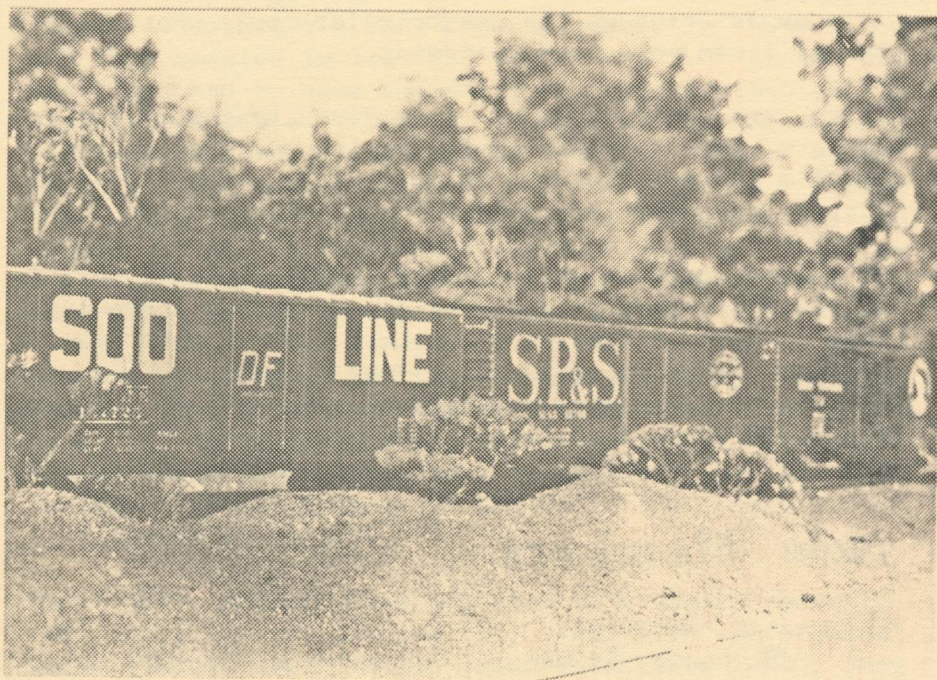


ESSENCE

A monthly publication of the
S Scale Special Interest Group

1:64 scale modeling with 1:1 fun

November 1985



Three American Models boxcars pose on the mainline of Ken Zieska's module. The S00 car appears in original colors. The SP&S boxcar carries CDS #152 dry transfer lettering. The Great Northern car has CDS #155 dry transfers. All three were weathered with artist oils and turpentine, "a really neat way".

Ken Zieska photo.

Foolscap

Ken Mackenzie
Editor

At last! This issue of **Essence** is exactly what we hoped the newsletter would become. It's full of letters which are full of news and views. For the first time, it is truly the product of the membership. Thank you all. Please keep those cards and letters coming.

You may have noticed that each issue has more pages than the one before it. This trend can't go on forever, but it's fun for a while. At this rate of growth, we would reach 52 pages per month by next August. Not likely! For one thing, we can only add 8 more pages without incurring a postage increase, and that would drive up the subscription cost. For another thing, I can only type so fast.

There are small changes from issue to issue because editors love to experiment, hoping to improve. This month's cover stock has changed in an attempt to drastically reduce printing costs.

If nobody noticed the shift of type font from 10/inch to 12/inch, that's good; it means that we are packing more in without straining anyone's eyes. Most publications reduce type to about 78%. That won't happen here because **Essence** is intended to be read by modelers who migrated to S scale for eyesight reasons.

New Members

Thomas F. Coughlan	Melrose, MA 02176
84 Morgan Street,	
Eugene J. Cox	Munster, IN 46321
9336 Larch Drive,	
Ronald D. Limparis	Gaithersburg, MD 20879
24104 Bush Hill Road,	
Donald E. McGovern	Dubuque, IA 52001
5640 Sunset Drive RR#5,	
Charles B. Porter	Oconomowoc, WI 53066
4775 Gifford Road,	

Coordinator's Corner

Ken Mackenzie
Coordinator

IS THE SSSIG REDUNDANT ?

More than one person has suggested that the SSSIG may be duplicating the efforts of other groups and, worse yet, may be detrimental to the scale by diffusing, rather than focusing, the efforts of existing S scale modelers.

Another person observed that a publication devoted to a single scale was useful, but *Essence* was the fourth one in S, and four was too many.

These viewpoints are very understandable to those of us who have modeled in 1:64 for twenty years. In the old days you had to have something of a pioneering spirit to tackle S scale. But our sources of information and supplies were so tenuous and so precious that we banded together for mutual support. We developed a "circle the wagons" attitude. Terms like "the world of S gauge" struck a responsive chord because we felt so isolated from the mainstream of the hobby. Were we paranoid? No, we were just a little lonely.

S used to be known as "the modeler's scale". As time went by, the mainstream modelers heard less from us and about us. The hobby press sometimes forgot to mention S when scale comparisons were discussed. When the NMRA ran out of S check gauges, nobody in the organization even seemed to notice.

Many NMRA members have migrated to S scale recently. Many more are considering it. The 1:64 environment seems strange and a little uncomfortable to them. They can no longer depend on the Walthers catalog, the local hobby shop, and neighborhood railroad club for support.

Hopefully, they will see the SSSIG listing in the NMRA Bulletin and write to us for information and advice. If they are lucky, one of us will live close enough to provide them with some personal assistance.

Redundant? I think not.

Modeler's Notebook

Glenn Berg

If you use styrene strip material, this conversion chart may come in handy. It gives actual and 1:64 scale dimensions for the styrene sizes available from Evergreen Scale Models.

This chart was developed by Glenn Berg of Lansing, Ill. Glenn models in Sn3 and is a member of the S Team club.

EVERGREEN NUMBER	ACTUAL DIMENSIONS	S SCALE DIMENSIONS
100	.010" by .020"	5/8" by 1 1/4"
101	.010" by .030"	5/8" by 1 7/8"
102	.010" by .040"	5/8" by 2 1/2"
103	.010" by .060"	5/8" by 3 7/8"
104	.010" by .080"	5/8" by 5 1/8"
105	.010" by .100"	5/8" by 6 3/8"
106	.010" by .125"	5/8" by 8"
107	.010" by .156"	5/8" by 10"
108	.010" by .188"	5/8" by 12"
109	.010" by .250"	5/8" by 16"
110	.015" by .020"	1" by 1 1/4"
111	.015" by .030"	1" by 1 7/8"
112	.015" by .040"	1" by 2 1/2"
113	.015" by .060"	1" by 3 7/8"
114	.015" by .080"	1" by 5 1/8"
115	.015" by .100"	1" by 6 3/8"
116	.015" by .125"	1" by 8"
117	.015" by .156"	1" by 10"
118	.015" by .188"	1" by 12"
119	.015" by .250"	1" by 16"
120	.020" by .020"	1 1/4" by 1 1/4"
121	.020" by .030"	1 1/4" by 1 7/8"
122	.020" by .040"	1 1/4" by 2 1/2"
123	.020" by .060"	1 1/4" by 3 7/8"
124	.020" by .080"	1 1/4" by 5 1/8"
125	.020" by .100"	1 1/4" by 6 3/8"
126	.020" by .125"	1 1/4" by 8"
127	.020" by .156"	1 1/4" by 10"
128	.020" by .188"	1 1/4" by 12"
129	.020" by .250"	1 1/4" by 16"

EVERGREEN
NUMBER

ACTUAL
DIMENSIONS

S SCALE
DIMENSIONS

EVERGREEN NUMBER	ACTUAL DIMENSIONS	S SCALE DIMENSIONS
131	.030" by .030"	1 7/8" by 1 7/8"
132	.030" by .040"	1 7/8" by 2 1/2"
133	.030" by .060"	1 7/8" by 3 7/8"
134	.030" by .080"	1 7/8" by 5 1/8"
135	.030" by .100"	1 7/8" by 6 3/8"
136	.030" by .125"	1 7/8" by 8"
137	.030" by .156"	1 7/8" by 10"
138	.030" by .188"	1 7/8" by 12"
139	.030" by .250"	1 7/8" by 16"
142	.040" by .040"	2 1/2" by 2 1/2"
143	.040" by .060"	2 1/2" by 3 7/8"
144	.040" by .080"	2 1/2" by 5 1/8"
145	.040" by .100"	2 1/2" by 6 3/8"
146	.040" by .125"	2 1/2" by 8"
147	.040" by .156"	2 1/2" by 10"
148	.040" by .188"	2 1/2" by 12"
149	.040" by .250"	2 1/2" by 16"
153	.060" by .060"	3 7/8" by 3 7/8"
154	.060" by .080"	3 7/8" by 5 1/8"
155	.060" by .100"	3 7/8" by 6 3/8"
156	.060" by .125"	3 7/8" by 8"
157	.060" by .156"	3 7/8" by 10"
158	.060" by .188"	3 7/8" by 12"
159	.060" by .250"	3 7/8" by 16"
164	.080" by .080"	5 1/8" by 5 1/8"
165	.080" by .100"	5 1/8" by 6 3/8"
166	.080" by .125"	5 1/8" by 8"
167	.080" by .156"	5 1/8" by 10"
168	.080" by .188"	5 1/8" by 12"
169	.080" by .250"	5 1/8" by 16"
175	.100" by .100"	6 3/8" by 6 3/8"
176	.100" by .125"	6 3/8" by 8"
177	.100" by .156"	6 3/8" by 10"
178	.100" by .188"	6 3/8" by 12"
179	.100" by .250"	6 3/8" by 16"
186	.125" by .125"	8" by 8"
187	.125" by .156"	8" by 10"
188	.125" by .188"	8" by 12"
189	.125" by .250"	8" by 16"

GETTING TOGETHER

Ken:

I am going to look forward to seeing you and Ann at future conventions. I hope they will be NASG as well as NMRA. I think the following (list of names & addresses enclosed) will be interested in the SSSIG.

John Bortz

P.S. Correction - The Gold Award was won at the 1969 NMRA convention in Minneapolis.

(1969? Could it have been that long ago? You and I are not that old, are we?)

We are already planning to use next summer's vacation for the NMRA convention in Boston. Seeing Thelma (& you to, of course) is always a treat. We are still raising a family and can't afford more than 1 major trip per year, so we will sadly miss any NASG events that are outside our area. I wish the NASG could coordinate major meets with the NMRA schedule, the way NTRAK does, so we wouldn't have such painful choices to make. Ed.)

EX PORTER

Your publication looks great, but as an ex-newsletter publisher/editor I can tell you that a monthly schedule is a bear!

Chuck Porter

(You sound like you expect me to do all the work. As an ex-newsletter publisher/editor, I hope you will pull some of the weight. For openers, we depend on you and Dave Koehler to keep us posted on the doin's of the Badgerland group. Did the club decide to fund the construction of that set of corner modules?)

The back of your model railroad "business card" lists more hobby organizations than I knew existed. I know you'll be disappointed if I don't ask what the next-to-last list entry is about. I give up. What does "TMNSGMTOTSOWROTNNOFOSBOOS" mean? Ed.)

HIGH IRON

I had been a relatively new member of Barney Dahler's SIG group, & was just getting interested in the implications of membership. I believe that I was not really eligible for membership since all of my nearly 700 feet of trackage incorporated Code 125 rail. Your new group seems very interesting!

Thomas F. Coughlan

(I don't know who you've been talking to, but there is nothing wrong with Code 125 rail. As far as the standards are concerned, there is no specification for maximum rail height or maximum flangeway depth. As far as appearance is concerned, what looks realistic to you is the main thing. As far as prototype fidelity is concerned, it depends on the kind of real railroad you are trying to represent.

The rail code is the height of the rail in thousandths of an inch, measured from its base to its head. The available rail stocks measure out roughly like this:

RAIL CODE ----	REAL HEIGHT ----	SCALE HEIGHT ----	RAIL WEIGHT ----
170	.170"	10-7/8"	180 #
125	.125"	8"	130 #
100	.100"	6-3/8"	105 #
83	.083"	5-1/4"	87 #
70	.070"	4-1/2"	75 #
55	.055"	3-1/2"	60 #

So, if you are modeling a seedy branch line that had light rail, bury the web of the rail in ballast or mud or weeds. But if you have 700 feet of track, I assume

you are modeling a Class One operation. Major railroads use some mighty hefty rail on their mainlines.

I used to work near where the RF&P crosses the Potomac coming out of Washington, D.C. The rail on this line seemed enormous by midwestern standards. I'll bet that rail was 8"-9" high. Stepping over it seemed like climbing over a stile. Maybe Ron Limparis, who lives near there, will check it out and let us know.

The rail at the passenger depot here in Milwaukee is 7" high - much closer to Code 125 than Code 100. Ed.)

DAKOTA SOUTHERN

I have only been to the Black Hills once. I did take a look at the abandoned BN line which was originally narrow gauge. It certainly showed its ancestry, with 4% grades and impressive wooden trestles. In modern times, the only major business was coal to a relatively small power plant which was able to truck a more direct route and had little incentive to use rail.

Homestake Mine is quite an operation - still the largest gold mine in the world. The Narrow Gauge & Shortline Gazette in the relatively recent past had a series of articles on the Homestake narrow gauge tram lines. These are still in operation.

Dakota Southern is nominally standard gauge. In fact, it could be properly described as S(64) or AAR 1:1. We are just setting up shop on 82 miles of ex-Milwaukee branch running from near Yankton, SD to Platte, SD. It is archtypal prairie branch-line. Oddly, my modeling preference runs to city street operations and terminal railroading.

Dakota Southern shares its paint scheme with Don Heimburger's Denver & Western. Both are based on the old Rock Island red and black with white striping style known as the "winged paint scheme". Our roster consists of one ex-MILW SD-7.

Should anyone be interested, I can provide S scale drawings photocopied from Milwaukee diagrams of # 7 1/7 frog switches. These may be of interest for the detail drawings of the hardware associated with a switch.

Alex Huff

(The scale drawings should be of value to all who want to treat trackwork as a detailed model. Can the drawings be published in Essence? I would be glad to contact the MILW for permission. If the drawings won't fit on a page, maybe its time Essence had a centerfold. Ed.)

SPOKESMANSHIP

Essence was accidentally delivered to my next door neighbor, and she didn't give it to me until September 16th.

I was disappointed when Barney disbanded the S Finescale SIG. I had always hoped that it would develop into the S scaler's spokesman to the NMRA.

I am working on a small S scale switching layout, and if I ever get anything running on it I'll let you know.

I have a question that possibly you or one of the SIG members can answer. I have written the NASG twice now for their free information pack about the NASG and S gauge. I have not received a reply, and it has been about six weeks since the last time I wrote.

Ron Limparis

(Thank goodness your neighbor delivered. Charlie Sandersfeld says his daughter kidded him about the first issue of Essence being a perfume catalog.

If the SSSIG grows, we can fill the spokesman's role. It has perhaps been difficult for the NASG (which is

also a SIG) to do so, because NMRA scale modelers are a minority among its members. In the past, it was a little harder to develop a consensus scale viewpoint, and it was a little harder to get the NMRA to pay attention. But things are changing. Hopefully, the SSSIG and the NASG can cooperatively improve the status of 1:64 scale overall.

Please don't wait until your switching layout is running to let us know how it's coming. Are you using a published plan, or one of your own creation? What are you using for switches, and how do they seem to be working?

It takes a few weeks for a volunteer organization to respond. The NMRA SIG Guidelines suggest that six weeks is about as long as written inquiries should go unanswered, so be patient for a bit. So, if you haven't heard from the NASG in few more weeks, don't hesitate to write them again. Ed.)

WELCOME

As the NASG Promotions Committee Chairman, I welcome the SSSIG as a great way to promote S in the NMRA. I do have some reservations about making your SIG for NMRA members only.

By closing your SIG to NMRA members only, are you promoting S scale or the NMRA? I feel you would do better for both the NMRA & S scale by opening up the ranks of the SSSIG. I believe you will get more people to join the NMRA after they become SSSIG members than before, and the few who don't join the NMRA will at least help you pay the printing cost of the *Essence*.

Don Thompson

(I'm glad you think we can be of help. See the Coordinator's Corner for a discussion of our objectives. Getting S gaugers to join the NMRA is not one of them. However, getting NMRA members to consider migrating to S scale is an objective. Ed.)

ON STANDARDS

If we worked as hard on our railroads as we have on standards, we would all have complete operating layouts. We might not be able to interchange, but...

If you are a loner, I'm sure standards are not important. As long as you're consistent, nothing much matters (within reason). Some of the greatest joy for me has been running things with people from around the country on the NASG modules, or having people bring things over to run on my layout.

S is unique. We are going through a period of explosive growth, and we have an opportunity to have S and Sn3 standards completely compatible. Also significant is the realization that there are likely more Sn3 modelers than S standard modelers.

What standards should we use? Consider that there has not been an S-3, S-4 NMRA check gauge made for at least 10 years. Consider that all the brass imports for the last two years have been NASG or NMRA Finescale, and that the turnout kits offered by American Models are all NASG or Finescale. Also, if you have built a layout during the last five years, odds are you used a Trainstuff 3-point gage or NASG check gauge and built to the NASG/NMRA Finescale standard.

Many of the available trucks and wheelsets are frankly not to any acceptable standard when you check production tolerances. To make them work really well, they must be checked with whatever gauge you have. Again, where will you find a gauge... only NASG.

The point as I see it is that the NMRA had other priorities and did not address the issue of S scale when it became critical. Frankly, that's not a slam on the NMRA. They have a lot of other

things going on. But now the Sn3 modelers demanding dual gauge compatibility and the NASG seeking better operation have in fact made an RP standard.

I would be amazed if a serious S scale model railroader would start a layout today with any other standards than the NASG/NMRA Finescale ones, just as I would be surprised if a serious HO modeler used horn hook couplers rather than Kadees.

As for the people with old S-3 trackwork, I think many would be surprised, after watching their Omnicon 2-8-0 run smoothly around their layout, to learn that it is gauged to the NASG standards.

Ken Zieska

(Persuasive reasoning, Ken. The embarrassing part is that it is up to the NMRA members "who care" to make things happen in the NMRA; the N scale NMRA guys don't work on S scale standards issues. To quote the cartoon character POGO: "We have met the enemy, and he is us." Fortunately there was plenty of energy in the NASG when it really counted, and there still is. Ed.)

AMERICAN MODELS

Concerning our wheelsets, we use .788" as an average back-to-back because the axles vary a little. Some come out .800" and some .780". This problem seems to develop with pointed axles.

This works well for most layouts, but they can be easily adjusted by twisting the insulated wheel in or out to change the back-to-back slightly. The same goes for the loco wheels. Wheel thickness is about .130". This we feel is necessary as many layouts develop "fall in" problems if the wheels are .110" thick.

We will have the #8 turnouts in stock by the end of the year. Hoquat Hobbies is taking over our

turnout line, as we just don't have time. We will still carry the whole line, supplying dealers and customers alike.

Ron Bashista

(Wider wheels are a painless way to provide more reliable operation through switchwork, since standards don't set a maximum wheel width spec. With my bad eyes I can't see the width of wheels anyway, except in tie-level head-on photographs. Ed.)

MODULES

Last month you mentioned doubling the number of 90 degree corners if the Badgerlanders would also make four like the four the Southeastern Michigan S Gaugers have. The term "doubling" may not be accurate. Bill Oertly of Cheyenne, WY wrote last year that he had already built four to our specifications. The Kansas City area club, the Heartland S Rails, has six 60 degree modules with which they can accomplish the same effect. Those end sections, plus their straight sections, were what Gaylord Gill and I plugged our modules into last year when we set up at the NMRA national convention in Kansas City. In any event however, the more the better.

The Badgerlanders, and anyone else, might want to consider making (some if not all of) the curves reversible. It's not hard if you plan it in advance. With one or more reversed curves, more interesting shaped layouts could be put together. As a start, five 90 degree curves the regular way and one reversed could create an L shaped layout.

I will be glad to share with anyone interested the secret of a very simple method of making a curved module reversible, yet still having all the cab/block control system.

As to modular standards for narrow gauge or dual gauge, I would not have the foggiest notion of

where to start. I think narrow gauge is cute, but I am not a modeler of it. For a beginning, I might suggest that those of you who model in narrow gauge should try to formulate a concise image of what you feel dual gauge modules should look like and how they should operate.

Here's just a spur of the moment idea off the top of my head regarding dual gauge modules. You (any group of NGers) could build a number of standard NASG modules and add a narrow gauge track running through these modules, with maybe a NG yard at each end. Between the two yards can be as many modules as you feel like building. Whether the NG trains run on discrete tracks or dual gauge on the mainline is up to you. I've seen this done in HO; it looks quite effective.

Or do you want the NG train to run around the entire modular loop, similar to the S Team system? This will have to be done with your own modules. Few if any of the owners of existing standard gauge modules would be willing to add a narrow gauge track.

If the SSSIG wants and needs a Module Chairman, I will be glad to share information with him.

I am not concerned about those proposed modular standards the NMRA Engineering Committee published. I've known Jim Monroe a long time and I have no fear of the NMRA officially adopting anything contrary to the NASG module specifications.

I agree with Ken Zieska that we should try harder to get photos into the NMRA Bulletin and other all-scale publications. Maybe since you live in the same part of the country the Bulletin Editor lives in, you could coordinate some of that effort.

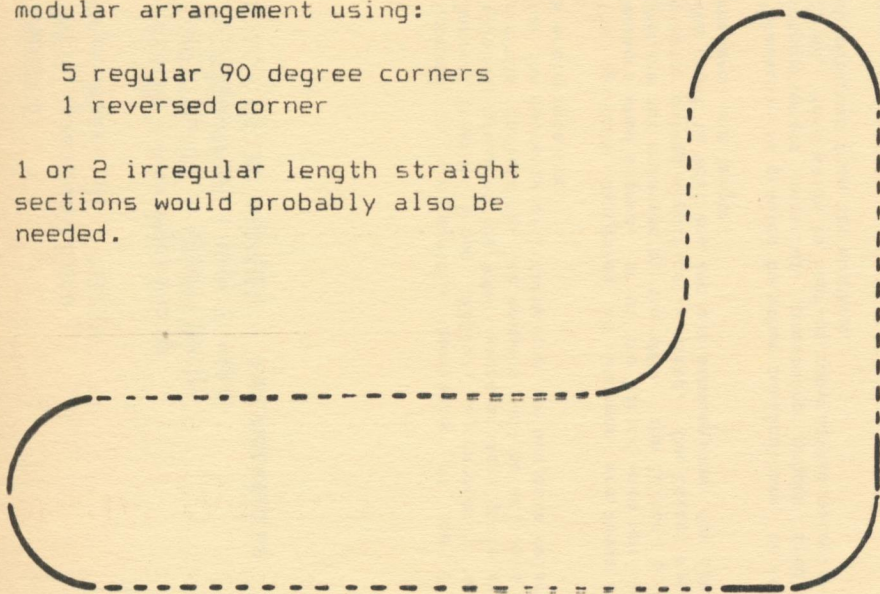
Tom Hawley

(I would be glad to. Mike Carlson seemed very helpful when I contacted him on another matter. Also, Russ Larson of Model Railroader lives nearby. Ed.)

Here is a schematic of Tom Hawley's suggested L shaped modular arrangement using:

5 regular 90 degree corners
1 reversed corner

1 or 2 irregular length straight sections would probably also be needed.



Help Wanted

ESSENCE CONTRIBUTORS to send photos, news, and opinions for publication in the newsletter. Write or call Editor Mackenzie, (414)421-5919, with tidbits or whole draft articles.

ESSENCE GRAPHICS EDITOR to provide artwork, photo-reduction, and layout design for the newsletter. Write or call Editor Mackenzie.

SSSIG MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN to plan and enact programs for attracting new members to the S Scale Special Interest Group (SSSIG). Call or write Coordinator Mackenzie (414)421-5919

SSSIG CENSUS DIRECTOR to compile a list of all known S scale modelers. Call or write Coordinator Mackenzie.

SSSIG PUBLICITY CHAIRMAN to spearhead programs which increase awareness of S scale in the NMRA and the hobby. Call or write Coordinator Mackenzie.

ESSENCE

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Essence is the monthly newsletter of the S Scale Special Interest Group (SSSIG), a non-profit special interest group of the NMRRA whose primary goals are to provide contact for its members and to act as a forum for the exchange of information on subjects related to S scale modeling.

The opinions expressed in Essence are those of the authors when signed, or of the Editor when not signed, and are not endorsed by the NMRRA, the Editor, or Coordinator unless specifically noted. The Editor reserves the right to edit any and all submissions for clarity, content, and length.

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Membership fee is \$1 per year (August thru July) for NMRRA members in the US, Canada, and Mexico. Subscrip-

To: _____

tions to Essence cost an additional \$6 per year for SSSIG members and \$10 per year for non-members. Subscribers will receive all issues of Essence published in that year.

Essence solicits articles, drawings and photographs on any topic applicable to S scale model railroading. All material submitted is understood to be gratis and contributed for the benefit of the hobby. Deadline for all material published is the first of the month.

Ads are not solicited. However, pre-printed advertising material which is deemed of interest to members may be included with the newsletter. Ad material must be cut or folded to 5-1/2" by 8-1/2", and may be printed on one side or both. Advertiser supplies 100 clean copies. The cost per issue for inclusion of ads in the newsletter is \$5 per 5-1/2" by 8-1/2" sheet and \$10 per 8-1/2" by 11" sheet. Send a copy of proposed mailing to the Circulation Manager for review. Disapproved copy may not be returned.