

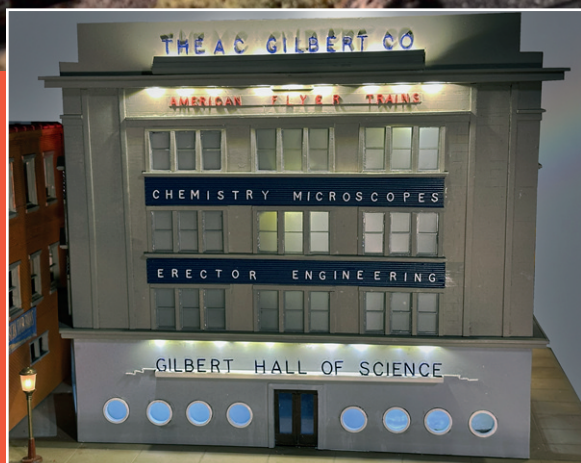


The

*A Publication Of, By and For The Members*

# DISPATCH

September/October 2025



Waiting for God  
Out Along The Line  
Gilbert's Hall of Science  
The State of S Gauge/Scale in 2025  
Badgerland S Gaugers – The History



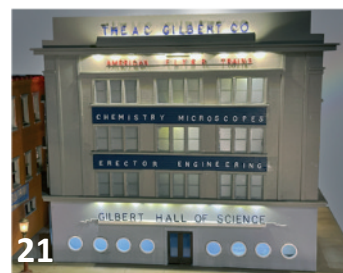


# The DISPATCH

September/October 2025

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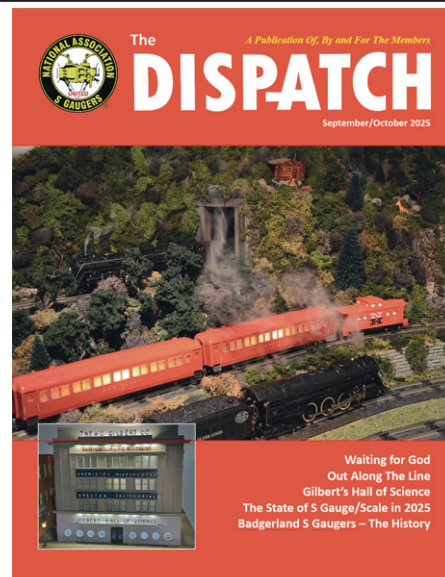


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## The COVER

*Old man of the mountain viewing unusual traffic on Nicholas Deely's railroad. See "Waiting for God" in this issue.*



**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](mailto:membership@nasg.org).

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# From the YARD OFFICE

## NASG Election Results

The results of the 2025 NASG Election are as follows:

President - **Jim Whipple**

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## FLASH BACK



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12 Dogwood Court, Middlebury, CT 06762

e-mail: [membership@nasg.org](mailto:membership@nasg.org)

## 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 1st for the January/February issue

February 1st for the March/April issue,

April 1st for the May/June issue,

June 1st for the July/August issue,

August 1st for the September/October issue,

October 1st for the November/December issue.



Welcome to the NASG Facebook Group. This Group is being designed with the goal of making S Scalpers 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



## Lionel is Still With Us

There have been a couple of comments in The Dispatch leading one to wonder if Lionel is discontinuing the American Flyer line. I reached out to Rene Schweitzer, editor of Classic Toy Trains magazine to which I subscribe, and asked her about Lionel and AF. She posted my question on the Trains dot com site with her reply. I thought you'd like to read it and perhaps share the information with Dispatch readers.

George Konder

*"I contacted Lionel with a similar question a couple of months ago, and confirmed they are NOT discontinuing the American Flyer line. They will continue to produce a few new pieces per year. In May, I interviewed CEO Howard Hitchcock and asked him a question about the future of S gauge and Lionel. Stay tuned to Trains.com for that video to learn more."*

Rene Schweitzer

## NASG Convention Pictures

If you have some good pictures from the convention, send them in, with a caption, for possible publication on the next *The Dispatch*.

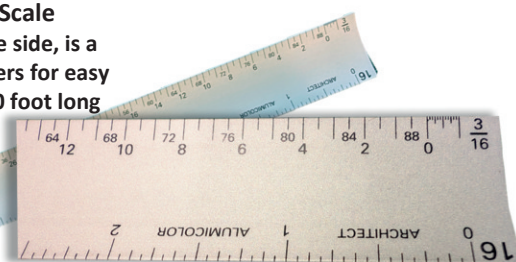
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OR send check made out to NASG to CHRIS CRNICH, 3243 W. 2600 North, Arco, ID, 83213. Include NASG membership number. Please allow 2 weeks for delivery. Questions? Email Chris at [cscrnich13@gmail.com](mailto:cscrnich13@gmail.com).





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## **SUPPORT YOUR NASG**

**Help out one of our  
Committees!**

## **S** modeling in **RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN!**

Every month on the inside front cover of RMC is an NASG ad featuring a photo of exemplary S scale modeling with directions to the NASG website for complete information about 1:64 scale modeling.



Modeling and photo by Paul Washburn



Modeling by Jerry Holmes, photo by Michael Holmes

## **WE NEED YOUR PHOTOS**

To contribute photos  
email to Brian Jackson at  
central\_vp@nasg.org

# NASG Annual Member Car



American Models 40 foot boxcar one using seven panel Superior doors and the other to use Commonwealth doors.

Superior door cars would be Monon 1. The cars in this production run started with road number 1 and ascended as cars were accepted. Monon 1 is a legend in Monon Railroad history.

Commonwealth door cars would be Monon 907. This car is a standard Monon boxcar without the history of Monon. We are tentatively planning a production run of 100 cars, 50 of each number. The production run would be for 15 scale and 35 hi-rail cars for each car number. Collectors want two car numbers with each annual car, and with this method, they can have two different door styles in addition to two different road numbers. The cars will be painted prototypical oxide red with white lettering.

Tentative pricing is \$65 apiece including shipping.

Orders can be taken through the NASG website or by mailing a check to:

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# Bill Parr's Hobby Supplies

1) Extensive selection of reproduction & original S-Gauge Parts, Replacement Decals, Stickers, Dry Transfers, Silhouettes, Smoke, Paint, Bulbs, Track (American Flyer, American Models, Fastrack, Gargraves, MTH, SHS) Road Bed, Boxes, Wire, Catalogs, Repair Manuals, Instruction Guides etc. (No lists available for above items – inquire for items wanted) Lists available for AF Sets & S Helper

- A) Gargrave's 37" Flex Track: 12 \$10ea, 13-24 \$9ea, 25-36 \$8.50ea, 37-48 \$8ea, 49 or more \$7.60ea
- B) SHS/MTH 40" Flex Track: 6-12 \$11ea, 13-24 \$10ea, 25-36 \$9ea, 37-48 \$8.50ea, 49 or more \$8 ea
- C) Repainted Like New Gray Roadbed: Straight \$5ea, Curve \$4.50ea (Quantity discounts available)
- D) New Repro AF diecast 4-wheel KC Freight Car Trucks \$12 pair (Quantity discounts available)
- E) Original S-Helper/MTH Freight Car Couplers \$10 pair (Quantity discounts available)

2) Reproduction Lionel AF & MTH S-Gauge Accessories (Limited):

- A) 594 Track Gang -\$110      B) 752 Seaboard Coal Loader -\$95      C) 755 Talking Station -\$100
- D) 774 Flood Light Tower- \$55      E) K775 Loading Platform/Car-\$129      F) 23789 Log Loader - \$125
- G) 789 Baggage Smasher -\$65      H) 23780 Gabe the Lamplighter - \$100      I) 23785 Coal Loader - \$79

3) American Models Products:

Extensive in stock inventory of the American Models Line including boxed sets, steam & diesel engines, freight & passenger cars, transformers, sound controllers, track, switches etc.

- A) 4-8-4 Northerns AC /sound: Santa Fe - \$525, WM - \$475      B) NYC Empire Boxed Set - \$750

Clearance Specials (In stock Items - Inquire): A) GG1's AC Hi-Rail w/sound -\$380, DC-\$310  
B) 5 Car H/W Passenger Sets-\$325 C) Diesels/Switchers/Locos\Cars (Inquire) -10%-20% Off

4) S-Helper Products: Huge supply of older previously issued Reefers, Box & Stock Cars, PS2'S Flat Cars, Hoppers, Cabooses, Engines, Track etc.(Call or Email for list of available items, prices)  
Special: All open top Hopper Cars - \$39, 2/\$74, 3/\$105, 4/\$132, 5/\$156, 6 or more 30 each

5) MTH Products: Special– All Box Cars, Reefers & PS2's \$45, 2/\$80, 3/\$115, 4 or more \$36 each

6) Large selection of AC Gilbert & Lionel AF Sets, Engines, Cars, Accessories etc. (inquire)

Featured Items AF: Locomotives: A) 313 EXC \$225 B) 316 EXC \$245 C) K325 EXC - \$195 D) 332AC EXC \$375  
E) 342AC EXC+O/W \$225 F) 21004 EX+OB'S \$395 G) 21099 EX \$300 H) 21155 EXC+ \$225 I) 21139 EXC - \$895  
Boxed Sets(complete)(Condition grades shown are for set contents–some set boxes are of lesser grade):  
A) 4611 (47) EX+ \$450 B) 4914A EX+ \$550 C) 5311T EX+ \$295      D) 5205W EXC+ \$850 E) 5334T (54) EXC \$700  
F) 5364W (54) EXC+ \$850 G) 5580H EXC to EX+ \$795 H) 20558 LN/ Mint \$1500, EXC+ \$1250 I) 20814 EX+ \$495  
Accessory: A)792 Terminal LN OB \$195 B)795 Union Sta/Terminal LN OB \$275 C)799 Union Sta. EX+OB \$145  
Lionel AF Mint Sets: SP \$450, ERIE ABA + 4 \$425, BM \$295, CO \$450, 48008 NH+4 49605/48943 cars \$395,  
48130 Santa Fe AA+ 48944 4Pk \$475, 49600 UP \$395, 49602 NP \$700, 49604 WP \$400, 49606 Sil/Flash \$425  
49611 NYC \$525, 49612 BO Mikado w/48965 2PK \$795, 49613 SOU Work Set \$295,49624 CO/Defender/Set \$450  
Diesels: GP7: 8350 BM \$195, GP9: 48014 NP \$160, 48017 NKP AA \$250, 49033, RI \$275, 48023 Santa FE \$325  
Steam: A) 484: 48047 UP \$295, 48054 UP \$425 B) Mikado: 48036 NYC \$365, 48041 UP \$425 48042 SOU \$399  
C) Challengers: 48082 UP \$750, 48084 UP \$750, 48085 DRGW \$725 D) Y3'S: 48180 NW \$950, 48178 ATSF \$895

Numerous other Accessories, Cars, Locomotives(steam & diesel) & Sets available - (no list-please inquire)

Send all orders for above listed items or requests for availability of other items not listed to;

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be notified of actual cost for payment

# NEW PRODUCTS

By Jeff Madden

It seems that the hot items nowadays are the 3D printing products ranging from loco shells, rolling stock, structures and detail parts. The manufacturers usually are mentioned on our NASG website. Mostly these are small companies that produce on demand. Many are home based as well. I'm sure this is a growing trend for the hobby of model railroading, especially for the minority scales like S.

Most rely on the Internet and E-Bay for promoting their products. Prices are often reasonable too. Most items come unpainted which is OK for most modelers. Paint schemes on rolling stock and locomotive shells, however, are more complicated and could discourage some. Maybe the custom

painters can step in to fulfill this void? Below are a couple of traditional manufacturers and retailers, plus, there are several 3D printing outfits as I mentioned above.

Diecast Direct is always a good site to check for newly released 1/64th scale vehicles and accessories.  
diecastdirect.com

Earnest Trains lists some 3D printed Buckeye truck kits for \$25.  
www.earnesttrains.com

Frisco Factory – See NASG website: Has some close to 1/64 structures of which many are cast-brick main street types.

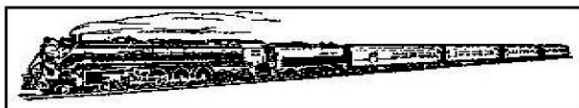
Check out our website and eBay.

HD Custom Designs (see the NASG website) an example of their offerings includes a Weirton Jct. Signal House (PRR) for \$34.50. The footprints are: 5.7" wide, 4.5" deep and 5.3" high.

Phil's Train Layout Store lists 3D printed parts for GP9s and SD9s that include exhaust stacks (\$3.00), torpedo tubes (\$4.00). They also list various loads such as transformers for about \$10.00 each. Four dwarf signals list for \$10.00. A phone booth is \$3.00.  
www.philstrainlayoutstore.com



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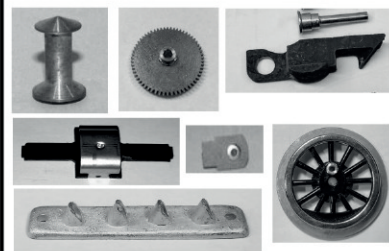
6 Storeybrooke Drive; Newburyport, MA 01950 (978)-888-0782

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR PRODUCT CATEGORIES & INVENTORIES !

### MONTHLY "FLASH-SALES"

Watch our website or FaceBook page each month for our 10-day selection of special sale items, as we work on inventory liquidation during 2024-2025.

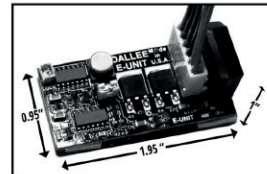
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# Down at the Depot

By Carl Rudolph

Well, here we are in the middle of summer, and so far, here in Northern California, it has felt like May. Pleasantly warm but not hot at all. Meanwhile a whole lot of the rest of the country is sweltering, and floods seem to be everywhere in the news. So there is a lot of grief and horror out there that makes it imperative that we turn to S gauge trains for some therapeutic relief! Here's the S news:

**The South Jersey S Gaugers** had a clinic presented by **Michael McConnell** providing tips for taking good pictures with a cell phone. We all like to see good pictures of trains, so this subject was most apropos! **Jim Oliver** showed his handiwork in 3D printing with models of the Riverline Transit, complete with finished interiors. Very nice work. Members of the club also went over to Pennsylvania to ride the West Chester Railroad for the "Lunch Special" excursion, which they certainly enjoyed! The club layout is slumbering for the summer with the next outing in September. See more about Mr. McConnell at the end of the column!

**The Baltimore Area American Flyer Club** had a successful meeting at the Zurads' home at which the proposed bylaw amendments passed with "Flyer" colors! The club is looking into an excursion to ride the Northern Central Railway in New Freedom, PA, (as suggested by **David Blair**) and are hoping to get enough takers to fill a coach. The club has a bunch of plans for setting up the layout this fall starting with their highly anticipated Strasburg show at the Pennsylvania Railroad Museum.

In the Jacksonville area, the **North Florida Division of the Atlantic Coast S Gaugers** met at **Larry Shughart's** barn. They discussed future layout setups at the Beaches Museum and at the Lake Nona TCA show, ate some snacks and ran trains. Sounds perfect!

**The Pittsburgh S Gaugers** had a couple of meetings at the Club House of

Vincentian Villa (a local retirement community) at which **Jon Knox** provided a presentation on various methods of layout construction and **Gary Schuette** presented methods to improve Plasticville models for S scale purposes. A Greenberg Train Show is up next for the club layout(s), and of course the club is deep into planning for next year's Spring S Spree!

**The Cuyahoga Valley S Gauge Association** (Cleveland area) had the improved tinsplate layout at the L.O.T.S. convention that was held in the same hall that the club uses for its Snow Dogs show in January. The tinsplate layout now allows DC operation on all lines and has new scenery to boot. They are planning to create a new lightweight layout (as are other clubs) to make setup and teardown easier. More to come on this issue, we are sure!

**The Central Ohio S Gaugers** report that the Spree (which they hosted) was a huge success with all vendor tables sold, over 5,000 hits on the Spree website, over 200 attendees, and 27 pizzas and two pounds of salad eaten! Vendors were happy with sales, and attendees had a good time. What a wonderful report from president **John Myers**! Then they topped it off with the annual summer picnic and meeting at Marion Union Station. Of course they had to pause the meeting and conversations every time a train went by—which is every few minutes there—so all had a good time there too! Kudos to the club!

**The Southeastern Michigan S Gaugers** met at **Gaylord Gill's** home at which the club discussed progress on planning for the 2026 NASG convention. The club displayed the layout at the local National Train Show in July; and three club members (**Bill Bartlam**, **Bob Rose**, and **Gaylord Gill**) all had open houses during the NMRA National Convention held in Novi. Good, classy exposure for S!

**The Badgerland S Gaugers** report, via correspondent **Ron Schlicht**, that the HO

club (called the Gandy Dancers) with which they share a clubhouse had an open house with S-Trains setting up a display and having a presentation. That should have been good! And the club is selling the AF collection of the late well-known Flyer expert **Brad Nelson**.

**The Chicagoland Association of S Gaugers** met at **Chuck Hempfling's** home. A week before that, a group of club members went to Rochelle, IL for a day of train watching. We are sure that most of you know that Rochelle is a trainwatcher's paradise with diamonds and lots of trains. Rochelle has constructed an elevated and covered viewing stand so you can see all the action. It had to be a great day! More events were planned for the summer—the Illinois Railroad Museum Vintage Transportation Day, East Troy Railfan Day, and Monticello, IL RR Museum Railroad Days! Hope to hear reports on those outings!

**The Kansas City S Gaugers** are not meeting at their new Clubhouse above Sol's Jewelry for a very good reason—central AC is being installed for the second floor! Your scribe was born in Kansas City (MO) and visited grandparents many times there so I know what it's like to not have AC in the summer. So the meeting was at **Bill Hutton's** office again where they set up temporary track and ran trains. Plans for the Mid America Train Show were discussed.

In the San Francisco Bay area, the **Golden Gate American Flyer Club** has met at **Bill Riechmann's** and **Rich Lenart's** homes. Besides show-and-tell and running layouts (and ogling collections), the club is working on a long-term project of creating (or updating, not sure which) an AF rarity guide, which surely creates fun discussions!

**The Miami Valley S Gaugers** (Dayton area) had a great outing at the Spring S Spree held in Lancaster, (OH).



*The Miami Valley S Gaugers at Railfest in Dayton's Carillon Park.*

There were lots of members to help out, and lots of attendees to enjoy their labors. That's what we call a success! The club

met at **Richard Boehm's** home where they enjoyed his large AF layout. Then there was the annual Railfest at Carillon

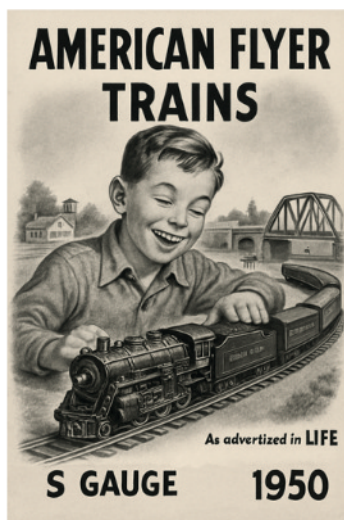
Park, which was also a great success. See the nearby photo above of the layout under the replica Wright Flyer!

**The Southern California S Gaugers Club** (Los Angeles area) is actively looking into venues and caterers for the next S Fest West. That is good news for us western S gaugers—always glad to hear that they are planning another one! Applications have been made for exhibiting the layout at several train shows but no response noted as yet. They met at **Ron Varnell's** home and enjoyed the meeting so much they voted to declare him “ember emeritus,” which would normally mean he is now a retired member?

That's all we have this time around except for this news: you may have noticed a small announcement in the last issue of *The Dispatch* that your scribe is retiring from writing this drivel.

The next issue (Nov/Dec) will be my last one—but don't worry, my replacement is already on board. I am very happy to announce that he is **Michael McConnell**, Secretary and Newsletter Editor of the South Jersey S Gaugers. He is a very active member of that club and also writes very well—much better than my poor attempts at it. The column will be in good hands.

Next issue we will list his email address for sending club communications to him rather than to me. And after I'm retired I will keep trackin'.



*Some people call it "AI slop," but every once in a while we can do some neat things with AI.*

*Made up ads generated by ChatGPT*





## Improving the Operation of Gilbert Diesel Motors

What I decided to write about for this issue was your preparation process for keeping the Flyer diesels you have running as well as possible. To have more fun running trains tuning up of the motors of Gilbert PA, Geeps, and EP-5 can make it happen.

American Flyer PA and GP-7 Diesels and the EP-5 New Haven Electric contain motors that don't always satisfy. These motors are small, and they have a few questionable design elements, too. Some motor chassis are so badly worn that they must be replaced or rebushed. However, many will perform quite well if properly maintained using some simple procedures.

My two-motor A units pull two dummy engines and five passenger cars up trestles at speed, and my single motor units run well too. While repairing these motors can be complex, there are three simple steps that will elevate many, if not most Gilbert diesels to a very satisfactory level of operation. These three steps are the topic of this article.

### Step One - Lubrication and Cleaning

The original factory instructions for maintaining Gilbert diesels should be ignored! The service kits that Gilbert sold to maintain their locomotives contained items that are brutal by today's standards: a heavy Vaseline gear grease, a thick blended motor oil, and large-grained emery boards for cleaning commutators. Fortunately, better materials are now available.

The original oil delivery system in AF diesel is no good either. It depended on cotton wicks to deliver oil upward from the bottom of the truck (the two holes marked "oil") to the outside of the porous armature bearings, which were impregnated with oil when they were manufactured. By now the oil wicks are clogged, and the original oil that impregnated the bearings has hardened. They aren't very porous any more. A light synthetic oil such as LaBelle should be applied directly to the joint between the bearing and the shaft with a needle tip oiler. It does a much better job of lubricating too! The new oil has one disadvantage, it doesn't stay the way the old type of oil did.

Therefore, you have to lubricate more often. Any loco that hasn't been run in a while should be lubricated before being run. Oil the axel bearings in the dummies and cars your diesels will pull also. This will drastically reduce their work load.

If the wheels of your diesel's power truck are locked up, the culprit is most likely old grease, which can harden to a rock-like consistency over time. In this case, it's best to disassemble the motor truck completely (don't remove the wheels and axels though) and soak the chassis and wheels in mineral spirits for a few hours. Then clean the old grease out of the gears and gear wells with a toothbrush and toothpicks

Since the mineral oil spirits tend dry out the Pull-Mor rubber traction tires, rub a few drops of

3-in-1 oil into them when you are finished. Don't soak the armature, but do clean the old grease out of the worm gears on each end with a toothbrush and mineral spirits. Be sure to keep the mineral spirits out of the coil windings. While the motor is disassembled, you can maintain the armature. Polish the commutator plates with #600 sandpaper then wipe them off with a clean rag. Apply a drop or two of modern oil to each armature bearing joint. Spin the bearing on the shaft and move it back and forth. Wipe off the oil and apply more. Repeat as necessary. This will flush grime, dirt, and hardened lubricants out of the inside of the bearing joint. Put a drop of oil on each axel hole joint too. While the motor is disassembled, you should probably replace the brush springs. This is described in the next section of this article.

If the wheels on your power trucks are not locked up, you can clean and lubricate it without disassembling the locomotive. Just remove the sideframe set from the bottom of the motor chassis. With the loco upside down, look into the two gear wells with a flashlight. You should be able to see part of the armature shaft and the lip of the egg-shaped bronze bearing in each, if there's not much old grease in the way. Use the needle tip oil bottle to apply a drop of oil to each bearing/shaft joint. Always do this before running diesels that have been in storage. (Don't get oil in the commutator. If you do, it will burn and the motor will stop

running. You will have to disassemble the motor and clean the oil off.) Whether or not you disassemble the motor, if there is no grease on the gears, apply a small dab of modern gear grease such as LaBelle's to each axle gear. Not much is needed. The motor action will spread it around.

To clean a commutator without disassembling the motor, remove the sideframe assembly. Attach wires with alligator clips from your transformer to the trucks. With the motor running and the loco held in the air or on blocks, hold a 3/8" wide strip of #600 sandpaper, folded several times, against the commutator. It will get shiny in a few seconds. You can clean the slots of the commutator with a toothpick.

By the way, never apply power for more than a few seconds to a non-running motor as this can burn out the armature. If the motor doesn't run, take apart the loco and find out why. A quick spray of contact cleaner onto the reverse unit is always a good first step for a non-running locos that haven't been run in years. Don't get the contact cleaner on the loco's finish, though.

## Step Two - Replacing the Brush Springs

Replacing the brush springs always make AF diesels run better. The arms of good brush springs, when unclipped from the brush arm ends, should form a 90 degree angle. Most don't any more. A simple test will indicate if changing springs will help your motor. With the side frames off, attach the alligator clips, hold the loco or chassis in the air, and run the motor. While it is running, push gently against each brush in turn with a small insulated screwdriver or wooden stick. If this causes the motor to run faster, and thus make a higher-pitched sound, new springs will probably help it. The old springs aren't pushing the brushes against the commutator hard enough.

Reproduction brush springs vary in quality from dealer to dealer. Make sure you locate a good source. They come in pairs, the left and right springs are mirror images of each other. They run about \$3 a pair. If you replace one, it's a good idea to replace both. The springs are L-shaped, with a coil at the corner of the L. One arm of each spring ends in a small bend that fits up inside a tiny hole in the upper panel of the brush bracket. On most replacement springs, this bent end is slightly too long and can cut into the motor's field coil. Cut a small amount, 1/32" or so, from this end of each spring.

The motor truck must be separated from the loco chassis to access the brush assembly. Two types of AF diesel motors were produced. The later ones had a double yoke, and the complete box assembly can be snapped out of the yoke, and the complete motor can be snapped out of the outer yoke. The earlier ones had a single yoke. The best way to access this type for servicing, once the body is removed from the chassis, is to unsolder the wire on top of the yoke stud, remove any remaining solder, remove the clip that holds the truck in place, and pull the motor down and out of the chassis. Save all the washers and note their order and location for reassembly. You may find that separating the reverse unit from the chassis will give you more slack in the rainbow wire that leads to the motor. This is done by removing

the screw that holds the reverse unit to the floor, setting the reverse unit locking lever in the middle, and wobbling the unit to free its two little feet from their holes in the floor. Some models have small straps that hold the rainbow wires in place. These can be freed by removing a single screw.

The first thing to do is remove the brush bracket assembly from the motor. It is held in place by two small screws that also hold one of the armature bearing straps. The brush bracket assembly, except for the very earliest models, contains two black fiberboard panels, one on top of the other. These are very fragile. The point of this exercise is to change the brush springs without damaging the cardboard pieces. If they are torn, the bracket will not hold the brushes correctly and must be replaced.

The brushes and their wires are very fragile too. Always grasp the brush arms rather than the brushes themselves. Exercise maximum cautions and gentleness throughout this procedure.

Gently lift the outer or free end of each spring over the end of the brush arm that it pushes against, freeing it. The top of the brush bracket should now look something like Step 1 on the drawing. Avoid snagging the wire to the brush with the end of the spring when you do this. Unscrew the two screws that hold the brush bracket in place and lift it off. Then, either work the brush arms out of the cardboard holder or fold them down and out of the way.

Next, use a surgical forceps with curved tips or a similar tool to rotate the top panel of the brush bracket as shown in Step 2 in the drawing. This will have the effect of moving one of the tiny holes in the top panel so that it sticks out past the edge of the lower panel under it. Now it is finally possible to remove the springs without tearing the cardboard panel. Remove the spring and slip a new one in its place. Then rotate the top panel in the other direction to free and replace the spring on the other side. Return the upper panel to its original position with the new springs in place, push the brush arms back into their original positions, and replace the bracket on the motor chassis. Once again, be careful not to break the brushes off the brush arms.

The final step is to tuck the ends of the new springs behind the brush arms. During this process, it is easy to damage the springs. The free end of the spring can bend across the coil at the spring's center resulting in a great loss of spring pressure. To forestall this, drop a short

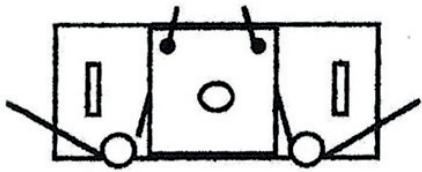
6-32 machine screw inside the coil of the spring. Then bend the arm over and around the brush wire and tuck it in behind the end of the brush arm. **See Step 3 in the drawing on next page.**

After the brush spring is in place, remove the screw (you may have to unscrew it) and drop it into the second spring. Snap the end of that spring into place as well and remove the screw.

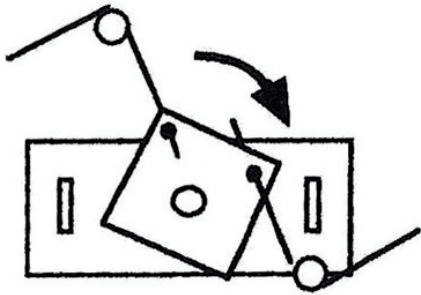
## Step Three - Tightening the Straps

The white metal of the motor chassis is rather soft. The axle holes enlarge easily, and screw threads strip if you merely breathe on them too hard.

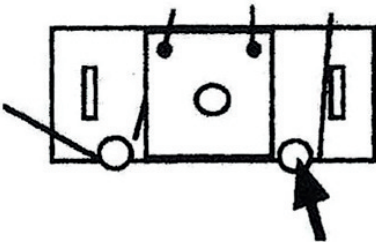




**Step 1. Free the end of each brush spring from the brush arms.**



**Step 2. Rotate the top panel of the brush mount to the right to remove and replace the left brush spring. Rotate it in the other direction to replace the other spring.**



**Step 3. Insert a 6-32 screw into each new spring hole before tucking the new spring end behind the brush arm. Then remove the screw.**

The armature is held down by two brass straps, each of which are attached to the motor chassis with two small screws. One of the straps is under the brush bracket, held by the same screws that hold the bracket.

These two straps must be screwed down tightly. Since the axel holes are probably somewhat enlarged, tight straps are necessary

to force the worms on the armature to mesh correctly with the axel gears.

Even one loose strap screw can cause a loss of speed and power, yet the threads in the screw holes will strip if you tighten the screws too much. I like to take a side view of the chassis as I tighten a strap screw. From this angle, it's easy to see when the head has pulled the strap down all the way flush with the chassis. It's not necessary to tighten the screw more than that. All four screws should be that tight.

Many motor chassis already have one or more stripped strap screw holes. If the threads in a hole are stripped, replace the original S171 self-tapping screw with a 2-56 machine screw, 2/16" long. These are slightly thicker and will cut more and better threads into the screw holes for a tighter grip. You can find these in various places. You can also cut down a longer 2-56 screw to a 3/16" shaft length. Wind a 2-56 hex nut all the way onto the screw before you cut it. Then unwind and rewind the nut over the cut a few times to re-establish the thread.

Proper cleaning and lubrication, replacing the brush springs, and tightening the straps, will drastically improve the performance of many AF diesel motors.

I hope this article on tuning up your Gilbert diesel motors will make the trains operate at peak effectiveness. Your friends and family will be more impressed with your hobby skills.

May there be new trains in your future. As always, if you have questions or ideas for future articles write me at [billstrains@aol.com](mailto:billstrains@aol.com).



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# Waiting for God

Text and Photos by Nicholas Deely



*The snowplow run through the Alaska Range on my layout.*

As I approach my 98th birthday, and compete with Methuselah for longevity, I refuse to relegate my life to one of “Waiting for God.” Rather, my goal is to remain focused on fulfilling my dreams while creating new ones. “Waiting for God” is that period in life that we euphemistically call the “Golden Years.”

Our trains have had their “last run,” and our railway has gone to the Valhalla of

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“Waiting for God” was a BBC Sitcom that first aired June 28, 1990. It ran for five seasons.

all model railroads. Sadly, the “last run” is the harbinger of mindless, artificial endeavors, such as the narcotic to and from excursions on the rocking chair... embellished, periodically, by witless games of Bingo.

Our “last run” comes, however, at the same time that we have reached the apogee of our knowledge, skills and wisdom. Ideally, we should, at this time, pass on to others these attributes that we, in turn, have received from our experiences in life. With this exchange with friends comes new horizons... ultimately for all!

To understand this mutational exchange, one must remember that everything in life is relative - and that CHANGE is the only constant, for we live in a world of constant adaptation. Two people evaluating a given image, or a set of facts, often have different conclusions. Accordingly, with new visions come new experiences, and a whole new life.

This ability to readjust your life comes from the fact that your brain is not “fixed” but adapts itself to the experiences that it encounters. Since the brain functions through the integration of specialized cells and nerves, new cells

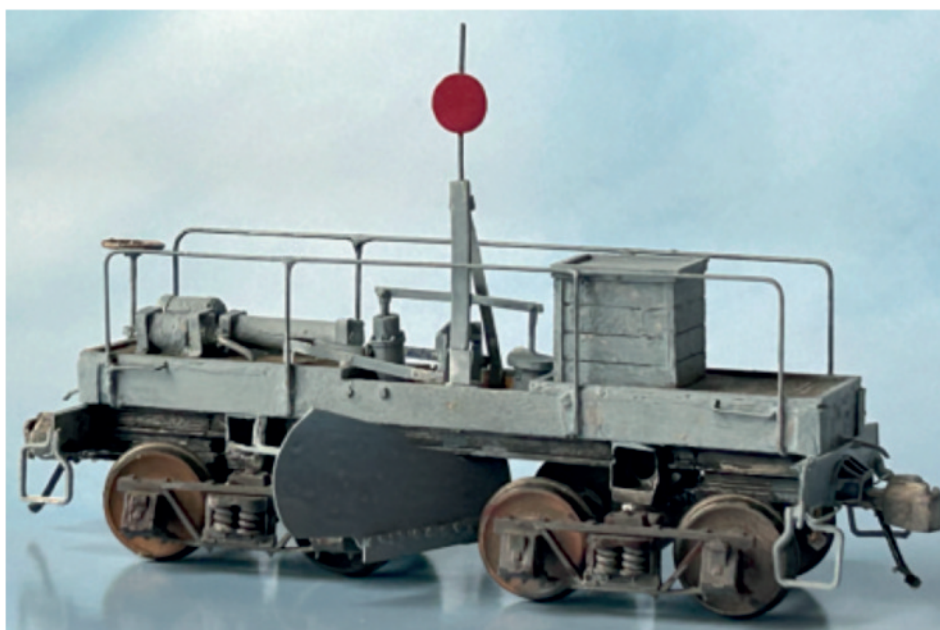




*Kiskissink Station in Northern Quebec. Built from a modified B.T.S. kit.*



*Rebuilt Pacific Rail boxcar. A gesture of deference to my Mexican friends.*



*Scratch-built D&RGW narrow gauge flanger with standard gauge truck. Prototype based on the Burlington Railroad.*

and nerves are developed with the advent of new experiences and then integrated into the existing neurological pattern of the brain. Not only do you now have a new perspective on life, but, as reported medically, you have a greater chance of NOT suffering from dementia.

Therefore, climb back into your virtual locomotive cab, give two blasts on the whistle, and slowly pass through that dead end switch onto the new, rebuilt mainline. New friends and unimaginable adventures await as you return to that band of S Gauge modelers who have distinguished themselves among model railway hobbyists. Never have so few accomplished so much with so little!

## About the Author

After reading Nicholas' article submission, Phil Scandura, Assistant Scale Editor for *The Dispatch*, asked about his history with model trains and how he got started. Nicholas replied, "Originally a Northern New Englander (my Yankee accent to this day still identifies me), I am very much an Alaskan. During the Second World War, I served in the U.S. Navy, aboard ship in the South Pacific. I have no knowledge of how I became interested in trains except that, even as a young lad, I was fascinated when I saw a train snaking through some scenic area. Thanks to Jim Doyle, of Northeastern Scale Models (Andover, Massachusetts), I was introduced to S Scale and have been a firm advocate ever since. I find the enjoyment of the challenge and creativity of piecing together models with various parts to transform the ordinary into extraordinary. The models are an opportunity to replicate the reality of life and bring it into representation within my home. The layout in my home has grown over the decades with a vision of portraying the beautiful landscapes that trains traverse and the wild animals and people that vitalize those environments."

Indeed, it is quite apparent from the photos that Nicholas is adept at transforming the ordinary into extraordinary. He noted that the station and rolling stock models were built during the last year. They are simply amazing to me.

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# The State of S Gauge/Scale in 2025

By Arthur E. Zinn



*Reverse loop of S gauge over O gauge amusement park on lower level*

**American Flyer** ceased production in 1966

**Lionel American Flyer** first produced 1979

**American Models** started up around 1980 (*Ron Bashista*)

**S Helper Service** founded 1989 (*Don Thompson and Michael Ferraro*)

**S Helper Service** sold to MTH 2013

**MTH** produced a limited amount of S gauge engines and freight cars 2017 to 2021

**Scale Trains** bought S gauge tooling from MTH June 2022

**Don Heimburger** owner of **Scenery Unlimited** and publisher of the *S Gaugian* dies 6/10/2022

**Scale Trains** produced a number of S gauge freight cars in 2022 but apparently stopped production soon after

*Ron Bashista* of **American Models** dies 12/4/2021

**American Models** is still in business but greatly reduced production.

**Lionel American Flyer** will only be producing a few new pieces pre year

At the present time the only full line of S gauge trains being produced are from **American Models**





***Largest section of layout including stores and freight yard***

When I was ten years old I had Lionel trains and a neighbor kid my age had a vast collection of American Flyer trains. To make things worse I had O27 track, which had incredibly small radius and 3 rails. It was obviously a toy train track. My engines were short and obviously not to scale, and my steam locos had wheel arrangements that did not exist in the real world: 2-4-2, 2-6-4 and 2-6-2. My friend's steam locomotives were sleek, sported sharp looking white wall tires, and had a realistic chug chug sound. The PA-1 locos were beautiful and realistic looking. To top it off, the 2-rail tinplate track looked amazing when pressed into black rubber roadbed.

When I got a paper route and started to earn my own money, I bought a Lionel engine only to discover that it had a 2-position reversing unit, which meant when there was disruption in power the engine went from full power forward to full power reverse, insuring a derailment and trains falling to the concrete basement floor and becoming badly damaged.

I bailed out of large scale-trains and switched to HO. I was enamored with the vast array of equipment available and the amount of scenery and building products available. All was not happiness, however. This was the age of the X2F coupler in HO that looked like a toy coupler and, due to the strong spring meant to keep the cars from becoming uncoupled, caused many derailments. The uncoupling pin had a tendency to snag on switches, causing more

derailments. There was also, even in HO, the ongoing battle between technical practicality and prototype modeling. Half of the cars used truck-mounted couplers that greatly reduced derailments but were problematic when coupled to body-mounted prototypical couplers. I thought my problems could be resolved switching to KD couplers but found the various conversion kits resulted in poor coupler alignment and drooping couplers fouling switches, once again causing derailments and accidental uncoupling. Of course the

major problem with HO was manufacturers being too cheap to provide two power trucks and split-axle electrical pickup on all eight wheels. This, coupled with brass track, resulted in frequent stalling and, despite constantly cleaning the track, trains still stalling.

My next stop was N gauge. Introduced in the early 1960s, this was new to me in 1970, and the first few years were not all that smooth. The track was obviously oversized and the horn hook couplers were ugly. However, the trains almost never derailed or uncoupled. Track was nickel silver and only had to be cleaned occasionally. Early motive power was primitive and frequently used nylon spur gears that would frequently wear out. Then Kato came along, and suddenly engines ran well. I was in heaven since I could build a nice layout in a locked room in the basement that my kid's friends could not vandalize or steal from.

By 1982 MPC was producing Lionel trains again, and that became what we put around the Christmas tree. The appearance of these trains was disappointing, but the play value was great. We used to put the kid's hamsters in the box car and have it travel around the layout. It drove the cat nuts because she could smell the hamsters but could not quite figure out where they were.



***Bridge over railroad track leaving downtown***





**American Flyer whistling Billboard that my son restored mechanically, with graphics by my daughter.**

The Disney cars were great for the kids, and you couldn't beat the operating milk car for operational reliability. As the kids neared graduation from high school, I began thinking in terms of a large-scale layout once we emptied the nest. We were still living paycheck to paycheck, so I dove into American Flyer link coupler trains. These were dirt cheap at flea markets and train shows, and I got a decent collection of them. When we moved to a larger home and all of my kids had graduated from high school, the basement was mine.

My first layout was all American Flyer link coupler and some of the new Lionel American Flyer trains. I missed the operating cars as well as the far greater choice of equipment from the O gauge



**Town Hall and Fire Department Plasticville buildings**

arena. I decided not to have to make an all or nothing choice. I began my current layout, which is S gauge on the top and O gauge on the bottom.

From this history you can see that I have had a great deal of experience in all of the popular gauges of toy/model trains. I have found that if you have a good deal of space to deal with the larger scales, S and O provide a good deal of protection from derailments, unplanned uncouplings, and dead spots. From an operator perspective, this is critical. I remember visiting a railroad club in New Jersey that had two layouts. One was 2-rail O scale and the other was HO. At the show, the O scale layout ran flawlessly with the operators controlling everything from their consoles. In the meantime, the HO layout employed about 6 teenagers to continually prod stalled trains to motion, rerail derailed trains and reunite uncoupled trains. It was pure chaos. I do have to admit that whoever built Northlandz in New Jersey was somehow able to work around these issues, and this giant layout seemed to have few operational problems. This, however, is the exception.

In 1969 when American Flyer ceased production, it was the possible death knell of S gauge. For the following 10 years the

only source of S gauge trains was second-hand equipment at train shows, flea markets, and eBay. Note that even when American Flyer was being produced, the only S scale buildings were Plasticville, which were OK but required a lot of kit bashing to make them look quasi-realistic. Fences, street lights, platform railings and pedestrian crossovers were non-existent. We had to depend on Hot Wheels for cars, and we had to paint our own figures, for which I did not have much talent.

Then in 1979 Lionel began slowly to resurrect S gauge trains with offerings increasing each year. About that time American Models and S Helper Service came on-line, and it looked like S gauge was saved. Lionel fixed a number of issues regarding American Flyer engines, and a major breakthrough was redesigning the GP7 to have real 4-wheel trucks rather than a PA-1 truck frame missing the center wheels. All wheels powered and improved electrical pickup made the Lionel American Flyer GP7s something an S gauger could be proud of. Similarly reengineering the EP-5 to have all power trucks and improved electrical pickup was another game changer. Budd streamliners were rerun, and a dining car was added. They even created decent-looking steam era rolling stock to replace the original poor-quality American Flyer steam era passenger trains. For some reason, however, they never provided a 10-6 sleeper car.

S Helper began producing an excellent line of box cars, reefers, and colorful hopper cars; and American Models began producing some amazing stuff such as the Amtrak superliner car set, the shrouded Pacific Empire State Express with interior decorated cars, and an array of first generation diesels and freight cars. I also adored the Southern Crescent set with its green Pacific and steam era cars.



**Mobil Gas Station built from kit and K-line Super Market**





*Union Station end view showing extra platform and extensions*

Things were looking good for S gauge, but there was no one seriously looking at the long-term health of the hobby and paying attention to a number of missing products required to keep a train scale alive. Toy trains have a two-phase customer base. The first phase is from age ten until a boy gets interested in girls. At this age trains are mostly received as birthday or Christmas gifts and paid for by his parents. Most young boys lack the financial ability to buy high-end products, and most enjoy playing with their trains on a 4x8-ft train layout. Serious well-decorated large layouts require money, time, and a large space. The only thing young boys have is time. The second market for toy trains/model railroaders is the empty nesters/retired crowd. By now they have become financially stable; and with the kids out of the house, they have the time and money to build a serious layout and begin to collect all of the trains they could not afford to buy when they were kids. Note that the post-war boom in train sales coincided with the arrival of the baby boomers and ended when the baby boomers married and started having kids. The hobby's renaissance coincided with the baby boomers entering the empty nest stage of their lives. The thing is that without the period of 10 to 21

year olds building an interest in trains, the empty nest bonanza does not occur.

Lionel recently emphasized selling to the very well-off with \$1000 locomotives with Legacy control systems that have a tendency to break down within two years and are almost impossible to repair due to lack of parts and skilled technicians. The far more reliable and reasonably priced Lion Chief control system is restricted to beginner sets. They are totally losing the interested-in-building generation to lack of interesting compatible and affordable trains.

As the main market for high-end "toy" trains declines due to baby boomers moving to retirement communities and dying, things don't look good for any large company to continue investing in this product line. The lack of S scale buildings, light posts, stair cases, and other scenery details also makes it hard for anyone to go into S scale even if he or she likes the size of S scale.

The thing that could save S scale is a retailer who would showcase everything in 1:64 scale in a single catalog so that buyers would know what is available. Currently what is available in 1:64 scale is not marketed as S scale but as diorama scale.

This was done in 1970 for N scale by The N Shop. The other possible savior of S scale would be 3D printing. I have a 3D printer but have been thwarted by the lack of training information on where to look for S scale printing files and, primarily, training materials on how to rescale HO and O scale files to S scale. This 3d revolution, which is happening now, is a game changer. 3D printing could also create a cottage industry of custom-made 1:64 scenery details. Again, this would require a retailer finding all of these small producers and advertising their wares. NASG has done some work in this area, but it needs more details and a search engine and a forum available to all S gaugers, not just NASG members

Another weak point in recent S gauge production is that the product mix is still targeting baby boomers, and that market is continuing to shrink. Trains the young people see today need to be produced. The fact that we only have four significantly sized railroads left and that most current rolling stock has no imaginative paint schemes and faded lettering, rust, and extensive graffiti. This means that model makers have to lean more heavily on passenger trains, both Amtrak and commuter rail. This equipment for the most part has some very attractive paint schemes and a vast variety of car and engine designs. The downside is that the toy model manufacturers until recently killed the play value of passenger cars by making it impossible to access the interior of passenger cars and failing to provide detailed interiors as sold or even as upgrade kits. LEGO is the only train that you can open up the roof and put passengers into the car or remove them. I know myself that even though my collection right now is stable, I would purchase a lot of Amtrak modern engines, cars and high speed-trains if they were to become available. I have in O gauge an NJT ALP 46 engine and a string of double-decker coaches that I really enjoy.

Since S scale really has the best size trains I feel that if somebody can fix some of the issues I have outlined in this article, S scale could again be a major contender in the toy train market place.



# Gilbert's Hall of Science

By Chris Monje



*In deciding to model this building, I realized that six stories would not be a good fit for my space. Using the modeler's license of "selective compression," I reduced it to four stories. This model represents, more than replicates, the building.*

I plan to bring this model of Gilbert's Hall of Science to the July 2025 NASG convention. It could be something for display.

New York's Gilbert Hall of Science opened in 1941, and is well documented on website [www.americanflyerdisplays.org](http://www.americanflyerdisplays.org). The Fifth Avenue window featured American Flyer trains. I'm glad I saw the layout before it closed in 1958.

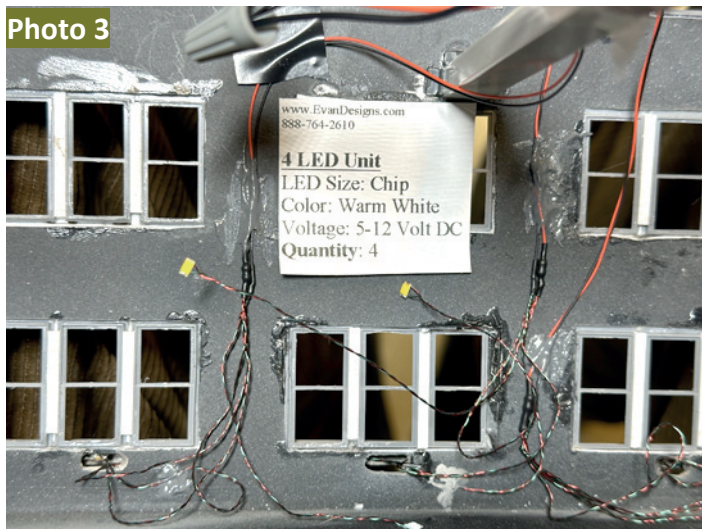
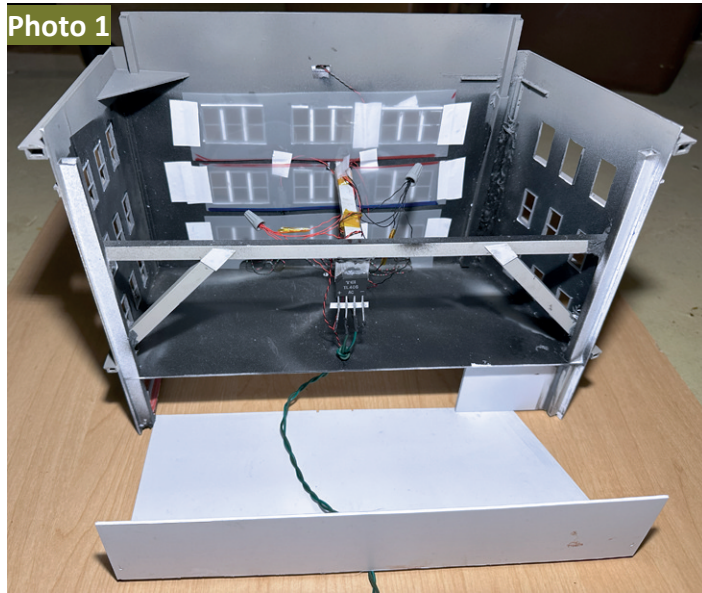
The model's walls are .06" styrene sheet. After cutting the window openings, I noticed slight warpage occurring. Reinforcement with rectangular tubing works well, and it's important to bond the corners securely. Ninety-degree corners are strengthened by including an L bracket on the inside edge.

The prototype's front wall is on 25th Street where Broadway diagonally crosses Fifth Avenue. To strengthen this diagonal corner, I used two-part JB Weld, a strong tacky product. Three walls comprise the structure—see **photo 1** on next page. Incidentally, in addition to strengthening a structure, interior bracing facilitates handling. It minimizes wear on the exterior. There's also a removable rear wall and roof. Note: Plastruct ABS tubing is stronger than styrene tubing.

I used rectangular ABS tubing for cornices at the roof and between the first and second floor. The "cornice" is also useful to locate indirect LED lighting. The top cornice has a downward facing strip of 12-volt LEDs illuminating the red



lettering below. The lower cornice is below the second floor windows, and it contains LEDs illuminating the "Gilbert Hall of Science" lettering. **Photo 2** shows the Plastruct RT-8 tubing housing the SMDs ( Surface Mount Diodes) from Evan Designs. These will illuminate the "Hall of Science" lettering when installed on the first floor exterior.



**Photo 3** shows the inside the building before some of the LEDs were positioned.

Tichy windows part number 3525 are an acceptable dimension of 25" x 57", although their vertical height is probably short. Removing the vertical mullion makes the window ideal for my purposes. The model's floors are eleven foot elevations, but the prototype's floors are higher. (Selective compression again, convenient for modeling.) **Photo 4** shows the measurement setup for locating windows. There's a large square clamped to the styrene front wall. Note: the triangular ruler is sold on the NASG website. It's very useful, and I added foot markers on this ruler with blue paint. Incidentally, cutting window openings could be facilitated by a Cricut. I haven't used one, but this device is an xy table that will at least score material for more accurate cutting.



The center windows are in sets of three. I found that styrene strips measuring .060 x .080 are good for spacing the windows. (**Photo 5**)

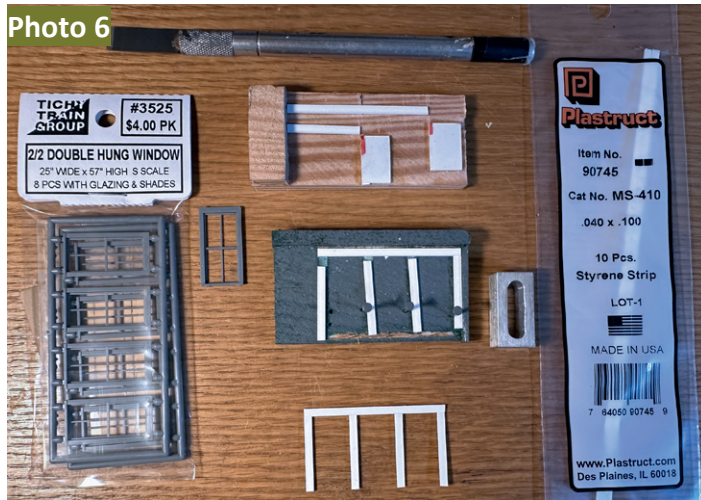




**Photo 6** shows how styrene strips are arranged to make trim for the inset windows. The strip dimensions are .040 x .100 inches, Plastruct item number 90745.

Window trim could be a good candidate for 3D printing. Using styrene strips is still useful to evaluate how dimensions look.

The Tichy windows are designed to be mounted on the surface of the exterior wall, but the prototype's windows are behind exterior trim.

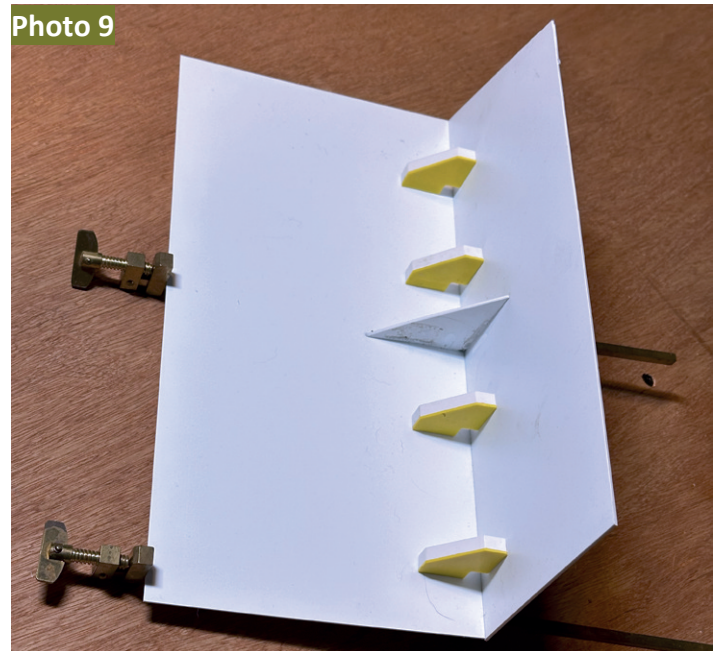


**Photo 7** shows how the window openings are carved at an approximate 45-degree angle, a tedious process. This allows the windows to be inset, then covered with the strips.



**Photo 8** shows Swagelok brass back ferrules used for the distinctive porthole windows. They are being painted white.

The roof and back wall are assembled using magnetic corner clamps for alignment during gluing. The brass clamps are also helpful. A perpendicular brace is good for reinforcement.



See **Photo 9**. Having the removable roof and back wall is convenient to access the building interior for lighting. The floor and 1st floor back wall are similarly designed.

The most economical forms of LED lighting are the 12-volt strips that contain 3 LEDs. They're available from several suppliers; Micromark is one source. I used these at the top of building, one strip facing down inside the rectangular tubing, and the other on top of the tubing to illuminate the AC Gilbert lettering. I use about 9 volts on these warm white LEDs by using dropping resistance of about 100 ohms. Just add or subtract resistors until illumination looks good. The 3-light LEDs are also used inside the first floor showroom. The smaller lower cornice has SMDs from Evan Design, illuminating the "Gilbert Hall of Science" sign. These come in sets of four with a module that accepts up to 12 volts.





( My LEDs use no more than 3 volts. A dropping resistor is always necessary unless the supply is 3 volts or less )

Illuminated buildings are attractive, but then need window treatment. The American Flyer layout in the Fifth Avenue window had a prominent double-track viaduct, perhaps representing the Delaware & Hudson's Tunkahannock. To make a rough model of the viaduct, I used Atlas HO hairpin fence and bits of styrene. **Photo 10** shows some of the assembly. It creates a plausible look, but this would be an ideal job for 3D printing. Lower tracks were later represented with styrene strips. I next used bits of styrene and epoxy to represent mountains and tunnels. The prototype was a dramatic setting to highlight American Flyer trains. With lighted model buildings, there's incentive to provide at least some interior. Sometimes a photo is fine. Throughout most of the building I used Woodland Scenics translucent light diffusing window film.

One tricky detail I added is the lightning bolts at the ends of the "Gilbert Hall of Science" sign. I had saved the vertical mullions removed from the Tichy windows and found them useful material for this job. I painted them white. These minute strips were dipped in a small puddle of CA and carefully placed with tweezers. Some glue is visible doing this, but is easily covered with touchup paint.



I used rattle cans for painting this model. To get a spoonful of paint for touch up, I spray paint into a short tube in a cap. The constriction of the tube prevents evaporation as the paint is sprayed. See **photo 11**.

Techniques used in making this model come from experience. They could be applied to a variety of hobby projects. I did not use 3D printing for this build, but sometimes 3D printing would be very useful. For example, the prototype had art deco futuristic



lettering, but I used stock "Plastabets" lettering from Plastruct. Occasionally, three-dimensional letters are used currently, as in an example from a Florida train station, **photo 12**.



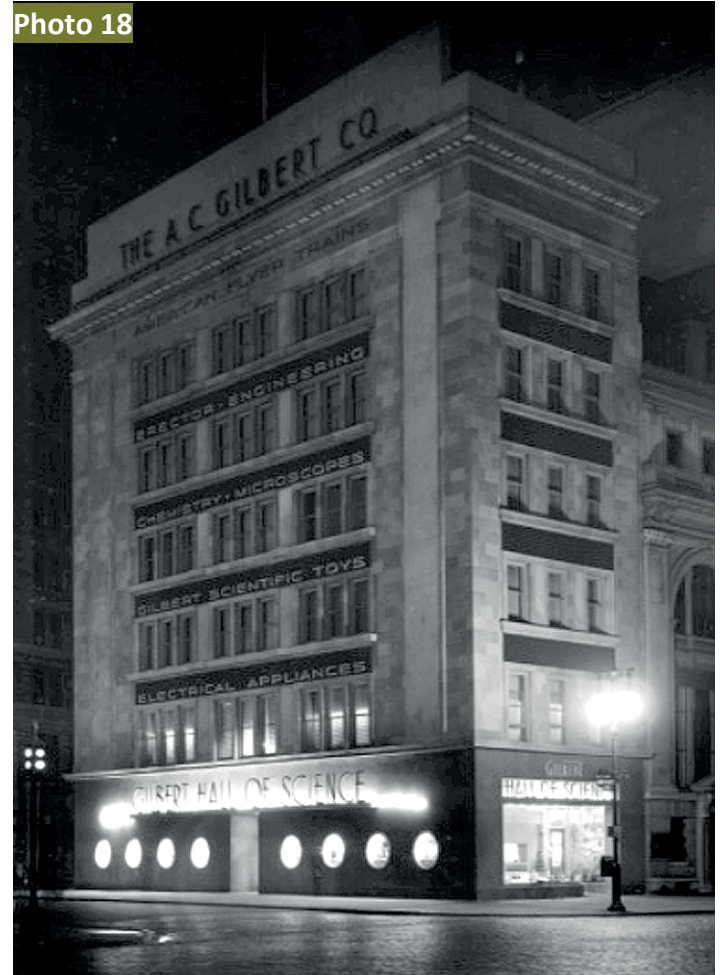
Thanks to Roy Mohrlang's photographs, there's good documentation of Gilbert's New York Hall Of Science. A comparison of the Fifth Ave window, prototype and model is seen in **photos 13 and 14**.





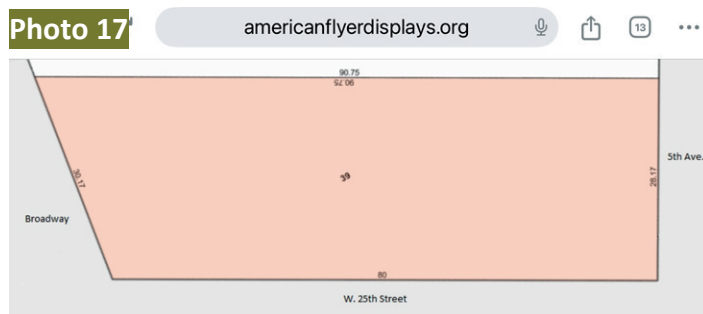
I don't think color pictures are available, but there's a small color image in promotional artwork, see **photo 15**.

The 1918 original building was more ornate, see **photo 16**.



One night picture shows how the Hall of Science lettering was illuminated; **photo 18**. Although not accurate, I added lighting to the upper levels for a more dramatic look. Scratch building the Hall of Science was a challenging project. It was fun to estimate dimensions to represent the building in S scale, kind of ironic.

The building is now a showroom for Porcelanosa, an interior design and materials business. The building dimensions are available at [AmericanFlyerdisplays.org](http://AmericanFlyerdisplays.org); see **photo 17**. I reduced the dimensions by a few feet to better fit available space.



## ADDRESS CHANGE

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



# Badgerland S Gaugers – The History

By Jeff Madden and other contributors



*AF Hudson is shown on a curve on the club layout in Waukesha, WI.*

At this upcoming Fall S Fest (Oct. 31-Nov. 2, 2025) the host Badgerland S Gaugers will be celebrating their 50th anniversary as an S gauge club. We are one of the oldest in the country.

If you remember the Fall S Fest in the fall of 2000—that's when the BSG celebrated their 25th anniversary as well as the 25th anniversary of the Fall S Fest itself.

However, this year the 2025 FSF won't be a double anniversary like that one because we lost two years due to the Covid epidemic (2020) and the State-Line S Gaugers dropped out of the rotation, which resulted in no FSF in 2022. Therefore, it looks like the 50th celebration for the Fall S Fest will move to 2027. But join us this year, though, to

celebrate the Badgerland S Gaugers' 48th annual FSF.

The Badgerland S Gaugers was founded by the late Chuck Porter. He managed to gather together a few other S gauge enthusiasts in 1976 and started up the club. The inspiration to initially start S clubs in the Midwest was during a 1972 carpool ride returning from the first official NASG convention in Kansas City. The riders included Don Heimburger, Ken Breher, Bob Ristow and Chuck. Don, of course, was producing the *S Gaugian*, Bob and Ken were working on S kit development and Chuck was active in the NASG.

Finally, in 1976, with an S club already established in nearby Chicago and after attending an NASG convention in

Chicago, Chuck Porter initiated the steps needed to form a club in Wisconsin where he lived. Addresses of potential members were solicited with the use of mailing lists from the *S Gaugian* and the *S Gauge Herald*. Locally, Bob Ristow and John Wickland had some contacts also. Letters were sent out in the fall of 1975. There were a couple of initial gatherings in late 1975 regarding the formation of an official club, and then in March of 1976 the club was initially born with a constitution being approved.

The first officers included: President, Bob Ristow; Vice President, D.F. Koehler; Secretary, John Wickland; Treasurer, Harold Immekus; and newsletter editor, Chuck Porter. The first official (open to all) meeting had 10



attendees. Only two of those, Roy Meissner and Fred Vergenz, are still active members of the BSG. In subsequent meetings, the attendance steadily grew.

In the first full year the BSG ended up with 29 members. For the next 10 years they averaged 30 members. For the following ten years the number of members ebbed and flowed with about an average of 43. Into the '90s membership averaged around 60 members with a peak in 2006 of 92. Monthly meetings were usually on Sundays—round-robin style.

The first BSG S gauge portable layout made its appearance at the Milwaukee Trainfest on November 5, 1976. The layout was constructed by John Wickland, and I was nicknamed the “Iron Maiden” because of its solid construction and weight. It was eventually replaced by a modular layout system (S-Mod standards), which was first displayed at Trainfest in November of 1986. That layout made an annual trek to Trainfest until about 2019, save one year when an application form was sent in too late. At one time there were 12 corner sections and 26 straight sections enabling a large horseshoe style layout. Eventually, this settled down to an oval donut shape with just four corners—usually about 10' by 20'. The Chicago club would occasionally add a couple of straight modules.

In 1976, the BSG and the Chicago Club (CASG) decided to start up the Fall S Fest, of which the first was in Northlake, IL, that year. The FSF sponsors, of course, expanded with two other clubs added to the rotation for the annual event. The State-Line S Gaugers (Rockford, IL area) came in in 1986, and the St. Louis group (AFSGSLA) joined in 1995.

Looking back to the 25th FSF in 2000, it ended up to be a double anniversary, BSG and FSF. The attendance for that particular Fall S Fest is estimated to be over 800 with actual registration at 521. There were 206 dealer/manufacturers' tables. Other items worthwhile mentioning were the sale of 525 commemorative cars being sold “before” the event took place and having well over 200 banquet attendees. A lot of the credit for the success was due to the efforts of “Mac” McGrath, who was the chairman. It was held at the same Waukesha Expo Center as this upcoming FSF this year. It



*The Milwaukee Road 261 4-8-4 is a Lionel AF offering.*

will be on the same grounds but will instead be in the “Forum” buildings rather than the dome-like structure.

Notable at the 25th FSF, besides the large attendance, there were a lot of memorable awards given out: Chuck Porter received the BSG “Founders Award.” The “Architect Award” was given to John Wickland, Andy Jugle and Pete Jugle. The late Don Heimberger was the guest speaker.

This double (silver) anniversary was a highlight of the many FSFs before and since, and it was the first FSF to be held in a non-hotel venue. This upcoming FSF will also break the hotel tradition, but hotels and restaurants are only a mile or two away.

Over the years the BSG has mainly met round-robin fashion at members' homes.

Also, to be a continuing ambassador of S, several other modular and portable layouts (besides the standard modular one) have made appearances at Trainfest (Milwaukee Fair Grounds) and other Wisconsin area train shows. A table-top S layout with mostly American Flyer equipment and Plasticville buildings made its way to smaller shows. Ron Schlicht also built a donut-shaped American Flyer modular layout (10' x 20') that he and some BSG members operated at Trainfest and other shows such as the NMRA-sponsored Mad City show in Madison, WI. With both the large modular layout and Ron's AF layout at Trainfest or the Mad City show, the various styles of S were well represented.

The BSG larger modular layout, using mostly 4-foot-long modules, became the showcase for scale and hi-rail equipment, although Flyer would run on it as well. The



Schlicht-built layout was lower to the ground to make it easier for youngsters to see. This layout always featured new and traditional Flyer equipment. There were several animated features and many mini-scenes that were always entertaining for the viewers. For example, there was a finder's list given out for folks to find various movie characters imbedded into the layout. The layout was dubbed "Hollywood Meets Model Railroading."

The hi-rail modular layout, due to a manpower shortage, was placed into

storage for a period of time and was no longer used for exhibition at area shows. However, in the last two years the BSG modular club layout has been resurrected and has found a permanent home. It has been revised and expanded and is now in a clubhouse yhat it shares with a large HO club in downtown Waukesha, WI. There are various open house events sponsored by both clubs. I'm sure the club layout will be open for the 2025 Fall S Fest layout tours on Sunday, Nov. 2.

Well, 50 years is a long time, and the BSG has seen members come and go. Some moved on or just drifted away losing interest. Unfortunately, many have headed to the sunset including some of our well-known members: Chuck Porter, Jeff Young, Jim Brown, Brad Nelson, Dove Koehler, Dick Kloes, Don Heimberger and Dave (Smokey) Smukowski.

But the BSG survives and so does the Fall S Fest. Come see us this year!!!

## TRAINZ

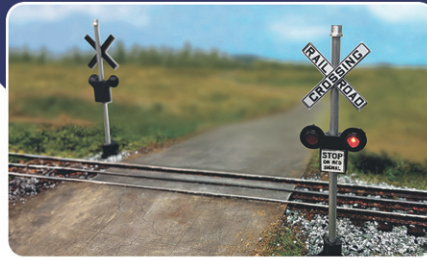
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## NASG introduces new PROMOTIONAL PRINT MATERIAL

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.





# Out Along The Line

photos by



NASG members

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*Two local “foamers” chat with the fireman as he does some light cleaning before the next departure from Union Station on Austin Birkey’s layout. The two No. 312 Gilbert PRR K5’s entered service in 1948. Photo by Austin Birkey.*



*A quiet day at the Heartland Mill and Elevator Company on Robert Stelmach’s pike. The water tank is a Lehigh Valley model, the stock car is an ON 30 adaptation, and the elevator is a conversion from an HO building. Photo by Robert Stelmach.*

***We Want To See YOUR AF, hi-rail or scale photos here!***

***Send photos and captions to Bob Bubeck at: [rbubeck327@aol.com](mailto:rbubeck327@aol.com)***



# Classifieds

All NASG members may place non-commercial ads here at no charge. Ads are limited to 750 characters. Email ads to [dispatch@nasg.org](mailto:dispatch@nasg.org) or mail to Dan Dawdy, 407 East Chippeawa St., Dwight, IL 60420. Include membership number. Ads will run three consecutive months unless

**FOR SALE:** I'm in the process of downsizing a large S Scale layout. I have S Scale and SN3 with some AF to sell. 1/64 Vehicles – Semis- Many ERTL Trucks of the World, Matchbox size cars and small trucks Structures – Several Lehigh Valley Models built up. Including the 3 part mine. Track Code 100 Shinohara switches (6 and 8), Shinohara used flex track, Tomalco used flex track SN3 East Broad Top, BTS 2-8-2 Number 12 ("Millie"), Railmaster M-1 Doodlebug, BTS Saltillo Depot Built up, Tomalco code 70 switches and flex track Locomotives and Rolling Stock, S- Helper Service cars complete with high rail wheel sets. American Models scale cars, Others include Downs, Des Plains Hobbies, BTS, etc. PHM RDC car. Lots of books and magazines. American Flyer is on a separate list. I'm ready to hear any reasonable offers, A list is available. Email me at [hoffmanroy@embarqmail.com](mailto:hoffmanroy@embarqmail.com) (1)

**WANTED:** Scenery Unlimited/S-Helper Service Circus flat cars. Numbers 01723,24,26,27 and Yellow crawler, billboard,etc. Trades will be considered. Shawn Solderitch, Email: [ssolderitch@earthlink.net](mailto:ssolderitch@earthlink.net) - please include CIRCUS CARS in the subject line. Call leave msg or text 484-821-6112 (2)

**FREE:** Are you looking for S scale clerestory roof stock? It has been many years since Northeastern Scale Models made it in S scale. I have a small quantity and will give some to anyone who has a project that needs it. No charge. Tell me what you are making and how many pieces you need. Steve Monson Email: [stevenmonson10@gmail.com](mailto:stevenmonson10@gmail.com) (2)

**WANTED:** A copy of the instruction sheet for Rio Grande Models Ltd. of kit #3317-D4 for Tractor, D4. Plus, the exploded diagrams of construction. Email: [williamloyd2023@outlook.com](mailto:williamloyd2023@outlook.com) (2)

**FOR SALE:** American Flyer new old stock Corvette model kits (complete and sealed with directions, decals, etc.) Red only \$90 each Contact Ludwig Spinelli [lsplinelli49@aol.com](mailto:lsplinelli49@aol.com) (2)

**WANTED:** SHS wood-sided reefers SHS #00690 Carling Black Label (CBL 804); SHS #02123 Carling Black Label (CBL 799); and #02124 Carling Black Label (CBL 812). New or Like New in Original Box; scale wheel sets installed or with scale wheel sets in box.

**ALSO WANTED:** SHS/MTH 70-ton roller bearing freight car trucks and SHS/MTH/Scale Trains 50-ton friction bearing freight car trucks (Bettendorf and Andrews side frames); scale wheel sets only. E-mail: [tpatterson31@wi.rr.com](mailto:tpatterson31@wi.rr.com) (1)

**FOR SALE:** AF TTOS cars 48490, 48498, 48203, 48209, 48225 & 48227. All 6 \$199.

TCA cars (15) 1990 to 2001. All for \$499. NASG cars (24) 1981 to 2003. All for \$725.

AF by Lionel MP set 49601 still sealed NIB \$425. Add for shipping based on carrier & distance.

Email: [FINELINEWP@AOL.COM](mailto:FINELINEWP@AOL.COM), Joe Wozniak (1)

**FOR SALE:** Tomalco Track Turnouts S-Scale in original packaging. 2 each Right & Left #6 Code 100 and 1 three-way turnout. All for \$200+ shipping.

**AND WANTED:** 2 American Model Fairbanks Morse locomotives undecorated. Scale DC

Contact Bill Taylor 910/262-3097 or [lttlkelly@gmail.com](mailto:lttlkelly@gmail.com) (1)

## FLASH BACK



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# Calendar of Events

## 57th Annual Div 7 NMRA Fall Train Show

CINCINNATI, OHIO October 11-12, 2025 - at Lakota West High School, 8940 Union Centre Blvd. West Chester, OH 45069. 10 am to 4 pm both days. Many scales & sizes of operating layouts, plus hundreds of sales tables of new & used model trains, books, collectibles. \$10 cash-only admission. Kids 12 and under plus scouts in uniform free with paying adult. No animals allowed except service dogs. Wheelchair accessible. Food and refreshments available. Free parking. Door prizes. See [www.cincy-div.7.org](http://www.cincy-div.7.org)

## Fall S Fest

The 48th fall S Fest will be held on Oct. 31, Nov. 1 and Nov. 2, 2025 at the Waukesha County Expo Center, 1500 Northview Rd., Waukesha, WI 53188. This event also marks the 50th Anniversary of the Badgerland S Gaugers who are the sponsors. The show will be in the "Forum Buildings" on the grounds. There is plenty of room for tables and layouts. The Fest includes lunch food vendors and clinics. Following the Fest on Saturday there will be a banquet and auction held at the nearby Machine Shed Restaurant. A nearby hotel, the Wildwood Lodge, has a special \$109 rate that includes a breakfast buffet. For additional information visit: [www.trainweb.org/bsg](http://www.trainweb.org/bsg) or [www.nasg.org](http://www.nasg.org). Contact Ron Schlicht at 414-477-7866 or email: [rons48tblue@gmail.com](mailto:rons48tblue@gmail.com)

## Contributing Members As Of June 30, 2025

Allen L. Ambler  
Cyrus J. Bacchi  
Al Baker  
Kenneth Baker  
John Barry  
Don Beard  
David T. Belusko  
Jon R. Beveridge  
James M. Bizorik  
William O. Blome  
Michael Bonczyk  
Bruce F. Norland  
Charles G. Bouchard  
Lee Brown  
Bob Brown  
Clay Buckage  
Charles O. Buffington  
Eddie Campbell  
John Ciarleglio  
Rich Clark  
George R. Connell  
Herb Cotter  
Claude Demers  
Ronald C. Doba  
Jeffrey D. English  
Pete Evans  
Richard C. Farewell  
Tyler J. Froarz  
Ken Garber  
Paul Garst  
Peter A. Gehret  
Dale Girt  
David E. Hansen  
Edward M. Harris  
William M. Hawk  
David L. Heine  
F. Lamont Heppe  
Gene Hornsby  
Dick Huff  
Alex Huff  
David P. Jasper  
William M. Knox  
John Lukaszewicz  
Michael Marmer  
Daniel A. Mastrobuono

Paul D. Mathias  
Dennis McCarthy  
Daniel E. McConnachie  
Mark McFrederick  
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Chuck Moen  
Steve Monson  
William Mosteller  
Gregg Mummert  
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Daniel Nack  
Lindsey R. Neas  
Roger E. Nulton  
James Onoda  
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David Peterson  
John R. Prior  
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Terrence Sprankle  
Jim Stapleton  
Robert Stelmach  
Luther C. Stephens  
Colin Stewart  
G. Leigh Swanson  
Louis E. Templeton  
Robert Thompson  
R. Scott Tilton  
Jim Wright



## New Members

May 1, 2025 to June 30, 2025

|                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Robin R. Authier    | Fort Lawn, SC     |
| Steve Beamesderfer  | Lebanon, PA       |
| Robert Borowski     | West Chester, PA  |
| Bill Cucchi         | Charlton, MA      |
| Cohn's Custom       | Southington, CT   |
| Patrick J. Eastwood | Fifty Lakes, MN   |
| Empirerail          | Norwich, CT       |
| Dr David R. Gerber  | Cridersville, OH  |
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