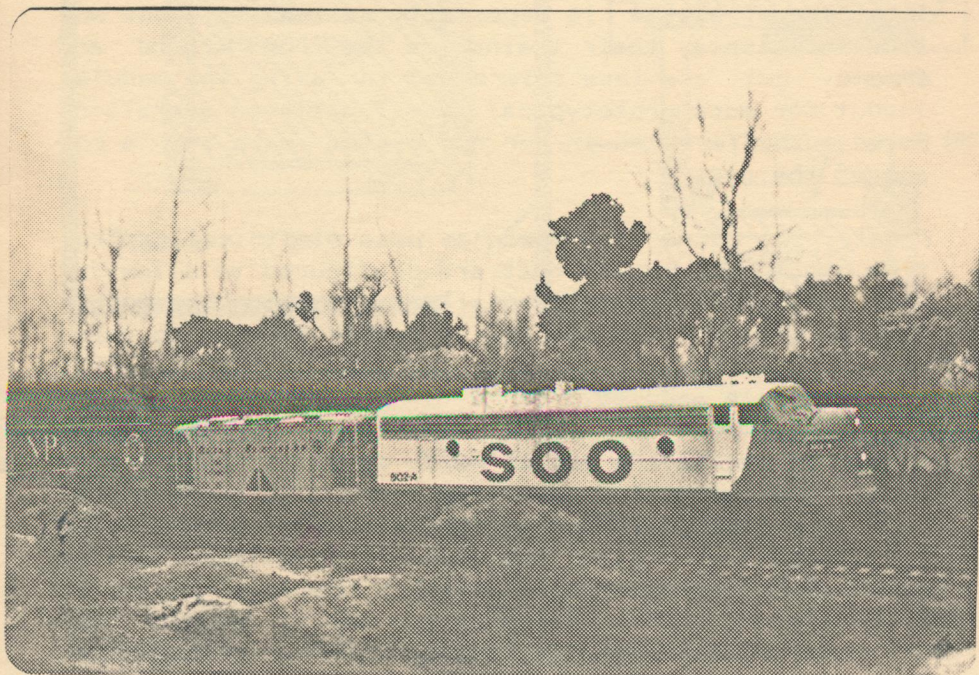


ESSENCE

A monthly publication of the
S Scale Special Interest Group

1:64 scale modeling with 1:1 fun
February 1987



Natural light makes pictures life-like, even on an overcast afternoon. Here, Ken Zieska's red and white SOO Line FP diesel shunts a GN covered hopper and a NP boxcar on his 2' by 4' module. Ken Mackenzie photo.

Isn't it about time you wrote to us? Do your summer plans include a trip to Eugene, Oregon for the NMRA National Convention?

Modulitis

Don Dewitt, Chairman
Module Committee

In the last issue I described the "Wire-to-Rail" subsystem of the new S-MOD electrical control system for modular layouts. It is very similar to the control system used by NTRAK operators, INTERRAIL operators, and some of the HO modular system operators.

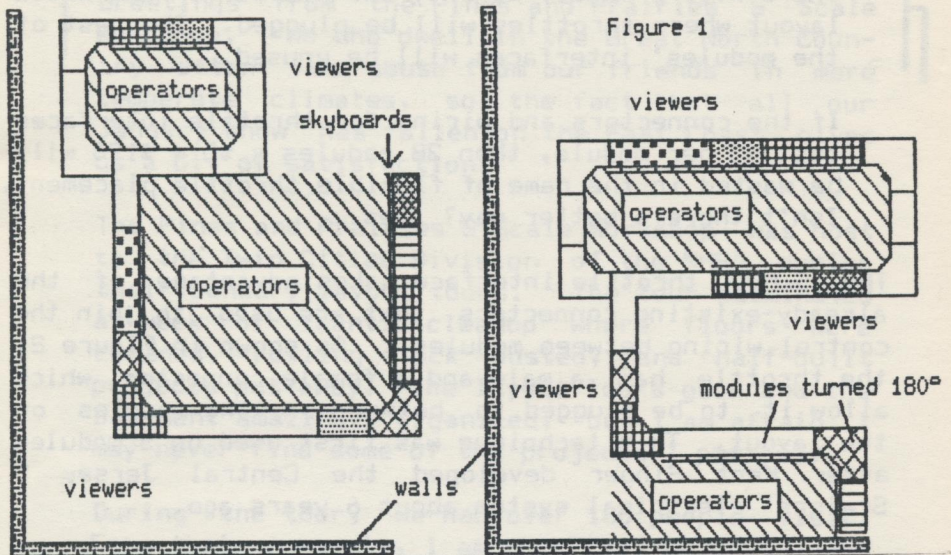
There is no common rail wiring, and there is the capability to assign only one throttle per mainline track. This type of system is especially suited to those who like to display their trains as they run around and around, but are less interested in using the modular layout for more prototypical model railroad operation. Several differences in our new system make it "a cut above" the rest.

First, the connectors used to pass electrical control from one module to the next are configured to allow for reversing a module's orientation (swapping the module end-for-end). This concept is rather foreign to many, so it is worthwhile to point out some of the benefits of reversible modules.

1. If you have a module with a siding, it is more interesting if sometimes the siding comes off of the inner mainline and sometimes off of the outer mainline (with the switch sometimes facing, sometimes trailing).

But I can hear you scratching your head and wondering: "But reversing a module will place the backdrop or skyboard on the wrong side, and keep visitors from seeing my wonderful module!!" This is sometimes true, and explains why many operationally-oriented module builders choose not to build them. [Others use removable/reversable ones. The module hardware sold by Modular Layout Systems includes a well-designed provision for removeable/reversable skyboards. Ed.]

In addition, Figure 1 shows how a module with a fixed skyboard can be used in either orientation, depending on how the layout is designed.



2. Another important reason for reversibility of modules is to allow corner modules to be used in a left-hand or right-hand configuration on branch lines. This is also shown in Figure 1.

A second important difference between our S-MOD modules and others is the way in which control throttles are interfaced with the control wiring running under the modules.

With most other systems, some modules are built with no way of plugging in a throttle, and so the placement of the module is somewhat dictated by the fact that the module cannot be used where a control point is desired.

Even in systems which require a control interface on every module, they use a special extra interface. This interface usually consists of a female panel-mounted connector which matches with a standard male connector on the throttle.

This works fine, but it adds to the cost and complexity of building each module. Just think about a 40-module loop layout with a double track mainline.. There will probably be only two places in the whole layout where throttles will be plugged. The rest of the modules' interfaces will be unused.

If the connectors and wiring for throttle interfaces cost \$5 per module, then 38 modules x \$5 = \$190 will be wasted in the name of flexible throttle placement. Isn't there a better way? Yes.

The S-MOD throttle interface takes advantage of the already-existing connectors that are used to join the control wiring between modules. As shown in Figure 2, the throttle has a male and a female connector which allow it to be plugged in between any two modules on the layout. This technique was first used on S modules after Kent Singer developed the Central Jersey S Scalers' electrical system about 6 years ago.

One final important feature of this S-MOD throttle interface is that it can be used with either of the S-MOD wiring subsystems (Wire-to-Rail, or Rail-Cab) without any changes.

NEXT TIME: S-MOD's advanced cab/block control system called the "Rail-Cab" subsystem.

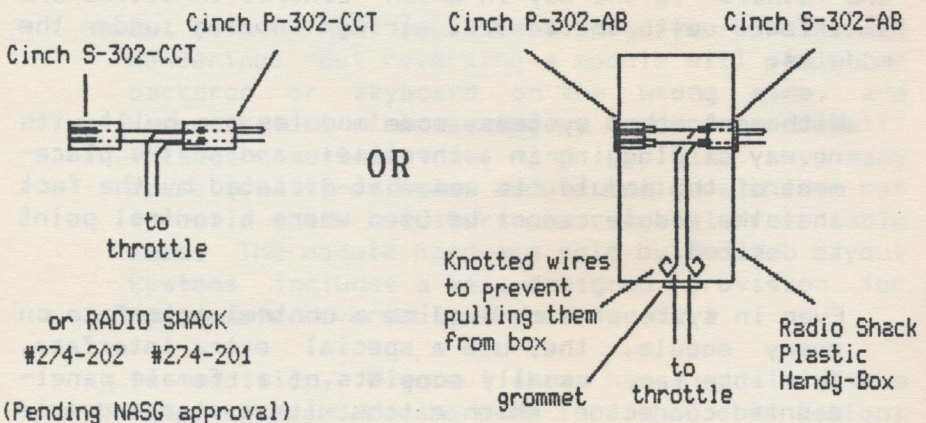


FIGURE 2

Greetings from the Pines and Prairies S Scale Workshop. We who dwell in the Great North Country often take abuse from our friends in more temperate climates, so the fact that all our January snow has fallen on the East Coast gives us a bit of satisfaction.

The Pines and Prairies S Scale Workshop was host to the Twin Cities Division of the NMRA during their January layout tours. The tour culminated a week of frantic cleanup where floors were cleaned, rolling stock dusted, and half-built projects put away. The layout looks good and the basement amazingly organized, but I am afraid I may never find some of the projects I put away.

During the tour, we had over 100 people visit. From their comments, I am sure they never thought S scale was alive, much less growing as it is. The last visitor left at 11:45 PM, and that was after five hours of solid visitors.

For the evening, we ran a number of different combinations of cars and locomotives. We also had several displays showing car kits and new products. The success of the tour was due in no small measure to the club members, who brought rolling stock and buildings, and of course, answered questions.

On the new product scene, brass has taken the spotlight. If you are modeling the modern era, take a look at the wide vision caboose imported by Modern Models. This caboose would look good on any layout following everything from F units to SD40-2's. But more importantly, the model just looks good. The detail included on this model is fantastic. From the cupola seats to the power take-off pulley on the trucks, this model has it all. The detail and quality of this caboose will amaze you and impress your friends in those funny smaller scales.

This model comes in two versions: the D&RGW version is most generic and very close to the model run by most railroads, while the Frisco version is more unique. Whichever is your choice, see them before they are all sold out.

Also new are the Overland F units. As promised, these units are full of detail and well made. Every door opens, and there is a bag of detail parts which will allow you to model just about any F that ran on rails.

Unfortunately, the screen etchings on the F3's seem to be incorrect, and that is a visual problem. Tom Marsh has a record of importing only high quality models, so I am confident that a fix will be available soon. EMD F units were the early workhorses of many railroads, and they lasted well into the second generation. The Overland F's will provide depth and variety to your roster and deserve a close look.

Ken Zieska

[Participating in an NMRA layout tour is surely a wonderful way to publicize S scale. What better way to show other-scale modelers what they realistically could (should?) be doing in their own basements. The heft, operating reliability, and detailing possibilities of S models are all things which can best be appreciated on a real model railroad.

For many of us, the layout tour is the most instructive and inspirational part of any NMRA meet. At the NMRA 50th national convention I looked forward to seeing "in the flesh" several home railroads that I had admired through photo stories in the hobby press. But the photos turned out to be more impressive, because the real models were so TINY. I knew from the photos that they were beautifully detailed, but my eyes were not good enough to see the rivets and such. I could appreciate an HO scene, but not an individual HO model.

The rest of us who live where NMRA divisional and regional meets are held should think seriously about

participating in the layout tours. Here in Milwaukee, Roy Meissner has done so. And don't hesitate because your masterpiece isn't finished yet; few model railroads ever are. While Ken Zieska is farther along with his layout than most of the Pines & Prairies club, he is still at the bare benchwork stage with most of the rail in - but not all. Roy's railroad is at a similar stage, but he has a few structures in place.

The biggest reason to hold back, of course, is that our own railroad never seems "good enough". We tremble at the idea that some sophisticated "expert" will sneer at our humble efforts. Hogwash! Good modelers are usually very nice people. The others are just insecure about their own work, so we should feel sorry for them rather than taking offense.

I learn something from every layout I visit, and I know people will learn from visiting yours. Go for it! Ed.]

MODELERS IN TRACTION

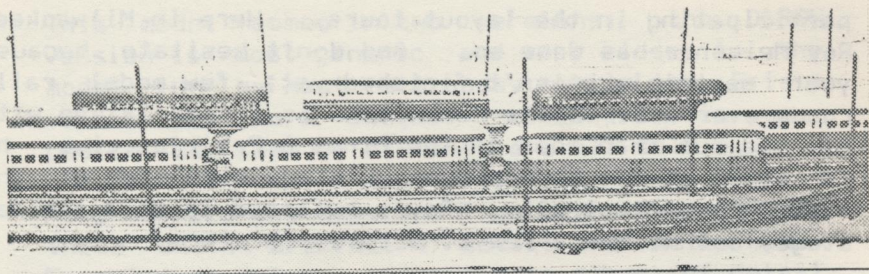
I enjoyed the December issue of *Essence*. I've gotten at least one phone call from a long lost traction person who saw the earlier issue of the interurbans. I don't have his name handy as I write this, but he was a contributor to the early (circa 1971) **S Gaugian**.

In regards to my favorite back-burner project, the Sn3 trolley car: I've gotten both car sides made up, and have cast replica sides in epoxy. The sides are encouraging. When I get out from under my backlog of orders for the PCC car project, I'll complete the Deadwood Central narrow gauge trolley. You've heard this before, but this time I'll finish it! (Emphatically).

Enclosed are some photos. I hope you can use them.

Roman G. Papierz

[You bet we can use them! The picture of your impressive array of PCC cars is printed here. When I saw the



ads for Niles & PCC cars from Pope Imagineering in Chicago, I suspected it was your venture. Thanks for sharing your work with us.

I have fond memories of PCC cars from my youth. When PCC cars replaced the friendly little "back porch" style wooden trolleys in Minneapolis, I was intimidated at first. They looked cold, austere, and forbidding to a ten year old boy. But what luxury! They were so quiet, smooth and comfortable that I never thought of them as trolleys; they were railcars to me.

At least half a dozen SSSIG members have indicated an interest in traction modeling. I'm surprised you haven't heard from more of them by now.

About the Deadwood Central trolleys: You and I are probably the only people in the world who are interested in them, so I am sure the PCC and Niles cars will keep you busy for quite a while. There is no need to push on my account. It will probably be years before my railroad is ready for them to run on.

Did you see the article on the DC cars in the **Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette** a couple of years ago? Bob Brown, the editor, got so excited about them that he built one for his own On3 railroad. Ed.]

ANOTHER BURLINGTON FAN

Dear Ken,

Your decision to model the Deadwood Branch of the CB&Q looks like a great choice. A standard gauge line with all the attributes of a narrow gauge line!

I found my copy of the **Burlington Northern 1976-77 Annual**, published by Motive Power Services in Denver. Its out of print, but if you find a copy for sale, snap it up! There's a 12 page article on the Deadwood Branch, a 30 page article on snow-fighting equipment, a 20 page article on the EMD SW1 switcher (including a photo of the Deadwood switcher with snowplows on both ends), and a 12 page article on the Cheyenne Branch, besides the usual rosters and sundry articles.

I understand that there's a short line down in Illinois that has a CB&Q caboose. It is one of two that offer steam tourist rides. I'd like to go down there sometime to photograph it and take some measurements.

Dick Lind

[Sounds like a trip I would also like to make. What do you say we make it an outing? Maybe some of the other Wisconsin SSSIG members would like to go along. Any takers out there?

The publication you mentioned sounds great, as does the new book A High Line Scrapbook, The Burlington's Branch to Deadwood. I am delighted that so much material is available about a relatively obscure branch line. Just goes to show that you never know what you might find until you start looking.

The Deadwood line was a fascinating little pike, though, in an amazing hotbed of rail activity. Where else could you ever find two standard gauge railroads, three 36" gauge railroads, one 20" gauge railroad, and a 36" gauge interurban line, all within an area about 4 miles square? Ironically, the real thing was too fakey to be believed if modeled faithfully: too much track-work for a well balanced model railroad.

Yet focusing on the DC/CB&Q is the best thing that ever happened to me in the hobby. Following one specific prototype simplifies my life. With little imagination or artistic talent, I can make a scene look realistic because it once WAS real. I am also less tempted to buy or build models that don't fit. Ed.]

S Dispatches

Glenn Berg
S. Cratchit

Here is some recent S-related material which appeared in the hobby press. Magazine abbreviations are:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| MG: Model Railroading | PT: Prototype Modeler |
| MM: Mainline Modeler | SG: S Gaugian |
| MR: Model Railroader | SH: S Gauge Herald |
| NG: N.G. & Short Line Gazette | SN: Sn3 Modeler |
| RC: Railroad Model Craftsman | DI: NASG Dispatch |

SCALE DRAWINGS

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| General Electric B39-8 | MR Feb 87 p86 |
| "Not Too Large" Water Tank | SH Dec/Jan 87 p2 |

PRODUCT REVIEWS

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| American Models mill gondola | SG Jan/Feb 87 p12 |
| American Models passenger cars | SH Dec/Jan 87 p14 |
| Lehigh Valley Models Brownhoist pillar crane | SG Jan/Feb 87 p13 |
| Colorado Tree Company trees & trestle bents | NG Jan/Feb 87 p13 |
| Finestkind Models Amex Oil & Grease Company kit | NG Jan/Feb 87 p14 |
| Grandt Line windows & doors | SG Jan/Feb 87 p14 |
| Models by Roger Schenck Sn3 D&RGW flat car kit | NG Jan/Feb 87 p13 |
| Modern Models wide-vision caboose | SH Dec/Jan 87 p15 |
| Omnicon Pency L-1 Mikado | SH Dec/Jan 87 p15 |
| Overland Sn3 C&S caboose | SN Winter 86 p12 |
| PBL Chama sand facility | SN Winter 86 p12-13 |
| PBL Sn3 West Side Lumber Shay | SN Winter 86 p11-12 |
| Precision Scale Co. D&RGW flanger and vestibule coach | SN Winter 86 p10 |
| RGM's Swayne/West Side caboose | SN Winter 86 p18-19 |
| Rix switchstand | SN Winter 86 p10 |
| S Scale Shop auto wheels | DI Dec 86 p6 |
| Scenery Unlimited gas electric | MR Feb 87 p48 |
| Waukeena Iron Wks crosscut saws | SG Jan/Feb 87 p14 |

LAYOUT FEATURE STORIES

- Scene on John Ciccarelli's S scale layout
(Trackside Photos) MR Feb 87 p90
- San Diego Sn3 Fellowship sectional layout
(Tracking Sn3) SG Jan/Feb 87 p48-50
- Touring the Rio Grande Northern SN Winter 86 p20-21

SCRATCH-BUILDING

- Build a Narrow Gauge Stock Pen SN Winter 86 p30-33
- Freight Door SH Dec/Jan 87 p18-19
- Lineside Supply Shed SG Jan/Feb 87 p34-36
- Log Buggie SH Dec/Jan 87 p34
- Rail & Tie Centering Jig SH Dec/Jan 87 p37
- Scratchbuilding Narrow Gauge Freight Cars (in HO,
but all applicable to S) MR Feb 87 p97
- Tank at Brockton NG Jan/Feb 87 p44-47
- Trestle Building RGS Style NG Jan/Feb 87 p22-27
- Turnout Templates SH Dec/Jan 87 p20-21

MODELING ARTICLES

- Adapting Kadee Couplers to Fit Huff N Puff Pockets
and Other Helpful Hints SH Dec/Jan 87 p22-24
- Building A Reading HT Hopper SH Dec/Jan 87 p16-17
- Climax Log Car, Sn3 Conversion NG Jan/Feb 87 p35
- Conoco Tank Car #6 SN Winter 86 p16-17
- Galloping Goose #6 (Prototype data)
SN Winter 86 p22-24
- Making the Efsi 1:66 Truck More Realistic
SN Winter 86 p15
- Making the Tyco Gondola Look Better (same as the
American Flyer gondola) MR Jan 87 p96
- PFE's Ice Reefers (Prototype data for model soon to
be released in S by PRS) MR Jan 87 p61 and
MR Feb 87 p86
- Rebuilding Super Scale Kits SG Jan/Feb 87 p25-28
- Scale Cars from Toy Bodies DI Dec 86 p12-13
- S-Kinks SH Dec/Jan 87 p38

Cinders

HEAVYWEIGHT PASSENGER CARS

A group in the midwest is preparing to announce a pair of quality 1:64 heavyweight passenger car kits: a Pennsylvania P-70 coach and a baggage car. The kits will feature flat urethane body castings and brass trucks. If there is market support for these kits, 2 or 3 more S scale car kits or structure kits will be added each year.

BUDGET DIESELS

By the time you read this, Omnicon Scale Models will be ready to take orders for their new low cost EMD F3 or F7 diesel kits. Priced around \$100, these A or B units will feature simple assembly and fine operation at a bargain price. Each kit will consist of a modified Wabash Valley plastic body shell, brass Blomberg trucks by SouthWind, and a Samhongska custom mechanism. Drawings and instructions for adding more SouthWind detail parts (not included) will accompany the kit. This is the kind of product which greatly helps the scale: one with a low entry cost, but capable of superdetailing.

GEEPS

By the end of the year, Omnicon also plans to import a brass GP35 or GP40 from Samhongska. Contact them at 900 Lunt Avenue, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007.

S00 LINE DECALS

Bob Ristow is producing modern S00 Line decal sets which are useable for red and white F units, GP's, and SD's. The older "Christmas Tree" style of lettering will follow soon. For details, send him a SSAE at 2005 Sunkist Avenue; Waukesha, WI 53188.

HIGH PRAISE

Did you see the product review of Scenery Unlimited's gas electric car in the February issue of **Model Railroader**? Senior Editor, Jim Hediger gushed: "This model [by Samhongska] is one of the best-performing imports I have ever reviewed." That should tell the magazine's quarter of a million readers something about the quality of products available in S scale.

Here is a recap of new products advertised recently which you may not have heard about. As always, enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) when writing for information.

Ace "S" Gauge, Downs Model Railroad, 206 Lehigh Avenue,
Gloucester City, NJ 08030-1215:
Code 110 36" steel wheelsets.
Code 125 self-gauging plastic ties.

Arkansas Valley Scale Models, 2105 Wolfe Lane,
Fort Smith, AR 72901:
Section house structure kit.
Tree stumps.

Finestkind Models, PO Box 25052, Overland Park, KS
66210-25052:
Amex Oil & Greeze structure kit.
Tri-Star Oil Co. structure kit.

G&W Models, 115 Upland Rd, Syracuse, NY 13207:
Coal loads for American Models hoppers.

John W. Hall, 2711 Pecksniff Rd, Wilmington, DE 19808:
B&O hopper car decals.

Houqat Hobbies, PO Box 253, Dunellen, NJ 08812:
1987 mail order catalog; 1:64 scale's largest.
Monarch pickle car kit.

Modern Models, 711 Lowell St, Peabody, MA 01960:
Wide vision brass cabooses.

Omnicon Scale Models, 900 Lunt Avenue, Elk Grove
Village, IL 60007:
PRR K4 Pacific 4-6-2.
PRR L-1 Mikado 2-8-0.
EMD F-3 & F-7 kits.

Overland Models, 5908 Kilgore Ave, Muncie, IN 47304:
Blunt trunk sideframes for Alco diesel switcher.
Mich-Cal Shay #5 in Sn3.
Union Pacific FEF-3 Northern 4-8-4.
EMD F-3 & F-7 diesels.

- P-B-L, Box 749, Chama, NM 87520: (Sn3)
Westside Lumber Co Shays, #7, #14, and #15.
RGS #20 4-6-0.
D&RGW C-16 2-8-0.
D&RGW 5500 series stock car kit.
D&RGW 6700 series idler flat car kit.
D&RGW long cabooses kit.
Gramps oil facility structure kit.
90 cast detail parts.
- Pope Imagineering, PO Box 30318, Chicago, IL 60630:
1908 Niles interurban combine.
1946 PCC streetcar.
- Railmaster, 4 Karamu St, Te Atato, Auckland 8,
New Zealand: (Sn3)
White Pass & Yukon GE shovel-nose diesel kit.
White Pass & Yukon Alco DL535E hood unit kit.
- Rio Grande Models: (Sn3)
Westside Lumber Co long cabooses kit.
- Sandy River Car Shops, PO Box 573, South Dartmouth,
Mass 02748: (Sn2)
SR&RL and WW&F car kits.
SR&RL and WW&F structure kits.
- Scenery Unlimited, 310 Lathrop Ave, River Forest, IL
60305:
EMD/St Louis Car Co gas electric.
Passenger car diaphragms.
- SouthWind Models, PO Box 9293, Plant City, FL 33566:
EMD sprung Blomberg trucks.
EMD "F" A-unit & B-unit dummy underframes.
Many many EMD "F" unit detail part castings.
- Sunset Models:
Union Pacific 4-6-6-4.
- Thomas A. Yorke Ent., PO Box 1330, Fontana, CA 92335:
Chinese laundry structure kit.
- Tomalco, Box 158, McCracken, KS 67556: (Sn3)
D&RGW coach/combine kit.

Triangle Scale Models, Box 566, Chama, NM 87520: (Sn3)
C&S/RGS Murphy roof boxcar kit.

V&T Shops:

Drop bottom gondola kit.
AH&D steam donkey kit.
Westside Lumber Co dispatcher's office kit.
Westside Lumber Co water tower kit.
24' flat car kit.

Wheels and Deals

Don DeWitt is looking to buy an E-8 diesel. He didn't say whether just an A unit, or A-B, or A-B-A. You can contact him at 37 Snow Drive, Mahwah, NJ 07430.

WANTED TO BUY: The book "Burlington Northern 1976-77 Annual", published by Motive Power Services. Condition is unimportant. Contact Ken Mackenzie, 5969 Sugarbush Lane, Greendale, WI 53129.

I think Roy Meissner has two of the early Sn3 Tomalco C-16s for sale. Contact him at Box 3003, Merton, WI 53056.

WANTED TO BUY OR BORROW: O scale boxcar from the NMRA 50th anniversary national convention in Milwaukee. Why an O scale car, you ask? Because I want to make up a display comparing O, S, HO, and N scales for the Eugene convention, and all such displays I have seen use high cubes or some other oversize car which makes HO look like a more acceptable size than it really is. I have the other sizes, but need an O scale car to complete the display. Ken Mackenzie, 5969 Sugarbush Ln, Greendale, WI 53129.

New Subscribers

Richard C. Lind

4221 N. Oakland Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53211

John E. Steele

RD #1, Bidwell Road
Parish, NY 13131

ESSENCE

5969 Sugarbush Lane
Greendale, WI 53129

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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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Peabody, MA 01960

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.