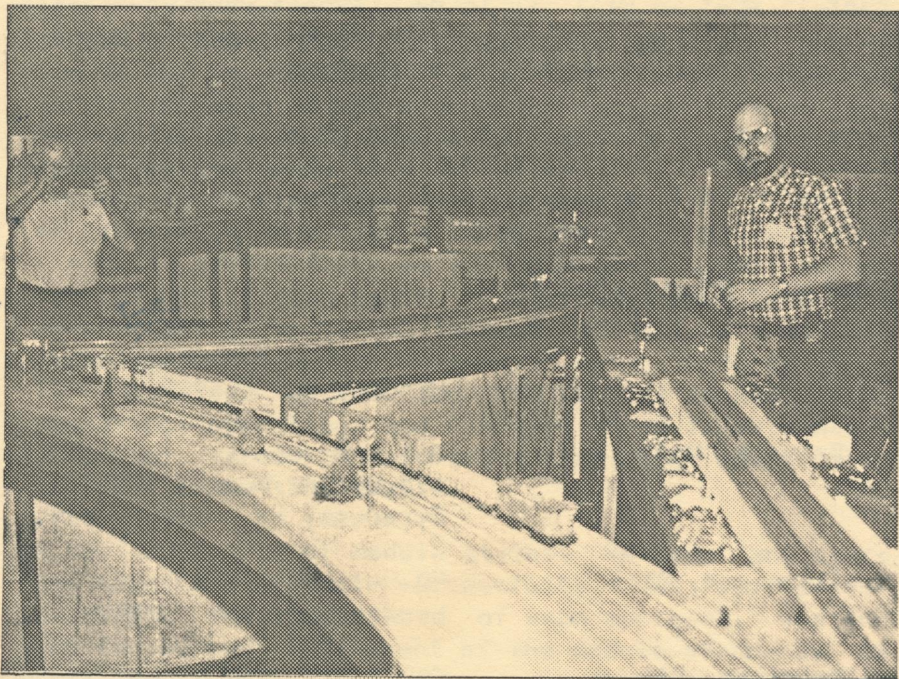


# ESSENCE

A monthly publication of the  
S Scale Special Interest Group

1:64 scale modeling with 1:1 fun

August 1986



Don DeWitt (right) is shown here at the throttle of a freight train which is turning through the Central Jersey Club's six-section wye-shaped "T module". This scene was part of the action at the Novi Hilton in Detroit over the Fourth of July weekend.

Ken Mackenzie photo.



# Foolscap

Ken Mackenzie  
Editor

After a year of producing this newsletter, I have come reluctantly to the conclusion that it is impossible to get out an issue every month. Only seven issues were published during our first year, and that was all the challenge I could handle. Often the timing of issues was determined by the amount of available material. If there were few submissions, I would stall until some more came in.

So, from now on **Essence** will go to press every other month. An astute member has suggested that our publication schedule be staggered to fill the gaps between the other popular bi-monthly magazines, and that is what we will try to do. Expect your next issue to be in October. Please read "Coordinator's Corner" for the financial effect of this change.

With all the discussion of module standards going on, I expect that the newsletter will become a few pages thicker. That depends on your submissions, of course.

## New Members

Brom, Erik	845 - 34th Avenue Winona, MN 55987
Danylak, Walt	G & W Models 115 Upland Road Syracuse, NY 13207-1119
Iannacone, Dick	40 Holton Circle Londonderry, NH 03053
McIntyre, Bill	528 South Vine Street Orrville, OH 44667
Riley, Paul V.	711 Lowell Street Peabody, MA 01960
Schnur, Jerry	845 West 77th Street Indianapolis, IN 46260

## NASG CONVENTION NEWS

The National Association of S Gaugers held it's annual convention on July 3-6 in suburban Detroit. About half the NASG membership (mostly scale modelers) showed up for a very special four days. This celebration of 1:64 modeling was a time to renew old friendships and to get acquainted with others we had only corresponded with.

Early arrivals congregated at Jim Kindraka's house on the 2nd for a wonderful evening of Milwaukee bratwurst, Detroit beer, fellowship, and exchange of modeling ideas. There were many compliments and some finishing touches applied to Jim's new L-shaped module which has a single-track branch taking off from a double-track main at right angles. It is built to look like the intersection of two railroads, with interchange trackage between. The plan of this module is terrific, and I hope to see it published. In an "instant clinic", we saw Vic Roseman plant dozens of clumps of weeds all over the module in minutes with twine, scissors, tweezers, and white glue.

The convention provided a large area for S scale suppliers to market their wares, and about 4000 square feet of exhibition space that housed the S Team and youga Valley sectional layouts as well as a mammoth assemblage of modules. The modular setup included about 2/3 NASG-style modules and 1/3 Central Jersey ones. Assembling, operating, and studying these layouts was a continuous theme between and during the many other excellent convention events.

We saw a variety of module styles, methods and specs come together and mate successfully. We also saw the advantages and limitations of each approach, and the need for further refinement of the module standards to minimize the hassles and maximize the fun of modular meets.

All of the clinics were excellent. The S.E. Michigan S Gaugers, who hosted the convention, conducted a very instructive series of clinics which demonstrated all the phases of module construction. The modulitis epidemic claimed many new victims as a result.



## TRAGEDY STRIKES

There is a thief in our midst. On Saturday, July 5th, between 5PM and 6PM, Bill Daiker's scratch-built engine disappeared from the modular layout at the NASG convention in Detroit.

This was the hour before the exhibition hall was locked for the banquet festivities. Few convention attendees (and none of the general public) were in the exhibition hall. When the hall was unlocked after the banquet the model was immediately discovered to be missing.

The engine was an exquisite 2-8-0 Maryland and Pennsylvania consolidation which Bill has invested a thousand hours in during the past twenty years. This convention was the debut of his finished product.

The convention officials were mortified at the apparent breakdown in their security provisions. At the General Meeting of the NASG that evening, it was suggested that a collection be taken up to somehow compensate Bill Daiker for his loss. This was a noble suggestion, but pointless because the one-of-a-kind 2-8-0 is irreplaceable. This prototype has never been produced commercially in S scale, and Bill's model is probably the only 1:64 Ma & Pa consolidation in the world.

Bill was saddened, of course, but he said "Building the engine was a labor of love, and the labor was my real reward. Nobody can take away the many hours of enjoyment I got from working on the model."

The thief, whoever it is, cannot benefit from this crime. The locomotive can never be sold or even shown to another S modeler. From its general proportions to its fine level of detailing, the engine's origin will be immediately apparent. The only practical thing for the thief to do is to pack the model carefully and mail it anonymously to: William Daiker; 319 Stockholm-Vernon; Stockholm, NJ 07649.

The practical thing for the rest of us to do is to make sure that everyone in the hobby realizes the futility of this theft, and to encourage return of Bill's model.



## NMRA CONVENTION NEWS

The next issue of the NMRA Bulletin, Model Railroader, and Railroad Model Craftsman will be full of pictures and articles on the Minuteman Conventions, so only the S news will be covered here.

Unlike last year's convention, S was almost invisible at Boston. Jeff Wilson of Hoquat Hobbies represented S in the exhibit hall. He had no products on hand, but was displaying copies of his catalog, the S Gauge Herald, and the SSSIG flyer. Next to the Hoquat booth, a power pack manufacturer had concentric loops of O, S, HO, and N track for demonstration purposes. For some reason, the American Models passenger train circling on his S loop was the only think running.

A stack of flyers advertising the SSSIG and back-issues of **Essence** were on display unattended in the Special Interest Group room.

On Friday night, the SSSIG held a roundtable discussion in the SIG room. Members in attendance were: John Bortz, Tom Coughlan, Don DeWitt, Dick Iannacone, Ken Mackenzie, Bill McIntyre, and Reggie Smith. Two other S modelers who sat in were Barry Lewis (Sn3) and John Medland.

The group brain-stormed ideas for promoting 1:64 scale in NMRA. There was strong feeling that S should have a presence at every national convention. Suggestions for this included:

- Operating modules as the best advertisement - at least a small operating display, if not a full modular layout.

- A scale size display and product availability literature such as the NASG used to exhibit.

- Providing (at nominal cost) a "survival kit" which would give interested modelers the info every 1:64 modeler should know, but may be afraid to ask.

There was much more, but you had to be there.



## ARCHITECTURAL MODELING MATERIALS

One of my "0" Scale SIG members recently called my attention to the products of Microform Models, Inc., Webb Drive, Merrimack, NH 03054. They produce a broad line of white metal castings (largely for architects and engineers) in a variety of scales from 1/500"=1' to 3/4"=1'. In between are a few 3/16" and 1/4" scale items that could be useful to S scalers.

Included are about a dozen 3/16" scale figures, seven styles of chairs and one automobile. The 1/4" scale listings are far more numerous and include much factory machinery which could be adapted to S scale. The company also offers dozens of tree armatures useable in any scale.

I would suggest that you order the Microform Models catalog at \$2.00 (it includes a coupon worth \$2.00 on the first order) and review it in a future SIG newsletter.

One point that I find interesting is that several of the scale figures are identical to those offered by Scenery Unlimited. My guess is that Microform is SU's supplier.

Gil Hulin

[Sounds promising, especially if some of the tree armatures are quite large. It is hard to locate materials for building 60' to 90' deciduous trees in S. I hope someone else volunteers to undertake the review you suggest; it will probably be a year before I get around to it. Seriously, architectural modeling supplies may be a major source of materials. I wonder how many other such companies are out there with very useful products that we don't know about? Is there an architect in the house? Ed.]



## MODERN VEHICLES

While hunting for birthday presents for my twin boys, about to turn five years old, I came across some vehicles which I believe are close to 1/64th scale. I found them at a local Children's Palace.

The first is a Kenworth Coe Aerodyne with trailer. The trailer measures 39'6" length with a top clearance of 14'. The overall length is just over 50' including the cab. Called "BJ and the Bear", it is marketed by Fleetwood Toys, Inc. of New York City, NY 10010. It is their part number 300-02, and I paid \$3.99 for mine.

The second is a line of diecast vehicles (catalog enclosed) which are mostly European prototypes. The manufacturer is Majorette, 69140 Rillieux, France. I purchased their #3062 GM semi with container load. The containers scale 19'8" in length each. When placed with the Kenworth, the Semi fits perfectly fine. These retail for \$5 to \$8 each.

Some of the particular Majorette items I thought were correct for S scale include farm tractors #208, #316, #323, #369, and #3012. In the 3030 series, I thought the #3030 pay loader looked OK, but the #3033 fire truck had a width of over 10'. Among those listed as being 11 3/8", the #3040, #3042, #3044, #3060, #3061, #3062, #3063, and #3068 all looked promising. The #3091 looked better suited for O scale.

The store had none of the buses shown in the catalog. If you find some in your area, and they look good to you, would you pick one up for me? Another possible source for the line might be Dave's Model Toys in Catonsville, MD. I no longer have his address, however he stocks virtually every diecast vehicle made. If memory serves, his catalog includes the approximate scale of each vehicle.

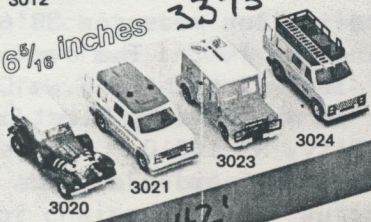


# MAJORETTE

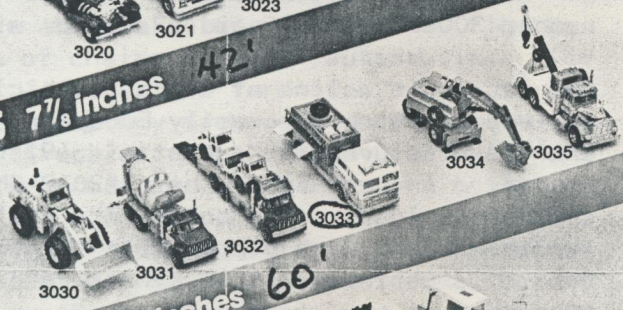
## 3010 SERIES 6<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches



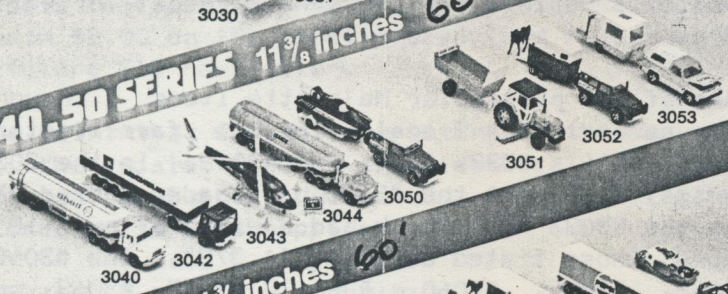
## 3020 SERIES 6<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches



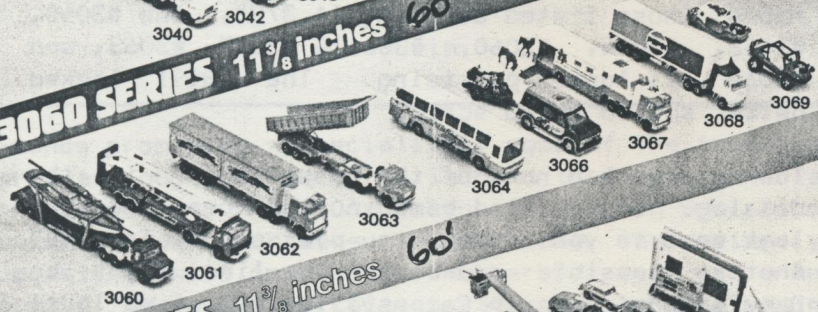
## 3030 SERIES 7<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches



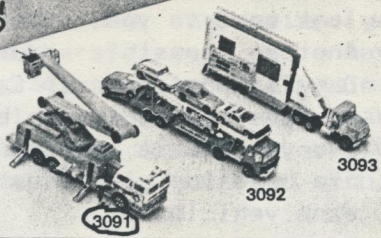
## 3040-50 SERIES 11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches



## 3060 SERIES 11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches



## 3090 SERIES 11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches



SIRET 961 505 039 00019. Réf. 3770270.  
Printed in France. Majorette F 69140 Rillieux.



Last of all, if anyone is looking for the Models of Yesteryear 1920's Mack delivery van, a local Kay-Bee toy store is clearing them out. Their Edina, MN location still had 6-7 left [in May].

Tom Lennon

[Thanks, Tom, for sharing this info. Some model railroaders refuse to acknowledge the rubber-tired competition on their layouts, but the real railroads are heavily into the container and TOFC business these days. I will keep an eye peeled for your bus, but my sons are taller than I am, so I don't have as many opportunities to browse in toy stores anymore. Perhaps other readers can help. Readers, please note Tom's new address in the roster printed elsewhere in this issue.

The Mack delivery van which Tom mentions was the subject of a fine conversion article by Don Thompson in the latest issue of the NASG Dispatch. Walt Danylak of G&W Models was selling these at the NASG convention in Detroit last month. If Tom's toy store is closing them out, they may be hard to find very quickly. Interested readers take note. Ed.]

#### MARKETING VERSUS THE MARKET

The S Gauge Herald is being brought out by Rollie Mercier, a former President of the NASG. He is paying for articles, has lower advertising rates (I understand), and plans to give the S Gaugian a run for the money.

The Pines & Prairies S Scale Workshop helped me put the mainline down in enough time to entertain about 24 Cub Scouts. Besides the enjoyment of showing off the railroad, the deadline caused us to make much more progress in a short time.

I have heard through the grapevine that Oriental is dropping their F-3 diesel project. I have heard that the project was on or off several times before. This time one of our local members heard it from Oriental directly, so it seems like pretty good information. While I realize that



most of us can live without F-3s, I am concerned about a lack of marketing being called a poor market.

Ask yourself what specifics you were able to find out about this project? What does the importer consider a "Phase 1" to be? Which specific paint scheme is he planning to bring in? How serious does the importer appear to be about the project? How many items sit on an importer's product list for years before they materialize or disappear? How do you know which items to order?

When Oriental did the NW-2s, they were very specific in their advertisements. While the project developed slowly, when they finally advertised and asked for money the project took off.

The S scale [standard gauge] market is not big, and most of us have enough motive power to get by today. For example, our club grew by four members this year, but they will not provide the buying frenzy that we had four years ago when the starved market was first opened to brass imports.

If an importer or manufacturer wants to succeed, he must do so by marketing. He must identify gaps that need filling. Following SD-40-2s with GP-38-2s resulted in the importer holding inventory. I suspect the fact that all of these were 4-axle locomotives probably slowed down sales of each of them.

Frankly I think a market survey in the S Gaugian, the NASG Dispatch, or the S Gauge Herald is worthless. Such a survey led someone to believe that a brass hi-rail Hudson with smoke and choo-choo would sell ... it didn't.

Right now the best form of market survey may be through actual sales. Talk to the people who have purchased, and find out what they want to buy. NASG knows who bought brass cars, and dealers know who bought brass engines.



I have heard a rumour that another manufacturer is planning to introduce a steel USRA 40' boxcar kit. If it fails from lack of sales volume, will the failure be blamed on a supposedly poor S scale market, or on a marketing mistake?

Ken Zieska

[There seem to be two equally valid ways for a major project of this kind to be launched: by conviction or by "trial balloon".

Most of the major new products are created out of conviction. The supplier thinks he sees (or can create) a demand for a specific product. He commits the funds for manufacture and promotion and hopes for the best. Both the S standard gauge and Sn3 markets have matured to the point where importers make these commitments with gratifying regularity. There is a risk, but realistic businessmen expect to take risks. As one of our importers said: "Every project is a risk, but I'm comfortable with that. I have to trust my own judgement. If I couldn't trust my judgement, I couldn't be in this business."

Occasionally, however, a supplier is pressed hard by some individual or group to offer a product which he really doesn't believe in. In these cases, he must either ignore the request or offer to send up a trial balloon. If he states that he needs a certain number of orders (at a forecasted price) or the project will be dropped, he gives prospective buyers a chance to come forward. If enough buyers do, he has done the hobby a service. If too few do, he has not taken a personal risk against his better judgement.

Trial balloons are a legitimate way to bring products to market when the suppliers doubt the wisdom of doing so. This is what Charlie Sandersfeld did with the PA conversion kit, even though he did not personally want to back it, and his manufacturer was insulted at the idea of being asked to produce it. Bill Peters of PBL will occasionally take the same approach with an Sn3 product he feels has only a very specialized appeal.



When a supplier is sending up a trial balloon, he needs to make sure we understand that the product will not be produced unless a specific number of orders are received, and he can reasonably expect down payments from us. If this is not made clear, we have the right to expect that the SUPPLIER IS TAKING THE RISK, and no money is required of us until the product is ready for shipment. Ed.]

#### MODULE INSTRUCTIONS NEEDED

Since **Essence** has been acting as somewhat of a forum on modular layout concepts in our scale, I wanted to share some thoughts with you and your readers on the subject.

Although modules caught on big with the smaller scales, particularly N scale, I feel there are good reasons to build modules in S scale. Modelers who prefer to work in S but don't have the space for a permanent layout can build modules. This way they can become part of a larger layout in a modular club and at local or national meets. And they can also set up a small layout in their home consisting of a few modules which can be easily set up and taken down when necessary.

Also, there are S scalers who are primarily model builders and don't have time for or aren't interested in building a permanent layout. A single or multiple-section module can be built with a reasonable investment of time and planning which would provide a place to run and photograph the models.

I was stricken with the modulitis bug while attending the NASG convention in Detroit. The series of clinics on module building was informative and enjoyable. However, I'm not sure I have all the standards right in my mind, and therefore feel I cannot proceed with construction. There are no national standards to provide a comforting feeling that my modules will easily connect with everyone else's in the country. Existing modules



are built to standards, of course, but the standards vary from club to club. This may make it harder to develop national standards, because the groups which already have modules built will prefer to stick to their own standards. Our scale needs this to be worked out soon (easy for me to say; I haven't done any building yet), and hopefully it will.

I'd like to see an official S scale module manual published, similar to the one in N scale. This could be made available through the SSSIG and/or the NASG. Modular railroading needs a set of absolute standards, particularly in the area of interconnectivity, to make it enjoyable.

Glenn T. Berg

P.S. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the NTRAK module specs, they are available in either of two publications:

NTRAK Manual: \$1.00

32 pages of module building standards.

NTRAK Module "How-To" Book: \$9.00

107 pages of plans, photos, and "how-to" details for building modules. Includes module building standards.

Either publication can be ordered from:

NTRAK - Jim FitzGerald

2424 Alturas Road

Atascadero, CA 93422

Make your check payable to NTRAK.

[I think it has taken a little longer for modules to catch on in the larger scales because of the tendency to think of a module as a single portable section which contains an entire scene. Since, for example, the passing siding for a six-car train in S takes about eight feet, our scenes tend to be longer than a single portable section. Once we began thinking about multi-section modules, this objection evaporated.



Your reasons for building modules are right on. I can think of some additional ones. Consider the person who has the time and space for a permanent home layout. Such a person should seriously consider building a module first. It's good experience; a module allows you to experiment on a small (disposable?) project before you try the same techniques on a larger layout.

Secondly, a module gives the builder a chance to work at all the facets of the hobby in a short time. When you get bored with laying ties all the way around the room, take a break and build another tree for your module, or spot a few cars on your module's industrial spur with your favorite switch engine.

Thirdly, a module can give you the chance to model a favorite structure or piece of rolling stock which does not fit the theme of your larger layout. For example, I can't excuse a wharf scene on my Black Hills layout, but I can have one on my module.

Another reason to build a module is for the promotion of S scale. Operating layouts attract more attention than anything else at model railroad conventions and shows. What better way to show off the reliability, the appealing size, and the detail of S than to bring your module to meets where other model railroaders can see what they are missing?

Yes, module standards are a bit of a problem right now, but hopefully not for long. A lot of energy and hard work is going into the question of electrical connectivity, and the letters and schematics are flying back and forth at an amazing rate. Some work is also needed on the issue of mechanical connectivity, but it needn't take long to resolve.

I don't think the vested interests of any of the folks who have already built modules will delay the standards development process. All of the clubs that I know of which have modules were represented in the module discussions at the Detroit NASG convention. The friendly consensus among them was that the need for a single good set of standards is more important than avoiding a little re-work.



Uncertainty about the standards, though, shouldn't keep you from beginning module design and construction. The only unresolved issues are:

1. After I wire my rails to the terminal strips on both ends of my module, what wiring goes from the terminal strip to the next module?
2. How far from each end of my module do the rails and ties stop, and how will the rails be joined to the next module?

Pending resolution of these questions, my provisional recommendations are:

Wire each track to the terminal strips under both ends of the module (making sure that each rail has at least two feeder wires soldered to it, in case one breaks someday) and defer final wiring inter-module connectors to the terminal strips for a few months until the electrical standards are resolved.

For your mainline tracks, lay ties and code 100 rail all the way to the edge of the module at both ends. Be prepared to remove the rail, and possibly the ties, back 2 or 3 inches from the end of each module when the physical connectivity standards are set.

Between physical sections of a multi-section module, I plan to use separate 2-pin Cinch connectors for each track's electrical connection. I plan to use a three-inch piece of (Tomalco or Scenery Unlimited) flex-track with slip-on rail-joiners for mechanical connection.

I agree that a booklet on building S scale modules is needed as soon as the standards are set, if not sooner. The 3200+ NTRAKers would never have been able to build without one. The NTRAK "How-To" book should be required reading for anyone getting into modules. Not only does it contain tips for standards-setters about why other standards choices were discarded, but there are a zillion module planning and construction ideas in its diagrams and photos. Ed.]



## ROSTER of MEMBERS and SUBSCRIBERS

Here is the first annual listing of all members of the NMRA S Scale SIG, and all other subscribers to *Essence*.

Bashista, Ron	American Models 22055 West Brandon Farmington Hills, MI 48024
Berg, Glenn *	18617 Bernadine Street Lansing, IL 60438
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Brom, Erik	845 - 34th Avenue Winona, MN 55987
Byers, Mike *	1 Songbird Lane Milton, PA 17847
Coughlan, Thomas F.	84 Morgan Street Melrose, MA 02176
Cox, Eugene	9336 Larch Drive Munster, IN 46321
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DeWitt, Donald	37 Snow Drive Mahwah, NJ 07430
Durstewitz, John M.	63 Crestview Drive Bernardsville, NJ 07924
Ferguson, William	112 Meighen Avenue Toronto, Ontario Canada M4B 2H7
Hawley, Tom	2311 Strathmore Road Lansing, MI 48910
Huff, Alex	P.O. Box 398 Wagner, SD 57380-0398



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Hulin, Gilbert M.	3895 Colony Oaks Drive Eugene, OR 97405
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Jasper, Dave	8900 Birchwood Lane Bloomington, MN 55438
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Noriega, Manuel	21 El Carmelo Circle Oakland, CA 94619
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Zieska, Ken 11810 52nd Avenue North  
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## Coordinator's Corner

Ken Mackenzie  
Coordinator

### IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE

Since the current editor can only manage to get out a newsletter every other month, and since no one else has (yet) stepped forward to take his place, we are altering the dues structure to match.

Last year's dues were established to fund the printing and postage costs of 12 issues of *Essence* per year. Consequently, all members and subscribers have paid for more than they have gotten.



#### CORRECTION

On page 19 of this (August 1986) issue of *Essence*, the article on the Canadian Meet should read "September 26 through September 28", not July.



Rather than cutting the dues in half, we are doubling the duration of everyone's membership. From now on, SSSIG members will pay \$6.00 every two years. All members will receive **Essence**. Non-member subscriptions to **Essence** will also cost \$6.00 for two years worth of issues. As a result, all current members and subscribers are paid up until July 1987.

Not only does this change give everyone their money's worth, but it greatly simplifies our bookkeeping. Also the bi-annual membership arrangement will reduce the processing of membership renewals by 50%.

There are two additional reasons for the reduction in non-member subscription rates from \$10.00 to \$6.00. Our current non-member subscribers are NASG members who contribute at least as much effort and energy toward the success of the NMRA S Scale SIG as members do; they just don't happen to be members of the NMRA. This help is appreciated, and should be encouraged.

Secondly, the costs of printing and mailing **Essence** will go down significantly if its circulation goes up. If this reduction in the artificially high non-member subscription rate should increase circulation, the organization as a whole will benefit.

Hopefully, these changes will seem fair to all. If not, please let me know. This is your organization.

#### **CANADIAN MEET**

Tom Hawley suggests that you may want to take in the NMRA regional convention in London, Ontario on July 26 through July 28. A tour of the Canadian National locomotive shops is planned. Look for Tom if you attend.

#### **NEWS WANTED**

I had to leave Boston early, so I sadly missed the "S-Gaugers Cookout" which the Bristol S-Gauger Railroaders Club gave. I hope someone who attended will write and tell me all about the good time I missed.



ESSENCE  
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Greendale, WI 53129

EDITOR - Ken Mackenzie  
CONTRIBUTORS - Gil Hulin

Tom Lennon  
Ken Zieska

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:

Tom Lennon  
12400 Cockspur Court  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

tions to Essence cost an additional \$6 per year for SSSSIG 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.