

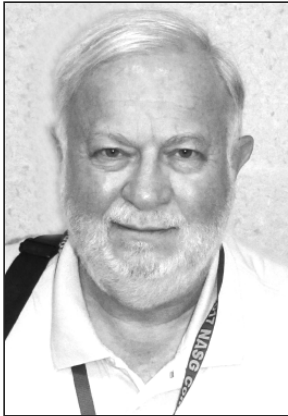
The Dispatch

May-June 2018



**Make Your Own Rerailer
Build a Barber Shop
American Flyer Switch Modification**

President's Message



By Will Holt, President, NASG

Many of the members of our association are proud about the NASG being an umbrella for all of S model railroading—Scale Standard Gauge, Scale Narrow Gauge, Hi-Rail and American Flyer. Still, too many do not fully embrace what that means.

The duties of a Regional Vice-President include following up on those who have not renewed their membership. During my term as Central VP, “de-railed” members

had acceptable reasons. But distressing was the number of members leaving the ranks of the organization because it was “too _____ oriented.”

With the center of the quote blank, almost all of you filled in that blank; probably with either the word “scale” or the word “hi-rail.” Some derailed members thought the organization was way too scale oriented; others way too hi-rail oriented. That is literally impossible; oriented to scale **and** too oriented to hi-rail. For some, the word “united” in our logotype is not what they truly believe. Shame on them.

Implied is that whether one considers one's self Scale, Hi-Rail or American Flyer, you share nothing with members in any of the other categories. This is simply not true! The only practical difference is most often only wheel flange, rail height and many times, the coupler.

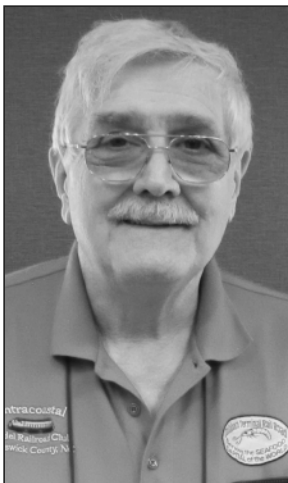
Pete Smith, a well known Sn3 model railroader, owned the Building and Structure Company for quite some time. I remember him telling about someone who saw one of his stations and simply could not use it because it was a narrow gauge station. Well, nooooo. It is an S model railroading station. He was perplexed since he could not figure out how to determine if the figure of a man was narrow gauge or standard gauge; an automobile scale or hi-rail; a tree hi-rail or American Flyer.

I know S hi-rail model railroaders who are top notch modelers. Others build quality layouts with great scenery and operation. And on the flip side the most ardent S scale model railroader probably enjoys having Tom Hanks announce “All Aboard” from the Polar Express train under the Christmas tree.

It is time that we move beyond the differences and on to the celebration that we have in S the diversity that other model railroading scales simply do not enjoy. Celebrate all of S model railroading! 🚂

— From the November issue, have you brought two new people into S as yet?

Musings From the Beach



**By Monte Heppe
Executive Vice President**

In January I had the pleasure of helping with the NASG booth at the World's Greatest Hobby Show in Charlotte, North Carolina. The show graciously provides us with the booth and also transports the large items of our display. The Carolinas Division of the Atlantic Coast S Gaugers had their modular model railroad set up and Bill Clark, an S scale dealer had his booth near ours. Several members of the Piedmont club helped us at the NASG booth. S was well represented.

The primary purpose of these shows is to introduce new people to the model railroading hobby. Many of the attendees were young families with children who were about to outgrow the Thomas push trains. They were looking to find electric trains as the next step for their children. There were also recent retirees who were looking for a hobby and some who had been involved in model railroading and looking to get back into the hobby. Many were attracted to our display and were quite pleased with the variety of equipment available in S. We had detailed discussions with approximately 100 individuals and families who were definitely interested in S scale. We got several new NASG members from some existing S scalers and even the Carolinas club picked up several new members.

The WGH Show typically attracts over 20,000 attendees at each of their two-day shows. This indicates to me that the hobby is alive and well and has a future. Fortunately we were there to make a pitch for S scale. 🚂

Contributing Members

Once a year we publish a list of those members who have generously paid more than the \$30 due to continue their membership. Their continuing support is greatly appreciated.

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Barry Atwood	Peter A. Gehret, MD	Stuart C. Mut
Jeff Bakst	Robert Greengrove	Roger E. Nulton
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DEADLINES for time sensitive articles and adver-
tising are the first day of January for the March
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first day of May for the July issue, the first day of
July for the September issue, the first day of Sep-
tember for the November issue and the first day
of November for the January issue.

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The Dispatch

Volume 42, Number 3, May-June 2018

MANIFEST

COVER Jim Babish' intricate multi-loop hi-rail layout will be on the
layout tour for the 2018 NASG Convention. *Photo by Jim Babish.*

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NASG Web Site

<http://www.nasg.org>

NASG Website Director, Peter Vanvliet: webmaster@nasg.org

2018 NASG National Convention

New England S-Press

2018 NASG Convention

July 24 through 29, 2018

Boxboro Regency Hotel, Boxboro, MA

At the last meeting of the Best Darn S-Gauge RR Club, we heard Joe and Tim talk about all the activities to take place at the NASG convention hotel next summer. **This month**, we listened in as they talked about the exciting convention tours.

Tim said "Hey Joe, I think you've convinced me to attend the 2018 NASG convention this July. I spoke to my wife, and she's excited to go with me, but we're having trouble selecting the tours we want to take . . . they all sound great!"

Tim is right!!! There are 9 different tours to choose from over the course of 5 days, and you'll still have plenty of time to attend the huge Trade Show and Clinics! Let's take a look at them.

TUESDAY: Arrive in Boxborough by Monday evening and you'll be there in plenty of time to settle in at the hotel and be ready for either of the two tours that leave Tuesday morning. One tour travels north to Meredith, New Hampshire, where you will board the Winnepesaukee Railroad for a scenic ride along the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee. Exiting the train, you will board the historic Mount Washington cruise ship whose origins date back to 1872. After a 2-1/2 hour narrated cruise on the 21-mile long lake where you will view numerous private islands, the White Mountains, Mount Washington, and many large private estates, you return to shore to board your train for the return trip to Meredith and your motor coach ride back to the hotel. Lunch is on your own while aboard the ship.

*Below: The Breakers, Newport, Rhode Island
Photo: The Preservation Society of Newport County*

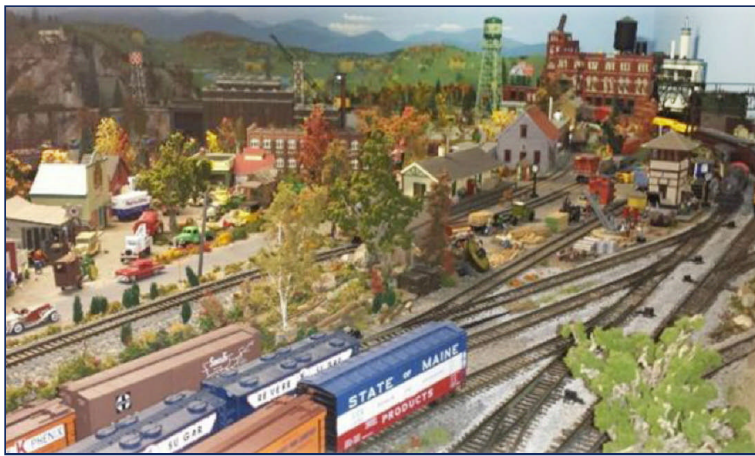


Winnepesaukee Railroad consist.

Photo from Hoborr.com

The alternative tour on Tuesday is a motor coach to Newport, Rhode Island, where you will tour two of the famous mansions "of the rich and famous." First take an audio-tour at your own pace of *The Breakers*, the 70-room summer home of Cornelius Vanderbilt II, owner of the New York Central Railroad. After lunch on your own in downtown Newport, you will visit *Marble House* for another audio-tour of this 50-room summer "cottage" built by Cornelius' younger brother, William, who managed the family's railroad fortunes, and also achieved fame in America's Cup racing. Marble House has been featured in several Hollywood movies and TV series.

WEDNESDAY: Two more great tours leave on Wednesday morning. The first heads west to central Massachusetts where you will visit two fantastic layouts. See the large hi-rail, action-packed layout of *George Reneris*, operated by DCC. Then travel to Palmer, Massachusetts, where you will have lunch on your own, at the *Steaming Tender Restaurant* located in the Romanesque-style station built in 1884. Freight and passenger trains pass by the restaurant throughout the day. Hold onto your hat! After lunch, we head back to Boxborough, taking time to stop at the hi-rail layout of *Dave Plourde*. Dave's layout has been featured in *Classic Toy Trains* magazine, and his artistic talents are evident in his backdrops and scenery.



Above: David Ploudre layout.

Photo by Doug Peck

The second tour on Wednesday is into Boston where we will board the famous “Duck Boats,” retired military amphibious vehicles, for a narrated 80-minute tour of the city, incorporating a splashdown into the *Charles River* for a great water view of the Boston skyline. Following lunch on your own at historic *Faneuil Hall Marketplace*, you will have ample time to explore the shops of the Marketplace before boarding your coach for the return to the hotel. Both tours will return to the hotel in time for you to have a leisurely dinner before attending the complimentary *Bristol S-Gaugers 70th Birthday Party* that evening!



Green Mountain Railroad streamline consist featuring the ex-Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe flute-sided passenger cars.

FRIDAY: The hotel will be buzzing all day with more clinics and a bustling Trade Show, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., with over 100 tables, and four or more operating layouts. There will be no rail trips this day, but we will be offering a non-rail tour to *Old Sturbridge Village*, only an hour away, where you will be on your own to enjoy this historic recreation of an 1830's New England village, with many authentically costumed artisans, craftsmen, and other “citizens” demonstrating their daily tasks. Since it first opened in 1946, Sturbridge Village has attracted millions of visitors including school groups, scholars, and tourists. You are on your own for lunch during your time there.

SATURDAY: During the closing day of the Trade Show, there will be a single non-rail tour to nearby *Minuteman National Historical Park*, in Lexington. After viewing a multi-media presentation about the historic events of April 19, 1775 — the first battle of the Revolutionary War — you will explore some of the battlefields and buildings from that era. Then you will have time in town for lunch and additional sightseeing or shopping on your own before your return trip to the hotel.

Below: Amtrak Acela passes the Steaming Tender.

Photo from steamingtender.com



Boston Duck Boat. Photo from bostonducktours.com

THURSDAY: The main tour of the convention occurs on Thursday as we head north into Vermont. Arriving in Bellows Falls, former home of Steamtown, we will board the Green Mountain Railroad and head north to Ludlow. The 35-mile ride through the Vermont countryside will be in the first fluted-side streamline passenger coaches that originally belonged to the Santa Fe Railroad. At least one photo run-by is planned, and lunch on the train is included. Don't miss this great trip into scenic Vermont ! Return in plenty of time for the Trade Show opening and numerous clinics, that evening.



Old Sturbridge Village potter at work.

Photo from osv.com

Continued on the next page

2018 NASG National Convention

LAYOUT TOURS: There will also be two other layout tours, one on Tuesday evening, and one on Friday evening. The Tuesday tour will visit three layouts on the North Shore. The first is *Don Haiges'* large hi-rail basement layout with a mix of American Flyer, Lionel-Flyer, S-Helper Service, MTH, and American Models equipment, with DCC control. Nearby, you will visit *Bob Frascella's* scale layout operating on code 100 track and hand-built turnouts. Bob's layout is partially scened, with hand-painted backdrops of actual landscapes around the North Shore! You will also see Bob's operational 3-D printed locomotives that he designed himself! Finally, you will visit *Bill Tarbox's* hi-rail layout loaded with original American Flyer equipment and accessories. Bill is also a collector of railroad memorabilia which you will find displayed all around the layout room.

Below: Tom Robichaud's layout. Photo by Tom Robichaud



Bob Frascella's partially 3D printed S-scale Delaware & Hudson Alco C420
Photo by Bob Frascella.

The Friday layout tour will visit *Jim Babish's* nearby DCC-operated multi-level hi-rail layout, highly-detailed and fully scened. You will be amazed at what Jim has created since beginning this layout little more than three years ago. You will also visit two other hi-rail layouts that have each been featured in *S-Gaugian* and *Classic Toy Trains* magazines. First is the layout of Rob and Phyllis Seiger, fully scened and loaded with incredible detail. Many structures were built by Rob, while Phyllis handled the intricate detailing of the layout. Included in their operating equipment is River Raisin's Flying Yankee. Finally, you will be amazed when you visit *Tommy Robichaud's* 22'x'22' DCC layout capable of running operating sessions as well as normal operation. Look for lots of detail and operating accessories on this excellent layout Tommy created after being lured away from O-gauge by other Bristol Club members!

SUNDAY LAYOUT TOURS: On Sunday, there will be a number of layouts open for drive-yourself visits before you head for home. Details, descriptions, and directions will be available at the convention.

This, and a lot more, means that you don't want to miss the 2018 NASG Convention!!! For info on registering and current updates
Go to our website: www.bsgr.us

Don't forget the model contests

Let's Show and Tell at the **NASG model contest** this year! It's contest time again at the NASG convention this summer. I'm sure that many of the Bristol Club members and folks living nearby will enter the contests which will include both the scale categories and one for Flyer Imagineering. I recall the 2008 convention in New England had many nice entries. Jamie Bothwell will host his special **Greeley's Place Contest**. This year he is offering a \$5 stipend for entering an American Models modified 12-1 long Pullman or a modified heavyweight shorty coach. These can be scale or hi-rail. There probably will be a prize for a long car and one for a short car. Regardless, if you have a favorite scale piece, Flyer Imagined piece or a Greeley's entry, why not bring it along to the convention. A single piece of rolling stock, small structure or loco doesn't take up much space if you're flying or Amtraking. — Jeff Madden

UPDATE: NASG CONVENTION CLINICS

At the convention this July, there will be four clinics with limited participants, requiring advance registration, or else you take your chances upon arrival. The four clinics are: **Make-&Take**, with **Ken Zieska** — kit construction of a small freight house; Limit: 25; Cost: \$30.

AND FOR THE LADIES:

Make A Sugar Scrub Moisturizer, with Deane Greene; Limit: 20; No charge.

Jewelry Making, with Lynn Barnhardt; Limit: 15; Cost: \$15.

Chocolate: Herb of the Heart; Limit: 20; Cost: \$15
See the convention website www.bsgr.us UPDATES page for additional information about each, as well as other important convention updates.

Make Your Own Rerailer

By Peter Vanvliet, NASG Webmaster

When I switched from N-scale to S-scale, I figured putting equipment on the track would be a lot easier. I had two of those nice N-scale Life-Life 2-8-8-2 engines, and they were beautiful to watch run. However, it took a long time to get all those tiny wheels on the rails.

I don't know if it is an age thing or what, but I have a hard time getting the wheels onto the tracks in S-scale as well. Add to that the fact that when we do public train shows, the ambient lighting is pretty bad. As we get older we need more and more light to see things well. Despite the larger wheels, putting our equipment on the tracks is still a challenge. But, at least we (usually) don't have to get on our hands and knees to place our equipment on the track like we see the local G-gaugers doing at train shows!

Since there is no commercial re-railer available in S-scale, I decided to make one myself. The June/July 1996 issue of the Dispatch has an article by Kent Singer on how he took an HO-scale Rix Rail-It re-railer, cut it down the middle length-wise, and then added some styrene to make it fit the wider gauge for S-scale. You can find that article online on the NASG web site, if you prefer to take that route.

The photos shown with this article are actually my third attempt, and it seems to work flawlessly. My first attempt was made out of scraps of styrene. Not wanting to invest too much of the material, I made it just long enough for one truck. This worked, but proved to be a pain to use at a train show when you are in a hurry to get 20 cars on the track. My second attempt was made out of wood and was made long enough to hold one of my 40-foot box cars. This also worked, but I built it quickly and it had a piece of wood in the back that caused it to have quite a steep slope. I usually cut off the trip pin on Kadee style couplers, but for the few cars where I had not yet done so, the trip pin would get caught in the ties. Also, sometimes the front wheels of a truck would rail perfectly, but the rear ones didn't quite line up and they would fail to rail.

That brings us to attempt number three. I built mine out of a piece of 2"x3" stud leftover from a bathroom remodeling project. Any scrap of wood will do as long as it is at least 2" wide, and of sufficient thickness to build the re-railer's overall height. Since a re-railer is just a simple tool, it doesn't have to be fancy. I learned from my previous attempts that the whole re-railer needs to be quite long, so that it can support any piece of equipment. I made mine 17" long. You'll have to determine what size you want for your situation, as 17" is not long enough for passenger cars and long tender-attached steam locomotives. However, making it too long may make it awkward to use, transport, or store.

The next thing to tackle was to make the approach angle as shallow as possible. This meant a bit more woodworking. Since woodworking was my main hobby before I returned to model railroading, that was not an issue for me.

To get a nice, smooth, shallow and long angle cut in a piece of wood, you need a tapering jig. These kinds of jigs are typically used for cutting tapers in table legs. A tapering jig provides a nice straight cut and, more importantly, provides the safety necessary to make such a cut. I didn't have a tapering jig, so I had to make one first. I have a tablesaw, so I made

one for my tablesaw. A similar jig can be made if you have a bandsaw only. If all you have is a handsaw, that will work too, but it will take longer, and you will have to use a #4 plane to smooth the cut surface afterwards. See pictures below.



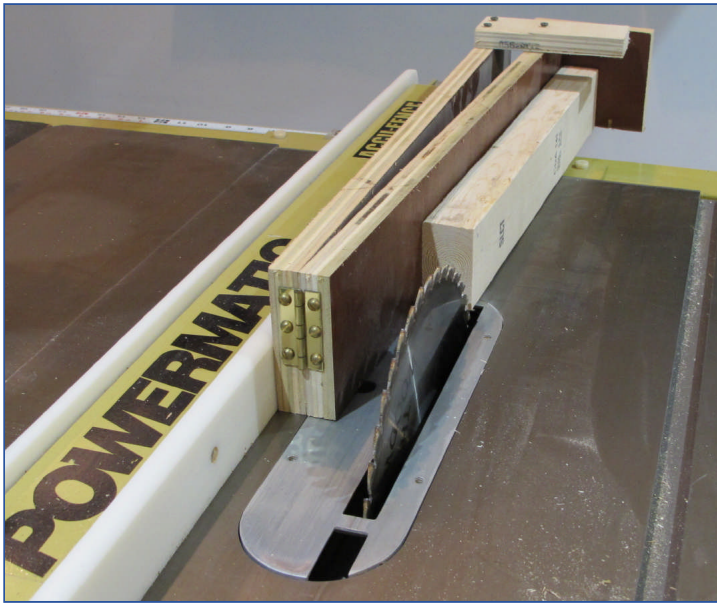
To build the tapering jig as quickly as possible for this project, I cut two pieces of 3/4" plywood to the same dimensions about 24" long and 4" tall. They need to be taller than the width of the wood you are going to use for the re-railer. Then I clamped those two pieces of wood together and installed a regular cabinet hinge between them on one end. This provides you with the core swiveling boards that form the jig. One board will ride up against the rip-fence of the saw, and the other one can be swung out to the desired angle of the taper you want to cut. Then I cut a small piece of plywood that I attached, perpendicular, to the end of the swinging board. I used only screws so that it can be replaced. This is the piece against which the re-railer board is pushed as you push it through the saw. The final piece is another small section of plywood that is attached to the tops of the two long boards. It is used to establish the tapering jig's angle. If you want to make a generic tapering jig, you will want to use bolts and a sliding slot in this piece of wood, so that you can adjust the jig for the project at hand. However, since I am only going to use it to cut the board for my re-railer, I *hard-wired* it by using screws to connect it near the back ends of the two longer boards. I simply chose a very shallow angle.

Continued on the next page

Make Your Own Rerailer



I then placed the jig on my tablesaw, and placed the 2"x3" stud board in its position. You can make the very tip of the rerailer nice and sharp, but I figured that such thin wood would eventually start to break off, so I set the tablesaw fence so that the tip of the rerailer was 5/64" thick. After all of that work, it was then just a matter of 30 seconds to make the cut! Be sure to keep your hands clear of the back of the tapering jig as the blade may cut through the pusher board on the back.

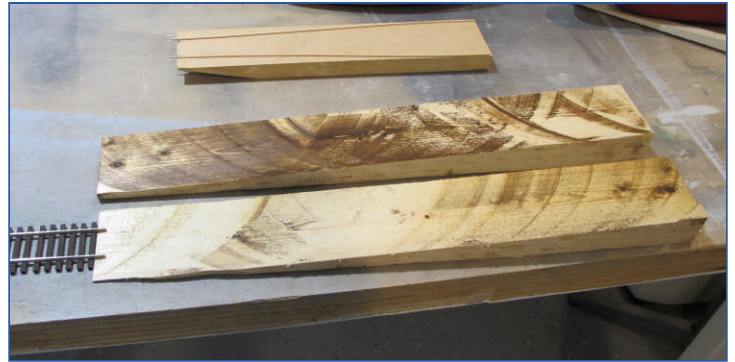


To get the rerailer to seat properly on a section of track, and to guide the wheel flanges to their rails, a pair of grooves need to be cut on the underside of the rerailer board. I use code 100 rail on my home layout, and the Houston S Gaugers' club layout uses that also. So, I set the tablesaw blade up to cut a 0.100" tall groove (or thereabouts). You will need to vary this based on the rail height that you use. Set the table saw fence so that it winds up cutting the groove at the desired distance from the long edge of the board and make the cut. Mark the spot for the other rail (I used a section of flextrack for my guide), adjust the fence again, and then cut a groove for the other rail. The kerf of my tablesaw blade is just a bit wider than

the width of the code 100 railhead, so I only needed one pass for each groove. For AF/hi-rail track, you may need to move the fence over a little bit and make a second pass to slightly widen the groove. Don't make the grooves much wider than the rail head, because the rerailer will be too loose, and it may not quite line up with the rails when you place it on the track.



The board gets us the down-ramp. What we need now are the guides that direct the wheels to the rail. I decided to use pieces of scale 5"x5" square stripwood to make these. The thin stripwood can be bent and forms a nice shape for guiding the wheels toward the rail. The height of this stripwood is dependent on the size wheels you have; it can be taller for AF/hi-rail wheels, thinner for Sn3 or Sn2 equipment.



My first attempt was to install just two such strips to guide the outsides of the wheels. This worked well on all of the S-Helper Service and MTH equipment. But when I attempted to rail my American Models FA-2, it failed. I double-checked, and the wheels are in gauge. However, it turns out that the wheels on the AM locomotives are wider than the ones on the SHS/MTH equipment by about one scale inch. So, I made a slight adjustment to my rerailer, by using the stripwood to guide the insides of the wheels. As long as your equipment is in gauge, regardless of the manufacturer of the wheels, the rerailer will work.



So, the final design of the guide strips are as follows. I used two outer strips to catch the wheels as they are randomly placed on the re-railer. As the front truck is in the process of going through the re-railer, the rear truck is being moved into position. The two inner guide strips do the work of getting the wheels to line up with the rails. Getting these right is critical.



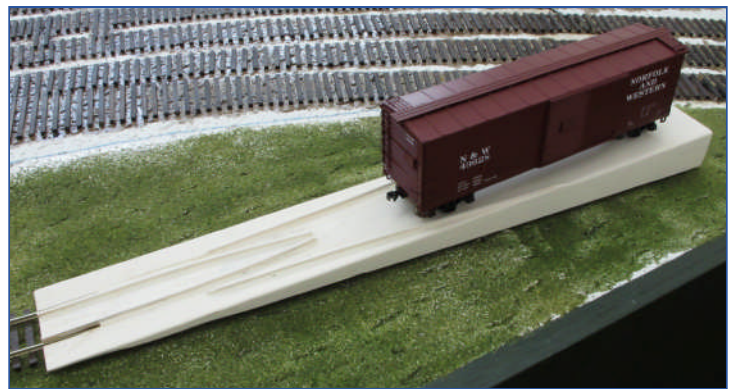
I made sure that about the last three inches of those inner guide strips is straight and in line with the rails. That was so that both the front and rear wheels of a truck are straight as the front wheel makes contact with the rails. This avoids the problem I had with my first attempt. Use the NASG track gauge to get these guide strips perfectly in line with the inside notches of the WHEELS marker on the gauge. Alternatively, if you don't have such a gauge, use the measurements found the NASG web site Standards page at <http://www.nasg.org/NASG/Standards.php> Use measurement **B** in the **S-4 Wheels** section. Note that this is different for AF, hi-rail, scale, and narrow-gauge, so if you use more than one, you will need to build a re-railer for each of those. But, as you cut the board that forms the basis of the re-railer, you wind up with another piece of wood leftover that also has a shallow-angle taper to it, so you actually can build two re-railers from the one cut (and maybe one more pass of the tablesaw or bandsaw). I just slightly bent the rest of the inner guides to meet each other (kind of like the inner guide rails found on bridge track). This allows us to not have to worry about how the trucks are placed on the re-railer. The stripwood guides were glued down with yellow carpenter's glue. Be sure to remove any excess glue where the wheels will make contact with the guide strips.



The basic re-railer is now done. Place it on a section of straight track and try it out. If you find the wheels riding up on the re-railer, use a file, sandpaper, or a chisel-style Exacto blade to remove a tiny amount of material from the outsides of the inner guides of the re-railer. If for some reason yours isn't working as desired, it is easy to remove the guide strips with a chisel and start over again.



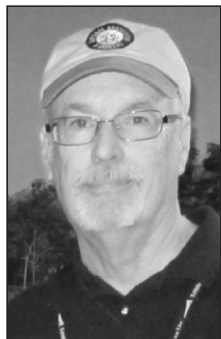
For most of my freight cars where I use S-Helper Service wheels, I can just put the car on the re-railer and let go, and it will run smoothly down the re-railer and rail itself. As a matter of fact, to take a photo of the re-railer in action, I had to put a piece of wood under the rear wheel to hold it steady for me to take the photo! I found that for the American Models FA-2, the gearbox is very low and it actually scrapes the tops of the inner guides. This was the reason why I initially made only the outer guide strips. So, if the FA-2 engines get stuck on the re-railer, I can just push them by hand.



In all the testing I have done with my re-railer, so far it has not failed once. I painted mine white so that it is easier to see in the dimly-lit train show facilities. The paint makes the surface a bit rougher so the cars don't run as smoothly on it. So, if you are only using yours at home, you might just want to leave the wood unfinished. Sanding the surfaces smooth will help. Or, you can make it out of a piece of solid wood, apply a stain and lacquer to it, and have it be a beautiful work of art! 🚂



Join a Non-S Club or Group



By Jeff Madden, Editor Emeritus

What? Heresy? Not really. This editorial is meant for those S scalers or S gaugers who don't live in an area where there are any S clubs or even many other individuals modeling in S. Sooo, if you reside in a geographical area where there are few or no other modelers in S, I suggest that you explore your location for other-scale modelers or other-scale clubs so at least you won't feel so lonesome.

I encourage those S modelers in small towns and non-S metro areas to seek out other scale individuals or groups. Even in the most remote rural areas there usually are some other model railroaders. In any metro area over 100,000 in population, I can almost guarantee there will be some other modelers, one or more model train clubs or a railfan group.

Let's take other-scale individuals first. Especially in small towns, other-scale modelers just might be in the same boat as you are — looking for others to share the hobby with. No matter what scale the non-S modeler is involved with, you can at least share ideas, and as a bonus, you might even decide to share some skills. Maybe you're good at carpentry and the other scalers (HO, O, N, G, etc.) might be helpful in doing scenery, wiring, etc. Plus, you can enjoy the fellowship and be involved in some activities. Who knows, you might even con-

vert one or two people to S. An S scaler or S hi-railer might find commonalities with an HO modeler or 2-rail O scaler, again sharing skills or just enjoying the camaraderie.

Same thing with finding a non-S club. For example, an AF modeler might find a 3-rail O gauge club in his neck of the woods and discover more in common than first thought. Commonalities in this situation might be toy-train themes, use of accessories, like-mindedness when it comes to scenic realism, and so on. S scalers or hi-railers might fit in well with HO or 2-rail O clubs with the common interests in realism, DCC wiring, car-order switching and detailed scenery.

If you feel like a lone wolf, it's a good idea to seek out local NMRA, TCA or TTOS members that meet on a regular basis. You might even investigate formal or informal groups that are mostly interested in real railroads. You'd be surprised at how many *railfans* are also modelers!

I sorta did this when I moved to rural Martinsburg, West Virginia in 1971, not knowing a soul interested in trains. I quickly discovered a club in nearby Hagerstown, a bigger town about 20 miles away, that had both an HO and an outside 3rd rail O scale layout located in a fairgrounds building. I joined and then found out that some of the members also had a small club with HO and Lionel O in Martinsburg, so I joined them also. I happened to be in HO myself at the time. Also being interested in real railroads, I joined an NRHS Chapter in nearby Winchester, Virginia, (about 20 miles away), and low and behold, half of those members were HO or O modelers also. I dropped out of the NRHS club as I was being pulled in too many directions and had a newborn at home keep me occupied. In the two model clubs I did contribute my efforts to the O layouts.

Note that clubs often put flyers seeking new members in hobby shops or on bulletin boards where community activities are posted. In today's world, of course, the internet can yield lots of information on clubs or even individuals.

The point is that if you can't find other S folks in your area, you can at least share the hobby of model railroading by finding non-S modelers or even railfans in order to enjoy the hobby even more — and you never know when you'll swing somebody over to S. 🚂

CORRECTION: The Crescent City S-Gaugers purchased a Booster Ad in the January-February 2018 Dispatch. We left a number off the telephone number. The corrected ad is below.

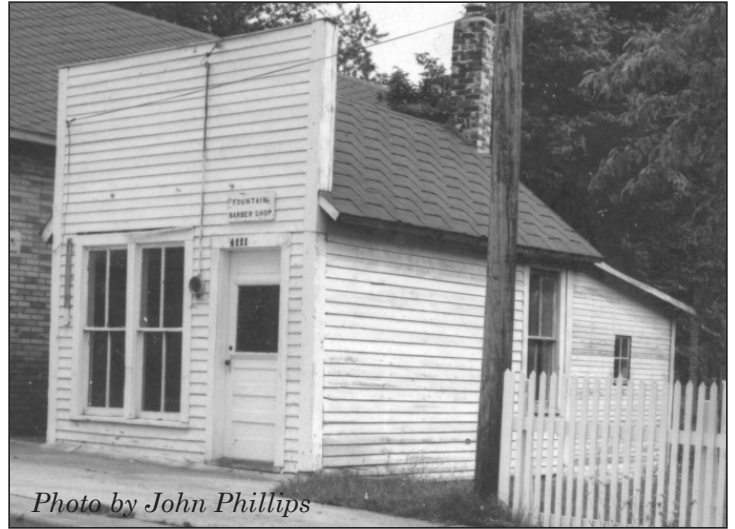
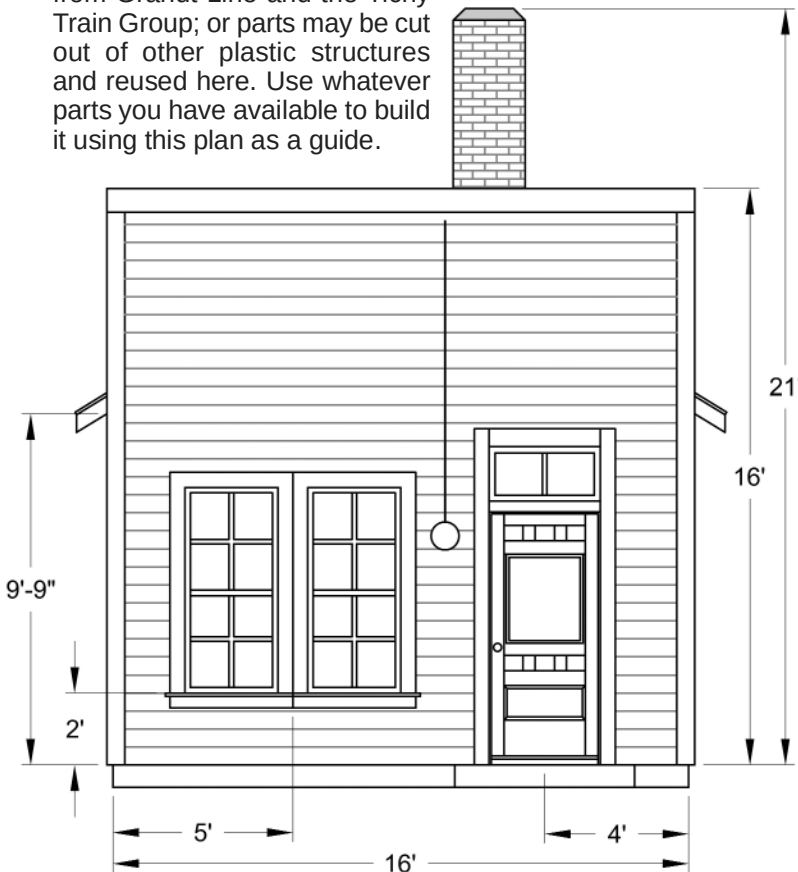
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Build a Barber Shop

By Edwin C. Kirstatter, Northern Ohio S Scalors
Scale drawings by Joe Kimber

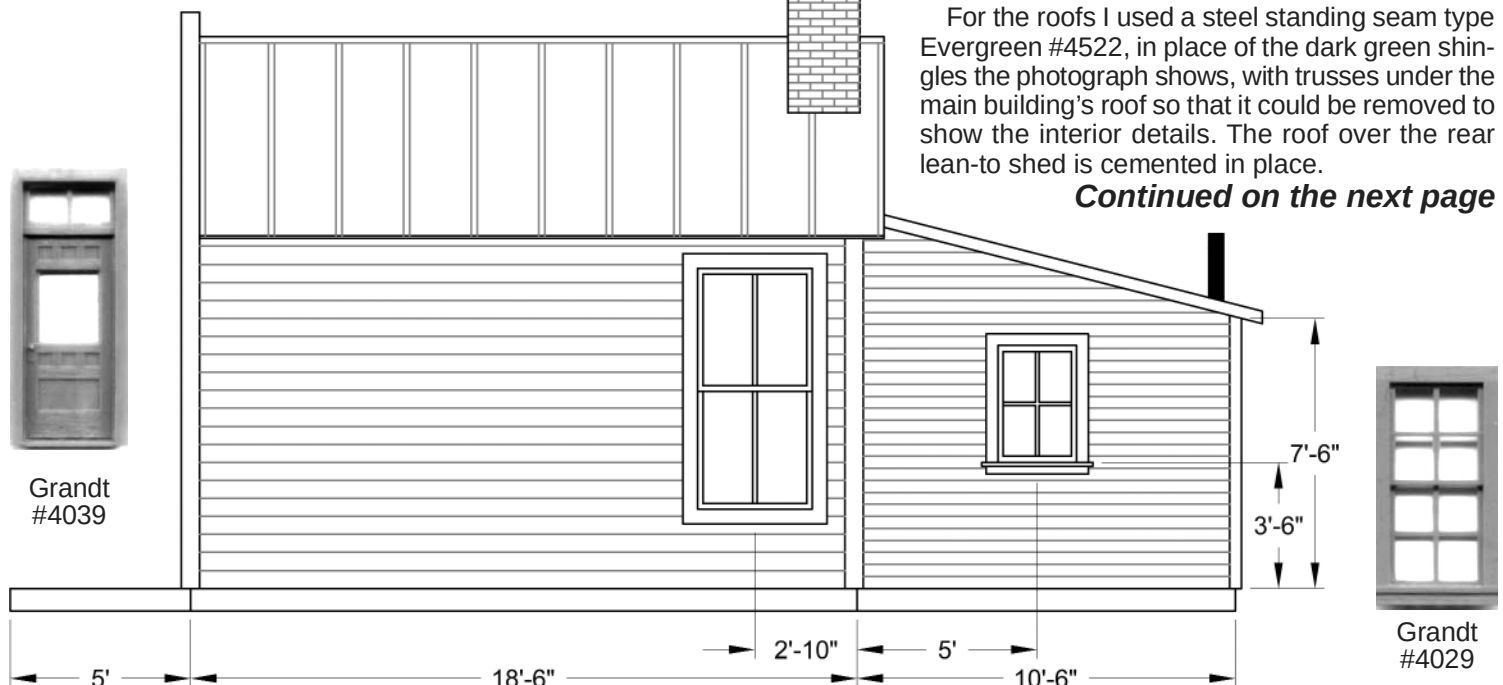
This interesting Barber Shop, a small false front building in Fountain, Michigan, was found by my friend John Phillips and he made a drawing of it. It can be scratch built from wood or plastic materials. Some windows and doors can be obtained from Grandt Line and the Tichy Train Group; or parts may be cut out of other plastic structures and reused here. Use whatever parts you have available to build it using this plan as a guide.



I found that by putting two of the Grandt Line #4029 windows side-by-side and door #4039 works well for the front. One of the Grandt Line #4036 windows will be needed on right side. The back shed addition can use three Grandt Line #0025 single sash windows. Start with cutting the sides and ends as needed from Evergreen Scale Models #4101 100" Clapboard siding and cutting openings for the windows and door to fit in. There is a louvered opening in the back gable to ventilate the attic. This is made of a piece of corrugated plastic with a frame added around it. Cement everything together with Testors liquid plastic cement or Super Glue. Where you assemble the sides and ends together you get an unsightly square corner that can be covered with Evergreen Scale Models #292 .080" angles to give it about a 6" trim. You need a base to mount all of these upon. Number 4504 Evergreen 1/16" square tile sheets are .040" thick and will work for the concrete foundation and also the inside floor.

For the roofs I used a steel standing seam type Evergreen #4522, in place of the dark green shingles the photograph shows, with trusses under the main building's roof so that it could be removed to show the interior details. The roof over the rear lean-to shed is cemented in place.

Continued on the next page



Build a Barber Shop

The heat for this building can be provided by an oil burning space heater or a coal burning pot-belly stove. Either one will need a brick chimney for its vent. The part of the chimney that shows outside on the roof was made from pieces of plastic brick material cemented together with a stone cap or you can use Rusty Stumps chimney # C2305L. Inside this shows against the back wall, where it was plastered over. The back shed has a vent pipe in the roof for the toilet. You can make this from 3/32" Brass tubing or from used-up ball point pen ink tubes of brass or plastic. The hot water tank is electric so no vent is needed.



Rusty Stumps
#C2305L

Paint the outside with a plastic compatible paint and put glazing inside the windows. The roofs are painted Aluminum to represent galvanized metal. The Toilet vent should be painted flat black and the chimney a red brick color.

Place decals or other signs on the false front. You can cut out and use the signs printed below or you can use an alphabet set like in the picture. The drawing and the prototype show a telephone line or a power line coming in at front with the meter below. This is a detail that is often missing from model structures. Meters are available from Grandt Line; part #3534, pictured on the right.

A Barber's pole by the front door would be a nice addition. I searched online but couldn't find a prefabricated S scale barber's pole. You can make an unlighted pole using the pattern printed below wrapped around a cylindrical object. Go online to page 33 to see examples of barber poles.

Interior details would be for show-n-tell only and a lot of work to do! To do this we would need to paint the floor to look like tiles and the inside walls a light color or put wallpaper on them. To paper them gather up some security mailing envelopes of a pleasing pattern to paste on those inside walls. We need two barber chairs, one full with a customer, the other empty and four other chairs for waiting patrons. A large mirror is on the wall behind the Barber's chairs with sinks and cabinets below in front of it and lots of those good smelling bottles of Tonics on it. The mirror was made from a piece of aluminum foil with all of the wrinkles pressed out of it. Or a hand mirror can be used if you have one. We need people inside, the barber with a man in one of the barber chairs, seated waiting customers with a heated discussion going on, and a stove to keep things warm. A cash register and pictures on the walls. Go to online page 33 to see pictures of the interior.

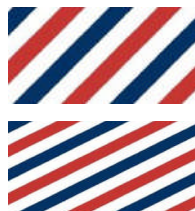
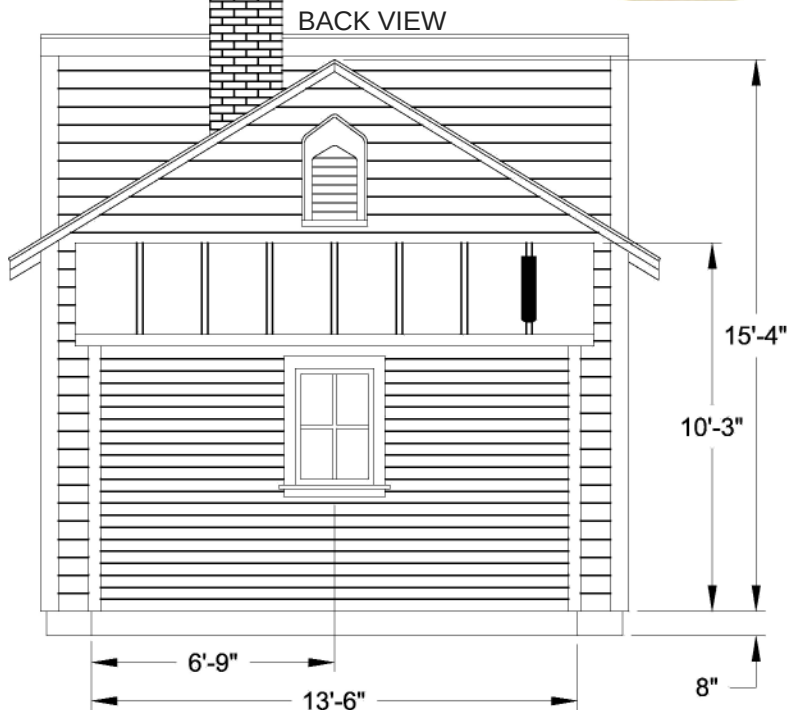
Place interior lighting inside up in the roof area if you have an interior to show off. Use LED's for lighting to not melt the plastics. Outside we need a concrete slab at the front door, a trash can out back and an oil storage tank nearby. There might be "broadside" pasted on the outside walls.

MATERIALS LIST: Most local hobby shops carry a large selection of **Evergreen** products. If you can't find what you want at your local store go to www.evergreenscalemodels.com Grandt Line products are also available at many local stores or go to www.grandtline.com Chimneys and other detail parts can be had from www.rustystumps.com www.berkshirevalleymodels.com is another good source of detail parts.



Grandt Line 3534

Grandt Line
#0025



Go to online to page 33 for more pictures

American Flyer Switch Modifications

What you can do with Gilbert American Flyer Track and Switches

By David Avedesian and Kyle Russell

Baltimore American Flyer Club • Photos by the authors

When it comes to selecting a track and switch manufacture and standards for your railroading empire's layout, the debate on which system is best often comes down to a list of pros/cons of each system. The big question is: Which system is best? Often the A.C. Gilbert American Flyer System is not listed high on most people's final list.

For we American Flyer operators, when it comes to A.C. Gilbert's American Flyer track and switches, we believe that there is nothing that you cannot do with this track and switch system. We will illustrate with photos and step-by-step, how-to-do almost anything that you could imagine with AF track and switches for your railroad empire's layouts.

The American Flyer track and switch system is the least expensive system to buy. So, if you can modify the track and switch system to give you unlimited track design flexibility at a very low cost with flawless operations, what could be better?

We will illustrate the following American Flyer switch and track modifications:

- Reduce the centerline offset from a 5-1/8" centerline to a 2-1/2" centerline.
- Eliminate the dreaded back-to-back S-Curve for a switch crossover.
- Change from a twin coil motor to a Tortoise Switch Machine operation for an AF switch.
- Compact toggle switch control boxes.
- Flip the detent operations to provide a compact yard ladder design.
- Modify the AF switch base to provide a very compact switch design and operation.
- How "not" to clean the dirtiest, ugliest, rustiest, paintiest American Flyer track.
- Flipping the AF Uncoupler under the layout for yard control.
- How to install the new modified AF uncoupler?

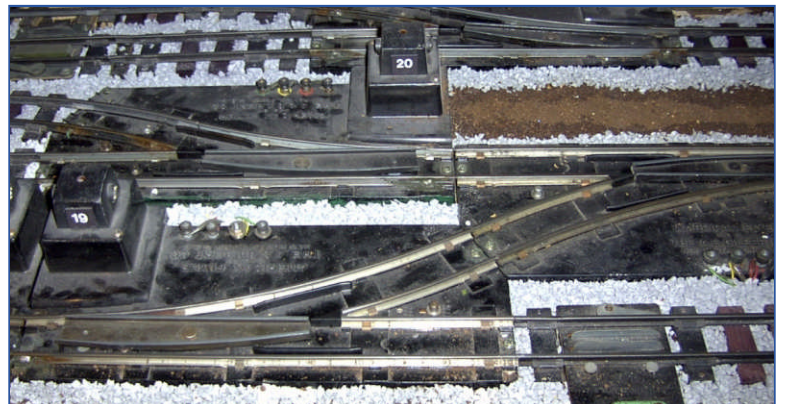
Reduce Centerline Offset from 5-1/8" to 2-1/2"

The easiest project with very little skill required is to modify the AF switch to reduce the centerline offset from 5-1/8" to 2-1/2". The term offset is the measure of two parallel tracks. If you were to measure the two tracks under normal AF geometry, the offset would measure 5-1/8".

The consequences of this wide offset, means that in a 36-inch wide yard configuration, you would be limited to only a seven ladder yard. If you divide 36 inches by 5-1/8" you would have seven parallel ladder track yard. However, if you reduce the offset distance to 2-1/2", then you can increase the number of ladders to a thirteen ladder yard in the same amount of space.



Above is an example of an eleven-ladder operating yard.



Above and below illustrate the difference between a normal 5-1/8" offset and a modified AF switch with a 2-1/2" offset. Note the modifications to gain the tighter yard ladder spacing. Above switch #19 illustrates the standard AF offset of 5-1/8 inches. Below switch #20 has been modified to an offset of 2-1/2 inches. This modification is described on the next page.



Now we are talking about some yard operations in the same 36" width table. In addition to an expanded yard ladder, the closer track spacing is more realistic looking. There is nothing more exciting to back a string of box cars down a narrow vacant ladder track deep within your operating yard.

Continued on the next page

American Flyer Switch Modifications

Modifying an AF Switch to a 2-1/2" offset with no modifications to the AF twin coil operations.

This is the easiest modification that you can do to an AF switch. The twin coil control remains the same and therefore the traditional four wire controller is the same.

Step 1: Using a Dremel cut off wheel, cut the outside curve section of the track parallel to the exit point beyond the black plastic triangle.

Step 2: Remove the curve sections of the switch. The track will slide easily out from the brass tab clips.

Step 3: From a curved track section, remove the first metal tie.

Step 4: Slide the second metal tie inboard just enough to clear the switch base.

Step 5: Trim the bottom flange on the *inside* curve section of the curved track. This is required to avoid the flange of the inside straight section of track from touching each other and causing a short circuit.

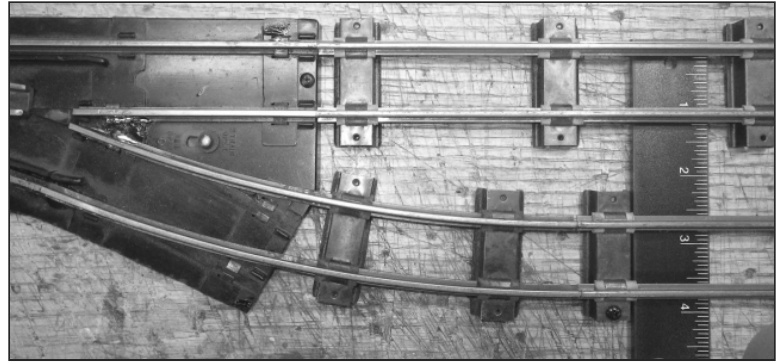
Step 6: Slide a metal track pin into the end of the curve track and mate the track to reverse the curve.

Step 7: To ensure improved electrical conductivity, use a Dremel wire wheel and clean the outside flange web and solder the *outside* curve section of track with a 3/4" piece of bare copper wire.

Step 8: Using a Dremel wire wheel, clean all brass track tabs and track flanges and solder the track flanges and brass tabs for better electrical conductivity. Soldering the brass tabs also secures the track in place.

Step 9: Using a Dremel cut off wheel, cut the full length curve track at the point where the track is parallel to the base straight track. This cut point is between the second and third metal tie. We have found that you can find this cut point by eye. As long as you are fairly close, you will enjoy reliable operations.

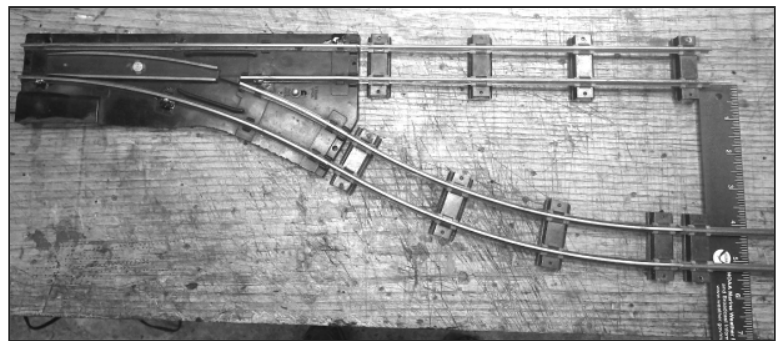
Review: It is important to note you have NOT changed the radius of the track. You have reduced the degree of arc of the curve. Therefore, your engines including your Northern #336 will be able to back into the ladder without any problems or derailments. That is a beautiful thing to watch.



Above: 2-1/2 inch offset with switch motor tombstone removed.

Below:

Standard 5-1/8 inch offset with switch motor tombstone removed.



Modifying an AF Switch to a 2-1/2" offset and to change the twin coil to manual or Tortoise operations.

This modification uses the same principles of design as above but in this approach we will save more space by removing the bulky AF twin coil switch motor. We will describe both options in this modification. There is an advantage to either approach. If you plan to manually move your switches, then using the AF detent spring and lock system will remain intact. If you plan to use a Tortoise switch machine motor, then the detent spring and lock system will be removed. With either option, space is saved. The advantage of removing the AF switch motor comes into play by removing the obstacles that hit the engine's overhang. As we make the AF switches more compact, engine overhang becomes a huge problem. Any modification that removes the AF twin coil motor and tombstone/ tower will enhance operations and appearance.



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The modifications are as follows:

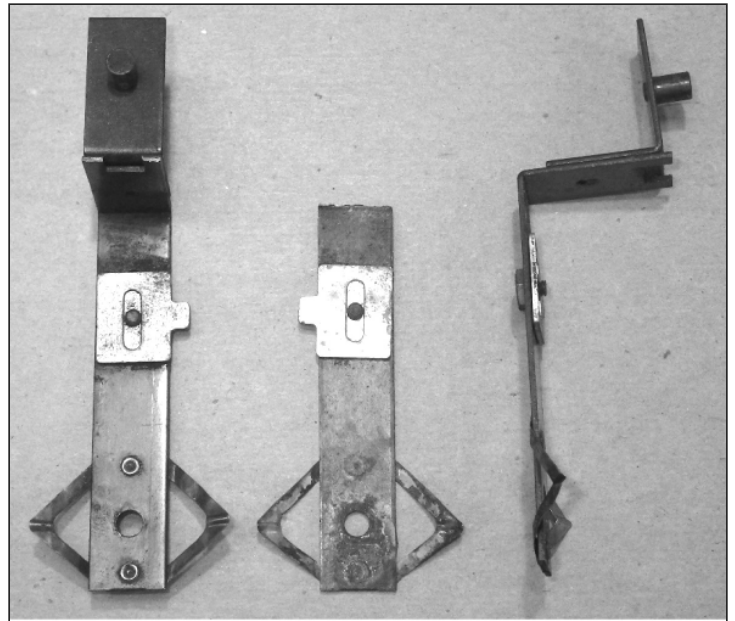
Step 1: Turn the AF switch over and unscrew the metal plates on the underside of the switch.

Step 2: Remove the motor top cover and screws.

Step 3: Remove the twin coil motor and save as spare parts for normal AF switches.

Step 4: Turn the switch upside down and remove the all the moving parts; detent, spring, contact slide and detent cover.

Step 5: Using a Dremel cut off wheel or sabre saw, cut the AF switch base as illustrated in the photo below.



Step 6: Bend and break the contact slide as shown in the photo above. The two outside images illustrate the slide bar before modification. The center image shows the where to bend and break the contact slide.

Continued on the next page

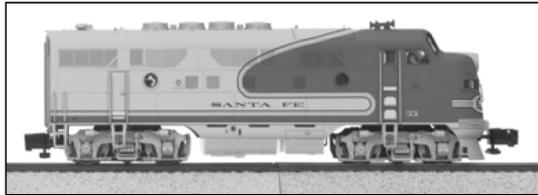
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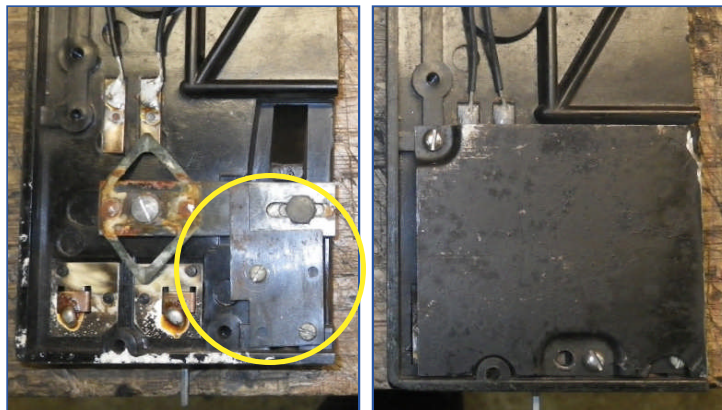
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American Flyer Switch Modification

Step 7: If you plan to use the AF switch in a manual mode, you would need to flip the detent cover plate and drill two additional holes and screw the detent cover plate is as shown in the photo below. The left image flips the detent cover with new screw holes. The right image shows the detent and slide bar with the finished look.



Step 8: Some of the earlier AF switches had a small piece of plastic to help guide the contact slide in a straight slide motion. If your switch does not have the plastic guide, then we have cut a small piece of wood and we have glued it in place using super glue.

Step 9: Re-screw the small metal cover plate. The contact slide and cover plate will be trimmed at a later step.

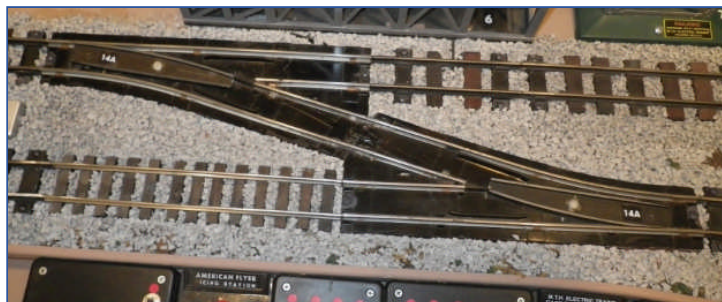
Step 10: Follow the same Steps 1-9 from above to modify the track to reduce the offset centerline to 2-1/2 inches.

Step 11: Slide the AF frog to the straight position and trim the contact slide and cover plate to give you an even finished look. If you want, you could cover the open exposed edge of the AF switch with a small strip of card stock glued and blacken using a marker pen.

Eliminate the Dreaded Back-to-Back S-Curve for a Switch Crossover

The enemy to smooth operation on any operating layout is the dreaded S-Curve. With a little design thought, you can eliminate the S-Curve forever. We will illustrate how to eliminate the S-Curve on an AF switch crossover, but the same technique can be applied to regular AF curved track. The finished results places a straight section of track between the two reduced arc of curve of the crossover AF switches.

In the photo below switch #14A illustrates the straight section of track placed between the two switches as an example of this modification. This switch also is driven by an under the layout Tortoise switch machine.



Step 1: Draw the two centerlines of your final track location.

Step 2: Place each switch over the centerlines and temporarily screw the switches in place.

Step 3: Measure the distance between the two switches from just beyond the black plastic triangle to the same location for the other switch.

Step 4: Using a Dremel cut off wheel, cut two pieces of straight track. These two pieces of track will be long enough to bridge the distance from each AF switch.

Step 5: Test fit the straight track by lifting up one of the switches, insert the new straight track and re-fit the switch to verify everything fits as you had planned.

Step 6: If everything is correct, cut the crossover straight track in half and insert a fiber/insulating pins on each rail. This is required if each loop has a separate power supply and if not; it is generally a good practice to isolate the crossover track.

Change from a Twin Coil Motor to a Tortoise Switch Motor Operation

As we become more comfortable with the Dremel cut off wheel, the twin coil motor is usually the first item to be eliminated. If the modified switch is going to be remote controlled, then an under layout stall motor is easy to use. We use the Tortoise switch motor. For American Flyer operations, we have made a number of minor but important modifications to the Tortoise switch motor. The photo below illustrates how the Tortoise machine is used to control the switch.



Those modifications are as follows:

Step 1: In order to get enough leverage and throw for AF switches, there needs to be a one-inch spacer below the base of the switch and the base of the Tortoise machine. The photo at the top of the next page also illustrates the additional modifications needed to the switch machine.

Step 2: Slide the adjustable slide to the max leverage.

Step 3: Due to concerns that we have placed too much leverage on the plastic slide, we cut aluminum angle to provide a better service factor.

Step 4: Glue the slide in place to prevent it from moving.

Step 5: In order to be able to apply the greater leverage, we up sized the spring wire.

Step 6: The low amperage DPDT aux contacts on the Tortoise switch machine have proven to be fun. We have hooked up MTH's semaphore which is directly activated when the latching toggle switch is made. There is nothing nicer to see than a remote switch's position being illuminated with a green or red semaphore signal.



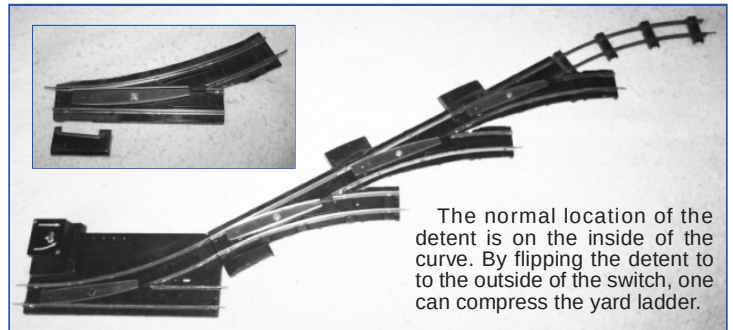
Compact Toggle Switch Control Boxes

As often the case, there are unintended consequences to learning how to modify American Flyer switches. The AF switch modifications have increased the number of switches on the layout. All of our switches are remote controlled. Therefore, we need more switch controllers. If we use the standard AF switch controller, we would quickly run out of control panel space. We have eliminated this problem by using mini 1/4" toggle switches. You can use either, DPDT Mon-Off-Mon or DPDT On-On latching switches.

If you look closely at the photo below and the photo on the right you will see that toggle switches 8, 9, 10, 11, 13A and 14A are DPDT On-On latching switches which we use to control Tortoise switch machines. The other toggle switches which are DPDT Mon-Off-Mon are for the traditional AF switch twin coil motors. The good thing about this approach is it allows you to pre-wire your control boxes with both styles of toggle switches. The pre-wired pigtails can then be wired to a terminal strip in a clean and neat fashion. The green and red dots are 1/4" press on dots and can be purchased from an of-

Flip the Detent to Provide a Compact Yard Ladder

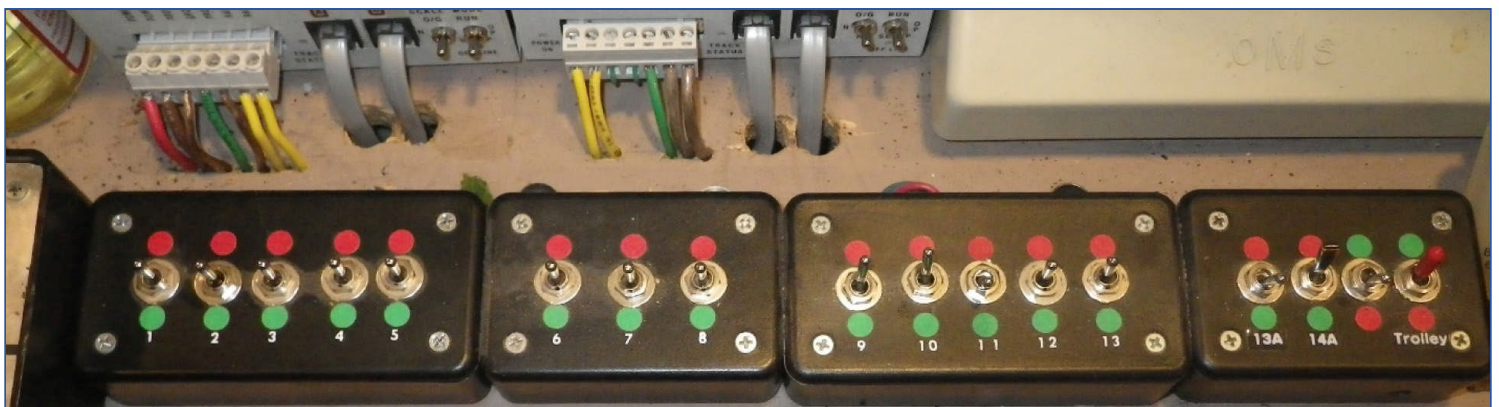
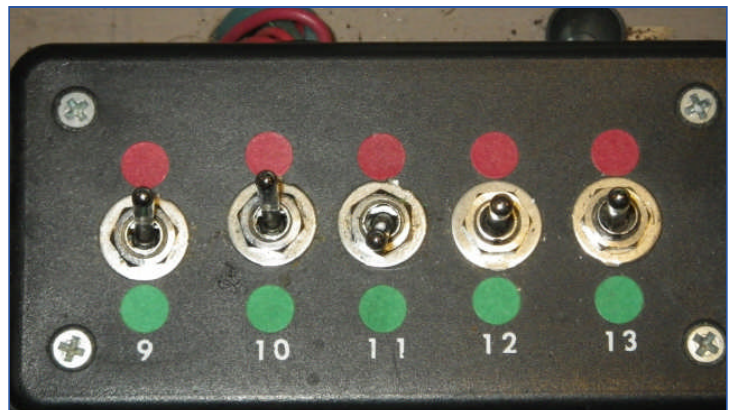
Flipping or moving the detent slide control operations of the switch from the inside to the outside of the switch base offers many operation benefits. By flipping the detent system to the opposite side of the switch, you can achieve a more realistic yard design. As soon as you view this approach to modifying the switch, you will realize that anything can be done to an AF switch. You can design your layout as you would like. Your railroad's functions control your design. You are not limited by the traditional AF switch operation or design. See the photo below for an overview of this approach. It is exciting to be able to understand that your imagination is your only design limitation.



Step 1: DO NOT use the later production switches that have the thermo plastic bases. They do not cut worth a darn and won't epoxy as well and if you take too long on a solder joint, they will melt from the heat. They can be identified by the slightly softer and somewhat flexible feel. There are provisions for two clips on both the long curved turnout rail and the long straight rail.

Step 2: We make a point of fully disassembling (Except not the movable points!!!!) each switch and do a thorough cleaning with Simple Green or other all-purpose cleaner, hot water, and a scrub brush.

Continued on the next page



American Flyer Switch Modification

After the cleaning, we follow up with a complete inspection of the switch. On the electrical contacts, Simple Green and a brass brush do wonders removing tarnish and cleaning the switch. We also use a brass brush and Simple Green on the sides of the rails, especially where we intend to solder brass clips to the rails. We also use Scotchbrite on the tops of the rails and the points. You will probably still need to use a soft Dremel wire brush to remove the oxidation where you want to solder the brass clips and rails together. However, you want to use a very light touch. If you take off the copper plating on the brass clips or the zinc plating on the rails you will expose bare steel and it doesn't like to be soldered when using rosin core solder. In addition to using rosin core solder, we got some water soluble flux at Home Depot. Use it to solder the brass clips and rails together. Rewashing the switch in hot water and a scrub brush removes all traces of the flux.

Step 3: We clean and straighten out old attempts to increase spring tension and re-bend the slide bar contacts to the original profile so that when reassembled they have good spring tension and the contact sections ride flat on the base contact pads. You want area contact, not point contact. We also make sure to clean around the point screw hole as this is the electrical contact for power to the points. When reassembling, use a wire brush on the shoulder screw where it will make contact with the detent slide bar to remove all dirt and oxidation.

Step 4: The main line switch can be a regular switch but to fit in our trailer slots we are using one with the tower removed.

Step 5: The second switch from the main line, first ladder switch needs to have the straight section cut short but does not need to have the detent moved if you trim the one corner of the switch to clear the main line roadbed.

Step 6: For all of the ladder switches, we cut the straight section 7-3/8" from the point end of the switch.

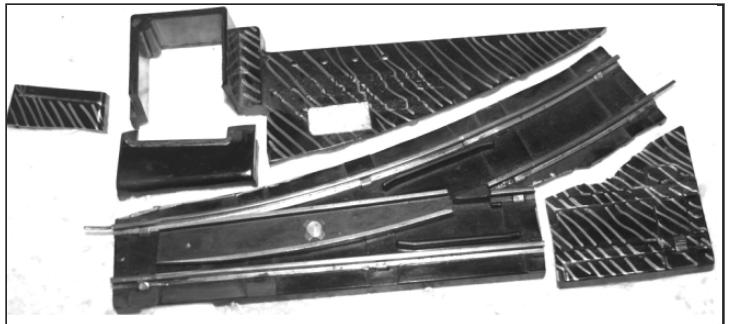
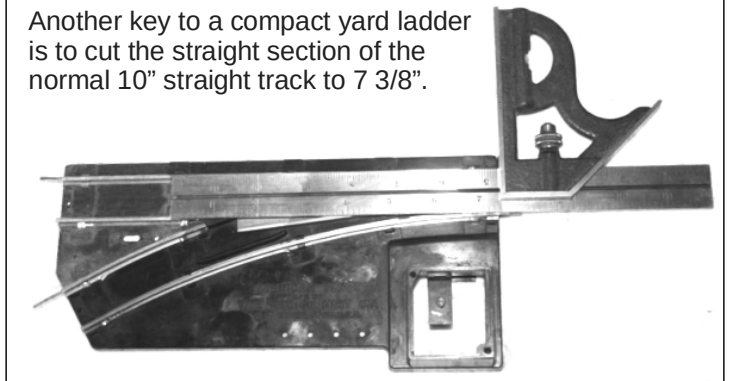
Step 7: If you are only cutting down the switch and not relocating the detent, DO NOT cut the detent housing off, as shown in the photos. They are only for the yard ladder switches. Leave the detent housing and cut off the tower so the cuts are flush with the inside of the tower. This will give a smooth profile to the finished switch.

Step 8: When moving the detent to the other side for the ladder, there are some finer points to keep in mind. They are as follows:

Step 9: When cutting off the tower leave enough material on the detent housing to form the two tabs to glue it to the base on the other side. These will have to be cut and filed by trial and error to get a good fit. You want the finished edge that was the inside surface of the tower to align with the edge of the base. The bottom of the detent housing needs to be flat and flush with the body of the switch. We used a plastic shopping bag over a hard flat surface to hold everything in proper alignment while the epoxy set. We epoxied in a scrap piece from the tower to fill in the gap for a more finished look. It acts like a glue block for more strength. Rough up the surfaces and do a good alcohol cleaning before bonding.

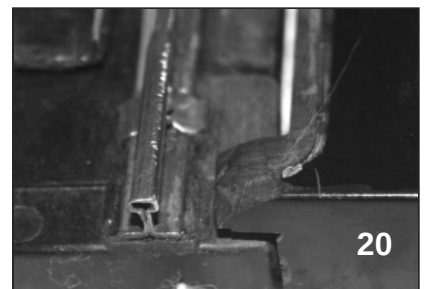
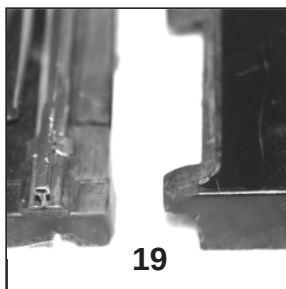
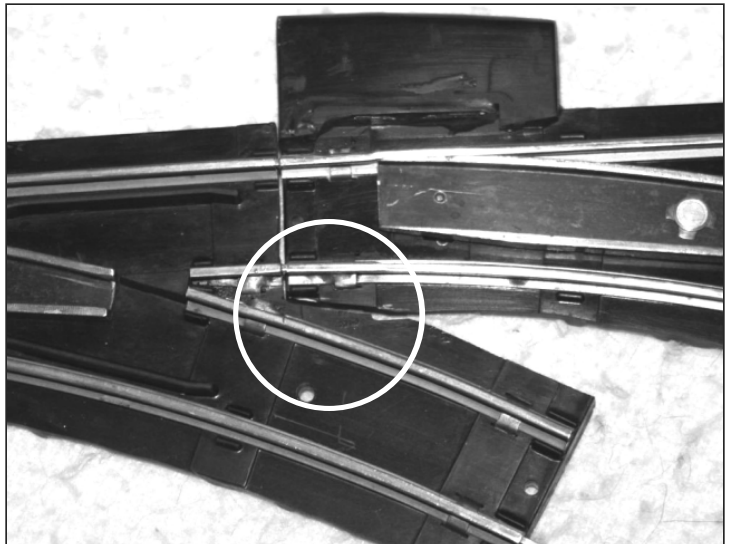
Step 10: Notch the side of the base to clear the reversed slide bar. See photos 19, 20 and 21 on the right.

Another key to a compact yard ladder is to cut the straight section of the normal 10" straight track to 7 3/8".

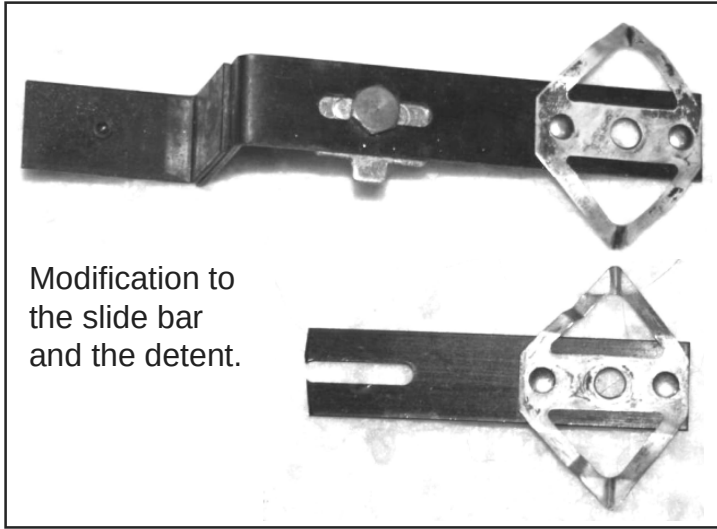


The above image illustrates the cut-off pattern.

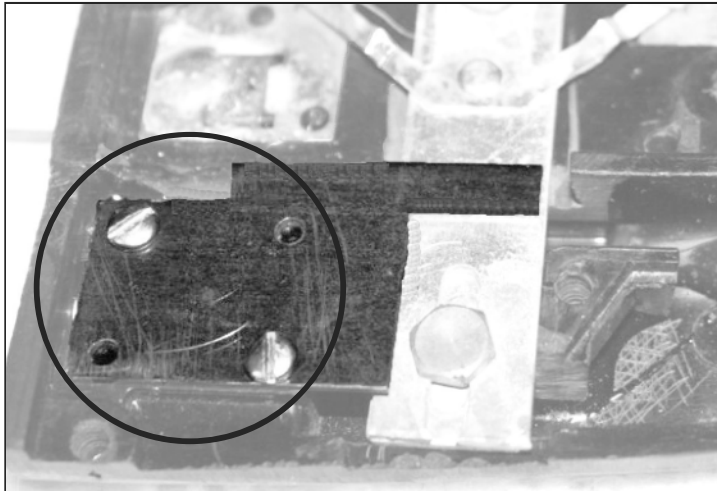
To compress the yard ladder, the image below illustrates additional modifications that can be made to a standard American Flyer switch.



Step 11: Third, since the contact wiper on the slide bar is not symmetric with the screw hole you need to shorten one of the "V" legs. The "V" legs on each side need to be moved back onto the contact pads on the base. We did this with small needle nose pliers bending the "V" offset into one leg. Be careful, too sharp a bend and you can break the contact's leg.



Modification to the slide bar and the detent.



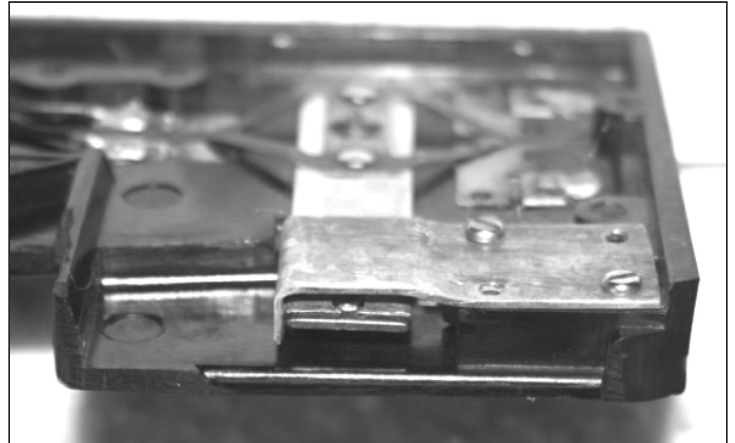
Step 12: Fourth, the photo above shows four screw holes in the detent covers. The detent cover must be flipped and it requires two additional screw holes to be drilled. Some of the switches have different hole patterns so we just gang drilled the extra two holes. We did this so that we wouldn't have to stop and drill the holes as we are reassembling the modified switch. Generally, the switches that have the relocated detents do not need the alternate holes.



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Step 13: Fifth, you will have to adjust the detent piece on the slide bar, so you get equal detent on both sides.

Step 14: Some AFswitches will need a custom-made combination detent cover and slide bar retainer clip. For switches that do not have the molded-in boss that prevents the slide bar from being pushed sideways by the detent spring and does not have the finger detent cover, there are two approaches to correct the issue. One is to use a piece of sheet metal and make a combination detent cover/slide bar retainer as seen in the photo below. Second is to glue in a wood block and depend on the AF metal bottom cover plate to hold the slide bar up far enough for positive engagement of the detent pin. Both modifications work very well.

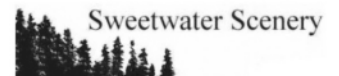


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American Flyer Switch Modification

Modify the American Flyer switch bases to make more compact switch operation

As you get comfortable using a Dremel cut-off wheel and the mechanics of the American Flyer switches, your imagination will begin to look at switching and track problems in a completely different way. Refer to the following six photos to gain some visual insight to some of the many different possibilities.

In the photo on the upper right Switch number 8 is a standard American Flyer switch. Switch numbers 9 and 10 are highly modified and are both operated by Tortoise switch machines.

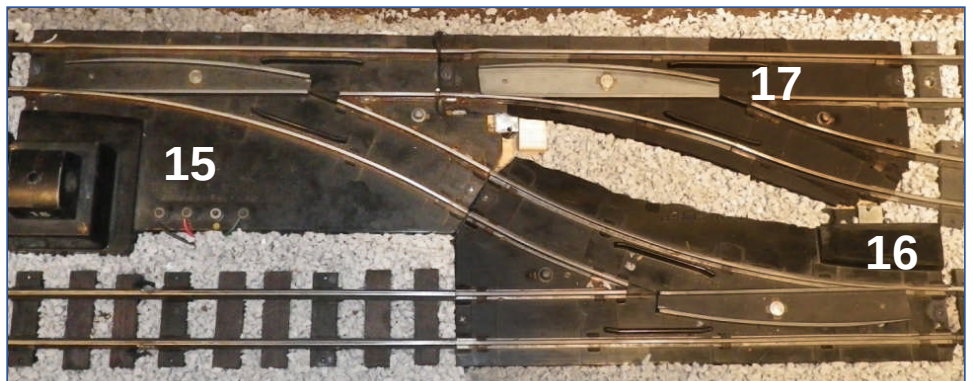
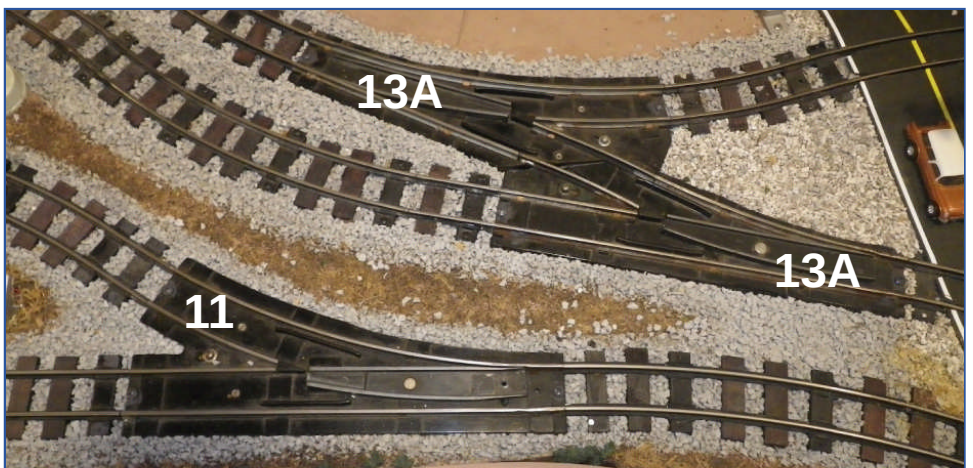
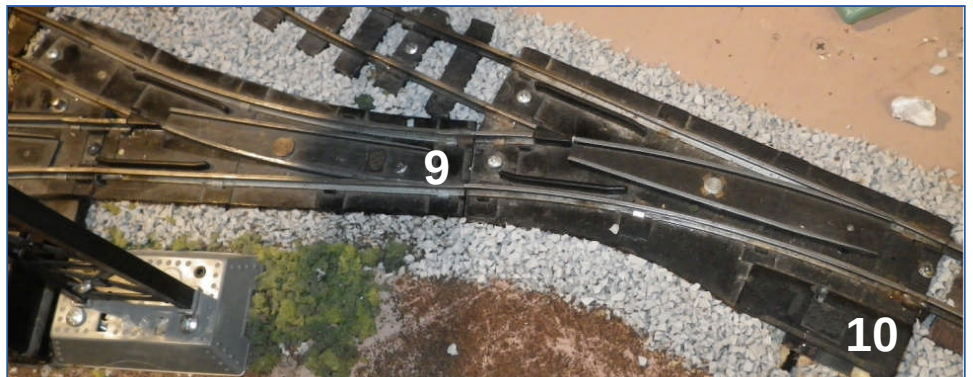
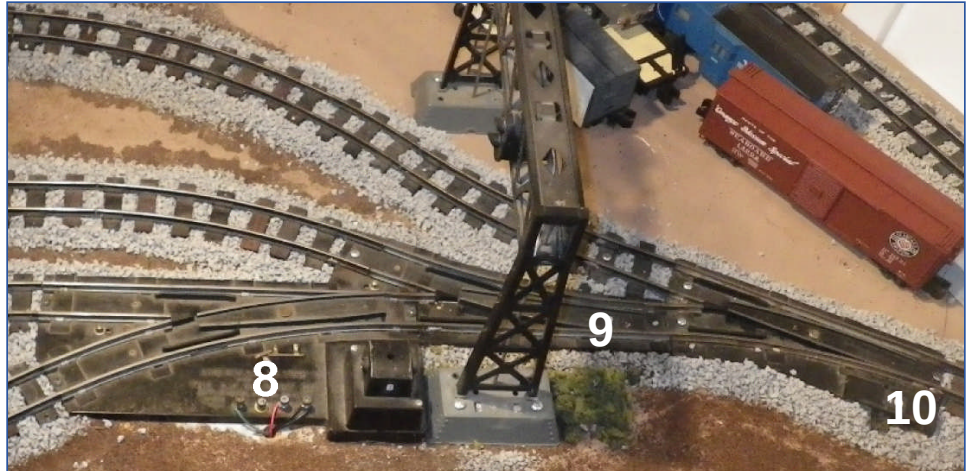
Photo on the right is a close-up of Switch numbers 9 and 10. On Switch 9, the control arm from the Tortoise switch machine comes through the frog screw hole. The Tortoise control arm for number 10 is moving the detent contact slide arm. Both methods work very well.

In the photo on the right, **switch number 11** shows some pros and cons for operational use. This switch is an older American Flyer model from which the tombstone has been removed. The electrical route switching is achieved by moving the frog across two brass **buttons**. This switch is easy to modify but one can have trouble with the quality of the track and the electrical routing system. **Switch number 13A** illustrates using a straight section of track and how compact we can make a crossover when you eliminate the switch's tombstone/tower. The switches are operated by under-layout Tortoise Switch Machines.

Switch number 15 is an unmodified standard American Flyer switch.

Switch 16 is a standard American Flyer Switch with the tombstone and motor removed from the right-hand side.

Switch 17 has a Tortoise Switch Machine motor under-the-layout and is modified to a 2-1/2" offset spacing.





Switch #18, above, illustrates that the straight section was cut short and the Flyer curve was started about 2 inches sooner. The offset remained standard, but the switch is operated by a Tortoise switch machine. This image illustrates how, with a little imagination and a cut-off wheel, one can install a compact switch with reliable and flawless operation.



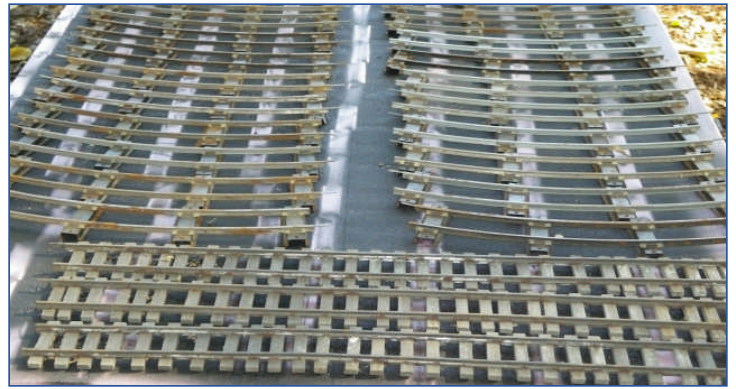
Switch #21, above, illustrates a standard American Flyer switch with the straight section shortened. The mainline is to the curve. The straight side leads to a siding. We wanted the siding to be parallel and as close as possible to the main line. This simple modification made the track work possible.

As you look at the photos of the AF switches being cut and modified, the only limiting factor to consider is the length of the movable frog. Once you have set yourself *free*, you can cut the straight *exit* track section anywhere after the frog and anywhere before the entrance to the curve, the possibilities are unlimited. The same goes for the *exit* point of the curve section of track. As for the switch base, there is no reason that you cannot custom cut the base to fit your operational needs.

As a practical matter, we tend to cut and modify manual AF switches before cutting up a perfectly good operating automatic #720 switch. Before cutting up a good #720 switch, we would sell it at market price and then use the proceeds to purchase many more of the less desirable manual AF switches. We have found that the manual switches can be purchased for next to nothing and that they tend to be damaged from years of abuse. The *damaged* AF switch is the perfect candidate for all of our switch modifications.

How Not to Clean the Dirtiest, Ugliest, Rustiest, *Paintiest* American Flyer track?

As you begin to look at the AF track and switch system to solve your hi-rail needs, you will begin to look at the possibilities of reusing the old and aged AF track. Because we have adopted a restoration process that is successful on any AF track, we have begun to look and seek the dirtiest, ugliest, rustiest, *paintiest* AF track around. When you are willing to take the worst of the worst, you obtain track at the lowest possible cost. In some cases, the lowest possible price is FREE.

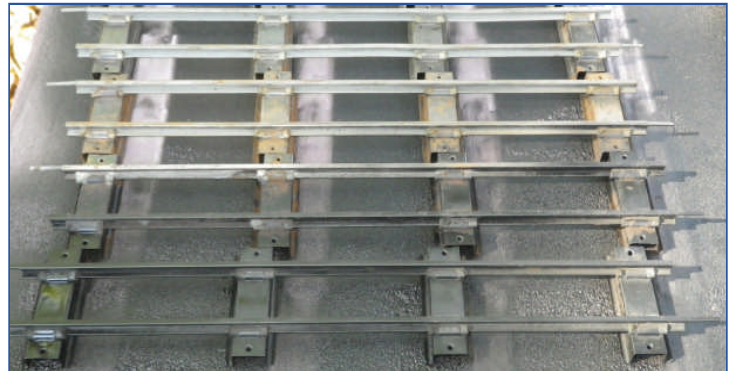


The trick to making the “xxx-est” track beautiful and functional is as follows:

Step 1: On a piece of paper or cardboard box, as pictured above, layout each piece of track to be spray painted. One can take the *dirtiest, ugliest, rustiest, paintiest* AF track and change it from *before* restoration to *after* clean-up restoration.

Step 2: We have purchased the least expensive flat black spray cans of paint from Home Depot for 99¢ per can. If you prefer a flat rust color on your rails, then the brown primer color would look very nice. The flat black color matches up nicely with the AF rubber road bed or wood ties with rubber ballast. In either style, the track looks great and performs superbly.

Step 3: We suggest that you make four passes for each piece of track. This will paint everything a uniform flat black. Your paint will cover up all the dirt, ugly, rust and *green* paint from scenery that has spilled over onto the track ties. In the photo below you can see the before and after look of the AF track. After the spray paint has dried, a quick pass on a circular wire brush and you will forever have a reliable train operating Flyer track. All track shown in the article started as *throw-away* track. One can say that one is being *green* by restoring otherwise unwanted American Flyer Track.



Step 4: Once the paint has dried, the rail head needs to be cleaned. Perform this task by using the wire 6” wheel on a bench grinder. Take each piece of track and make two passes on the wire wheel: one pass for each rail. In time, you will become proficient in this process. If you have some heavy rust, a second pass on the wire wheel does the task in short order. When completed, the track looks great and will perform as if it was brand new. The uniform flat black paint gives the track a realistic look and all the *ugly* has disappeared.

Step 5: The final step is to inspect each piece of track for its condition. If any track is twisted or missing metal ties, *harvest* the track pins toss out the track pieces or set them aside for future use as custom cut shortened pieces of track.

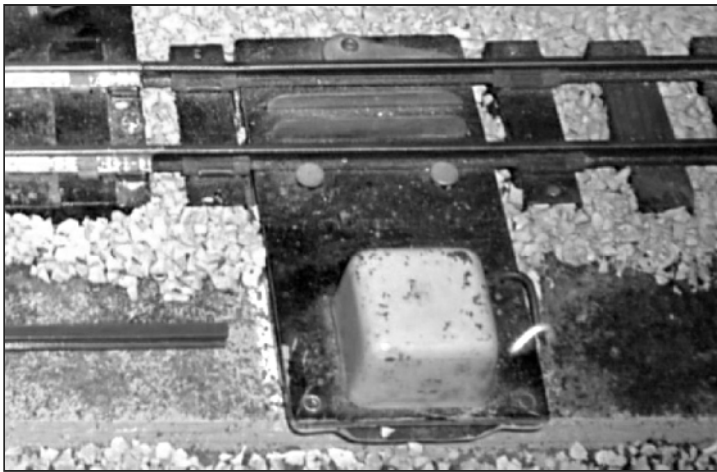
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American Flyer Switch Modification

Flipping the AF Uncoupler under the Layout for Yard Control

When standard American Flyer switches are used, the centerline distance is 5-1/8 inches. With a 5-1/8 inch centerline, the standard AF uncoupler will fit between the tracks. In order to fit more tracks in our freight yard in the same amount of space, we modified our AF switches to make the track centerline 2-1/2 inches. This modification increased our yard from six to eleven track ladders. The success in adding tracks to our yard created another problem. The new problem was "How are we going to un-couple our box cars in the freight yard?"

Our first plan was to build an L-shaped tool that would allow us to reach between the box cars and uncouple them. This worked; however, the system was manual. Being control freaks, we decided to modify an AF uncoupler to be used with our new freight yard. We wanted to have a remote controlled automated operating uncoupler system.



The AF uncoupler is a very simple device. (above) It works on two principles. One is the electromagnetic coil and the other is that of a seesaw. When the coil is energized, the metal seesaw is pulled down on one end and the uncoupler bar is lifted up on the other end. As we know, when the bar is lifted up, the knuckle coupler on the freight car is opened.

To modify the uncoupler, the coil needs to be removed and turned upside-down. This allows the uncoupler to fit between the reduced tracks centerlines. In order to fit the modified uncoupler between the tracks, we will need to cut a hole in the table. We will describe the hole pattern later in the text.

How to Modify the American Flyer 706 Remote Uncoupler

For this project, all dimensions are measured from the side of the uncoupler with the track clamp.

Step 1: Drill out the four rivets that hold the uncoupler together.

Step 2: Separate all the parts.

Step 3: With the coil to the right and the track clamp to the left, measure 2-3/8" from the clamp side and cut the top piece at this mark. See figure 1.

Step 4: With the coil to the right and the clamp to the left, measure 2-11/16" from the clamp side and cut the bottom piece at this mark. See figure 1, above right. Refer to the piece that you cut as the *coil piece*.

Step 5: From the clamp side of the bottom piece, measure 2-1/4" along both long sides and make a mark 1/8" from each side. At this mark, drill a 1/8" hole. See Figure 1, right.

Step 6: Use a hammer to flatten the stamped metal corners on the coil piece.

Step 7: Use tin snips to cut an opening on an angle in the front of the coil piece. This allows the metal seesaw to rest in front of the upside-down coil. Refer to figure 2, below right.

Step 8: With pop rivets, re-attach the top and bottom pieces of the modified uncoupler from the clamp side of the uncoupler with the uncoupler bar in place using the original holes.

Step 9: Line up the holes in the coil piece with the two new holes which you drilled in step 5 and drill a 1/8 inch hole through the top, bottom, and coil pieces.

Step 10: Invert the seesaw and place under the uncoupler bar.

Step 11: Leave a 3/16 inch spacer between the top and bottom piece and the upside-down coil and pop rivet all the pieces together using the *new* 1/8-inch holes that you made in step 9.

Step 12: The modified American Flyer uncoupler is complete.

Installing the modified American Flyer Uncoupler?

Step 1: To install the modified uncoupler on your layout, cut a square hole for the upside-down coil to fit into. Measure from the track centerline on your layout 1-1/4" and 2-3/8" and make a 1-1/8" square hole between these two marks. Refer to figure 3 below for the final view.

Step 2: Sometimes you will have to slide the metal AF ties in order to get the new uncoupler to fit under the adjacent track.

Step 3: Run the wires under the layout to your control panel.

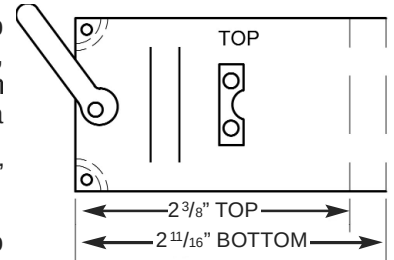


Figure 1

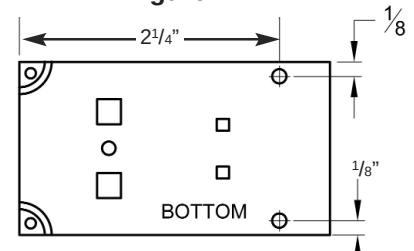


Figure 2

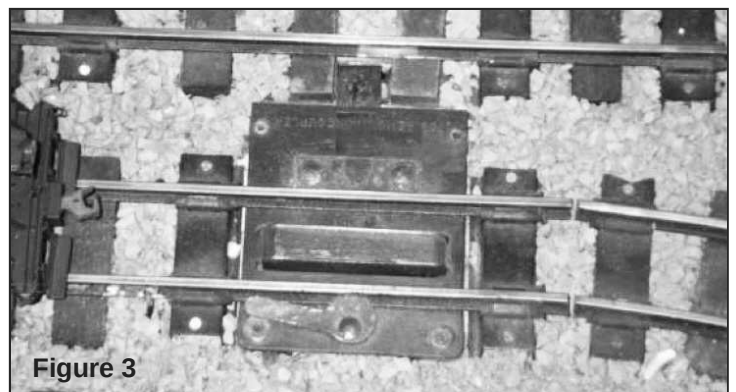


Figure 3

Optional Modification

With some of the new American Models boxcars, the uncoupler shoes do not operate well with the AF uncoupler. The normal Flyer uncoupler has two metal strike plates that vibrate when activated. There is a gap between the strike plates that is wider than the *uncoupler shoe* on the SHS and AM couplers. This can be corrected by inserting a small wood strip in between the uncoupler bar. The wood insert fills the gap and the uncoupler works for all S gauge couplers including link. Paint the wood strip black or dark brown and you will have a good looking uncoupler that works. See picture below.



In Summary

After you have mastered the above American Flyer switch modifications and flipping the AF remote controlled uncoupler, you will be able to dream your dreams of a great and wonderful railroading empire. After one makes the modifications to the AF switch, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished from a track and switch design layout point-of-view.

So, get out your Dremel cut off wheel and have a go at it.

Your railroading empire dream awaits you. 🚂

Editor's note: This information was originally presented as a clinic at the 2017 NASG National Convention. It has been edited slightly to better fit the Dispatch format. It can also be viewed in its original form on the Baltimore American Flyer Club web site: <http://www.baltimoreamericanflyerclub.org>

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End of the Line

Grandt Line Closing . . .

After 60 plus years in the hobby industry, the Grandts are calling it quits.

Thank you to all of you for your friendship and patronage over the years...we will certainly miss visiting with you and hearing about your amazing projects!

We hope to shut the doors in June . . . but will accept new orders through May 1, 2018. After that, we will sell only stock on hand. So....if you need some of our "stuff", be sure to give Liz a call sooner, rather than later.

We plan to attend the shows listed on our calendar, in one capacity or another . . . so we may see you there.

Again, thanks for being such loyal customers and friends. It has been a good run.

Sincerely, Dave, Liz, Phyllis, Peter, Mary and Jessie. 🚂

George Richard "Dick" Cataldi, 71, passed away Thursday, February 15, 2018 at his home in Christiansburg, Virginia. Dick is survived by his son, Peter Cataldi; daughter, Galina (Ryan) Barefoot; sister, Martha Northern; nephews, Eric (Missy) and Derek Hagan; and ex-wife, Olga Cataldi. Dick had a fulfilling lifelong career with the Association of American Railroads. He was a proud Virginia Tech Hokie, avid hiker, passionate basketball coach, devoted model railroader and dedicated family man.



In 1976 Dick and a small circle of friends including Bill Oertly, Ed Schumacher, Jack McGarry, Rollie Mercier and Wally Collins, got together and did the ground work to reorganize and incorporate NASG. Their efforts put in place the organization that exists today. Wally Collins handled the legal work and Jack McGarry put the Constitution and By-Laws together. for the group's review. The incorporated organization started with \$3 annual dues and a membership under 250. 🚂

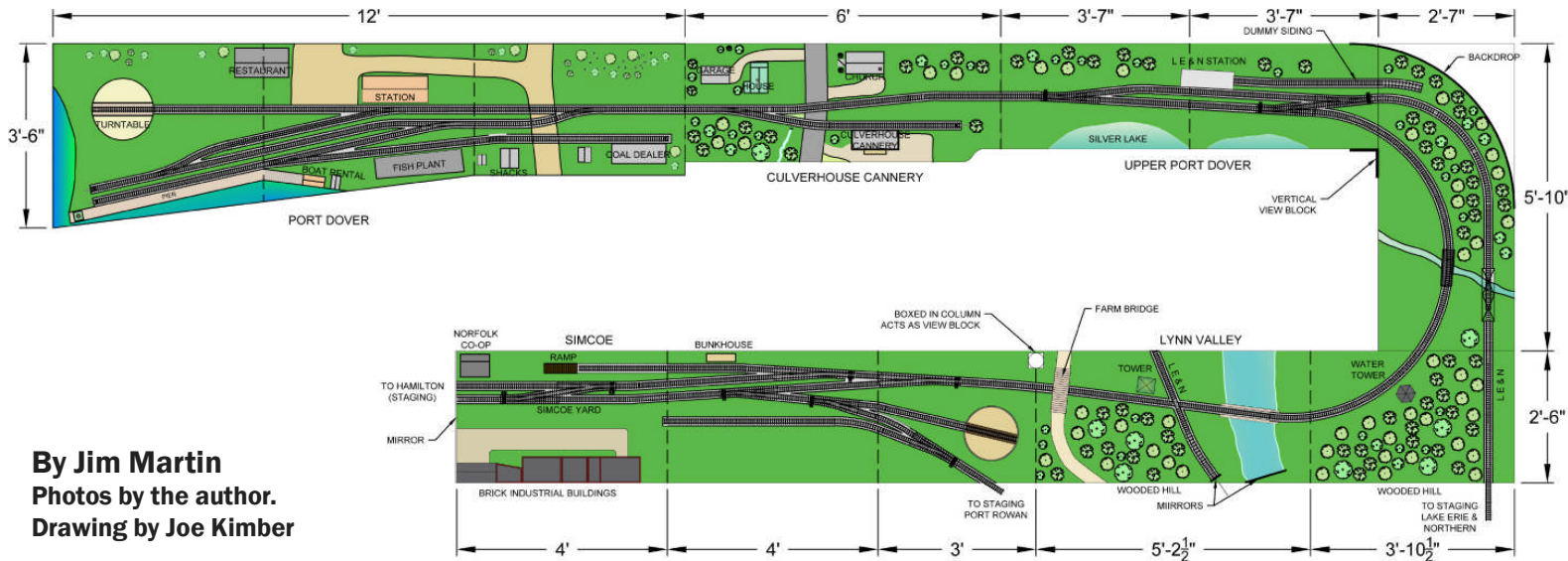
The above was compiled from information provided by Jim Kindraka and Bill Oertly. To read the complete story of Dick Cataldi go to the online pages. Instructions on page 31.

Nicholas R. Segalla, 76, of Rockford, Illinois, passed away on December 4, 2017. Nick was born on July 30, 1941 in Rockford, the son of Nicholas and Antoinette Segalla. He was a 1959 graduate of St. Thomas High School and studied at St. Ambrose College. Nick was a founding member of **Stateline S-Gaugers** in January 1981.



In 1946, like most of us, Nick received his first train set as a Christmas gift. It was a bright new American Flyer Judson with a string freight cars and an oval track under the tree. When he became a teenager in the 1950s, he lost interest, and the trains were packed away. In 1975 his interest in trains was rekindled and after unpacking his old train set and acquiring more at garage sales and flea markets, he built an 8 x 19 foot layout in his basement. 🚂

Jim Martin's Port Dover Branch



By Jim Martin

Photos by the author.

Drawing by Joe Kimber

Finally, a Track Plan:

Thanks to my friend and Dispatch illustrator Joe Kimber, I finally have a track plan depicting my Port Dover Branch layout. I've never been good at drafting, so all the track bits required to finish the layout were built and located ahead of any formal drawing. However I now have a rendering that I'm really pleased with, and one that will lend clarity to any future articles about my home layout.

As you can see it's a simple point-to-point thing representing the CN line between the southern Ontario city of Simcoe, and Port Dover on Lake Erie. There is also short bit of track, including a dummy diamond, for the Lake Erie & Northern electric line that also ran between the two centers. I'll write more about the layout in the future, but right now I'd like to describe how I have been building the scenery around the CN/LE&N diamond that was just south of Simcoe.

Creating a Scene: Part One

While beavering away in the basement it occurred to me that the way I was building my scenery is quite different from how many model railroaders would choose to do things.

Whether they build on a plywood table or open grid construction, most modelers lay the track first, and then follow up with the scenic formwork, usually lattice covered with towels dipped in plaster. However, I decided to rough out my riverbed and hillsides ahead of any trackwork. Doing it this way keeps the track free from any damage or mess. Speaking of mess, I've never liked working with plaster, so I didn't use any on the layout. All my scenery shapes are from pink Styrofoam board.

My layout sections are simple open-grid topped with thin mahogany plywood, to which I glue two-inch thick foam board for my layout base. I used two layers of one-inch foam in this particular area to simplify carving out the river section and trestle abutments. I glue the plywood to the framework with panel adhesive and then use foam-friendly, water-based contact cement to glue the foam to the plywood. The same adhesive attaches my cork roadbed to the foam. When the track finally goes down, it too will be secured to the roadbed with contact adhesive. Almost my whole layout is glued together using various adhesives to their best advantage. There are few mechanical fasteners anywhere.



Southbound out of Simcoe as we imagine future running. No rails or ground cover yet but it's starting to look like something.

A railfan's view. Number 88 is an S Scale Loco and Supply Mogul kit constructed by Simon Parent. The Plasticville tower was described in the October 2014 Dispatch.





An overall view of the unfinished scene with the farm bridge, tower and Lynn River trestle. The gap between the backdrop and riverbed will be hidden by a mirror which will visually extend the 3-D river.

Like painting a landscape, I think of layout building as something that moves from the back (backdrop) to the front (aisle). So, although the small hillside against the aisle will also be semi-finished before the track goes down, it and the farm bridge will not be glued down to the layout base until after I lay the track. Again, it all comes down to safe work access.

The rough hill forms are small bits of scrap foam stacked side-by-side on edge. I glue the bits together with 3M Super 77 spray glue. I find this gives a stronger bond than other similar brands. Nevertheless, handling a low, wide hillside made of a couple of dozen sections is asking a lot, even from this product. To strengthen the hillside, I cut some Tank Board as a base for the laminations and attach it with Super 77. Tank Board is a thick cardboard used in the building trade to protect counter tops and floor surfaces in construction areas. It's an inexpensive product with a lot of uses for hobbyists.

I use a couple of tools to shape the foam.



The author's scenery forming tool kit: 60 or 80 grit sanding disc, professional foam cutter, Super 77 spray glue, cordless drill with wire wheel brush, water soluble wood filler.

One is a hot knife specifically for the building trade. It also comes with an optional flat-plate wire attachment, pictured here, which is very useful for cutting out specific shapes such as the river banks and the farm road. The "wire" is actually a malleable, flat, knife blade and can be bent to a variety of useful shapes . . . cutting sub-roadbed and ditches for example.

The second tool is much less elegant . . . a wire wheel chucked in an electric drill. Right now you have visions of foam chunks flying everywhere, but a drill with good low speed control will simply leave the bits on top of the work. Nevertheless you will want to vacuum frequently. I got this idea from Oliver and David Clubine.

I finish up by hand sanding. I like to use a 60 to 80 grit orbital sanding disc. Because it is circular, there are no corners to hang up on edges. Any remaining large gouges or fillets can be smoothed out with wood filler. The brand I use cleans up with water. I wear a surgical glove and apply what I need with my fingers. Because the hillsides are not yet glued to the layout, much of the shaping work can be done outside the layout room if one so wishes. That said, most of the sanding and shaping debris stays in the immediate area. Did I already mention to keep the vacuum handy?



Craft paint makes future scenery easier to imagine. The pink hillside near the aisle still has to be shaped and painted.

Finally, I don't like looking at pink Styrofoam. It may take months or even years to finish this area, so I apply a temporary coating of acrylic craft paint . . . greenish black for water, and a tan color for the land forms. I then top-finish the tan with an artist's sponge, stippling on some olive green, highlighted with leaf green. Such paintwork is fast and cheap. It makes the unfinished work much easier on the eyes while blending with the finished sections of the layout. It's also a visual incentive to complete the scene.

Of course it's also fun to mock up scenes as one proceeds, planting some structures and posing some rolling stock. I hope I've left you with a few ideas. Further instalments will follow as my mood permits and time allows. 🚂

News From the North

By Jim Martin, Ontario, Canada

William Flatt: It's always sad to see the end of a memorable layout, but William has made the decision to downsize his hobby activities, and as part of that decision he is ridding himself of his fine S scale interurban layout (Dispatch, January 2015). As you may recall, William built his layout so it could be easily dismantled and moved. So if you would like a turnkey entry into S interurban modeling, get in touch with William at wflatt@bserv.com. It would be a shame to see this in the dumpster. William is also selling much of his fine rolling stock.

William has also decided to cease producing his excellent line of interurban detail castings. That business is up for sale and last that I heard there was an interested party south of the border. We may even know who by the time you read this.

Till next time, Cheers, Eh?

Calendar of Events

This page is for the listing of model railroad events, with emphasis given to S-gauge or S-scale. If you know of an upcoming event related to S-scale model railroading, or model railroading in general, please e-mail the information to dispatch@nasg.org as soon as possible so that we are able to print it in a timely manner.

May 5, 2018 — Parma, Ohio

SPRING TRAIN SHOW presented by the **Lake Erie Chapter** of the **TCA** at the UAW Hall, 5615 Chevrolet Blvd. Watch trains run on operating layouts. Trains to buy, sell or trade. Parts, repair manuals, price guides, books, model building supplies, kits and more. All Gauges Z to Large Scale with over 150 tables. Adm: \$6 each, under 12 free. FREE Parking. Open to the Public 10 am to 3 pm.

May 5 and 6, 2018 — Rickreal, Oregon

MODEL TRAIN SWAP MEET AND SHOW presented by the **Polk Station Operating DCC Model Railroad Club** at the Rickreal Grange Hall, 280 Main Street (Hwy 99W). 9 am to 3 pm. Admission \$5, under 12 free.

May 5 and 6, 2018 — Austin, Texas (Area)

TRAIN SHOW at the Williamson County Expo Center, 5350 Bill Pickett Trail, Taylor, TX. Saturday 10-5 and Sunday 10-4. Admission \$7 (12 and under free w/ adult). Clinics and self-guided layout tour. www.austinrailway.org/trainshow.html.

May 6, 2018 — Wheaton, Illinois

CHICAGOLAND ASSOCIATION OF S GAUGERS will have their layout set up at the **Great Midwest Train Show** at the Dupage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Road.

May 6, 2018 — Fishersville, Virginia

Atlantic Coast S Gaugers, CAROLINAS DIVISION will have their layout set up and running at the 32nd Annual **Shenandoah Valley Model Train and Railroading Show** at the Augusta Expo, 277 Expo Road. 10 am to 4 pm. This show is sponsored by the **Augusta County Railroad Museum and Model Railroad Club**. Food will be available. Test tracks will be available for all scales, N to G. Area railroad clubs will display their layouts. Web site www.acmrrc.org

May 11 and 12, 2017 — Dayton, Ohio

2018 SPRING S SPREE hosted by the **MIAMI VALLEY S GAUGERS** at the Crossroads Expo Center, 6550 Poe Ave. S dealers at over 100 tables. Layouts from regional clubs and individuals. Web site www.sspree.info/

May 12, 2018 — Newport News, Virginia

Atlantic Coast S Gaugers, TIDEWATER DIVISION will have their layout set up at the **National Train Day Show** at the Denbigh Community Center, 15198 Warwick Boulevard, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

May 24 through 26, 2018 — Santa Clara, California

O Scale West — S SCALE WEST — Narrow Gauge West at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 5101 Great America Parkway. **Bay Area S Scalers** will be operating their new and evolving modular layout. S Dinner. Model and New Diorama Contests. 2018 will be the twenty eighth consecutive annual O Scale West. It will also be the **thirteenth consecutive S West meet**, and the first annual Narrow Gauge West. The O, S and Narrow Gauge activity is fully integrated into one large event with the name of O Scale West. The show includes vendors, clinics, contests, operating display layouts, individual vendor tables, and self-drive layout tours. Web site www.oscalewest.com

May 26, 2018 — Sacramento, California

The **TOY TRAIN COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION NOR-CAL DIVISION** will hold their annual **Sac Sierra Toy Train Show and Swap Meet** at the Scottish Rite Center, 6151 H Street. 10 am to 3 pm. Admission \$5, under 12 free.

May 30 through June 2, 2018 — Portland, Oregon

STUMPTOWN EXPRESS the **NMRA Pacific Northwest Regional Convention** at the Red Lion Jantzen Beach Hotel. Information at <http://www.pnr2018.org> and www.facebook.com/StumptownExpress

June 1 and 2, 2018 — Johnson City, Tennessee

3rd annual **SCALE MODEL TRAIN SHOW and SALE** sponsored by **The Mountain Empire Railroaders Club** in association with the George L. Carter Model Railroad Museum at East Tennessee State University Memorial Center. Admission is \$6 per day; children under 12 are free. Plenty of free indoor parking. The **Piedmont S Gaugers** will have their modular layout operating, and dealers will have S Gauge trains for sale. Z through G scales will also be available. Show times are from noon to 6 p.m. June 1, and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on June 2. For more information visit www.memrr.org or call show coordinator Roger Teinert at 423-791-4937. Vendor tables are available in the show's 64,000 square foot display area.

June 2, 2018 — Manassas, Virginia

WASHINGTON & OLD DOMINION S GAUGERS will display and run their layout at the **MANASSAS HERITAGE RAILWAY FESTIVAL** 23 Harris Pavillion, 9201 Center Street.

June 3, 2018 — Wheaton, Illinois

CHICAGOLAND ASSOCIATION OF S GAUGERS will have their layout set up at the **Great Midwest Train Show** at the Dupage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Road.

June 8 through 10, 2018 — Timonium, Maryland

The **BALTIMORE AMERICAN FLYER CLUB** will operate their layout at the **Great Scale Model Train and Railroad Collectors Show** at the Maryland State Fairgrounds, 2200 York Road. Info at www.gsmts.com/index.htm



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 If interested, contact Tom Henderson at
sidetracks_1@msn.com

June 9, 2018 — Marlbank, Ontario, Canada

S SCALE OPEN HOUSE Paul Raham will open his large S scale layout to visitors. Festivities begin at 10 am with viewing, operations and food at 652 Deshane Road. RSVP 613-478-5808

June 23 and 24 — Dayton, Ohio

The **MIAMI VALLEY S GAUGERS** will set up and operate their club layout at the **2018 RAIL FESTIVAL** at Carillion Park, 100 Carillion Road. Saturday 9 am to 5 pm, Saturday 11 am to 4 pm. Admission \$8 adult, \$7 senior, \$5 children, Under 3 Free. Web site: www.railfest.com

July 15 and 16, 2018 — Emmett, Idaho

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN HI-RAILERS will have their **Lookout Junction** layout set up and running at the **Emmett Cherry Festival**. Web site: www.rockymountainhiraillers.com

July 24 through 29, 2018 — Boxboro, Massachusetts

The **New England NASG S-PRESS Convention** held at the Boxboro Regency Hotel & Conference Center. Just 40 miles from Boston off Rt. 495. Featuring five layouts, model contest, three tours with 8 S-gauge layouts. Clinics. Sponsored by the **Bristol S-gaugers**. For more information go to www.bsgr.us

August 5 through 12, 2018 — Kansas City, Missouri

NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION Online registration is now open at www.kc2018.org

August 12, 2018 — Wheaton, Illinois

CHICAGOLAND ASSOCIATION OF S GAUGERS will have their layout set up at the **Great Western Train Show** at the Dupage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Road.

August 25, 2018 — Atlanta, Georgia

Atlantic Coast S Gaugers, GEORGIA DIVISION will have their layout set up at the 55th **Atlanta Model Train and Railroadiana Show** in the Infinite Energy Center, 6400 Sugarloaf Parkway, Duluth, Georgia.

September 9, 2018 — Wheaton, Illinois

CHICAGOLAND ASSOCIATION OF S GAUGERS will have their layout set up at the **Great Midwest Train Show** at the Dupage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Road.

September 20 through 22, 2018 — Indianapolis, Indiana

The **Indianapolis O Scale Show** and **S SCALE MIDWEST SHOW** at the Wyndham Indianapolis West, 2544 Executive Drive. The Indianapolis O Scale Show has been in place for over 48 years. For the past 15 years, it has been chaired by James Canter, and he has decided it is time to "pass the torch." The Model Railroad Resource LLC, publishers of The O Scale Resource and The S Scale Resource, have been selected to carry on the tradition for the 50th year, and include S Scale. Web site: <http://www.indyoscaleshows.com>

September 30, 2018 — Sacramento, California

The **RIVER CITY TOY TRAIN SHOW** sponsored by the Sacramento Valley Division of the **TOY TRAIN OPERATING SOCIETY**. 10 am to 3 pm, at the Scottish Rite Masonic Center, 6151 H Street. Toy trains, accessories, parts and supplies. Buy, sell or trade. Operating layouts and demonstrations. Special drawing for kids with paid admission. Refreshments available. Admission \$5, kids under 12 free with adult. Free Parking. Web site: www.ttos-sv.org/Events.htm

October 13, 2018 — Elk Grove, California

FLYER FEST WEST 2018 sponsored by the Sacramento Valley American Flyer Club at the SES Hall, 10428 East Stockton Blvd. For more information e-mail ffw2018@sonnet.com

October 14, 2018 — Wheaton, Illinois

CHICAGOLAND ASSOCIATION OF S GAUGERS will have their layout set up at the **Great Midwest Train Show** at the Dupage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Road.

October 27, 2018 — Texas City, Texas

The **HOUSTON S GAUGERS** will have their layout set up at the **TOUCH-A-TRUCK AND MODEL TRAIN SHOW**. There will be many other layouts, food vendors, all in a small-town one-day downtown setting. 10 am to 4 pm, 409 Sixth Street North.

October 27 and 28, 2018 — Timonium, Maryland

The **BALTIMORE AMERICAN FLYER CLUB** will will operate their layout at the **Great Scale Model Train and Railroad Collectors Show** at the Maryland State Fairgrounds, 2200 York Road. Info at www.gsmts.com/index.htm

November 2 and 3, 2018 — Orland Park, Illinois

The **43rd ANNUAL FALL S FEST** You are invited to join the **CHICAGOLAND ASSOCIATION OF S GAUGERS** at Quality Inn and Suites, 8800 W. 159th St. This will be an exciting weekend of S gauge, 1:64 scale model railroading! The Fest encompasses ALL of S: Scale for "Narrow-Minded" and Standard gauge devotees, Hi-Rail, Tinsplate and American Flyer. Clinics, on-site layouts, a model contest, manufacturer displays, home layout tours, train races, a family program, movies, a hospitality room; all this and more will show the tremendous diversity that S has to offer to all of model railroading and toy trains. From collectors to rivet counters, we have something for everyone to enjoy! More info at: www.trainweb.org/casg/sfest.html

November 10 and 11, 2018 — West Allis, Wisconsin

TRAINFEST 2018 The **Badgerland S Gaugers** and the **Chicagoland Association of S Gaugers** will run their combined layout at this event, at the **Wisconsin Expo Center** on the Wisconsin State Fair Park, 8200 West Greenfield Avenue. Four football fields of layouts and vendors for your enjoyment. Hours 9 am to 5 pm. Info at: www.trainfest.com

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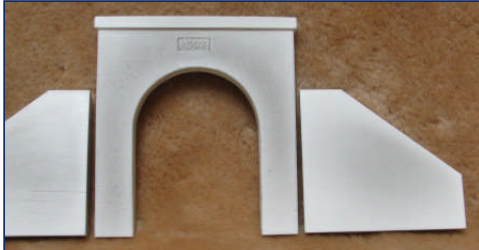
S Products



Many of you have seen **Larry Blank's** layout, either in person or in the S-Scale Resource or the December 2017 Model Railroader. Larry made some beautiful bridge piers, bridge abutments, bridge shoes and tunnel portals. He wants to make these available to other S-scalers, so he asked me to add them to the **Pre-Size product line**.

Orders of \$25 or more are free shipping. Visit the web site for more pictures.

www.pre-size.com/products/Sscale.php



Tunnel Portal with retaining walls
#PS510 \$29.70



Bridge Pier
#PS155 \$32.20



Bridge Shoes
#PS154 \$10.20 for 4



Bridge Abutment with retaining walls
#PS149 \$23.40

Tired Iron: 1965 Pickups

By Ted Larson

If your model railroading era includes 1965, and pickup trucks interest you, you are in a sweet spot; diecast models of full size pickups from four major 1965 truck manufacturers are readily available. None of these castings are new, but all are recently available in new colors. Models are available in both narrow *Stepside* and wide *Fleetside* box, with both 6½' short box and 8' long box or bed. From left to right in the photo:

- Racing Champions Ford long box. Ford calls their wide box *Styleside* and their narrow boxes *Flareside*.
- Greenlight Dodge short stepside *Utile* box. Greenlight also makes this model in both short and long fleetside *Sweetline* box.
- Johnny Lightning International (IH) long fleetside box.
- Johnny Lightning Chevrolet short *Fleetside* box. Johnny Lightning also makes this Chevy in a short *Sportside* which is what Chevy calls a narrow box.

I find it easiest to find new models from online vendors or eBay rather than making repeat trips to local stores. Colors from the past are sometimes available on line.

All these pickups are very close to exact 1/64th scale. I find that any model from 1/62nd to 1/66th looks size appropriate with other 1/64th vehicles. The maximum width error for this size range is just over two-scale inches (.035" or about 1/32"). It is quite surprising and pleasing that the Johnny Lightning pickups are so accurate, since most JL auto models are substantially undersize.

Also note that these models are appropriate for more than just 1965, typically with only minor grille changes.



The frugal Minnesota Heartland is especially pleased with these offerings because the highway department yellow versions make it easy to acquire maintenance of way vehicles without the expense of custom painting; just buy them in factory paint, apply railroad logo, put them to work, as seen in the photo with Minnesota Heartland logos. It appears that Conrail used this same strategy!

Notice in the photo background that the frugal MHRR still has trucks from the 50's hard at work. From the left;

- Rear view of stake truck; M2 1956 Ford COE;
- Far distant rear view of M2 1958 Chev COE;
- Rear view of 1956 Greenlight Ford pickup;
- 1956 M2 Ford with utility body and cover.

All these pickups are very close to exact 1/64th scale. To see additional size information on these trucks go to the NASG web site at <http://www.nasg.org/Scale/Articles/Larson/php>

Company Store

FOR SALE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC



**NMRA Sn3
TRACK & WHEEL
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\$7⁰⁰ for members
\$14⁰⁰ non-members



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TO ORDER any of these products, download an order form at www.nasg.org/Store or write your order legibly on a piece of paper. Make checks payable to NASG Company Store and mail to:

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IMPORTANT: Be sure to include your member number, quantity desired and sizes.

PRICES include shipping to anywhere in the continental US. All shipping is by US Mail. For shipping outside the US contact the Company Store. Wisconsin residents please include appropriate sales tax and county of residence. If you have questions contact Storekeeper Roy Meissner at 262-538-4325 or e-mail to companystore@nasg.org

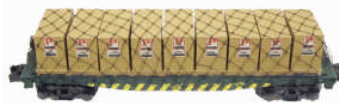
TO SHOP ONLINE: Go to <http://www.nasg.org/Store/CompanyStore.php>
Choose the items that you want to purchase and click **Add to Cart** and follow the instructions.

NASG Special Cars

Each year since 1981, the NASG contracts with an S manufacturer to produce a limited-run car or locomotive specifically geared toward the American Flyer collector or operator. This is an official NASG project, so you must be an active NASG member to purchase one of these cars. Coordinated by Dave Blum, of Pikesville Models.



2017 and 2018 American Flyer Commemorative Cars We located photographs of Gulf tank cars with two different color schemes and decided to use them as the basis for both the 2017 and 2018 commemorative cars. They are both available now. The price of these cars is **\$69 each or \$130 for two**



2016 AF Commemorative Car
CNW Flatcar loaded with pallets. Made by Lionel, road number 3516 for the 35th edition and the year 2016. **Price \$79.** Extra pallets can be had 4 for \$10, decorated or undecorated.



2015 AF Commemorative Car
BNSF waffle side boxcar, made by Lionel, road number 3415 for the 34th edition and the year 2015. Price \$69



2015 Convention Car Kansas City Southern PS2 Hopper car by MTH. Road numbers 286707 or 286815. Hi-Rail only for \$68



2006 General Electric MOW Crane Car by Lionel. Price \$70*
2007 General Electric MOW Boom Car by Lionel. Price \$52*
***SPECIAL OFFER!** The Crane Car and Boom Car for \$115

TO ORDER THESE CARS

Make payment out to NASG and mail to:

Dave Blum, 3315 Timberfield Lane, Pikesville, MD 21208

Please include the following in your correspondence:

1. Your NASG ID number from your membership card.
2. Your name and shipping address.
3. Which car or cars that you want and how many of each.
4. Your telephone number or e-mail address in case there are any questions about your order.
5. Maryland residents add 6% sales tax to your order.

All prices include shipping to addresses in the United States. Canadian orders please add \$10. To ship outside the continental US or for any other question contact Dave Blum at pikesvillemodels@yahoo.com

TO SHOP ONLINE Go to www.nasg.org/Store/AFCars.php for the AF cars or www.nasg.org/Store/ConvCars.php for Convention Cars and click on the **Add to Cart** button for the item(s) that you want to buy and follow the instructions.

Classified Ads

ANY ACTIVE MEMBER of NASG can place a non-commercial classified ad in the Dispatch for no charge. Ads must be limited to 10 lines+-. E-mail your ad copy to dispatch@nasg.org or mail to Bill Pyper, Editor, PO Box 885, Salem, OR 97308-0885. Please be sure to include your **member number**. Ads will run for three consecutive issues unless told to stop.

FOR SALE: South Wind Models Great Northern USRA RPO 2-4, 3-3 Number 30 made by Duck Yoo Corp. SWM model number 0025. This unpainted brass car is one of only ten made for SWM. Car is new in box. Sale price \$225 plus shipping. Contact Rob Berridge at roblynn@columbus.rr.com for more information or pictures.

WANTED: S-Helper Service F7 engine, Missouri Pacific, road #591 (if possible, but any will do). B-unit only, with AC/DC sound (product #00836). E-mail Tony at ilmolinaro@yahoo.com or telephone 717-887-7058. Grazie!!

WANTED: New York Central streamlined 4-6-4 Hudson, SCALE and DC. Scratches okay, I want to kitbash it into an ATSF Blue Goose. Must operate well. Contact: Norman Bos, 128 Fir Place #7397, Star Valley Ranch, Wyoming, 83127 Phone: 307-880-4925 or e-mail ncbos2@gmail.com

FOR SALE: (1) All-original AF 1957 NP Vista Dome North Coast Ltd set 20370. Original item boxes (minor box damage). PA 492 (21552)-roar, PA 490 (21556)-horn, combine 24702, coach 24705, dome 24708, observation 24712, 708 horn control. Unused. \$1850 full set-reasonable offers will be considered. (2) Small airport/airshow on your layout? 3 UNUSUAL 1:72 plane kits in original boxes-Aurora Beechcraft Super 18 twin prop commuter; USSR-made Northrop P-61 Black Widow; USSR-made early biplane (box stained one end, kit fine); \$15 each. For more info/photos/other items, email Bruce.Shore@sympatico.ca

FOR SALE: Several S-Gauge engines (D/C current), freight cars and a few cabooses as well as houses, utility structures, some bridges and trees. My father "Wally" Collins had a large S-gauge set-up known as "Midland Pacific" and I still have more items than I need. If you are interested please contact me directly at wallace10019@yahoo.com

FOR SALE: American Flyer Lionel #6-47900 Delaware & Hudson 2-coach set, new in OB \$140 +shipping. #6-47909 Delaware & Hudson Baggage-Observation set, new in OB \$140 + shipping. #4-7941-200 Legacy left hand remote switch, mint in OB \$95 +shipping. Dick Wachtman, 1220 Wood Rd. Hummelstown, PA 17036. Phone 717-497-5606 or e-mail to carolanddickwachtman@verizon.net

FOR SALE: (1) American Flyer Lionel Production #4-9400 Chessie System Caboose, Mint in Original Box, \$12 (have 10). (2) Scarce Revell HO Trains 1958-59 Catalog, Good, torn corner, \$8. (3) 1960 Lionel HO Trains Catalog, Like New, \$9. (4) 1959 Lionel Trains Catalog, 55 pages., Very Good, \$10. (5) Miller Engineering Animated Neon Signs, New York Central System, Gulf, both large size, Mint, \$35 each. All prices plus shipping. Will send photos on request. jshirey1@comcast.net or call (916) 429-2764.

WANTED: Two Lehigh Valley Models (LVM7) Continental Canning Company kits. Wanted for a kit-bashing project so kits with some missing and/or damaged parts may be acceptable provided all 26 brick wall panels and the printed clear plastic window material are present. Contact Tom at tpatterson31@wi.rr.com with a description of kit condition and desired price.

WANTED: Rex or Putt Trains 0-6-0 or 2-6-0 with slope-back or road tender and hi-rail wheels. Contact Joe Kimber at jkimber1943@comcast.net or 856-935-2288.

WANTED: Flyer compatible coupler bracket assemblies for 2 MTH FA units. Please contact Brian Beardslee, 3561 Tee St., Sherrills Ford, NC 28673. E-mail nc4brane@outlook.com or telephone 704-500-6817.

NEEDED! After 7 open-heart bypasses, I built a small (5' x 7') American Flyer pike in my Florida home. I have most of the boxcars I saw when growing up in Buffalo, but one is missing: "Buffalo Creek." I will pay up to \$75 for an AF compatible Buffalo Creek boxcar in very good to excellent condition. Contact: Joseph A. Tringali, 441 Marlin Rd., N. Palm Beach, FL 33408. e-mail JATringali@calkinsharbor.com or call (561) 906-4642

ESTATE SALE: Noted collector and repairman Phillip Peschi died last October. His model railroad equipment specializing in Lionel and American Flyer trains and memorabilia is for sale. If you are interested in seeing what is available please e-mail ppptrains@gmail.com for a list of items and prices.

The **ROCK ISLAND REPORTER** is a free e-mail newsletter. To sign-up go to <http://leepurl.com/Ut8UL> Please pass this link to anyone interested in the Rock Island.

ANY MEMBER CLUB that has special edition cars left over from conventions or fests can advertise them at no charge in The Dispatch. Send a hi-res jpeg photograph and information to dispatch@nasg.org



BURLINGTON REEFERS Stateline S-Gaugers has a number of Fall S-Fest show cars for sale for \$65 including shipping. A color view of the cars is available at www.statelinesgaugers.org. To order make checks payable to SLGS and mail to Tom Behles, 15804 O'Brien Rd., Harvard, IL 60033

2017 CONVENTION CARS AND TRAILERS



**TOFC \$70 each
Trailers \$25 each**

Shipping:
\$11 first item
\$4 each
additional
item

The **Baltimore American Flyer Club** has the following TOFC and trailers remaining from the 2017 NASG Convention. B&O #2017 in Scale only. B&O #9523 in both H-rail and Scale. Western Maryland #1889 in both Hi-rail and Scale. WM #2411 both Hi-rail and scale. Extra McCormick trailers are available. Go online to <http://baltimoreamericanflyerclub.org/wp-content/uploads/2017-CarForm5R-1.pdf> or send order by mail to David Blair, 35 Beecham Ct., Owings Mills, MD 21117.

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As of April 1, 2016, the yearly member dues are as follows:

\$18.00 One-time 6-month
Trial Membership
\$30.00 Regular
\$40.00 Family

\$50.00 Contributing
\$50.00 Non-personal
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You can now **renew your membership online**.
Go to the web site **www.nasg.org** and click on membership.
Under the heading **NASG Membership Renewal** click on renew
and pay online. Enter your name and member number and
follow the instructions. Have your credit card ready.

You can still renew your membership by sending a check or
money order by mail, payable to NASG, to:

Dick Kramer, Membership Secretary,
P. O. Box 268,
Middlebury, CT 06762-0268.

New Members

From January 1, 2018 to February 28, 2018 the following people have joined the NASG.

Ray Burns Gaithersburg, Maryland
Gary J. Carmichael Imperial, Pennsylvania
Cleon O. Cobb Newnan, Georgia
Stephen Doyle Wayzata, Minnesota
Arthur Goodell Indianapolis, Indiana
Hewitt Hurst Shelbyville, Kentucky
Chip Kessler Johnson City, Tennessee
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Lawrence A. Stroup Monaca, Pennsylvania
Mike Tricker Ashford, Middlesex, UK
Richard Trotter Saguache, Colorado
Patti Valenzky Moon Township, Pennsylvania
Stefan A. Wood Herndon, Virginia

Deceased Members

G. Richard Cataldi Christiansburg, Virginia

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Click on the **NASG** button. Click on the **Members only** menu option. Click on the **Log in** button and enter your **NASG member number** and **password**. Click on **Recent Dispatch Issues**. Use the **drop down menu** to find this issue. Note the password shown on the drop down menu. Click on **Retrieve**, then **Click here to download or view** the requested Dispatch. Enter Password. When magazine appears, scroll to page 33 .

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REMEMBERING DICK CATALDI 34
HELP SOLVE A MYSTERY Can you identify this locomotive? 35
WORLD'S GREATEST HOBBY IN HOUSTON 36

Seaboard Air Line's Baldwin S-12s



All new for Christmas and 2018 Seaboard dual or single engine train set. Prototype colors and decorations as on the real railroad. Featuring locomotive's brass handrails, Gription wheelset for superb traction, eight wheel drive, LED headlight and motor with brass flywheel. Die cast metal frame provides increased traction.

Cars are available in several different number variations i.e. ordering 3 of the same car will have 3 different numbers. Dual powered engine AC HR set with 5 cars \$629.95.. Single engine set AC HR with 5 cars \$439.95.. DC HR or Scale versions \$10 & \$20 less.

All new items never made in S scale before.



Seaboard S12 Locomotive \$199.95



4438 SAL Gondola \$42.95



6028 TOFC Flat car with Seaboard Razorback trailer \$69.95



3380 SAL Hopper \$44.95



2230 SAL Box car



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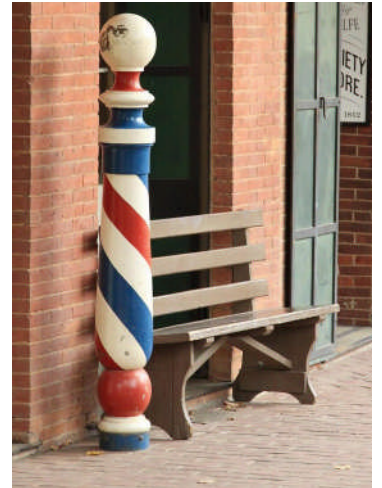
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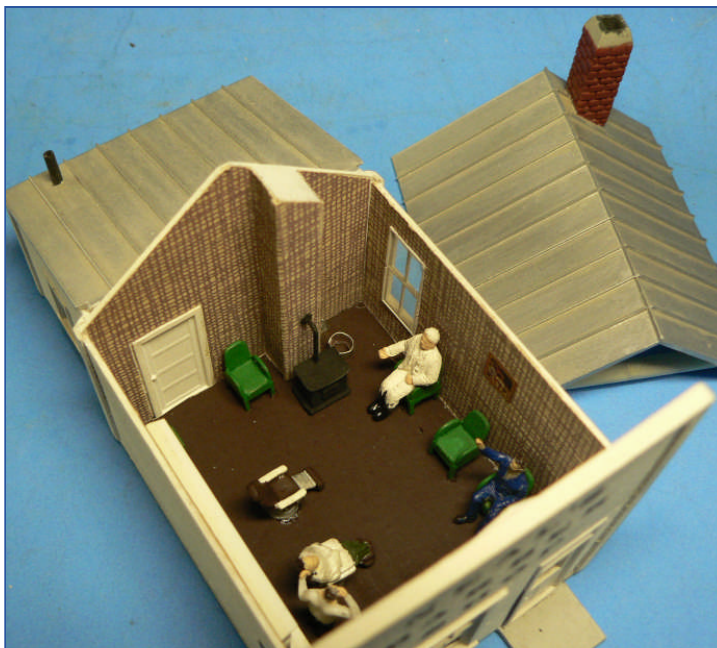
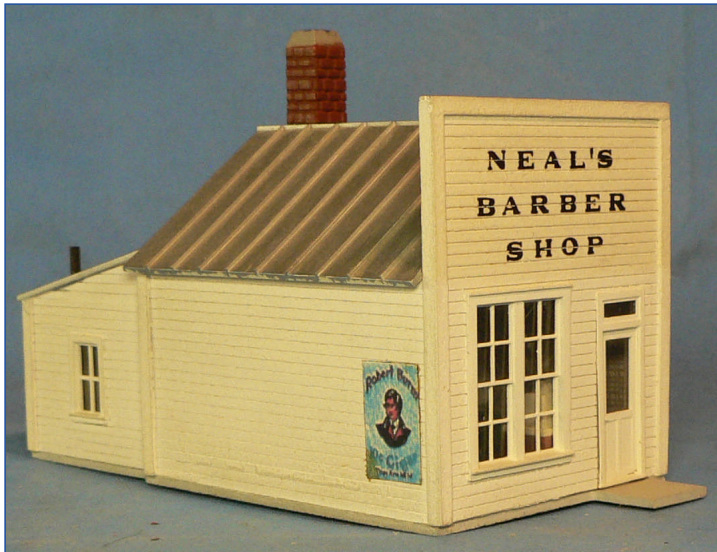
www.americanmodels.com

Build a Barber Shop



Most Barber Poles are about three-feet tall and wall mounted. Some have a lighted globe on top. Most are lighted and many have the stripes rotating.

There also a variety of stand-alone poles of varying designs and sizes.



George Richard “Dick” Cataldi

George Richard “Dick” Cataldi, 71, passed away Thursday, February 15, 2018 at his home in Christiansburg, Virginia. Dick is survived by his son, Peter Cataldi; daughter, Galina (Ryan) Barefoot; sister, Martha Northern; nephews, Eric (Missy) and Derek Hagan; and ex-wife, Olga Cataldi. Dick had a fulfilling lifelong career with the Association of American Railroads. He was a proud Virginia Tech Hokie, avid hiker, passionate basketball coach, devoted model railroader and dedicated family man.



From Bill Oertly . . .

Dick was a member of the **Potomac Valley S Gaugers** for over 50 years. Yes, the club still exists. I met him when I joined the club in 1968. He was past president of the NASG and was quite involved with the reorganization and incorporation of the organization in the mid 1970's.

He worked in the railroad industry for most of his life. He was a car repair foreman for the N&W when first out of college. Worked in the Research and Test Department of the Association of American Railroads for many years, and was the mechanical officer for Virginia Rail Express. He also worked for some consulting firms in various types of research between his railroad employment.

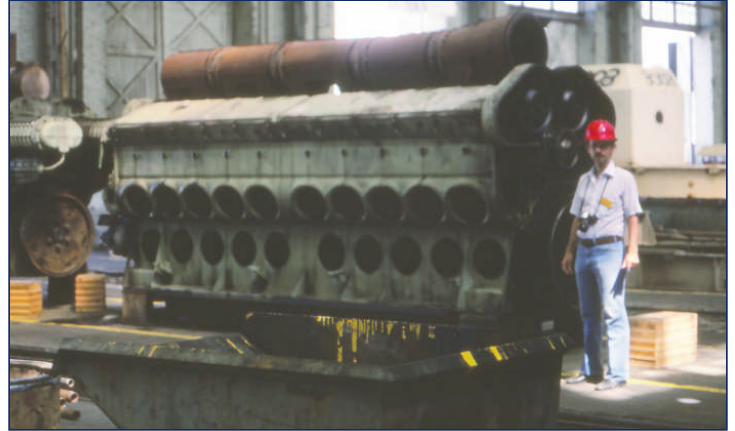
He partnered with Glenn Stephenson to produce a B&O 4-6-0 in the early 70's, the company name was Bennett Locomotive and Manufacturing. For various reasons they never completed the project.

From Jim Kindraka . . .

What follows are some personal reflections on Dick Cataldi. I think his passing should be noted in the Dispatch, to a large measure Dick founded it! I've attached the only photo I have of Dick, it is rather poor but captures him in a spot where he was very comfortable. I took the photo on the tour of the Southern Pacific Shops in Sacramento, California during the 1985 NASG Convention in that city. SP was rebuilding SD45's at the time and Dick is standing next to one of those locomotive's 20-cylinder engine blocks...

Bill Oertly recently posted to the S Scale group that George Richard “Dick” Cataldi passed away on February 15, 2018; he was 71 years old. To more recent converts to S Scale, his name probably means very little. Dick was a low key kind of guy, never seeking the limelight. Over the last two decades he pretty much faded from the scene to all but a very close group; but his passing must be noted as Dick was very much one of the founders of NASG, Inc. As much or possibly more so than some more well known names in S Scale's history.

In 1976 Dick and a small circle of friends and associates that included Bill Oertly, Ed Schumacher, Jack McGarry, Rollie Mercier and Wally Collins, got together to do all the ground work to reorganize and incorporate NASG. Their work basically put in place the organization that exists today. Wally



Collins handled the incorporation legal work in New York State and Jack McGarry put the Constitution and By-Laws together. for the group's review. The incorporated organization started with \$3 annual dues and a membership under 250.

Ed Schumacher served as the first President of NASG, Inc. and Dick was Executive VP. When Ed resigned in his first year, Dick took over as organization President and served until 1980 when he chose not to run for re-election. Dick lived in the Washington DC area and learned the value of low key, strategic administration through his long professional tenure at the Association of American Railroads (AAR). He brought that and his engineering perspective to NASG, Inc., preferring to direct development of initiatives and allow others to lead them and have the credit.

Under his leadership as NASG President, the NASG S-3 and S-4 Track and Wheel standards were developed and adopted. Dick also took the initiate to introduce the “NASG Newsletter,” which he started after the S Gauge Herald shut down in 1978. That original typed, 3-page mimeographed newsletter was later renamed “The Dispatch”. Working for the AAR was part of Dick's life-long interest in prototype railroad-ing. For a time Dick was the proud private owner of an ex-California Zephyr 6 Double Bedroom 5 Compartment Budd-built stainless steel sleeper.

To those who knew him and worked with him his wry wit, mischievous smile, quiet leadership, friendship and modeling ability will be missed. All of us in S Scale owe him a debt of gratitude for realizing that action needed to be taken and, most importantly, following through and taking the necessary action at key times in NASG's history.

Jim Kindraka
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Can you help solve this mystery?

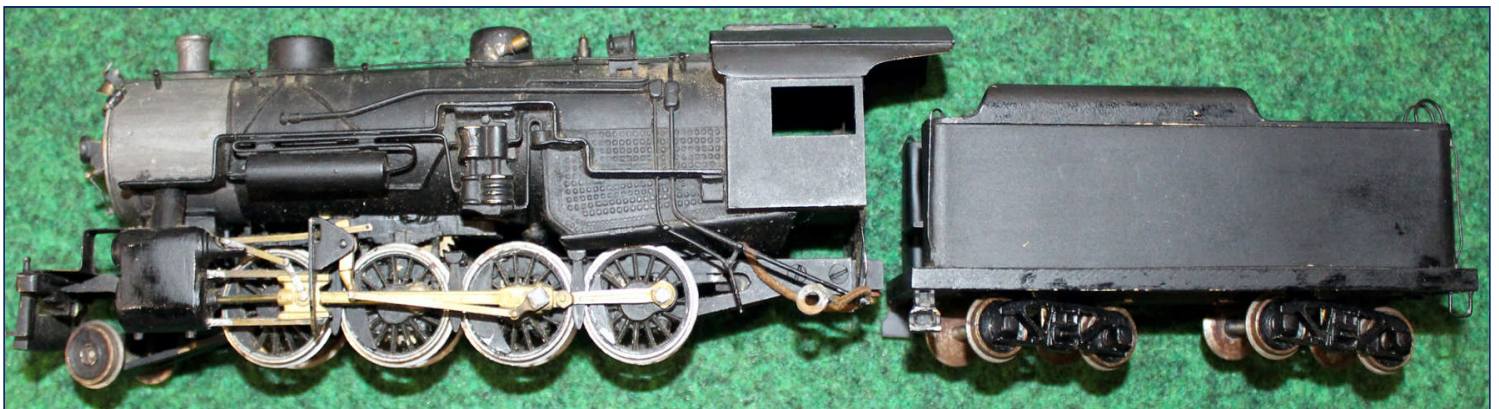
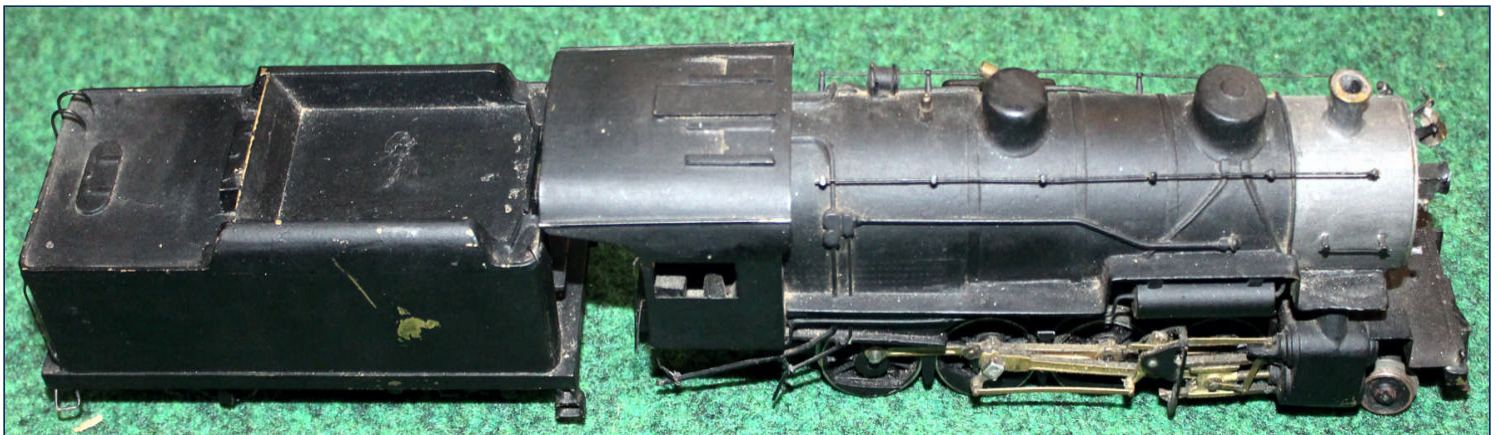
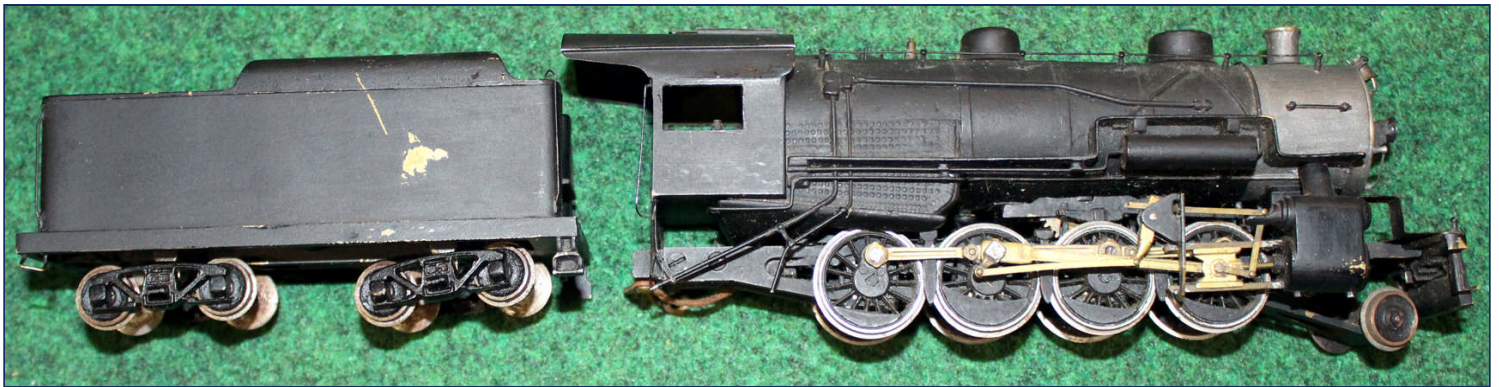
During the recent World's Greatest Hobby on Tour a gentleman came to the NASG booth and asked for some help. He has two older S scale steam locomotives at home and hoped that we might help identify them. They had belonged to a relative who has passed on.

Photos of the one locomotive that he brought to the show are presented here. This 2-8-0 appears to be all brass construction including a cast boiler. If you look closely, you can see the gear box over the number 2 axle. There are separately applied details such as piping and handrails on the locomotive.

Detail on the tender is minimal. The locomotives, as he understood it, were probably from either before World War Two or just after. There is, of course, the possibility that the locomotives were scratch built.

If any one can identify the manufacturer of the locomotive, please contact me at president@nasg.org or by telephone at 630-881-9025. Any help you can provide would be greatly appreciated. 🚂

Will Holt



World's Greatest Hobby in Houston

NASG INFORMATION BOOTH AT THE SHOW

Left: Don Hand on the left, talks with Don Hand at the NASG Booth. *Vanvliet Photo*

Right: Display at NASG booth.

Photos by Jay Mellon

Below: Michael Bushnell of the Crescent City S-gaugers left and Don Hand of the Houston S Gaugers right.



Left: MTH S display.

Right: Lionel American Flyer display.

Below: MTH display layout. The third track in is the S-scale oval, running an F3 with a few freight cars. *Photos by Peter Vanvliet*

