



### VIEW FROM THE CAB

I can feel Spring is just around the corner. Yes, it's still cold and I won't jinx us by mentioning the "S" word, but there are some planning steps we have made and that we still need to get arranged.

First, we've decided to cancel the Spring Roxana Train and Toy Show. The state plans seemed to indicate the restrictions in force on May 1<sup>st</sup> would still limit our numbers so much as to make it impracticable. So we've decided instead on the Yard Sale solution we used to such great success in 2020. The first one will be May 1<sup>st</sup>, so if you think you want to reserve a spot to sell, let us know. We will give first preferences to our show vendors, then open it up to the membership, but I will take priority standby requests starting March 15<sup>th</sup>. There will be 3 more Yard sales through September, and decision on the Roxana Fall Show will naturally be driven by the State Restrictions again.

We also need to look at a future layout building project. The obvious issue of volunteers being cautious regarding time spent at the club is keeping us from starting right away, but we have sold both of our small portable layouts in the past couple of weeks, and we need to make the effort to exploit this excellent source of revenue. So watch your e-mails and once enough folks have had their shots, we'll get started. I have a few track plans for O gauge and one for HO, which are our easiest layouts to sell.

Security at the club in the manner of doors being left open and unlocked and sometimes actually propped wide-open, continue to be an issue. We have a camera in place now, and I hope everyone will please try to remember to make sure before they leave that if they came in alone, and are leaving with no one else in the facility, they must lock the wooden doors and test the handles to make sure they are locked. If the K9 folks are not there, make sure that glass door is also locked. As far as I know, we have yet to lose anything as a result of these lapses of security.

This year is being heralded by Lionel Trains as the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of American Flyer S Gauge. If nothing before this reminds me that I am getting old, that surely has solidified it! My birth year is the same year the A.C Gilbert Company first introduced the S Gauge 2-rail trains in 1/64 scale. The trains they manufactured were quite true to scale. If you place a 1/64<sup>th</sup> scale ruler next to a 40 foot box car, the ruler will read 40 feet. In fact, before WWII, Gilbert was scaling their O Gauge trains to 1/64<sup>th</sup> also, and on some early S Gauge Steam engines, if you look under the chassis you can see the copper center-rail pickups that the casting needed for the third (center) rail on the O Gauge roster. Many of those left over O Gauge castings became S gauge steam engines.

Have a Happy March, and come see us at the club and check out the changes made to the displays.

*John Hodges*

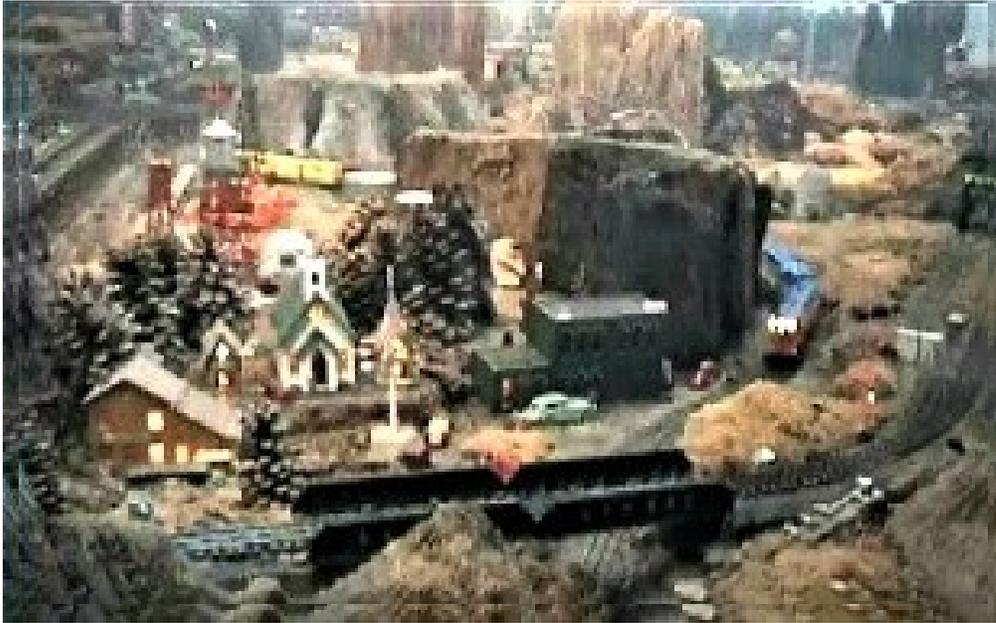
### STEAMPUNK TRAINS

I saw these "steampunk" model trains on the internet. Steampunk is an inspired movement of creativity and imagination. With a backdrop of either Victorian England or America's Wild West at hand, modern technologies are re-imagined and realized as elaborate works of art, fashion, and mechanics. If Jules Verne or H.G. Wells were writing their science fiction today, it would be considered "steampunk."



## NEIL YOUNG AND MODEL RAILROADING

- Though the public knows Neil Young the musician, they might not know Young the model train enthusiast. The singer's home south of San Francisco includes a 2800-foot barn housing a model railway with 750 feet of track and a living landscape. Young created the tiny forests after collecting plant specimens from the woods nearby. To ensure everything stayed green, he built a misting irrigation system.



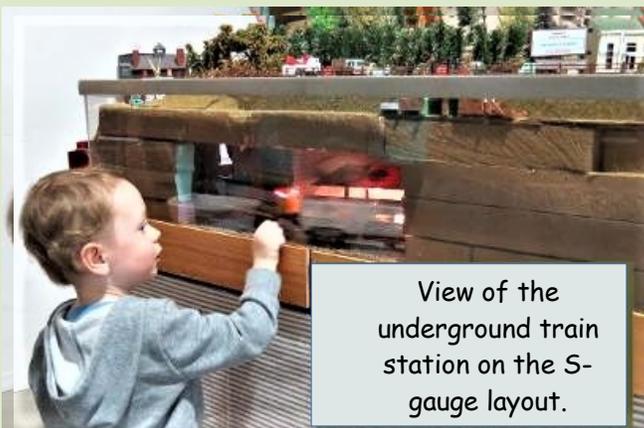
Editor's note: About seven years ago, we ( Bill Z., John, H., and Dave L.) were getting ready to leave the York show for dinner. I decided to take one more look at the Lionel exhibit. I saw two men walking towards me. One was well groomed and wearing a suit; the other had long hair and was wearing faded jeans and a worn leather jacket. When they got closer, I realized it was Neil Young. I approached him, shook his hand, and had a 10 minute conversation about his music and trains. I had already taken my packages back to the car and didn't have either a pen or paper for an autograph.

Young's passion would eventually take him from enthusiast to inventor, and the inspiration started with his son. Born with severe cerebral palsy, Young's son Ben couldn't control the switches for the model railway. Hoping to grant Ben greater control over the trains—and share his love of the hobby—Young created a device called the Big Red Button. The wireless device provided unprecedented control: Simply by leaning his head into a paddle, Ben could supply power to the trains, and by repeating the action, he could turn power off. Young went one step further and eventually created a system where the Big Red Button could repeat the last run maneuvers by a train, allowing Ben the ability to control even more complex actions.

Young formed a partnership with Lionel in 1992 and set about to make improvements to model train technology. His efforts resulted in the TrainMaster Command Control System, which permitted tracks to host more than one train without complex wiring. Trains also sound more real thanks to a digital sound system called RailSounds, equipping each model train with the sounds of their real-life counterpart. To date, Young is listed as the co-inventor on seven U.S. patents.



## DAVE'S PHOTOS



View of the underground train station on the S-gauge layout.



Visitor excitement at the G-gauge layout.