



The

A Publication Of, By and For The Members

DISPATCH

May/June 2025



- Phil's Builds
- Deconstructing a Layout
- Fiber Optic Marker Lights
- S Scale Coal Mine
- Winross Diecast Truck Models





The DISPATCH

May/June 2025

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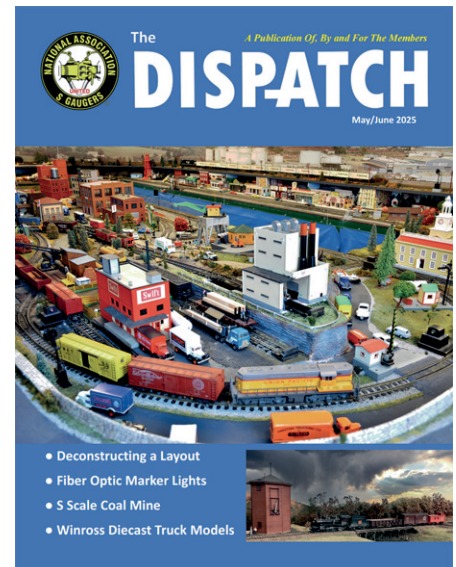
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MEMBERSHIP YEAR: The Membership Year is determined by the date that one enrolls, guaranteeing 6 issues, starting with the next issue. All applications, renewals and membership questions should be directed to NASG Membership Secretary, Dick Kramer, membership@nasg.org.

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From the YARD OFFICE

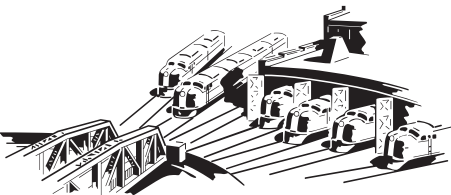
Last Reminder: Minutes of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has voted to discontinue publication of its meeting minutes in *The Dispatch* while continuing to publish them on the NASG web site. The rationale behind this decision is that space within *The Dispatch* is at a premium--32 pages--and could be put to better use by publishing articles instead of minutes. NASG members without internet access can request for printed versions of the minutes to be mailed to them by contacting the NASG Secretary.

Last Reminder: Dick Kramer Change of Address

The address for our Membership Secretary has changed as the Post Office box will be closed shortly.

Please send all mail to:
Dick Kramer
NASG Membership Secretary
12 Dogwood Court
Middlebury, CT 06762



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CHANGES

Must be reported to Dick Kramer at the addresses above and received 30 days prior to publication of *The Dispatch*. No replacement issues sent after that.

DEADLINES

For time sensitive articles and advertising are:
December 15th for the January/February issue
February 15th for the March/April issue,
April 15th for the May/June issue,
June 15th for the July/August issue,
August 15th for the September/October issue,
October 15th for the November/December issue.



Welcome to the NASG Facebook Group. This Group is being designed with the goal of making S Scalers aware of the NASG and the benefits it offers its members. You do not need to be a NASG member to join this group, but we hope once you see some of the benefits of the NASG, you will want to become a member.

Simply go to Facebook and search for NASG.

The DISPATCH

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and For The members*

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POP VALVE



Advertiser News

Flowery Branch, GA, March 12, 2025 - After decades of determination, Trainz.com has become the leading online model train retailer. Decidedly, to strengthen its management structure to support their ongoing growth, Scott Griggs, Founder and CEO, stated, "With the advent of moving into our new, expanded facility in Flowery Branch, now is the time to focus more on strategic growth and acquisitions to take Trainz.com to the next level." Ken Cummings, CTO, also added, "Now that we have finished significant technical projects by replacing our legacy ERP and WMS systems, our IT team will have significant resources to innovate new service offerings for our customers."

Ken Cummings, CTO – Ken has been an integral part of Trainz since 2004, initially serving as a programmer, database administrator and technical architect. Today, he leads onshore and offshore teams, executing the vision for Trainz's technology roadmap, marketing strategies, and marketplace initiatives. Ken's expertise has been instrumental in shaping the company's evolution, developing the specialized software solutions necessary to scale the business. As Trainz continues to advance, Ken and his team play a pivotal role in positioning the company at the forefront of technological innovation.

Cindy Horn, COO – Cindy has been a valuable asset to Trainz since joining our team in 2006. From the beginning, she brought exceptional leadership and organizational skills to the company. Through her determination and loyalty, Cindy became one of the key figures who

helped build and shape Trainz. She continues to contribute to the company's success with her strong business acumen and extensive knowledge of the model train industry. As Trainz continues to grow, Cindy's leadership will be essential in bringing on new team members and scaling the company efficiently in the coming years.

Monica Montgomery, Finance and HR Executive - Monica has been with Trainz since 2009. With a strong accounting background and attention to detail, Monica saw Trainz through its formative years developing policies and procedures to ensure not only financial solvency but also that Trainz is a great place to work. Through concerted resiliency, she will continue to ensure strong financial oversight and build on a solid foundation of HR polices.

Carlie Maddox, Procurement and Customer Service Executive - Carlie has been with Trainz since 2011. As an expert negotiator, Carlie uses her southern charm and gentle persuasion to close deals. Never one to be afraid to get her hands dirty, she has dug into the why behind the customer when it comes to buying and selling a wide variety of new and collectible vintage model trains. Moving forward, she will continue to supply Trainz with collections and provide outstanding customer service we have come to be renowned for.

Trainz.com is the nation's leading retailer of vintage collectible and new model trains in all scales. Trainz has been a Great Place to Work certified company since 2021 and in 2024 was recognized as #17 on Fortune Best Workplaces in Retail™ 2024 (Small and Medium). To learn more about us, visit Trainz.com.



Kelvin White

Kelvin White passed on March 3, 2025. Although he was an ex-member of the NASG, he was still interested in S scale in North America and built at least 3

small switching layouts based on USA prototypes, which were designed to be shown at British model railway shows. I often went with Kelvin to these shows, though they were one-man layouts. Some NASG members might remember that he also set up White Oak Models, primarily to get S scale turnouts made, with sales to the USA. The total cost to ship across the water meant it became unviable. There are entries on the NASG website about the layouts in old *Dispatches* as well as a past company entry. Kelvin also produced an S scale newsletter for those in Britain interested in N American S scale, and there are not many of them, then or now.

However, he was very active in many other interests and it seemed there wasn't a scale, gauge or prototype that didn't command his enthusiasm. In our White Horse group based in Oxfordshire, we gently referred to him as a "butterfly", which he accepted with a smile. In the many projects he was planning, despite ongoing MS, he still wanted to build an S scale switching layout, based on his railfanning of Wisconsin short lines in 1995. His short illness and death from pancreatic cancer has left his friends of many decades very saddened and missing his great spirit for life.

John Prior



NASG Leadership Team

2025 NASG Convention

The Connecticut S Gaugers, in conjunction with the Bristol S Gaugers and the NASG Convention Committee, are pleased to announce the 2025 National Convention to be held in Norwich, Connecticut.

When?

From Wednesday August 6, 2025 through Saturday August 9, 2025.

Venue

All of the activities will be held at, or originate from, the Holiday Inn Norwich hotel: 10 Laura Boulevard Norwich, Connecticut 06360

More information will be made public as it becomes available on the NASG Website: nasg.org.



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SUPPORT YOUR NASG

Help out one of our Committees!

Sprung Journals, Loco and Cars

One of the S-Scale.IO e-list members questioned the benefit of sprung journals, as usually there simply isn't enough mass to bear down on individual wheels. That got me to thinking. Prototype locomotives and cars all have sprung journals to keep the wheel treads on the railheads, especially when entering and leaving superelevated curves. And at low speeds, the equipment stays on the rails on some pretty rough trackwork.

Similarly, for our models, a cardinal rule of derailment prevention is to keep all the wheels on the rails at all times no matter how rough the track. (This is much easier to do than laying perfect track.)

For diesels and non-powered rolling stock, the easiest solution is to use

equalized trucks. These have bolsters that allow the sideframes to rotate vertically with respect to each other. Sprung trucks are tricky because the springs need to be partially compressed at all times, otherwise the truck is rigid. There are two ways to accomplish this: either weight the unit until the springs are partially compressed, or replace the springs with softer springs that compress under lighter weight. There are sources of springs of various sizes and stiffnesses, for example, W. B. Jones (www.springsfast.com).

Softer springs are always preferable to overweighted cars. However, adding weight to locomotives is generally a good thing, provided its added weight still allows wheels to spin instead of stall.

Steam locomotives with stiffly sprung drive wheels can be your worst nightmare. I had an Overland Reading I-8 2-8-0 camelback that was totally sprung but,

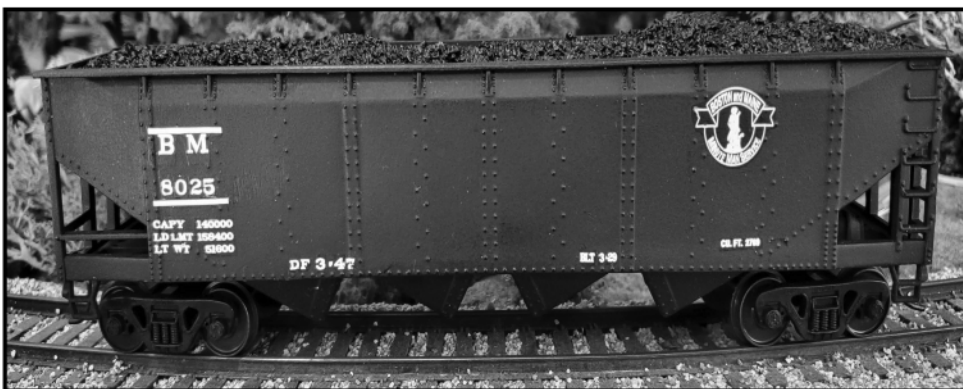
alas, totally rigid. It could not even navigate a smooth transition from the main line through a turnout servicing a spur at a lower level. Replacing excessively stiff driver springs is sort of like doing a valve job on an automobile. Simple, once the entire engine is laboriously taken apart, then laboriously put back together. Although I do have the skills to replace my camelback's springs, I relegated my camelback to storage.

PS...

A simple statement of coil spring physics is in order here. A coil spring is a spiral of wire. The longer the spring, the softer it is. Cutting a stiff spring in half will make it twice as stiff, not twice as soft. The wire size matters too. If Spring B's wire is half the diameter of that of Spring A but is otherwise the same length, Spring B's stiffness is only one-eighth that of Spring "A," not one-half.

THE BRISTOL S-GAUGE RAILROADERS

"The Oldest S-Gauge Club in the Americas" is offering this unique S-gauge car, produced exclusively for our club by American Models.



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"MINUTEMAN"
QUAD HOPPER
(circa 1940)**

**(3 car numbers available:
You may specify prefer-
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or Highrail.**

**\$55 per car, or a set of all
three car numbers for
\$150.**

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Mail to Doug Peck; Bristol S-Gaugers; 6 Storeybrooke Drive;
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All orders subject to prior sale. Limited quantities still available,
especially scale.**

NEW PRODUCTS

By Jeff Madden

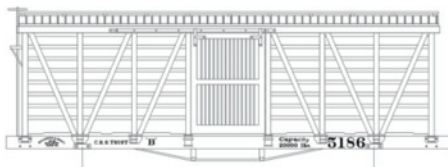
Deerfield River Laser now has a North Bridgton (Maine) station available as a laser kit in S. The B&SR kit is \$94.

www.deerfieldriverlaser.com

Mike Fyten has a 3D-printed ACF 2-bay covered hopper (with triangular slot). No trucks, couplers or decals. The \$75 includes shipping in USA.

mike@kvrr-usa.com

Leadville Designs has new rolling stock: Sn3 D&RGW 24' stock car \$64.95; Sn3 DSP&P LaMothe pipe gondola \$67.95; Sn3 F&CC dump gondola \$69.95. These all are laser kits with plastic and brass details.



Billmeyer & Small 24' D&RG Stock Car



DSP&P LaMothe Pipe Gon

Also coming in Sn3 is a business car for \$114.95, an Sn3 water service car for \$69.95, a D&RG bobber caboose for \$79.95 and a DSP&P bobber caboose for \$79.95.

Leadvilledesigns.com

Team Track Models have semi-truck trailer kits in S for only \$5.99 each. Note that these are paper and poster board construction. These have no wheels included. Sizes vary from 28' to 53'. Their website shows some containers and buildings as well.



www.teamtrackmodels.com

Tomalco Track is now owned by Micro Engineering. Only the flex track is now owned and produced by Micro Engineering. Rail sizes include code 70, 83 and 100. A pack of six is \$75. A pack of six with weathered rail is \$78.

Microengineering.com

Smoky Mountain Model Works is updating their switchstands by going to



John Hall photo

3D-printing. These are the Bethlehem versions numbers 53A and 53B smokymountainmodelworks.com

Great Decals! is offering L&N Hummingbird/Georgian tavern-lounge and dining car decals, in dulux gold, that are now available in S-scale (set # 215) Each set has the letterboard script, numerals, and car names specific to the this group of cars. The sheet includes four pairs of L&N road names and each train name, car names and road numbers. Each sheet does up to four cars. Artwork by Curt Fortenberry.



Car names include Churchill Downs, Boston Club, Carnival Club, Belle Meade, University Club, Aristocrat, Fiesta Inn, Bouquet Inn, Azalea Trail, Dixiana Inn, Duncan Hines, and Cincinnati Club. How can you resist having a Duncan Hines diner? Dealers' inquires welcome.

Greatdecals.com



NASG introduces new PROMOTIONAL PRINT MATERIAL

NEW!



The NASG announces a set of targeted full-color promotional handouts to help clubs and NASG members explain and promote S modeling to potential newcomers.

To obtain copies of the tri-folds, contact your regional VP or the Promotions Committee. View the trifolds on the NASG website on the NASG page under Promotions heading.

Down at the Depot

By Carl Rudolph

It is almost April Fool's day as your scribe writes this column, and any fool can see grim news on tv or the paper or online in just about any subject area. Bad weather, limping economy, quarreling nations, and general unhappiness all seem to abound across the land. So it is good therapy to have something fun, like model trains (especially S gauge!), to turn to for diversion. In contrast to other news, club news is mostly positive, so here is a report on our collective diversion:

The Pioneer Valley Model Railroad Club (in western Massachusetts) report that they had another successful event with Santa's Trains at the annual Look Park "Winter Wonderland" holiday show. It was their 16th annual supervision of Santa's Trains and Look Park's 50th annual holiday event. The club is already performing maintenance and repairs to prepare for next Christmas at Look Park! The club was assisted in setup, operation, and teardown by members of the Bristol Club. The Pioneer Valley club responded by helping Bristol with their layout at the Amherst train show. Members **Gene Maag**, **George Renneris**, and **Steve Allen** were also involved in setting up of Christmas train displays at the South Hadley Senior Center and at Wisteriahurst Museum in Holyoke.

The Connecticut S Gaugers are busy preparing for the next NASG convention (in partnership with Bristol and NASG national) so sent in this extremely long report that we quote here in its entirety: "We will see you all at the convention this August in CT!" Whew. Hope **Mr. Dawdy** can find room for that!

The South Jersey S-Gaugers finally got their layout out of the Haddon Heights Library basement. It took five weeks to repair the elevator and get it re-certified and then another week to get a crew together to get it up and out into the trailer. Now they can meet the schedule of setup at the New Jersey Military Technology Museum in April! Also, in late April, the club is planning an excursion on the Woodstown Central RR; hope to have a report on that next issue. Lastly, member **Jim Oliver**

showed his latest 3D printing efforts with an excellent 1/64 model of the Riverline DMU cars made by Stadler.

The Baltimore Area American Flyer Club had the layout at a "very successful" Great Scale Model Train Show in Timonium. They say the show did lots of advertising and it paid off! The club also reports they signed up several new members, which is always good news. And the Pennsylvania Railroad Museum in Strasburg has accepted them again for Model Railroading Days, also good news!

In the Jacksonville area, the **North Florida Division of the Atlantic Coast S Gaugers** met at **Larry Shugart's** barn as usual where Larry showed his latest acquisitions of Kinsman express reefer kits, brass 54' REA reefers and milk cars. His layout now has milk reefers and milk flatcars well represented! The TCA has its national convention in Jacksonville this year, so it is anticipated that many club members will attend.

The Pittsburgh S Gaugers have signed a contract for the 2026 S Spree venue and are well along with other Spree planning. The idea of a portable layout small enough to be carried in a compact car is gaining traction with a lot of discussion. **Jim Whipple** mentioned that the T-Trak-S system as shown on the NASG website is a possible solution, and the club is looking at that. At recent meetings, **Larry Stroup** gave a clinic on servicing AF locomotives, and **Roger Schneider** gave a presentation on A.C. Gilbert connections in New England. The club will have its hirail layout at this year's S Spree in Lancaster, Ohio.

The Cuyahoga Valley S Gauge Association (Cleveland area) were to have a February meeting at **Gary Suchocki's** home, but the weather dictated otherwise. The club was hoping to try again in March. The Akron show went well with plenty of club members helping out. Next week was the NMRA Railfest in Kirtland, with both tinplate and hirail layouts set up (busy

weekend!) and after that the Great Lakes TCA meet with the tinplate layout.

The Miami Valley S Gaugers (Dayton area) had a great show-and-tell at a recent meeting. **Alan Smith** showed his custom "cover" for the bare trailing truck on AF Atlantic and some Pacific steamers. The cover makes the trailing truck look like a fancy Delta truck and greatly improves the look of the loco! **Jay Reese** showed two custom heavyweights that were part of the 1976 Bicentennial Freedom Train. The prototype cars were converted from baggage cars; the baggage doors were turned into picture windows so artifacts could be seen from outside the train. Really cool. Lastly, the club has started a new series in the newsletter "Member Spotlight," and newsletter editor **Ray Garbee** was the first to be interviewed. Nice feature!

The Central Ohio S Gaugers are just about done with planning for this year's Spring S Spree that they will host. As of this writing, many registrations and vendor reservations have been received. By the time you receive this issue, the date (May 15-17) will be upon us! The February meeting was supposed to be a really good one, hosted by **Art Lofton** who planned on having lots of AF for sale – but the weather again turned nasty, so the meeting was held on Zoom only. Some members braved the weather anyway and got good deals from Art.

The Central Ohio S Gaugers – Northern Division met at **Monty Kaufman's** home in Sandusky and then at **Phil Spicer's** home in Fremont. No other details were provided but you know they had a good time!

The Southeastern Michigan S Gaugers met at **Ken Snyder's** home where there were lots of things to discuss and see. The club is working on the promotional presentation, to be previewed at this year's convention, for the 2026 NASG convention that they will host. They also are quite involved in this year's NMRA convention to be held in Novi. At the meeting, **Jerry Poniatowski** showed his latest project in

progress – a GE Genesis P20/P42 style locomotive with custom brass frame and American Models running gear. The shell appears to be 3D-printed with excellent detail. **Ken Snyder** showed his completed arch bridge (visualize the Hellgate bridge,) which was also 3D-printed. It is exquisite. Lastly, yours truly made two errors in last issue's paragraph for the SMSG: I wrote that **Ken Garber** displayed his Packard water tower when in fact it was **Ken Snyder's**; and I also wrote that they met at the Ann Arbor Depot when in fact it was the Dearborn Amtrak station. Put it down to old age here at the keyboard. Sorry for the errors.

The Badgerland S Gaugers (Milwaukee area) have taken correspondent Ron Schlicht's portable AF layout to several local shows, including the Mitchell Park Domes show in Milwaukee, the Mad City (Madison) NMRA show, and Delavan train show. The Domes are a botanical garden, and the show includes all gauges. Even 7.5" gauge live steam was on display! The club is moving along well with planning for this year's Fall S Fest that they are hosting.

The Chicagoland Association of S Gaugers had a great weekend attending the Mad City NMRA show and displaying the club layout. More shows on tap include the All American Train Show and Great Midwest Train Show. The latter occurs several times throughout the year, and the club takes the small layout to each show. The club has lots of events (field trips) planned for the summer and they sure look inviting!

The Kansas City S Gaugers have established an "auxiliary headquarters" at Sol's Jewelry. Turns out Sol's has an upstairs conference room in their warehouse at which the club has set up the layout that was down in the store over the holidays. Now they can meet there, run trains, and discuss club business! How

great! The club was to discuss their potential involvement in the new Missouri Model Railroad Museum and get an update on their permanent S gauge train operation at Union Station. Sounds like great progress!

The Houston S Gaugers sent in this news via correspondent **Don Hand**: "This year's Greater Houston Area Train Show occurred in nearby Pasadena (remember "Urban Cowboy"?) on February 15. Houston S Gaugers set up our 14' by 28' modular layout, which delighted attendees because we ran both steam era and contemporary consists; also, long streamliners are always a crowd-pleaser! The legendary **Bob Werre** has recovered well enough to have been present; that is good news! And we also welcomed a new member, **John Hesse**, to 'S Scale, out in-the-public-eye'! HSG plans to set up again, at Galveston Transportation Museum, on the weekend of April 26-27." All good news! Thanks Don!

The Arizona S Gaugers sent this note via correspondent (and *Dispatch* Assistant Scale Editor) **Phil Scandura**: "The Arizona S Gaugers enjoyed one of its biggest gatherings yet in March. More than two dozen folks visited three layouts in the north Tucson area. First, we visited **Michael Fox's** S Scale, proto-freelanced switching layout located in his garage. It is inspired by the Milwaukee Road's operations along the 29th Street rail corridor in Minneapolis in the summer of 1970. It features several scratchbuilt structures as well as commercial product adaptations representing the industries along the line. Next, we visited **Bruce Shore's** S Gauge "Burgundy Midvale" American Flyer-Plus Layout. It features passenger operation on an inner loop with small freight siding, climbing point-to-point commuter line, elevated streetcar, and more. It has a little bit of everything including American Flyer, S-Helper,

American Models, Lionel FlyerChief, a motorized 1930s Hafner wind-up M-10000, a converted pre-war Hafner-Lionel-Flyer O-gauge tinplate, and even an N Scale trolley line at the rear of the layout for forced perspective. The group enjoyed a tasty lunch at the El Charro Café that boasts being the oldest continually family-run Mexican restaurant in the USA. Our last stop of the day was visiting **Jack DeBolt's** Sn3 version of the Rio Grande in Chama and Santa Fe. Constructed in a dedicated outbuilding, the layout is a work in progress sporting point-to-point around-the-walls construction with hand-painted backdrops and stunning New Mexico scenery. The layout was also on tour that day for the Arizona Division, Pacific Southwest Region, NMRA State Meeting. All in all, a very busy day of railfanning! The Arizona S Gaugers are planning two more get-togethers before taking time off for the summer." Busy indeed! Thanks Phil!

In the San Francisco Bay area, the **Golden Gate American Flyer Club** had the 9' by 20' layout at the World's Greatest Hobby show in Sacramento. No report on that show as yet. The most recent meeting was at **Rich Ridgeway's** home in Hayward. Rich alerted the club to bring forks to help him eat birthday cake!

The Southern California S Gaugers Club (Los Angeles area) had the 30' by 34' L-shape layout at the Ventura Great Train show, which had good attendance both days. The club was able to set up their new yard modules for the first time. These modules had been the subject of work sessions in the previous two months to get them this far. The modules were not yet operational but still provided lots of track for displaying trains.

Well, all this club news has improved my outlook on life and I hope yours too. Keep trackin'!



Smoke Unit Repair

My choice for this Restoration Station Column is something that is pretty basic for most long-term Flyer collectors and operators; but a number of my Flyer friends haven't attempted it yet, so I decided to write about rebuilding the steam engine smoke unit. I hope this column will be helpful to those of you who have never tried to improve the smoke efforts of your smoke in boiler engines.

This subject is an easy one to find information on and resources to accomplish this repair. I decided to use information from the Port Lines Hobbies in addition to my own to help it be as complete as possible.

One thing I learned my research on this topic is that there are several versions of the smoke units in addition to the Smoke in Tender (SIT) version. The SIT units were used in the 1946 and 1947 engines. The 2nd type was used from 1948 through early 1957. Most of the steamers after that used a modified unit; and the Franklin, Washington and docksider engines used the smoke unit from the Flyer HO engine.

From 1948 on, smoke units were located in the boiler and synchronized with the gear axel. The wicks were made of fiberglass. A few engines toward the end of production used a smaller HO smoke unit of a different design.

The AF smoke unit must get electricity to work. Always check that it is wired correctly and getting power before looking into repairing it. The usual reason why a smoke unit doesn't smoke is that the wick has become clogged with old hardened smoke fluid and gum. The coil wire is extremely fine and may be broken. Either way, the best solution is to replace both the wick and coil. This is one of the most common repair tasks encountered in AF railroading, along with replacing reverse unit fingers. You should not be intimidated by it!

Parts dealers sell smoke kits, which consist of a nichrome wire coil wound around a

hank of fiberglass and instructions. Once you have several kits in hand, disassemble the locomotive to access the smoke unit. Always unscrew and remove the brass or red plastic chimney first. Unsolder all wires and remove them. Remove the smoke unit from the chassis.

Disassembly and Cleaning

There are several types of units. The HO type in the docksiders and Frontiersman locos is a cylindrical shape with a round front plate. The other two types have a rectangular smoke chamber. The most common type (1948-57) has top and bottom plates, an upper and a lower chamber, and the coil is positioned crosswise. The later types have only one chamber and the heating coil is positioned lengthwise. If there is no removable plate on the bottom of the unit, it is a late type and will be discussed later.

Remove the smoke unit from the loco chassis and unsolder the wires connected to it. The top plate has two solder lugs on it. Very fine wire, the ends of the heating coil, should be wound around each lug. Remove the top and bottom plates by unscrewing the screws that hold them in place. Snip at the fiberglass and wire with a diagonal cutter to cut them up as necessary for removal. Eliminate all leftover wick material from the two holes between the upper and lower chambers too. The old wick and coil will not be reused. Remove as much solder as possible from the top plate and clear the holes in the eyelets that anchor the solder lugs to the top plate. The coil leads must pass through these holes. Unwind any of the fine coil wire that may be wrapped around the lugs.

The next order of business is to clean the leftover gunk out of the chambers in the unit casing. If the wick is gunked, the walls likely are too. I use several solvents for this task; the most civilized one is isopropyl alcohol; the casing is soaked and the inside cleaned with a small brush and solvent. Scrape off stubborn deposits with a hobby knife. There is or should be a brown cardboard lining the coil chamber.

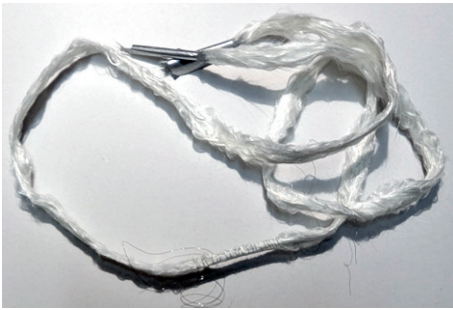
If you can loosen it from the walls, clean behind it, but don't damage it badly. Make sure the air passageways are unblocked, especially the two tiny holes, one at the end of the cylinder and one at the entrance to the smoke chamber. Push a toothpick into them a few times.

Preparing the New Wick

There are two steps to preparing the smoke kit. First, the wick ends must be fed through the two holes from the upper chamber to the lower. They usually must be thinned and smoothed by pulling the fiberglass between the thumb and forefinger several times. Most smoke kits contain more fiberglass than necessary. You don't want to stuff the unit with fiberglass, because you want it to act as a resonating chamber for the choo sound. Five inches of wick on either end of the coil is plenty.

Second, and perhaps the most important step, is to make sure that the windings of the coil do not touch each other. If two windings should touch, the coil will burn out. The nichrome wire is very fine. Use a magnifier of some sort and separate the windings with the side of an X-ACTO knife blade. The wire is stiff and will take the shape you want. Take up any slack by pulling on the ends of the coil. Check all sides of the coil.

The coil leads will go through the holes in the top plate that are 9/16" apart. If you have a VOM you can measure the resistance of the smoke coil before installing it. It should measure at least 25 ohms and can work if it is as high as 40 ohms. In the locomotives with four wires between the engine and tender, a resistance in the lower range will work better because the coil is wired in parallel with the brushes and in series with the field coil. If the locomotive has two or five wires between the engine and tender, the smoke unit has a separate power supply in parallel with the entire motor; and a resistance in the upper part of the range will work well. You can also double check the resistance of the new coil with the VOM after you install it.



New wick

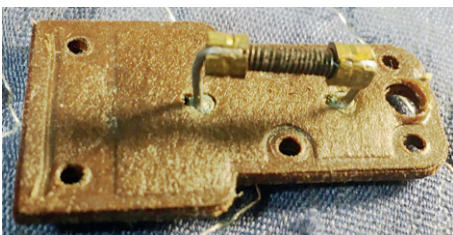
Installation

To install the new coil and wick, put a few drops of smoke fluid on the ends of the wick and thread them through the holes between the upper chamber and lower. Pull them down until the coil is almost in position and check that coil windings still do not touch each other anywhere. Then pull on the wick so that the coil is centered in the chamber. You do not want it to touch the top, bottom or sides.

Thread the coil leads through the two eyelet holes in the top plate, put the plate in position, and screw it down tightly. Make sure that coil leads are not trapped between the casting and the top plate. Wind the coil leads around the solder lugs seven times or so and tie off and cut any excess wire. Tuck the wick into the bottom chamber and replace the bottom plate. Replace the smoke unit on the chassis, put the power and headlight wires into the soldering lug holes, and solder them in place. Be sure to block the holes completely with solder. The loco should now be ready to smoke and choo.

Later Types

About 1957, the design of the smoke unit was changed to make it less expensive to produce. Replacing the coil and wick in these is somewhat more difficult. The interior forms only one chamber instead of two, and there is no bottom plate. There are two variations of this type. The first



Later Type

used a hard-bodied coil rigidly mounted to the top plate by stiff wire leads. The fiberglass wick was wrapped once around the coil. If the coil is intact and functioning, all you have to do is unwrap the wick from the around the coil and wrap a different unclogged part of the wick around it, or you can replace the wick with a new piece of fiberglass

If the coil is shot, you can use a smoke kit and carefully suspend the new coil under the top plate, making sure that the coil doesn't touch any other part of the wick but that which it is wrapped around. The coil should not touch the sides of the unit or the top plate, either. This is a delicate job and may take several attempts. You can add a separator if you can get one.

The second variation of the later smoke unit used a coil wound around the wick. A black fiberboard separator with four upward pointing tabs divided the bulk of the wick from the coil part. The wick was threaded through two holes in this separator. It is extremely fragile and difficult to deal with. When pulling the wick in or out of these holes, support them with the tips of a pair of forceps. Don't try to hold it by the legs or they will fall off.

The same rules apply to the later type replacement coils. The windings should not touch each other, and they should not touch the sides or top plate. Make sure you double check all around the coil just before putting it into its final position.

Occasionally a unit will leak smoke from under the edges of the top plate. A few drops of clear nail polish over the leaking area will usually seal it up.

Reworking the smoke unit is somewhat delicate task, but it isn't difficult. Most of us do it ourselves. It may take you a few attempts to get the knack, but replacement kits are inexpensive. Work slowly and carefully, learn as you go, and you will soon master these procedures.

Additions from Port Lines Hobbies Repair Clinic – Doug Peck

A Chance of Improvement Without Replacement

The primary problem with smoke units that work fine when first filled but quickly quit, is that the wick is hardened. The wick material is passing fluid along its length too slowly, so if it has been sitting, there is fluid near the heating element; but it quickly uses it up when you start running the engine. Because the wick is hardened it cannot "wick" new fluid along itself fast enough, and it soon quits. In some cases, a hardened wick can be freed up satisfactorily. Spray some "Tuner Cleaner" (I use Radio Shack's. It's expensive, but it is nonflammable and it won't harm your plastic shells) down into the filler tube: 2 or 3 quick shots of it. Follow it with 6-8 drops of smoke fluid. Let it sit overnight and try it out.

Checking Your Replacement Wick

Open your newly purchased replacement smoke wick. Note that the nichrome wire has been pre-wound around the wick, but has two long ends. If you have an ohmmeter, check the resistance across the two ends of the winding before you install it. It is likely that it has too many windings, which results in high resistance and low smoke output. The last one I checked had about 75 ohms resistance, which is about double what it should be. I had to remove about 5 windings from each end of the coil in order to get the resistance down to 35-40 ohms, an appropriate amount to produce a good volume of smoke at even slow speeds.

A final Check

When assembled – at this point, I usually test the unit. Connect your transformer jumper clips (assuming you use them) across the two lugs, and blow into the plunger cavity. Hopefully, you'll see smoke billowing out of the unit. If not, something is wrong.

Franklin, Washington, Dockside & Gilbert HO Engine Smoke Units

These smoke units are constructed very differently. To rebuild the units:

1. Unsolder the lead on the front of the smoke unit chamber which connects to the edge of the chamber (ground).
2. File away, or "unpeen" the front edge of the chamber.

3. Now the front disk will pull out of the chamber. You will note that this unit has what looks like a wirewound resistor attached to the front disk; this is the heater element. Inside the chamber should be some wadded wick material that absorbs fluid and keeps it in contact with the heater element.
4. If the disk is undamaged, you can clear the solder from the two holes and replace the heater element. Conduct a test insertion to be sure the wire lead at the rear end does not contact the back of the chamber. If the disk is damaged, then purchase and replace the entire disk assembly, which includes the heater element.
5. Disk is reinserted, with some new wick material around it if necessary.
6. Seal the edge with epoxy.
7. Bend one lead over and solder it to the edge of the chamber, like the original (ground).

I hope the combination of these two resources will assist you in making more smoke as you operate your steam engines. I would like to add a few of my own suggestions:

- After I have finished operating a steam engine and I am ready to place it on a shelf, I put in an adequate amount of smoke fluid in the engine so I know the wick will stay wet till I run the engine again.
- A smoke wick tool has been developed to make the job of threading the wick from the upper to lower chamber a great deal less time consuming. They run less than \$4.
- The replacement heater element and disks for the HO smoke units are available through Port Lines Hobbies as well as are a number of other smoke unit parts.

A Flyer collector friend of mine, Leif Erickson, actually has some of the Gilbert

smoke unit replacements and I have included some pictures he took of those replacements. They are different than the ones produced today and actually match the different types described in this column.



Photos of Later Type Wick

I hope your train room is smoke filled in the future after bringing your smoke units up to speed. Contact me at billstrains@aol.com for your questions and suggestions.

PORT LINES HOBBIES



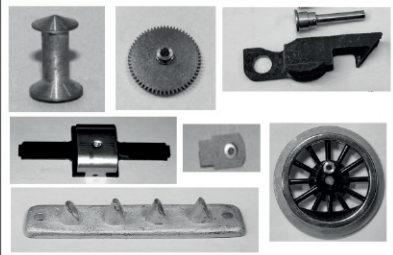
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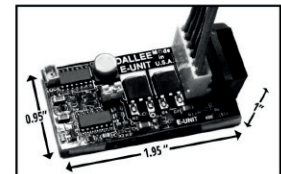
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A Farm-themed American Flyer Layout

By Mike Lewis

A Tribute to Bob Guckian



Mainline above the agricultural area.

Robert (Bob) & Deborah (Debbie) Guckian owned and operated this 960 square foot railroad in Eaton, Ohio. Bob loved A. C. Gilbert American Flyer S Gauge trains as a young boy; but as most hobbies go, he could not dedicate finances and time into this hobby until around 1983 at which time he began to collect and build his S Gauge hi-rail layout. Bob started out simply with a small eighty square foot layout with a single loop featuring a five-stall roundhouse, twelve track yard, three passing sidings, and one reverse loop. This section was large enough to run four trains at one time with good concentration. Bob ran both AC and DC engines on this section of layout until Lionel began to release TMCC engines in S Gauge. Like others, Bob started converting most of his engines over to TMCC/Legacy as well as adding SC2 switch controllers and MTH TPC controllers to enable more operation from a remote. This section of his layout touted the following accessories that grandkids, visiting children and adults spent countless hours operating: 23780 Gabe the Lamplighter, 596 Water Tower, Whistling billboard, 4-2300



The American Flyer 596 Water Tower stands next to the working turntable in the engine yard fronting the 5-stall roundhouse.



Kids were delighted to see trains passing underneath basement steps.

Oil Drum Loader, 799 Talking station, 766 Animated station, 785 coal loaders, and a 770 Loading platform.

The unique parts of this section of layout that were admired by/chased by children were the loop within a crawl space and the train passing underneath a basement step.

Bob continued to grow his collection, filling his basement with display shelves and storage cabinets making minimal progress on the plans he originally made for his layout that was to take over the entire basement. After his wife Deborah passed away, he ended up focusing his time on completing the layout he wanted, which indeed did take over the entire basement. In total, Bob's layout ended up with three individual loops that allowed trains to easily travel between them if desired. The largest loop traveled the entire wall of his basement, approximately 130'; the other two were approximately 100' and 60', respectively. In total Bob could run five trains at any time on the three separate loops, more if visitors helped him run them. The large loop featured unique travels such as running through a restroom, a cabinet, and a display shelf all to get to another room that had a long twelve-siding yard where several trains could be parked as well as a sixteen-siding passenger station. The entire layout used GarGraves track & switches for the mainlines and A. C. Gilbert American Flyer track & switches for the yard and sidings. Some switches were cut down to allow closer placement. Bob's collection consisted of mostly post-war A.C. Gilbert AF, Lionel, S-Helper, American Models, and K-Line engines and rolling stock.



A Triple Crown unit train passes above fields fresh with crops.

Due to the size of the layout and quantity of rooms in which trains traveled, Bob's layout incorporated ten video cameras to allow him to monitor status from a couple of different stations, depending on the room he was in at the time.



An admiring crowd views an assortment of tractors on display at the annual tractor and car show. John Deere was always the featured tractor, garnering premiere parking under roof.

Bob started out as a farmer and worked as a local John Deere tech and counter person, so it was not surprising that Bob incorporated his love for John Deere and farming into his layout as much as possible. Having also lived in an area in which a Norfolk & Southern railroad line passes, Bob saw the first Triple Crown trains, which inspired him to build what I believe was the first Triple Crown train around, definitely in S gauge. Bob did a lot of unique things to keep his layout useable and fun for all. In total, the layout contained twenty-two operating accessories, five bridges, four tower lights, ninety-three switches, nine uncouplers, six transformers, several SC2 modules, a Legacy Wi-Fi module, and countless cars and trucks an individual could play with. Bob also created a custom, whole-basement exhaust system to evacuate the train smoke, which was needed with that many trains running, most being incredibly good smoking steam engines.





Passenger yard entrance.

Did Bob have a theme or goal to his layout? The answer is no, other than to fit in as many trains as possible and try to make it look realistic. He accomplished this with help from his friends and family.

Not only did Bob work on his layout, but he also rebuilt and cleaned a lot of engines for himself and others to help keep as many trains running as possible. His workbench usually had something being worked on at any given time.



**Above: Diesel repair shop.
Left: Train through the farms.**

Bob had some unique tools and a small lathe setup to support proper rebuilds. Bob was a mentor and helper to a lot of people both in and out of the hobby train world and was a highly active member in the Miami Valley S Gauge train club from Dayton, Ohio. Bob promoted S-Gauge and real-world trains as much as he could to whoever would listen. Normally you'd find Bob wearing his favorite 611 N&W steam engine, 765 NKP steam Engine, or his MVSG shirts or hats. Like a lot of the real-life old-time railroads, the Guckian Railroad is slowly being dismantled and repurposed after Bob's passing on October 16, 2023, at the age of 81.

If you would like to see videos of Bob's layout and trains you can find them on YouTube at:
<https://www.youtube.com/@CarTrain1/videos>



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Phil's Builds

By Roger Nulton - Photos by the author



"The Greater Seattle S Gaugers" on Phil's floor in 2010. From left to right: Don Miholovich; Bob Kimball; Roger Nulton; Dick Karnes; Phil Johnson

For seven years, S Gauger Phil Johnson set up his hirail trains on the floor of his large, finished basement, usually from Jan. 5 to Mar. 24th. He called it the "Columbia Valley and Western." To have destinations for the trains, Phil built a variety of beautifully crafted structure models that he placed along his sidings. We members of the "Greater Seattle S Gaugers" club met there every year to enjoy Phil's trains and each other's company. When it became too difficult for the members and for Phil to easily get up from the floor, he built a new stand-up logging themed layout in his garage. He used many of the structures from his floor layout there. Phil graciously offered to lend eight other structures that would be more appropriate for my S scale "Monon Fourth Subdivision" layout to me for

display. They are all cleverly mounted on bases, making them portable, so that they could be stored in stackable plastic boxes during the months when he didn't have them out for viewing. Since Phil was one of our Monon operating crew, he could continue to enjoy his fantastic work at eye level as he was driving his train past it: a win-win!

Phil now has a wonderful new logging layout in his garage. He has many more stunning structure kits on display on his new layout. You can view it on our NASG website: [Current Layout by Phil Johnson - NASG](#)

Here are some photos of Phil's buildings as they currently sit on my layout. Many of the kits are no longer on the market, but many are: check the website to find them: [Resources - Structures - NASG](#)



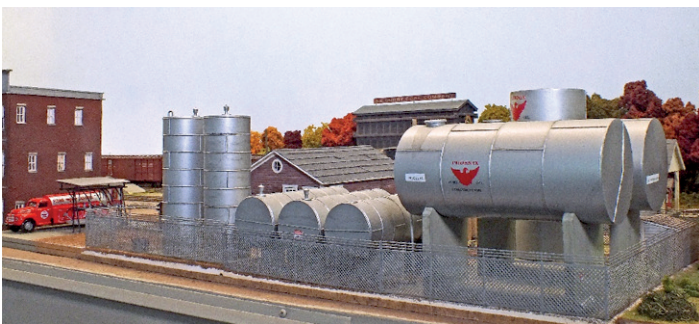
These buildings, shown on Phil's floor on April, 2012, are now moved to my Monon layout.



Walthers HO Grain Elevator



Pine Canyon Scale Models Toxic Terminal



Walthers HO scale Interstate Fuel and Oil Company kit combined with an O scale Walthers Phoenix Fuel Oil Company kit.



Lehigh Valley Models Corrugated Box Company



Pine Canyon Scale Models Rigsby Freight Service



Lehigh Valley Models Continental Canning Co.



Twin Whistle Icing Station and platform

Deconstructing a Layout

By Jim Martin



The last run. No regrets.

In the May 2015 *Dispatch*, I wrote:

It is our artistic interpretations of the real world setting for our models that provide so much scenic individualism from one layout to the next. Sadly, our visions don't usually travel too well. No matter how well we craft our track and scenery, it remains our vision; no one else's. A few historic or landmark layouts may find new homes elsewhere after their builders are done with them, but the rest are destined for dumpsters. Thus, they should be viewed as temporary art installations, rather than permanent works of art. If they are viewed in that context, then the money and time spent on them is not wasted.

I recall those words because I recently disposed of a large part of my Dover Branch Layout (*S Scale Resource* June 2022 and October 2024). But my layout bits didn't go to the dumpster; they went to Buffalo. Here are two tips for getting a layout out of your hair while preserving it for future use... make it sectional and make it free. Time to back up a little.

A period of ill health last year robbed me of any desire to work the layout. As my strength returned, and with it a growing interest in getting back to the hobby, I realized that the layout didn't excite me like it used to. After my cathartic experience, the Dover Branch, largely complete, somehow felt stale.



The layout. Its last night together.

So, I offered all, or parts, of the Dover Branch for free to my S Scale Workshop buddies. The "free" part was for the layout sections including track, switch machines, scenery and

whatever small buildings were attached. The offer did not include the supporting benchwork, trains, power supply, vehicles, details, or larger structures, although the structures were open to offers.



Temporarily removing a section of Port Dover Harbor frees up the lateral space needed to remove the rest of the sections.



The first of the sections to be given away is out. The remaining six sections will be easy to remove.



Packed up and waiting for Darby.

Two of my American buddies responded. One was Darby Marriott in Buffalo, a mere thirty miles to the east down the north shore of Lake Erie. The other was Jamie Bothwell in Bethlehem, PA.



Kristen and Darby: ready to roll. An understanding wife is a wonderful person. A strong one is even better.

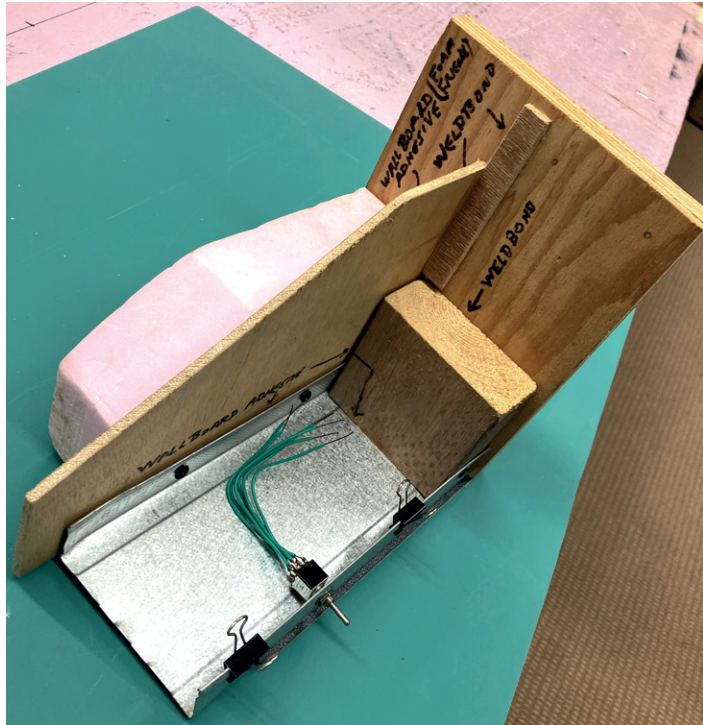
On February 1st Darby, along with his lovely wife Kristen, backed a rental van into my driveway. A few hours later they were off with Jamie's sections and theirs. I was left with a good feeling and a lot of extra space in the train room. The pictures tell the story.



The remaining Port Dover sections to the left. To the right, a blank canvas.

Regarding sectional construction, I think a lot of model railroaders overbuild their layouts. Heavy construction may be required for scenically complex layouts; but when it's time for them to go, disassembly is labor intensive and often destructive. However, linear, around-the-walls designs lend themselves beautifully to sectional construction. Each section is a complete unit that can be easily worked on away from the layout if so desired. It's especially convenient, for example, to set a section on its side for ease of wiring. Because my layout was of sectional construction, takedown was quite easy. Note that "sectional" may not be synonymous with "portable." Port Dover Harbor is truly portable as its sections were designed to come apart quickly for transport to train shows. The rest of the sections comprising the Dover Branch required cutting through rails and scenery across the end plates, but that work was minor. Most of the sections were held together with C-clamps and rested loosely on top of the L-girder benchwork. Only one central section was attached to the benchwork with a single screw to resist

lateral movement. The rest, when fastened to it, were rock solid. Gravity is free so I decided to use it.



Here is a corner sample Jim constructed for shows and clinics to illustrate his hybrid layout construction. A block of 2-by-4 glued to the end plate is the anchor for the steel stud wall track. A sandwich of thin plywood and 2-inch foam completes the basic structure that is rigid and lightweight.

Aside from the screws attaching the metal to the endplate, nearly everything else is glued with either construction adhesive or contact cement. The steel track is also a handy place for mounting switch machine controls and for clipping layout drop cloths.



Finally, a few words about how I construct my layout sections. I use a hybrid mix of materials...steel stud wall track attached to plywood endplates and topped with a sandwich of thin plywood and two-inch foam. The result is lightweight, rigid, and, as was proved with Port Dover on its travels, able to stand up to rough roads and huge variations in temperature. Give it a try.

So, where do I go from here? I plan to add a sector plate to the end of my remaining sections and operate Port Dover as a small switching layout. As for the rest of the empty benchwork, I have some alternate layout ideas that excite me. But I'll wait to see if they come to fruition before I say anything else.

Cheers!

Editors note: My wife Amy and I had the pleasure of seeing and doing a write up and video of Jim's fabulous railroad. It was printed in what turned out to be the last issue of *The S Scale Resource Magazine*.

Here is a link to that issue:
<https://magazine.sscaleresource.com/books/szpu/>

And a link to the video: <https://shorturl.at/rdfaN>



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S Scale Coal Mine

By Cliff Brown



Delaware Valley Models Coal Mine x 2

I bought the DV mine kits from Frank Titman back when I lived in Pennsylvania – and then moved to North Carolina in 1982. After purchasing our newer house in 2008, I finally tackled putting together all three kits that made the model, the mine itself, the power plant, and the breaker. Although this made a rather large model, it is miniscule compared with the real Pennsylvania coal mine and breaker.

Building a new, revised layout after our move, I wanted at least something larger than just the kit; so I decided to double its size by placing it in front of a mirror, a technique I had been reading about. I chose to place the breaker in a corner, with a large mirror found at a nearby yard sale, costing a whole dollar!

By placing the breaker in the corner, the other side of the mine received a large gray background, representing the usual

culm pile. In order to place the breaker, I made sure that the wall side roof hangover was cut off, and, likewise, the hangover facing into the mirror was eliminated.

Due to the thickness of the mirror glass, there will be a reflected gap equal to twice that thickness. A front surfaced mirror would solve the problem; but that would be expensive (more than \$1), and perhaps the finish would be fragile.

The power house is placed alongside the wall, and, likewise, the roof overhang was eliminated on the wall side. Otherwise this building was built as directed, and just fits between the first track and the wall. There was not enough room for the water tank, so I moved the tank to the round-house area and substituted a smaller tank built by Frank Titman many years ago.

The breaker kit is designed for two tracks underneath the breaker, but I

wanted more action. I added a third track that ends at the elevator and a fourth track that goes under the angled elevator, which caused me to build different support braces rather than the one drawn in the kit instructions. Adding the fourth track also required me to extend the walkway beyond the third track, coming to the ground between tracks 3 and 4.

The resulting appearance is that two tracks go under the breaker into the large yard, the third track ends at the elevator and the fourth track also goes into the yard. The appearance works, if viewed from directly on; therefore, I added a large cement plant (4" PVC pipets and a lot more detail) as a view block for the town behind and in front of the viewer, and the tracks curving behind the cement plant.

For the mine head kit, just follow instructions. It is also placed right in

front of the mirror. A yellow monster truck is blocked from a second view. I used HO track into the mine and three HO gondolas cut in half and shortened to appear as my mine cars. I may be wrong, but my opinion is that the design of mine cars in the kit yields cars just too small. Although the gondolas were bright HO colors, I dirtied them pretty well.

FINISHING TOUCH – REMEMBER – KEEP THE WIFE HAPPY!!!! I named the mine and added that on to the mine head face – KATHLEEN’S MINE !!!!

Finally, you can’t fool everyone; but one visitor bent forward to see the depth of the mirrored town and suddenly jumped back

when he saw himself! My grandson Kyle insists that I should add a fake door to the back wall!

Important tips – (1) no building overhangs on the two hidden sides; (2) always keep the mirror clean, therefore within reach; (3) limit the viewing angle; and (4) create some view on the left side wall as viewed on my layout.

I rank these three kits (Breaker, Mine Head, and Powerhouse) among the best kits ever produced for S Scale! Most likely difficult if not impossible to find anymore.

Editors note: The line of these models has been rereleased by K & P Brick & Building Company. www.kpbrick.com.



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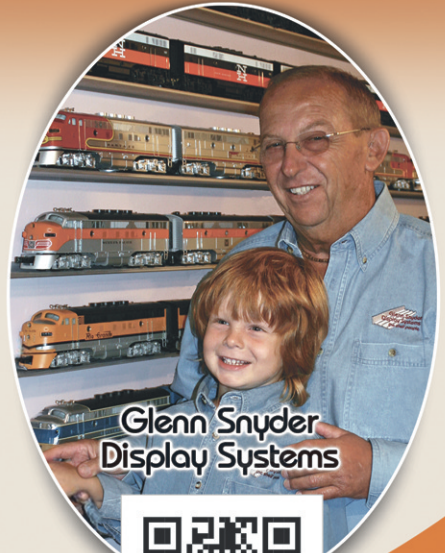


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Winross Diecast Truck Models

By Ted Larson



Clockwise from front left:

White 5000 pulling a propane tank. This is an example of a low-priced model that will be repainted for a local carrier. There are also propane tanks painted as prototype carriers. White built the 5000 in the 1960's (these production dates are per various web pages and the American Truck Spotter's Guide 1920-1970; Tad Burness).

White 3000. This is a mix and match example; the trailer is Hartoy-produced with a Model A vintage tractor. The trailer seems much more realistic with a 50's to early 60's tractor. The White 3000 was a common Winross item in the 60's, and again more recently in their Nostalgia series. White built the 3000 1948-1950's.

White 1500 with original box. Price sticker says \$2.75, from the 60's; sounds cheap until you remember that \$2.75 would be around \$25 with inflation added in. The price now is not much higher. This cab was a common Hartoy straight truck in the 60's. White built the 1500 Compact Series in the 1960's; it was commonly used in city delivery for its short wheelbase. It is interesting to note that the early Winross boxes say "Winross Toy"; see photo.

White 7000 with cryogenic trailer. Great example of a very usable RTR paint job that would be hard to reproduce at home. White produced the 7000 starting in the late 1950's.

White 9000 straight truck with stake body. The straight truck version of the 9000 is relatively recent. The 9000 appears to be the most common cab for Winross semi's. White built the 9000 from the 1960's into the 1970's.

WINROSS – A few years ago I was discussing S scale vehicles with a well known S modeler; and when I mentioned Winross, he said that he had never heard of it. This exchange prompts me to write this edition of Tired Iron. (Please note that in this article, “scale” refers ONLY to the size of the model relative to the prototype. It does not refer to amount or accuracy of detail.)

Winross started manufacturing toy trucks way back in the 1960's, transitioning to promotional trucks in the 70's, many in various prototype livery. These early trucks were five models of WHITE trucks and one Autocar (a division of White), all except one produced with good prototypical accuracy and level of detail similar to other toys and our S scale trains of that era (AF). However, as with our older trains, the AMOUNT of detail on these trucks has become less impressive as other manufacturers produced newer products having more and better detail: Hartoy/AHL, Greenlight, ERTL, DCP, M2, trailers by American Models and SHS, and other manufacturers. This relative lack of detail on the early Winross trucks along with high prices driven by the collector market had made Winross less attractive for our layouts; however, there are some good reasons to reconsider Winross trucks for your layout. The purpose of this article is to revisit the benefits of using these early models on our 1950-1980's layouts.

Variety - The real world has immense variety, and emulating that variety makes our layouts more realistic. The five models of WHITE produced by Winross—the 1500, 3000, 5000, 7000, and 9000 along with the Autocar heavy duty truck—provide much variety. Adding to the variety, these trucks were made with either single or dual rear axles, some with exhaust pipes, and some with the air deflectors above the cab roof that started becoming common in the late 70's.

Semi's - Winross has made a LARGE variety of trailers. Most trailers are of the 40' length and numerous styles: van, flatbed, moving van, fuel tanker, propane tanker, and cryogenic tanker. There also 32' trailers: van, tanker, and flatbed. These 32' trailers are a mix of 60's items and the more recent NOSTALGIA series.

Straight Trucks - Winross offered straight trucks both in the early years and in recent years: vans, flatbeds, utility boxes; and with the Autocar they offered dump trucks and wreckers—variety!

Prototype Livery - It is easy to dismiss the Winross van trailers as very undetailed in comparison to the excellent offerings from AM, AHL, and SHS; however, helping offset this is a huge benefit offered by Winross—the amazing number of prototypical trucking company paint schemes that they have produced. Having accurate local and national paint schemes on your layout provides great visual realism; and the Winross models provide that realism RTR, no need for painting and finding decals. For my Minnesota Heartland layout, my Winross models include these local and national liveries: Glendenning, Ryder, Ryerson, Red Owl, Roadway, PIE, Consolidated Freightways, Raymond, Time DC, Linde, Indianhead, Murphy, Roadway, and Yellow.

Price - Prices are plummeting. I have seen many models sell on eBay for half of what I paid for the same models a few years ago. Models of favorite prototype trucking companies such as PIE, Yellow, Consolidated Freightways, and Roadway have sold for

under \$20. It appears that many collections are coming on the market while there are apparently fewer buyers willing to pay the previous collector prices for them, similar to what is happening with AF trains. For example, for me Winross is not a collectible, but rather just another S scale truck; and since they have less detail than the previously mentioned newer trucks, I don't want to pay more for Winross than I do for Hartoy or M2.

Kit-Bashing - If you want a livery not available, many Winross models are cheap enough to be economical for repainting and decaling using commercial decals or your own. I have purchased cabs of a specific color for modeling a local trucking company so that I have a factory paint finish rather than painting the cab myself. Another kit-bashing option is to use Winross cabs to replace the cabs of Hartoy trucks that are too old for common use on the 1950s - 1980's layouts so common in S scale. A Winross cab grafted onto an older AHL straight truck body is a kitbash for a future Tired Iron article. Unpainted White 1500, 3000, and Autocar diecast cabs are available on eBay, along with other Winross components.

Mix and Match - Those great trailers from SHS and AM need a truck to pull them; use a Winross. Or, you may have a Hartoy semi where the trailer is appropriate for the era of your layout but the tractor is too old (for example, the Hartoy Roadway trailer that has a Model A vintage tractor, use a Winross tractor instead; see photo).

Availability - Availability is great even though many of the items were produced decades ago. eBay is of course an easy place to find Winross. Since not every livery is available all the time, you may also want to check with the eBay Winross dealers who may have on hand what you want when you want it. There are also Winross dealers that have websites; for example <https://truckhobby.com/>.

For more photos of Winross trucks, see

<http://www.trainweb.org/mhrr/mhrrreast/vehicles5.html>

For photos of prototype White trucks, see my "gallery" at

<http://www.pinterest.com/mhrrreast/winross-164th-scale-truck-prototypes/>

Note that eventually, to the benefit of modern modelers, Winross retooled to produce a much wider variety of modern trucks, also having good prototypical accuracy, that are not covered in this article.

Also note that another WHITE diecast model was produced in S scale: the W24, a diecast kit from Barry Pazan's Old Motor Trucks.

Production dates are per various web pages and the American Truck Spotter's Guide 1920-1970; Tad Burness.

Fiber Optic Marker Lights

By Chris Monje



Fiber optics make good marker light lenses. This PRR caboose uses them underneath the roof of the rear platform. It's an attractive detail.

The marker light “lens” is made by snipping the desired length of fiber optic, then rounding the end with a file. Any light source can be used. In this example I used a red LED from

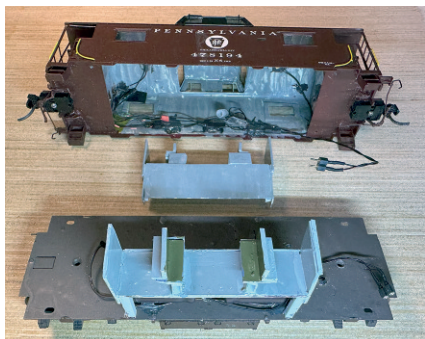
Evan Design.

<https://evandesigns.com/collections/hobby-leds>

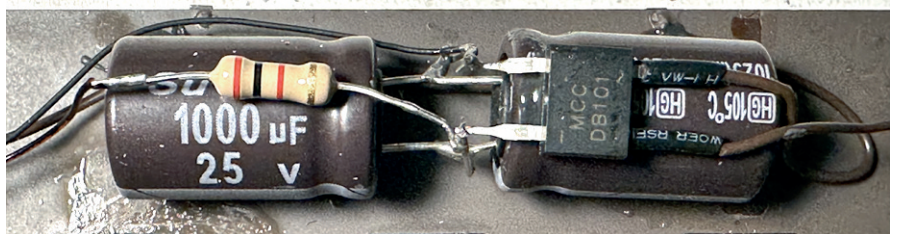
An illuminated interior is good, but then requires minimal detailing. Regardless of how optimally clean wheels and rails are, flickering lights can still be problematic.

I used 2mm fiber optic, but 1.5mm might be preferable for S gauge. Both ends of the fiber optic cable can also be colored with a red indelible marker.

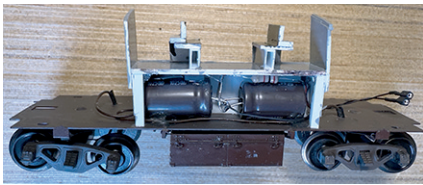
It's preferable to have a capacitor to momentarily supply power.



This interior view gives a sense of the basic interior, used to avoid an empty look.



This closeup view shows how two 1000 microfarad capacitors were joined, although a single capacitor would be completely adequate.

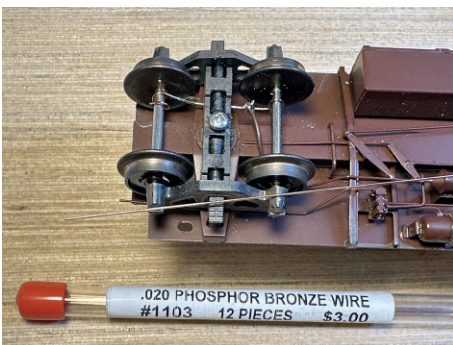


Cover for the electronics.

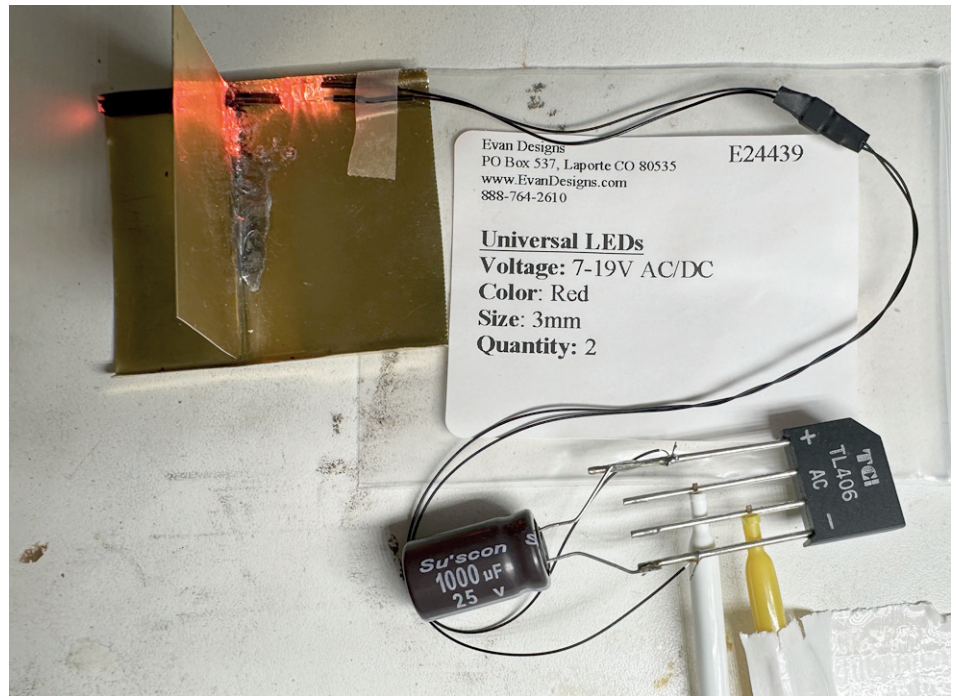
On the left is a resistor to dim the interior LEDs slightly. On the right is a black rectifier to maintain consistent polarity for the capacitor. Regardless of what type power is used, (AC, DC, DCC) the rectifier will maintain the correct polarity to the LED.



This interior view shows a surface mount LED (SMD) on the ceiling, but not visible are the LEDs for the marker lights. They are hidden under tape and epoxy. Red light is only visible at the tip of the fiber optics. Next to the caboose is an illuminated LED from Evan Designs. Visible in the picture is the module that maintains the correct voltage to the LED, so it's described as "Universal LED, Voltage 7-19V AC/DC."



Phosphor bronze wire is wrapped around the axles for improved conductivity.



This mockup illustrates what's inside the caboose and shows how things are connected electrically.

In the mockup picture, the rectifier is labeled "+ AC - ". The white and yellow clips are supplying an input of 15 volts. The output + leg of the rectifier is longer, as is the positive terminal of the capacitor. It is a convention that the positive leg is longer. The rectifier supplies a continual voltage to the capacitor; but if this supply is interrupted momentarily, the capacitor then kicks in, preventing flicker. Incidentally, the rectifier has greater capacity than what is needed for LEDs. For illustration, the labeling shows AC in and DC out.

A more sophisticated illustration is available here:

https://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/sr201509_lighting.pdf

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Out Along The Line

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NASG members



A gathering of WP F's that includes three A-B-B lash ups of freight F7's, an A-B-B set of passenger California Zephyr F3's and one of WP's initial order of FT units (Overland brass) on Bob Hogan's S scale layout. Photo by Bob Hogan.

A triple header of Gilbert CNW Baldwins laboring an incline above a string of red stripe Sante Fe streamlined cars and a Gilbert 332AC Northern on Marvin Hager's American Flyer layout. Photo by Marvin Hager.



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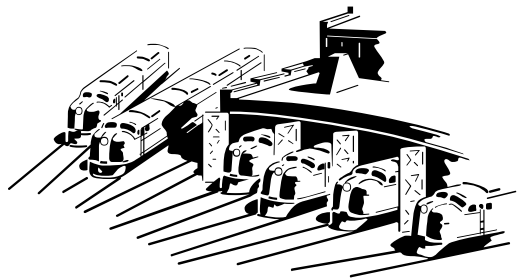
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In Memoriam

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The NASG extends sincere condolences to the family and friends of these members.

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See the NASG Website for more upcoming shows.

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May 16 & 17, 2025

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Fairfield County Fairgrounds
157 East Fair Avenue
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Central Ohio S Gaugers are proud to host the Spring S Spree 2025. The gathering of S gauge model train enthusiasts will be held at the AAA Multipurpose building on the beautiful grounds of the Fairfield County Fairgrounds in Lancaster, Ohio. Lancaster is approximately 30 mile southeast of Columbus. <https://sspre.info/>

O Scale West

May 23-25, 2025 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Santa Clara, California

The phrases Narrow Gauge West and S West will be dropped from the name; however, narrow gauge and S Scale attendance will continue to be recognized and strongly encouraged. <https://www.oscalewest.com/>

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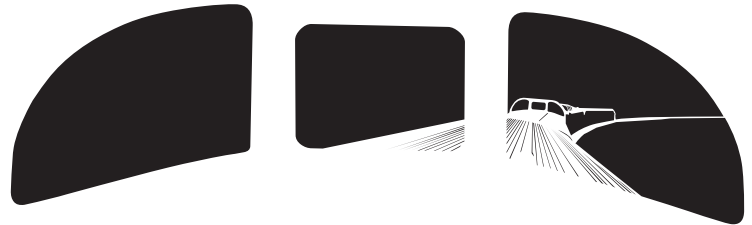
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The Connecticut S Gaugers, in conjunction with the Bristol S Gaugers and the NASG Convention Committee, are pleased to announce the 2025 National Convention to be held in Norwich, Connecticut.


<https://nasg.org/Convention/index.php>

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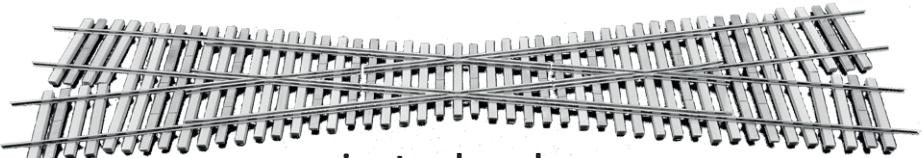
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