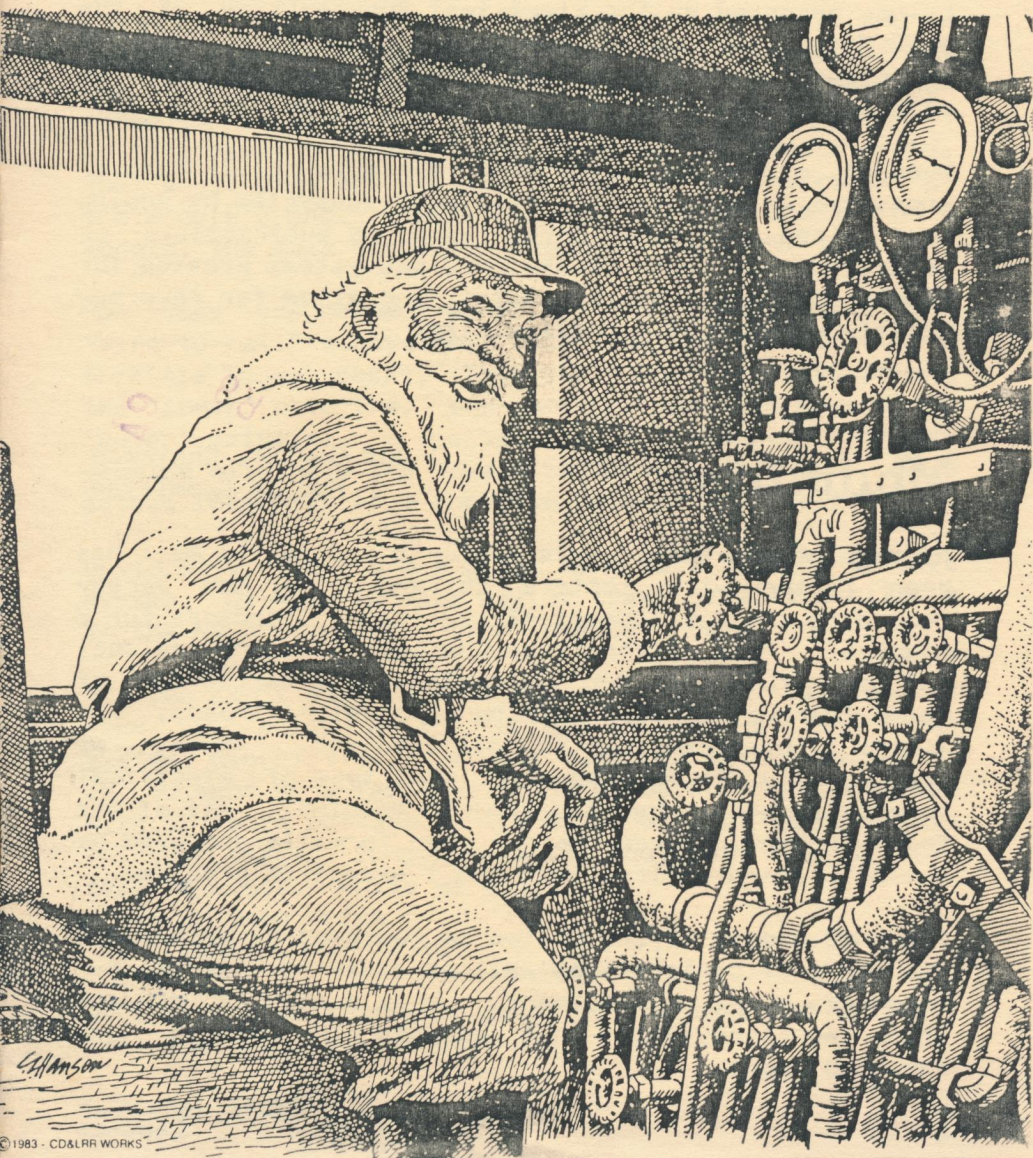


ESSENCE

A monthly publication of the
S Scale Special Interest Group

December 1986

1:64 scale modeling with 1:1 fun



Foolscap

Ken Mackenzie
Editor

The holidays and the peak of the modeling season are upon us, so this issue has very few contributors. But we trust we will hear from you soon. Meanwhile, enjoy the holidays and savor their special sentimental ties to our hobby.

Meanwhile, Glenn Berg has an interesting proposal for you, and Don DeWitt reports on the SMOD wiring system being proposed by the Electrical Subcommittee of the NASG Modular Standards Development Committee. Members of every major S club have been represented in this effort, and the results so far are very exciting.

Modules may be upgraded from a simple "rail-to-rail" subsystem to an advanced "rail-cab" subsystem by adding four wires and connectors, with no subtractions or modifications. Both of the SMOD subsystems provide for single and double-track modules, and allow for reverse-ability without additional wiring.

Modulitis

Don DeWitt, Chairman
Module Committee

As many of you know, this summer's and fall's mail has been filled with letters to and from New Jersey regarding the development of electrical standards for S modules. This interaction has been slow and tedious, but very fruitful. Our discussions have forced many of us to learn a lot about wiring of model railroads, and I hope it has been fun for all involved. Anyway, we are finally in agreement on what type of electrical connectors should be used to join modules. All of the following information has not been formally approved by the NASG Board of Trustees, but I expect no problems.

The SMOD module wiring system is designed to accommodate the needs of beginners as well as advanced, operation-oriented model railroaders. This system is divided into two subsystems that address the simple and advanced needs.

The simple, or "wire-to-rail", subsystem uses two wires per track that run from one end to the other. From these lines, rail feeder wires bring the power to the rails. Therefore, a two-track mainline module will have four wires underneath. These four wires are connected to an 8-position barrier-style terminal strip at each end of the module. In order to be able to use modules in a left or right-hand configuration (ie., turn the module 180 degrees), a specific orientation of connectors is necessary.

The system uses Cinch 2-pin connectors with a male connector attached to the lines of one track and a female attached to the other track. Each connector has one large and one small pin (or socket). As used, each connector's large pin or socket is positioned so that it is closest to the outside edges of the module's end. The small pins and sockets are closer to the center of the module's end. Finally, when you face the end of a module, the male connector hangs on the right side.

How does one connect power to the modules? In the "wire-to-rail" subsystem, each track is connected to a throttle (power pack). Thus one throttle always powers the "inner" mainline, and another throttle powers the "outer" mainline. A special throttle connector configuration with male and female connectors is used. This allows insertion of a throttle between any two modules.

Obviously, there are a great many more details to this system. We hope to make all of these details available in the NASG Dispatch. [And **Essence**. Ed.]

If you can't wait a month or two, I will be glad to send you a copy of the current version of the SMOD system description. I will mail you this information if you send me a large self-addressed business envelope with 56 cents postage. The SMOD document is currently thirteen pages long, so \$1.25 would be helpful for copying costs. Write me at:

37 Snow Drive
Mahwah, NJ 07430

Next time I will briefly describe the advanced system I call the "rail-cab" subsystem.

S Scale Guide to Periodical Literature

January 1985 - June 1986

GAZ: Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette
MM: Mainline Modeler BUL: NMRA Bulletin
MR: Model Railroader PM: Prototype Modeler
MRG: Model Railroading RMC: Railroad Model Craftsman

SCALE DRAWINGS

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Jess Bennett's Great Northern Pacific
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Layout Tour-- Roger Schenk's Sn3 Empire
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Powell's Produce - Part 1: The Structure
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Upgrading Plastic Hopper Cars MRG May/June '86 p28

Mail Bag

S FEST '86

S Fest is an annual meet which has been held in the Chicago area for over a decade. At first, the Chicago Area S Gaugers club sponsored the event. Then, the event alternated between Chicago and Milwaukee, where it was sponsored by the Badgerland S Gaugers club. Now a third club has done the work, and the event itself is beginning to take on a new character.

Since I live in Milwaukee, I had heard of S Fest. When I asked other S scalers about it, they shrugged and said "It's just a big American Flyer swap meet", so I had no interest in attending.

But Ken Zieska changed all that. He wrote that several members of the Pines & Prairies S Scale Workshop were coming down from Minneapolis for the meet, and urged the S scalers in Milwaukee and Chicago to do the same. His idea was that it was an opportunity to get together, and we might be able to show our tinsplate ancestors a little of what was happening in 1:64 scale. We did.

The 1986 S Fest was held October 24-26 at the Holiday Inn midway between Beloit, Wisconsin and Rockford, Illinois. It was hosted this year by the State Line S Gaugers club.

I arrived early at Registration, and was asked to declare whether I was interested in tinsplate or scale (maybe this wasn't going to be all AF after all). I soon discovered the reason for the distinction: there were two sets of door prizes, one set for tinsplaters and one set for scalers. The model contest also had separate categories for tinsplate and scale.

For the first few hours, I felt very much out of place as scores of tinsplaters arrived and unpacked their wares onto trading tables for other tinsplaters to haggle over. As expected,

many of the choicer items were sold during the unwrapping before they ever touched the tables. I learned that Baker's Chocolate cars are very expensive, not because they are colorful, but because they are RARE. Old American Flyer steam engines were selling for well over \$200. My father, who is a stamp collector, would have been interested in all this.

The only scale island in this sea of toys was Don Heimberger's Scenery Unlimited display. I hung around like a stranger in a strange land, until Don and I went to dinner. When we got back, a large bag of the beautiful new Southwind castings had disappeared from Don's table. Another thief, but who? We were the only scalers around. To underscore this point, I won the first scale door prize of the day. Not luck, just 50-50 odds.

Then things changed. Joel Lebovitz, Dave Nether-ton, Roman Papierz, and Charlie Sandersfeld arrived from Chicago with a display of the new Alco PA conversion mechanisms, and samples of Omnicon's other engines. A crowd gathered.

Dave Kloes, Dick Kloes, and Dave Koehler from the Badgerland club arrived and set up 24 feet of S scale modules which ran like a switching pike and showed off a variety of available scale engines, including one brass articulated. The tinplaters' eyes were getting bigger and bigger.

From Minneapolis came Dave Jasper, John Kromhout, Tom Lennon, Rusty Westermeier, and Ken Zieska. Rusty filled a table with nicely built and weathered Sn3 engines and cars, at least a dozen of which sold. Rollie Mercier flew in from Washington D.C. with dozens of standard gauge scale cars built from craftsman kits. The one I wanted to buy was sold before I could get to it.

Chuck Porter and Roger Shimon from Milwaukee chanced to get a hotel room beside the indoor swimming pool which became the S scale convention center and lounge. Modelers came and went, but

the conversation and refreshments in this room never stopped until the wee hours of the morning. We discussed everything from the fate of the new S Gauge Herald to ways of connecting rails from module to module. We met an old friend from St Louis and discovered a new S scaler from New Holstein, WI. Once again I was reminded that the best part of this hobby is the people in it.

So, whatever S Fest may have been in the past, it was a memorable gathering of 1:64 modelers this year, and hopefully will be again. As the song says: "The times, they are a changin'". One AF operator at S Fest was heard to say that he was going to have to convert to scale because scale equipment was now cheaper than tinplate.

S. Cratchit

NEW JERSEY GET-TOGETHER

For several years now, the Central Jersey S Scalers club has held a fall meet which features major modular model railroad operation in addition to the activities found at most S meets. Each year the gathering seems to grow as modelers (especially those with severe cases of modulitis) come from farther and farther away to get in on the fun. Here is news from the 1986 edition held November 21-23.

Boy, did we have fun! Our "Get Together" brought together S Scalers from Michigan (Jim DeWitt, Tom Hawley, Dave Held and Jim Kindraka), Pennsylvania (John and Thelma Bortz, Mike Byers, Matt Lacko, and Jim Miller), Massachusetts (Tom Coughlin, Doug Peck, and Paul Riley with his beautiful new caboos), Connecticut (Bill Fuhrman, Bill Krause, and Don Ross), New York (Doug Miller and wife, Vic Rosemann, Jay and Ellen Sobleman, Stan Stokrocki, and Howie Waelder), Delaware (John Hall), Maryland (Jerry Smith), Virginia (Joe and Marion Scales and family), and New Jersey, of course.

All in all, we registered over 50 participants. Of course, our major focus was a huge modular

layout. The attached plan shows how we joined 30 modules ranging from 4 to 24 feet.

Unfortunately we had three cancellations. If they had come with their modules, our layout would have been the largest ever in S. Instead, our 236-foot layout must remain as the second largest behind the 255-foot layout at the 1986 NASG convention. From the number of yard modules it is obvious that we focused on operation. This layout also featured the use of the newly developed NASG SMOD electrical control system. The SMOD system will hopefully receive NASG approval early in 1987.

After-dinner activities on Saturday were: Lou Wassermann's slide show about the Chessie Safety Special, Don DeWitt's clinic on module wiring and control systems, and Jay and Ellen Sobleman's clinic on making reproductions of small parts.

On Sunday, many of us gathered again for operation of the layout or for a trip to the huge HO layout of The Model Railroad Club of Union, New Jersey. All in all, I think everyone had a fine time, and we hope to welcome more visitors next year.

Don DeWitt

New Members

Krumbein, Ernie	224 Sunnyside Avenue Munster, IN 46321
Miller, Dave	2318 Park Lane New Holstein, WI 53061
Papierz, Roman	5234 West Cullom Chicago, IL 60641
Ristow, Bob	2005 Sunkist Avenue Waukesha, WI 53188
Shimon, Roger	P.O. Box 305 Oconomowoc, WI 53066

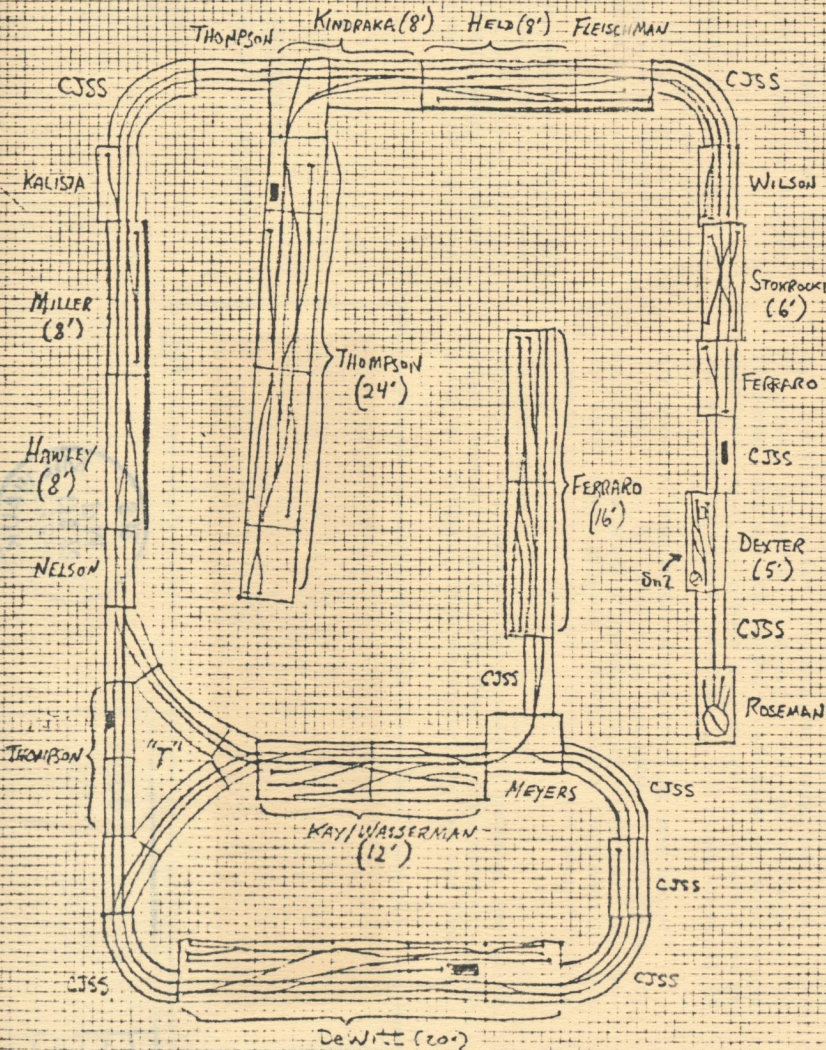
Central Jersey S Sealers'

5th Annual "Get Together"

November 21-23, 1986

South Amboy, N.J.

featuring the debut of the S-MOD
module wiring system (both Wire-to-Rail
and Rail-Cab control subsystems)



ESSENCE
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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.

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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.

