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Don Thompson

The demands of running an S scale business have caused me to neglect my model railroad these past years. I do some testing on it, but that is about all that I have done lately. It is handlaid point-to-point using code 83, 70 and 55 rail to the NASG trackwork specs. I model the Newark and New York branch of the CRRofNJ in the mid 50's. Motive power includes a custom-made 2-8-2, three American Model RS-3s, and an Oriental NW-2 soon-to-be-replaced with our upcoming CRRofNJ SW-1s.

Industries include an ice station, brewery (Ballantine Beer), steel yard, iron scrap yard, coaling trestle, cement plant (Atlas) and a refinery. Interchange is with the PRR (Kearny) at the Western Electric plant and a yard at Brill's Junction. The layout features a single-track elevated section through the Iron Bound section of Newark (lots of

cars and trucks) and four passenger stations. Most of the trackwork was completed, and I was working on scenery when we started S Helper Service in 1989, and it has not progressed very much since then.

For trackwork, I suggest two books by Paul Mallery (Carstens Publications), *Trackwork Handbook for Model Railroaders* and *Bridge and Trestle Handbook*. These are both great "rescues," and I highly recommend them. The other tip is to visit lots of layouts in any scale. You can get great ideas on how to do stuff.

I try to read everything published. In addition to the **S Gaugian**, I get *Mainline Modeler* and *Railmodel Journal*. We advertise in *Model Railroad News*, *RMC*, *Classic Toy Trains* and the *S/Sn3 Modeling Guide*, so I read those too. But if I see a current issue of any model railroad (or prototype type railroad) magazine, I will try to page through it.

I think there will always be S gaugers as long as people enjoy modeling and col-



lecting trains. We have many customers who never had AF as children. Some got started from grandparents, fathers or uncles having AF, but many just picked S for the size. Today, the greatest growth for our product line is "born again" S gaugers, those who had AF as a child and are rediscovering the joy of having model trains.

Promotion of our scale is the greatest issue in S. It is important for every-

one to expose as many people as we can to S. Opening home layouts to layout tours, S scale layouts at train shows and malls, displays in libraries during the holidays, models in contests—lots of things can be done to promote our scale. I remember a few years back that I would not suggest S scale to anyone, as there was very little available. Today that is not true. Although the variety of equipment is not as great as other scales, there is still more than enough stuff to make a great layout without too much difficulty. **S**

used as pushers also. You can fashion other pushers as well. Ensure that the oil wicks are moist, not wet, before you use the pusher-plugs. You may also use short self-tapping flat headed screws or tiny flat-head wood screws to keep the oil wicks fully elevated. The diesel chassis holes must be drilled so that the flat-headed screws are flush into the chassis so not to interfere with the mounting of the diesel side truck frames. (This drilling is not necessary in handcar chassis.)

Even though oil holes exist in the diesel side truck frames, they should not be used, as the oil will contaminate the entire bottom of the motor chassis with an oily mess! Oil the wicks after removing the side truck frames, when you do the periodic maintenance.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

For railroads running outdoors, or in very humid climates, it's best to use greases and oils that are made to resist water. Most such lubricants are silicone lubricants. These can be found at businesses maintaining office copy machines.

For modelers who have trains using plastic or nylon gears, some require no lubrication, or very sparse lubricant. Sili-

cone lubricants are often used there, also. Note that some lubricants can damage some plastic gears. It's best to contact the product's manufacturer/distributor for guidance in this area.

Lubricating small items, such as on our railroads, is admittedly hard on eyes. Therefore, a strong light helps to ensure quality precision lubrication. The best light is sunlight, of course.

TRACKAGE

Many operators notice that the rail tops on tracks often develop a film of oil. This is a desirable condition which helps prevent corrosion, lubricates sliding contact shoes, and can mediate accidental derailments due to stopping too fast. A clear and lint free cloth, drawn over the rail tops every few hours, ensures the above qualities.

Lubricants, though the fine servants they are, must be kept isolated from places they will do damage. Never lubricate joints that have fiber bushings or washers. Ensure that the communicators of motors are free of oil also. Ensure that no lubricants come in contact with the shells of locomotives that are painted and decorated.

THREE-STEP REVERSE UNIT

With these warnings in mind, you should not be using any oils which spray, unless you are extremely careful. An exception is the use of television tuner cleaner and lubricant spray. You should use this compound to clean and lubricate the locomotive's three-step reverse unit, which is often prone to binding. Ensure that the spray only goes where it is intended to go. Radio Shack and electronic supply houses usually carry television tuner cleaner/lubricant.

In the marketplace you will see many other lubricants offered. You may discover one that works especially well for you. Just keep in mind that all railroads, large and small, depend on lubricants to stay running and operating efficiently. Your railroad is no different.

Ideally, careful lubrication will prevent a great deal of wear, often times leaving lubricated surfaces finely polished!

Your experience will guide you in using the proper thickness of oil. Basically, the longer the gap to be lubricated, the thicker the oil to use. Gears, worms, and loose pinots/sliding surfaces require light greases. **S**