



# ***THE BSG BULLETIN***

## **NEWSLETTER OF THE BADGERLAND S GAUGERS**

*"... A social club for the promotion of model railroading-  
especially S gauge including American Flyer, hi-rail, scale  
and other facets....*

*Established 1975*

## ***Badgerland S Gaugers***

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**[www.trainweb.org/bsg](http://www.trainweb.org/bsg)**

## **2022 March Issue**

So, what's happening with the Badgerland S Gaugers? Somewhat due to Covid and the **parade tragedy** in Waukesha, the progress on the BSG club moving into the Gandy Dancers model railroaders club facility bogged down. We hope to have the situation in hand by the first week in April. If all goes well, we will move in and are planning on a general club meeting shortly thereafter. Having some place to meet and run trains will be a treat.

The Gandy Dancer also have open house events for the public. Their "SIXTY FOOT" long layout alone is worth the visit. It is an in-progress project but some of the finished areas are spectacular. This will also give our club more public visibility and perhaps draw some new members.

## **Mad-City Report**

Finally, a big train show in Wisconsin. After the cancelations of this annual event due to Covid, the South-Central Wisconsin Division of the N.M.R.A. held the 54<sup>th</sup> "annual" Mad City Model Railroad Show and Sale. The turnout was very good but was just a little short of expectations. I talked to some vendors who said that the sales were very good.

There were not as many layouts as in the past and there appeared to be some open space. The show is dominated by HO and there was a number of large layouts on display. There was one G gauge layout which has been at the shows in the past. When it comes to Tinplate/Hi-Rail, there was one American Flyer layout. The program listed the wrong information that I had provided. It was on the club members badges that helped out at the layout. "Badgerland S Gaugers/American Flyer Trains. The layout generated a lot of interest and we had S gauge pamphlets and general "S" gauge information available.

There are a couple points of interest that may be evidence of things to come. No Lionel layouts or O gauge layouts were there. Also, I might note that one of the large HO, club layouts had for sale signs on the modules. From what I hear the entire layout was sold piece by piece. I queried the director about some of the absences and was told that the individuals said that they were getting “too” old and didn’t wish to participate anymore. “ONE AMERICAN FLYER LAYOUT” that was it for the “toy train” crowd.

## **Special Report**

The following article appeared in the South Jersey S-Gaugers Newsletter. It is a nostalgic look at A.C. Gilbert Trains. It was an era when Gilbert was, the major manufacturer of S Gauge trains. It was a time when “electric” trains were one of the main gifts that young boys received for Christmas.

### **The American Flyer Boys’ Railroad Clubs a Brief History by Ed Claypoole**

Some of the finest and most cherished memories of my boyhood were the Christmas Day visits to friends in my neighborhood to see their train layouts and what new engines and cars they got that year. Some were Lionel operators and some were American Flyer operators. (Even back then you could sense a competition between the two.) Mostly I remember the Flyer layouts, of course, especially the 11 x 6 foot layout my father built and kept concealed from me until Christmas Day.. It seemed like all my friends had trains and, like me, many had Erector Sets. Obviously one of the principal joys of having American Flyer trains is the sense of nostalgia they bring and the lasting connection to one’s youth.

With this thought in mind, I set about searching for a nostalgic aspect of American Flyer and settled on the subject of this report. The extent of model railroading’s popularity in the early 1950’s is certainly evident in the letter to young boys that was written and published by A.C. Gilbert, regarding the American Flyer Boys’ Railroad Club. The letter was penned in 1950. A. C. Gilbert, of course, was the chief engineer at the headquarters located in New Haven, Connecticut. It was an exciting time for the Gilbert Company, as exciting new postwar products were just starting to hit the 3/16 scale market and sales were booming. Model trains seemed to be everywhere at that time. The memo invited American Flyer enthusiasts to

create their own layouts and gave instructions as to how to go about it, and encourage young boys to join with other Flyer operators to form a club and operate their layout like a real railroad.

Summary of the Memo from A. C. Gilbert

The letter from A. C. Gilbert to prospective club members laid out important steps for the model railroaders:

- (1) Decide where the layout will be located, making sure the layout will be dry and not exposed to the elements and have plenty of light;
- (2) Developing a track plan (with help from the AF catalog if necessary);
- (3) Creating a platform or table to house the layout, as well as selecting material to form a skirt to dress it up;
- (4) Marking out where the track and securing it, to the table, and deciding where various aspects of scenery, such as roads and rivers, will go; using paint and American Flyer No. 21A artificial grass to add realism;
- (5) Mounting all the accessories and drilling holes for the wires leading to the transformer, then completing all wiring.

The memo goes on to encourage the young modeler to get together with a group of other boys to form a club, and elect officers, such as President, Vice President, General Manager, Superintendent of Operations, Secretary, Treasurer, Purchasing Agent and so on. It calls for a set of bylaws and periodic election of officers according to the bylaws. When all the officers are selected and bylaws written, they should be sent to A. C. Gilbert, who will issue a certificate indicating the club is official and will be registered. Gilbert goes on to describe how the club should operate as a real railroad, and encouraged them to invite a guest from a real railroad to talk about various operations. Thus the groundwork was laid for the videos later produced featuring the Boys’ Club.

There were six videos produced in a studio in New York, completed just in time for the 1950 Christmas season, with the goal of getting young boys interested in model railroading. A couple modest sized layouts were used and each video centered on a specific theme. All six shoots were done in a matter of days. Each video featured an employee of a real railroad. Episode 1 featured the New Haven Railroad, Episode 2 and Episode 3 featured the New York Central, Episode 4 featured the Union Pacific, Episode 5 the Pennsylvania, and Episode 6 the B&O.

These guests from the featured railroad discussed their jobs as well as showing films of the railroads in action. Of course, the emphasis of the videos was to highlight American Flyer trains and accessories, and the guests joined in the fun of running the layouts on the video and interacting with the boys in the video..

The show seen in the following illustration aired in October, November and December of 1950. It was repeated during that same time period for the next two years.



Waybill April - May '21 7

Figure 17 - The Boys' Club makes the news, a 1950 article from Playthings Magazine.

Figure 18 - Another photo of the Boys' Club taken in 1952.

Figure 19 - Commemorative Boxcar 48483 issued by Lionel AF in 1993 honoring the American Flyer Boys'

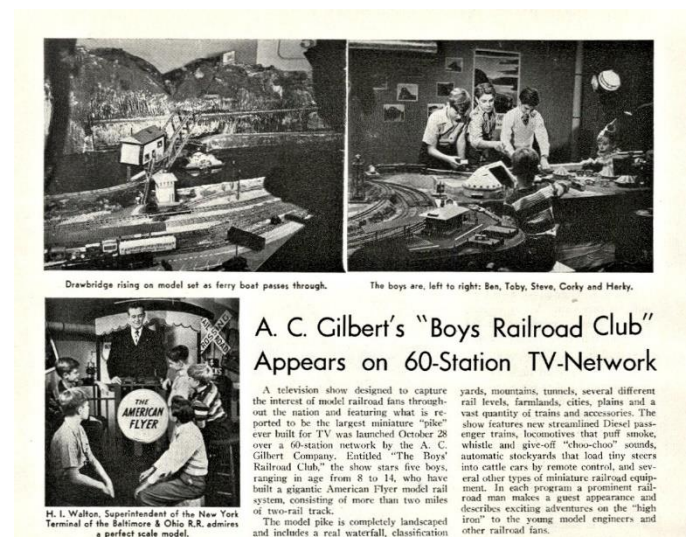
Railroad Club All of the six videos of the Boys' Club can be viewed online. I found a vast amount of Flyer stuff out there in Cyberspace. You could spend hours, days or weeks just watching it. But you have to eat and sleep too.....

There are a couple DVD's that can be purchased containing all six of the American Flyer Boys' Club videos. Or you can simply watch them online by searching for the Boys' Club. In 1993 Lionel Flyer issued a commemorative boxcar (48483) honoring the Boys' Clubs. It can be ordered on eBay for somewhere around \$40. As a side note I thought I'd mention that I found a link for American Flyer Displays and History at: [www.americanflyerdisplays.org](http://www.americanflyerdisplays.org), which opened up a whole world of fantastic images, including the display at John

Wanamaker's in Philadelphia, where I saw my first Flyer displays as a kid. There I go getting sentimental again.... but it is just one of many links to American Flyer that will put a smile on your face. There are too many links to cover here, but you can go to town on it. Hap

## Postscript:

Thanks to the Waybill for allowing BSG to reprint their article. Some of you may remember when Gimbels and Boston Store, in downtown Milwaukee, had large model train layouts. I believe, if memory serves me right, Boston Store had the monorail that went around the ceiling of the toy department. Just prior to it being torn down, myself and two daughters got to ride it. It brought back many memories. I hope that it did for you too.



**If you still plan on being a member of the Badgerland S Gauger, Please rebmit your dues to the club Treasusrer Roy Meissner. In addition if there are any address, phone number or email changes let us know.**



# **BSG Inventory**

BSG still has some 2016 Fall S Fest cars 2016. For those who were unable to attend the 2021 Fall S Fest. There are still some FSF hopper cars left. Contact Ron Schlicht Phone (414) 477-7866 Email: rons48tblue@gmail.com



HI-RAIL CARS ARE \$50.00 EACH  
SCALE CARS ARE \$55.00 EACH

## **2021 Fall S Fest Hoppers**



**Hi-Rail or Scale \$55.00 Each**

## **Local Area Meets**

**Badgerland S Gaugers**  
**American Legion Post, #537**  
**9159 W. Beloit Road, Milwaukee, WI 53227**  
**8:00 A.M. To 12:00 P.M.**  
2022 March 27

**Lionel Swap Meets**  
**New Berlin Entertainment Center**  
**16000 West Cleveland Ave.**  
**New Berlin**  
**8:00 A.M. To 12:00 P.M.**  
Dates and Location T.B.D.  
2022 March 27

**Tri-City Train Show**  
**Roma Lodge,**  
**7130 Spring St, Racine, WI 53406**  
**8:00 A.M. To 12:00 P.M.**  
2022 March 13

**Great Midwest Train Show**  
**DuPage County Fairgrounds Wheaton, IL**  
**9 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.**  
2022

I'm not sure of the dates at this time.

I will be posting the dates for "all" area meets in the near future.

It is my hope that there will be more train related articles in subsequent newsletters. There will be a tips column and more pictures of members projects. Emailing newsletters gives BSG more flexibility without having pay for the printing (color being a cost factor), not to mention the increasing postal rates and stationary supplies. Please send any of your comments to me at [rons48tblue@gmail.com](mailto:rons48tblue@gmail.com).

**Jeff Madden**  
**Ron Schlicht**

**BSG encourages its members to share any new or existing product information they may found to be beneficial.**

**Your opinions or advice regarding the use and performance of the products are welcomed. In addition, share your scenery, technical or operational experiences on your own home layouts for the BSG newsletters.**

**Photos are encouraged**

