

We've been quiet for far too long.

Now we're making up for that. A lot has happened since our last *Newsletter*. Charter SIG Coordinator Ed Loizeaux retired from the position. He was replaced by Chris Borgmeyer, who volunteered to replace Ed and was confirmed by a vote of the SIG Board. Unfortunately, Chris soon found his time subject to tugs from many different directions including professional obligations and domestic remodeling in addition to coordinating the SIG. It was clearly time to remedy the leadership situation, so we turned to seasoned organizer and long-time S modeler Dave Jasper, who is also a SIG Board member. Dave agreed, was confirmed by the Board, and is now our SIG Coordinator.

I asked Dave to put together an introductory column for the Newsletter; it follows below.

– Dick Karnes

THOUGHTS FROM OUR NEW COORDINATOR

by Dave Jasper

My reasons for stepping forward

I consider the hobby of model railroading and the people I have gotten to know to be a blessing. I also hold the highest regard for those pioneers in the '60s and '70s who kept a critical mass of publications, products, standards and gatherings (e.g. conventions, swap meets) to preserve the scale and advance it to its present state. As an act of thanks and giving back I want to do more, leading to

my decision to offer to coordinate the S Scale SIG.

Perhaps you should know a bit about my hobby life first. I am 77 years old but don't feel that old. I have been model railroading since 6th grade when Eddy Foy and I combined our Lionel stock and built an open grid benchwork layout about 8x10 ft. I began building structure models, we tried paper mache scenery, and I tried my hand at a scratchbuilt pickle car using peach crate wood. I began reading all issues of the *Model Railroader* from the library several times over going back to 1935. In September 1952 I began my own subscription, which I continue today. In 1949 I switched to HO scale because it was *scale*. Because our family moved about every two years, I started several layouts. About a year after I was married in 1960 I switched to S scale because it was the right size and operation was superior to HO. I was part of the National Association of S Gaugers (NASG) circuit letters and did some drawings for Claude Wade's loco casting catalogue. I joined the NMRA around 1965 and became a life member a few years later. I became a member of the *LAYOUT DESIGN SIG* and *OPERATIONS SIG* early in their inception. Ever since I was in the DC area in the early '60s, I have always been part of an S gauge round-robin group, currently the *Pines and Prairies S Scale Workshop* that I helped found in the early 1970s.

My intentions for coordinating the S Scale SIG

The SIG at its core is a special-interest group of the NMRA. Its mission as published on the web site, well known to



you, is distinct from the mission of the NASG. It comprises the best modelers and leaders of S modeling. While encouragement through fellowship and strengthening membership skills is a consequence, the SIG should not keep its light under a bushel. I see my role as providing focus, then motivating and finally coordinating. I would begin with a focus on goals; i.e., specific actions. I have often participated in discussions on how could we advance our chosen scale through attraction of more active modelers and create a larger market while preserving the benefits of the scale. I am sure I do not have definitive answers as to the best course of action(s) to follow; consequently I am open to suggestions. But let me lay a foundation for a discussion. These are not new or original, just a list significant to me as starting points. My givens/observations:

1. MODEL RAILROADING is fundamentally a craft hobby: we build, create, make. S is the pinnacle of that aspect because of limited commercial product. HO hobbyists can model with their wallets. S scale has much more limited commercial choices.
2. The size of S is just right for building and operation.
3. MODEL RAILROADING is "doing," not "having." Collectors "have," whereas we represent that part of the hobby that "does." We create. Incidentally, that is why a model railroad is never "done."
4. Although the S market is small, recent technology advances make the small runs that our scale demands affordable. Three examples: 3-D printing has made one-offs and small runs practical; laser-cut sheet material makes small structure runs possible; and printing with color for decals, signs, wall images,

backgrounds etc. can now be done at home in lots of one.

5. The work of excellent modelers attracts other modelers to attempt to achieve similar results. The greats like Frank Ellison, John Allen, Allen McClelland, and Paul Scoles, to name but a few, motivate countless followers through publications.
6. However, model displays exceed the value of published work for sheer inspiration. On the other hand, while such inspiration is often more intense, it reaches a smaller audience than media can reach.
7. The greatest obstacle to modeling in S is inertia. Many have said to me, "If I could start all over I would start in S, but I have so much HO I cannot start over."
8. Model railroaders' aging eyes seek larger models. How do we get them to choose S standard?

Some conclusions I derive from these observations:

- Emphasize and focus on modeling skills (in S). Expand and develop the dialogue/blog on modeling tips, modeling techniques both old and new, and convert them into articles for broader publishing electronically or in print.



Three heavy electrics sit on the ready track on Dick Karnes' New York, Westchester & Boston railroad. All three of these locomotives are scratchbuilt – the two green ones by Dick, the New Haven EP-5 by Vic Roseman.



End of the pier in New Bedford MA. on the old colony division of the the New Haven in the fall of 1927.

Dave Jasper photo

- We need to find more ways to demonstrate that S is the right size. There must be some compelling way to show the synergy of the aging eye versus a 36 percent increase in size from HO; or 87% increase from N scale as well as the impact of the volume increase (“heft”).
- We should consider pooling our skill sets and making small runs of 3D-printed model parts, e.g., express reefer underbodies.
- The same could be said for flat printing and laser-cut materials.
- In the '50s John Allen had full-page images of his railroad that were soft-sell ads for Varney. Possibly we could convince the NASG to replace its one-page ad inside the

front cover of *Railroad Model Craftsman* with full-page shots of fine S modeling showcasing various advertisers’ products. Initially, maybe just quarterly?

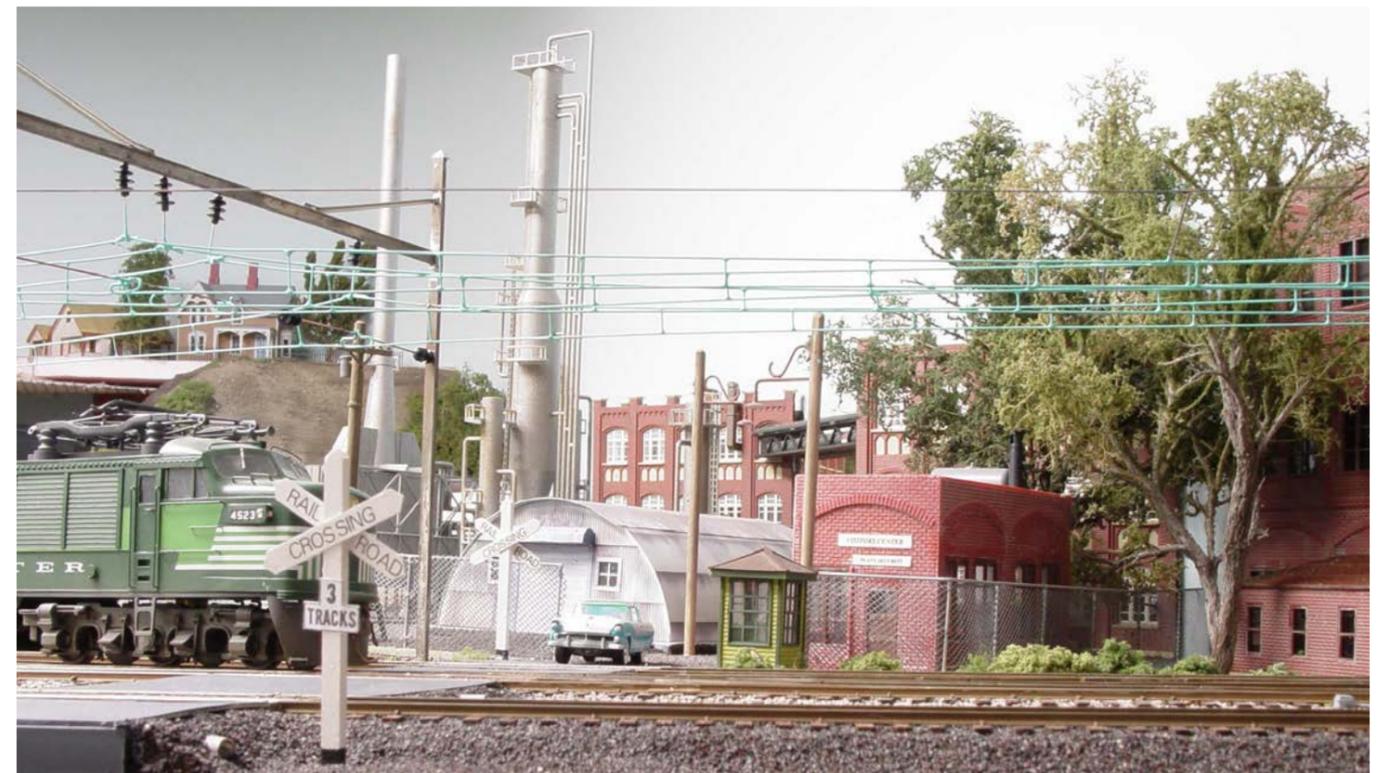
- Get more S articles in national publications.
- Find someone who made the switch from HO and is willing to write a first-person story on how it went.
- Find a way to encourage more S scale models to be entered in NMRA contests; also RPM meets.
- Create an artistic, finely-modeled diorama employing S suppliers’ products that is highly portable, compact, and can be used at conventions to stimulate interest in S.

- Following the lead of Brooks Stover and the SMSG layout, have a presence at every NMRA national convention.
- Assemble a \$25 starter kit for those seriously interested in making a switch to S scale. Make it available at conventions and through the SIG web site.
- Encourage the continuation of the S Scale Journal and reach a larger audience.

From these and ideas other members may have, I intend to stimulate S scale modelers to get involved in sharing our great hobby.

THIS NEWSLETTER

Our former SIG Newsletter outlet, *1:64 Modeling Guide*, has been defunct for a couple of years. The recent advent of a new on-line magazine, *The S Scale Resource* (<http://sscaleresource.com/>), gave us new hope. So we approached their editor, Glenn Guerra, to see if we could come to some sort of arrangement. We even furnished him a digital copy of our last Newsletter for his perusal. Unfortunately Mr. Guerra declined to support us. Therefore, the S SIG’s Newsletter is resuming quarterly publication solely on the S SIG website, sscale.org.



New York, Westchester & Boston Class P-3 electric motor, on the point of the Grand Isle Lirited, crosses the access road to the Burnham NY Texaco refinery. The locomotive and trackag are scratchbuilt. The catenary is a combination of scratch and Model Memories parts. The guard house was scratchbuilt by Kent Singer. The quonset hut is an S scale Clever Models paper cardstock kit. The visitors’ center building is made from scraps of an AHM HO engine house kit. The cyclone fence is made from brass rod and plastic window screen material. The tree is a sagebrush armature with Supertrees material hot-glued to it. The rest of the refinery i made up of Walthers and Kibri HO kits. The 1955 Ford is a Racing Champions model.

Dick Karnes photo