

Trainfest EXPRESS

www.trainfest.com

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Cooperation 'N' Success: The Capital City N'Gineers

The Capital City N'Gineers have become a regular fixture at Milwaukee's annual Trainfest. There's good reason for it too! Their dedication to the local event is extraordinary and their regularly displayed ability to provide a high quality layout has even earned them additional presentation space.

In 2010, the club was granted the space at Trainfest to present a 48'x20' oval-shaped layout. We recently spoke with Gary Seymour, Layout Coordinator for the Capital City N'Gineers, and he explained what the N'Gineers are doing today, what they have done to get there, and what they have planned for the future.

The current layouts presented by the Capital City N'Gineers will vary from a 20'x40' oval-shaped layout to a 30'x50' U-shaped layout, depending on the

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Trainfest starts as a single day model railroading show on 6th St. **1972**

Expands to two-day show and moves to the 11,000 sq. ft. Family Living Center at WI State Fair Park. **1974**

Moves to north half of the South Exhibit Hall at WI State Fair Park to expand display area to 21,000 sq. ft. **1976**

Expands to cover the entire South Exhibit Hall—42,000 sq. ft. **1978**

Expands to include the Family Living Center featuring a canvas tent heated walk-way to connect it with the North and East Halls providing 86,000 sq. ft. **1997**

Trainfest grows into the East and North Exhibit Halls with 75,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space. **1991**

Show moves into the North Exhibit Hall occupying 67,000 sq. ft. **1986**

Trainfest takes over North, South and East Exhibit Halls—117,000 sq. ft. **1999**

Trainfest is the first weekend show to exhibit in the newly opened WI Expo Center with now 200,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space! **2002**

Achieves another record attendance with 23,467 persons marking the 9th consecutive year Trainfest is largest weekend event held at WI Expo Center. **2010**

Trainfest celebrates 40th Anniversary! **2011**

Trainfest Timeline

1972-2011



If Memory Serves

By Richard Cecil



I attended my first Trainfest (then known as an “Open House”) in 1975. At the time I thought it would be nice to introduce the hobby to two of my sons in hopes they might get as interested in model railroading as I had been as a child. To that extent, it did the job – I was back in model railroading...and I haven’t stopped since!

The very next year I participated in the show as a volunteer, taking tickets and doing odd jobs. Before I knew it, I was a member of the National Model Railroad (NMRA) Division Board of Directors and an integral part in planning the event.

As the show grew in popularity, we kept adding exhibit space by moving to different locations at Wisconsin State Fair Park. From the Family Living Center to taking part of the old South Exhibit Hall to more of it, changing to the North Hall, adding the East Hall – it finally culminated in taking the entire Expo Hall (which is only about 60% of the space we use today). Each move meant new plans and logistics...but it was worth it.

Back then volunteers didn’t go hungry thanks to the wife of a Director who made Sloppy Joes in a Nesco® and various sweets for dessert. She knew we couldn’t work on an empty stomach.

Early on, we did not have the sit-down dinner that we now enjoy with the many folks who help put on **Trainfest**: the organizing crew, the volunteers, layout operators, hobby dealers, and manufacturers. (Truth be told, there just wasn’t enough room in the old Expo Hall to even contemplate a sit-down dinner.) Back then volunteers didn’t go hungry thanks to the wife of a Director who made Sloppy Joes in a Nesco® and various sweets for dessert. She knew we couldn’t work on an empty stomach.

As with any large endeavor, there were always problems and challenges, but none were insurmountable. There were a few that came close. The one that comes to mind was when a roofing company started to remove the roof of the old Exhibit Hall during our set-up day. Before we knew what was happening, large amounts of dirt, dried asphalt and “who knows what” was raining down on the Walther’s

We’ve asked Trainfest Committee and Wisconsin Southeastern (WISE) Division Board Members to answer “Remember When Trainfest...?”

Over the next few issues, we’ll share their memories.

display. What a mess. Fortunately, we were successful in stopping the roof demo, but not before it ruined a white leather coat of one of Walther’s employees.

When you’ve been active with an organization for nearly four decades as I have, there are some shining moments which make you proud. One such for me was after the 1985 NMRA National Convention when I was elected Superintendent (aka President) of the local NMRA division (WISE). That in itself is an honor which makes me smile. But it’s what I was able to accomplish while Superintendent which make me extremely happy to this day.

Before we knew what was happening, large amounts of dirt, dried asphalt and “who knows what” was raining down on the Walther’s display. What a mess.

My “day job” at that time was working with the City of Milwaukee Division of Economic Development. As part of my responsibilities, I was involved in the naming, launching and growing of the great music festival, Summerfest. Taking a page of what I knew from those activities and what the vision was for the “City of Festivals” as Milwaukee was then known, an event name was everything. So one of my earliest initiatives as Superintendent was to suggest that we needed a catchier name than “Open House.” I suggested that we call the show **Trainfest**. It was embraced. After all, **Trainfest** was, and is, as much a Milwaukee tradition as Summerfest.

Having the honor of naming **Trainfest** is just one of the many wonderful experiences I’ve had in the nearly 40 years of working with the event. The memories continue to serve me well. It’s been a ball and the time spent has been a worthy investment. It’s a great hobby and the friendships I have developed are priceless. 🍷

Richard Cecil has been a member of the Wisconsin Southeastern (WISE) Division Board of Directors “off and on” for nearly 30 years and an active Trainfest volunteer since 1976.

Share your Trainfest memory with us, email editor@trainfest.com



From the Caboose

Thank you again for making **Trainfest 2010** the best attended **Trainfest** ever with 23,476 attendees. In fact, because of you, we broke all time single day attendance records on both Saturday and Sunday.

When **Trainfest** started in 1972, it was a dream to have so many people enjoying the show. Now it's come true. This makes planning the 40th Anniversary of **Trainfest** even more special. Plans are well underway. Some manufacturers are working on special commemorative items – it'll be fun to see what they come up with!

We will be getting a sneak peek of what and how manufacturers are going to celebrate the 40th Anniversary at our special Friday Product Showcase event. Traditionally we hear comments like: "it was really great to be able to spend time with the manufacturers without the push of the weekend crowds" and "the food was great" (special catered Friday supper) and "it was really nice to see the new products and talk about future product ideas." This year, we expect to hear more about the "grab bag" items (donated by various model railroad manufacturers) and the special commemorative products.

So if you haven't attended our special Friday Product Showcase event, this will be the year to try it. If you have attended,

*Don't forget to visit trainfest.com for up-to-the-moment information on **Trainfest 2011***

make sure to get your tickets early as we expect to sell out. (Remember tickets are limited to the first 200; and include exclusive admittance to the manufacturers display area, a special catered dinner, and admission tickets for both Saturday and Sunday.)

Tickets for **Trainfest 2011 Friday Product Showcase** are at the printer. You can purchase them direct from **Trainfest** starting in June or at your local hobby store as listed on our website.

While waiting for the next **Trainfest** in November, visit the WISE Division's free monthly model railroad meets. You can find a list of dates on the Wise Division website at www.wisedivision.org.

**In the spirit of model railroading,
Clear Signals Always,**

John

John H. Tews, MMR
Executive Director–Trainfest

***Trainfest EXPRESS** is sent free via email as a PDF and can be seen on the **Trainfest** website in an interactive, online paging-style format. You can also print out the pages or articles you desire.*

*We continue to look for your input (on articles you would like to see) in the **Express**. Send them to us at john@trainfest.com or editor@trainfest.com.*

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Trainfest is sponsored by the Wisconsin Southeastern (WISE) Division, Inc., NMRA

CAPITAL CITY, continued from front page

space available at any given show. The smaller layout can run up to three trains, while the larger layout can run as many as six.

Today their N-scale layouts operate according to NTRAK standards and attract plenty of attention at every show in which they make a presentation. However, this club originated with much simpler aspirations.



Phil Jackman's Canyon Corner.

Capital City formed in 1974 and then associated themselves with NTRAK in the late 1970s. The club began as a small group of N-scalers that only ran short trains. Over time, the Capital City N'Gineers grew and started to construct more modules and more impressive layouts. During the 1980s, the Madison and Milwaukee clubs pooled their modules together in an effort to extend the capabilities of layout design.

The cooperative spirit amongst N-scale model train hobbyists grew in the state of Wisconsin, and the clubs grew with it. Modelers like Gary Seymour were making the transition from HO and other scales to N-scale, and also shifting from presenting single modules in their basements to presenting large and ornate club layouts in numerous model train shows.

These days, the club is made up of approximately 30 members. Some of the members build their own modules, while others simply provide their own trains and run them on the other members' modules.

Like many other members, Seymour has constructed several modules by himself in his home. Most members construct and store their modules at home and then bring them together when it is time to assemble a show layout. In some situations, several members will establish one single location to work on a more complicated module as a group, but there is no permanent meeting location for the club as a whole.

The system Capital City employs (members make their modules at home and then bring them together) presents some unique possibilities and noteworthy challenges.

As many of the members construct their modules individually, utilizing their own special gifts of creativity, the result is a wide variety of modules. Seymour indicated that he enjoys the diversity of scenery amid the various members' modules.

A Capital City N'Gineers layout may feature a cityscape alongside a rural scene, or a mountain region alongside a desert, or even a module featuring Thomas the Tank® Engine and James the Red® Engine. These

juxtapositions are all a part of the fun involved coordinating the layouts, but the task does present some tricky responsibilities, as well.

see CAPITAL CITY, page 8



Capital City Yard and banner with Eric Meyer and Kevin Buege.

Kitbashing with Al Crisp

In the late 1950s, Al Crisp found that modeling Canadian Pacific trains didn't offer much in the way of variety. He joined the Niagara Frontier Region model train club about thirty years ago, and around that same time, Crisp began kitbashing. Today, he boasts one of the largest HO-Scale layouts in Canada, and a lack of model variety has not been a problem.

Kitbashing is the process of assembling unique models that do not exist as a commercial kit. Pieces for a kitbashing project may come from other kits, hobby stores, or even a person's personal stash of misfit parts.

Piggyback cars and trailers are popular among kitbashers, but locomotives, passenger cars, and tank cars can be kitbashed, as well. Crisp insists that there are some very specific steps to take when kitbashing and he was kind enough to share them in great detail.

Step 1: Initial Preparation

Before getting started on a kitbashing project, it is important to learn the basics first. Crisp stresses the importance



Shown here, a sample tool kit. According to Al, the tool kit "can be an addictive part of the hobby because everything one sees will spur ideas of what can be done with it,"



Al Crisp shown with his largest kit bash to date. The bridge is about 8 feet long and was built from 12 kits and hundreds of detail parts, many scratch-built.

of going to a local kitbashers' meeting to learn from those who have done it and to see the process in action. Once the procedures are understood, it is necessary to pick out the right car.

Do some research to determine which railroad you would like to depict and what you will need to get for the look that you want.

Crisp recommends starting out by using an old car that you don't mind modifying. Otherwise, the Branchline® Blueprint Series offers a very basic starting point and is a good series for the beginner. His reason -- they come with a bag of parts so a person can decide what they want and don't, without having to search for pieces. Crisp strongly recommends that a person keep what is not used as it becomes extra parts and decals for future projects.

In his own projects, Crisp favors Westerfield® and Sunshine® Models styrene plastic and resin kits.

When it comes to paint, Crisp uses a Testor® Corporation airbrush and solvent-based paints, because he finds that he gets great detail with them. Crisp suggests a beginner might want to consider a starter kit, including a pressure can, instead of purchasing an airbrush for a first kitbashing project.

Step 2: Disassembly and Assembly

It is important to do a thorough disassembly of the car before moving onto assembly. Take the car apart and remove anything that you don't want on your model. Once you've

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Seymour maintains an inventory of what pieces club members are constructing and storing. When a show approaches, Seymour communicates with all of the members to determine who will be attending and what modules they will be contributing.

At any given show, the club generally claims twelve or more modules, but the availability of modules fluctuates from show to show. The amount of space available also fluctuates from show to show. Once Seymour has determined which modules he will have at his disposal for the upcoming show's layout, and how much space is available, he goes to work designing the layout.

These processes can be complicated, but simplicity is a key to success for Capital City N'Gineers. Members consult the NTRAK Handbook for ideas and guidelines when designing their modules and layouts. Generally they try to keep the layouts free of extra electronics. No digital command control is run. Automatic switches and lights are not incorporated in their layouts. Simplicity makes the development process easier for club members. It also means fewer things that can break or go wrong.

Although members individually complete a large portion of the necessary work, to say that the club lacks a cooperative spirit would be completely incorrect. While members all maintain their own modules, if someone is having difficulty keeping up with a particular project, everyone else in the club is there and ready to help.

The idea of the club is to work together as a team to produce something that is truly remarkable. Teamwork is very important and comes into play quite heavily during the actual set-up of the layout at a show. A number of factors

often complicate the set-up process, so it is important that club members work as a team.

One such factor came into play years ago when Trainfest was still housed in a building with uneven floors. The N'Gineers were forced to use wooden boards to prop up the table legs at one end of the layout. In the end, the club was able to present their layout on a level surface, but it was a challenge solved only by the cooperation of the members.



Capital City Circus modules.

At another show, a member brought a corner module. The problem was that the module featured a canyon and could not be easily folded like some other modules, so it would not fit through the main doors of the host building. Members of the club took the module on an alternate route. After navigating through some very tight hallways, members ultimately found a way to bring the necessary corner piece into the hall to join the rest of the layout.

Weather is always a factor club members must consider. A layout needs to be set-up the day before a show begins so that it can "settle." If the layout doesn't get the proper amount of settling time, cold temperatures inside and

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New to the Trainfest Experience?

Model railroading is a great hobby for enthusiasts of all ages – and it doesn't take an avid modeler to appreciate them.

Fans of arts and crafts enjoy the countless design features on display at *Trainfest*. With customization applied to nearly every aspect of a railroad model, the possibilities are endless. Favorites include the realistic handmade scenery, beautifully designed skylines, and intricately-painted townspeople – the skilled modelers at *Trainfest* are true artisans.

Fans of minute technology and intricate procedures enjoy the precision craftsmanship that goes into each individual module.

Model train hobbyists are always happy to answer questions about everything from blinking lights, to automatically occurring sounds, to digital train controls. Many modelers prefer to keep their railroads sharp and precise, but technologically simple. Others prefer to employ electronic gadgetry wherever possible. Be sure to browse them all and take in all the impressive design details that *Trainfest's* modelers have to offer.

A walk through *Trainfest* is a chance to explore different trains, different places, and even different times.

Being the largest operating model railroad show in America means we have the most set-up and fully operating model train railroads and modules in one place, at any one time. It's quite impressive. Over 200,000 square feet of model trains! Come to *Trainfest* and be entertained, and perhaps even be inspired to become a model train hobbyist yourself.

60 Amazing Railroads



Endless Discovery



Enormous Fun!







Learning to tie shoes leads to Train Adventure

Gary Seymour, a former high school social studies teacher, began working with model trains in 1977. His passion for trains began when he and his then 5-year-old son attended a local mall show and Gary said the fateful words, “if you learn to tie your shoes, we can do one of these (layouts).” Minutes later, shoe tying mastered, their model train making adventure began.

Their first model train layout was a J-shaped 8’x12’ H0 layout. Before long, however, Gary began working in N-scale, and joined the Capital City N’Gineers in 1990.

These days, Gary acts as the N’Gineers’ Layout Coordinator. He has a great fondness for the craft of coordinating his club’s layouts and prides himself on his efficiency. In Gary’s eyes, each layout is its own art project, incorporating a variety of different modules, limitless possibilities for scenery design, and numerous time-intensive challenges.

He spends a great deal of time with his favorite aspect of the hobby—building scenery—but conversely finds that he can generally design a show layout in as little as 30 minutes.

In any given month, Gary may spend 40 hours or more on model railroading. It’s a large commitment, but one that he finds very rewarding...in terms of both accomplishment and camaraderie. As Gary humbly remarks, “the friendships and cooperation with the N’Gineers, and the modeling community overall, mean the world to me.” And to think...it started with learning to tie shoes! 🚂

Seymour's Lifelike Scenery Tips

The emergence of new manufacturers in model railroading has brought about competition and raised the overall quality of locomotives, cars, tracks, and even materials used in the development of scenery. Gary Seymour, of Capital City N'Gineers, recently shared some of his own personal product preferences with us and explained how he uses these products in constructing his modules for Trainfest and other events.

Seymour enjoys gardening, both in his own yard and in his modules. When it comes to plant life in his modules, Seymour gravitates towards the Woodland Scenics® Foliage Cluster for trees. He prefers the Woodland Scenics Foliage Cluster to the Clump-Foliage for making trees, and likes the fact that they offer fall colors, while many other manufacturers do not. Clusters can also be pulled and twisted to shape bushes and vines.


To Seymour, he sees gardening and designing modules as similar activities and has even found ways to combine the two. While he may use boar's hair to make impressive-looking reeds alongside a marsh, he will often use everyday items, such as sedum and weed tops, from his garden to produce a more natural look in his more lush vegetative scenery.

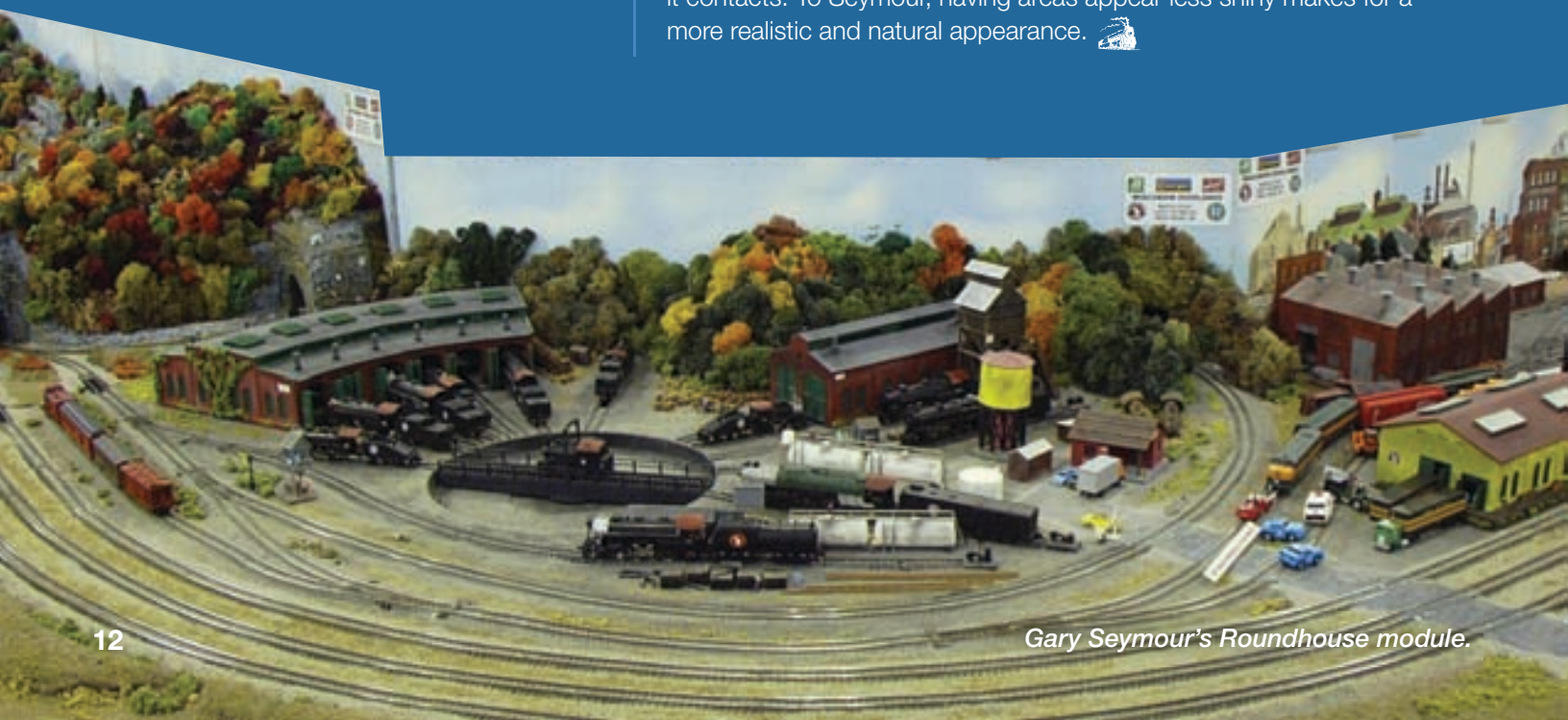
When it comes to model rock surfaces, there are many trains of thought on best practices (no pun intended!) As Seymour states "some will insist that molding the surfaces is the best way to make rocks with a natural appearance. To me, the preferred method begins with foam insulation."

Seymour finds that carving the rock surface out of foam insulation is easier and provides him with the ability to carve the surface to look exactly as he desires.

Once the foam piece is carved, he spreads a layer of Liquitex® Acrylic Modeling Paste over it. The paste has the consistency of a stiff putty, but since it is water-soluble, it can be thinned with water to suit the needs of his project.

Seymour especially likes that it adheres very nicely to the surface, can be carved, and will not crack. Plus, since the dried paste will take both latex paint and Elmer's® Glue, Seymour is able to choose the right sort of adornment for finishing the rock surface – as it requires. It makes it more realistic.

Liquitex Matte Medium is also a top product pick of Seymour's. While this product is a kind of glue, it also takes part in the creation of his pieces. Seymour combines the Matte Medium with water (1 part matte medium to 4 parts water-with a drop of dish detergent) and then sprays the mixture over his module. He uses it to hold ballast in place, hold scenery together, and to hold grasses, bushes, and other scenic materials onto the module. Seymour prefers this versatile product versus other adhesives because while it offers substantial hold, it also dulls the vibrant appearance of the surfaces it contacts. To Seymour, having areas appear less shiny makes for a more realistic and natural appearance. 



KITBASHING, continued from pg 6

removed the excess, get it cleaned up; using body filler, when necessary. When it comes to assembling the car, put together the large pieces first and then move on to the detail work. Be sure to take photographs along the way to track your progress.

Step 3: Paint Preparation


Once the car is assembled, it's necessary to wash and dry it. Use a mild detergent and water to wash, and a clean towel to dry. Let the car air dry to ensure that all collected water is gone.

Crisp has fashioned a handle that he screws into the bottom of the train. He finds it makes the painting process easier. As you do your own painting, you will find what works best for you.

Step 4: Painting and Drying

Be sure to paint your car in a well-ventilated area, and always wear a mask and gloves. Al prefers to paint several cars at

one time as it is easier on his airbrush and a more efficient use of his paint. Once his cars are done, Al dries them by attaching them to hangers installed in his ceiling.

The entire process generally takes a week or more. Be patient and have fun. 

Editor's Note: *Al Crisp is a member of the Niagara Frontier Region of the National Model Railroad Association and a Master Model Railroader, #430. Crisp and more than two dozen other experienced modelers will be holding various demonstrations at the Trainfest 2011 Craftsman's Corner. Stop by to ask a model train question and watch Crisp kitbash in person.*




CAPITAL CITY, continued from pg 8

outside the presentation space can affect the overall layout performance. It's one more reason why the club coordinates the set-up effort well in advance to ensure that the layout will be ready to run on the first day of the show.

The Capital City N'Gineers, like many other clubs, believe in cooperation within the group and within the community of model train hobbyists. Their operation is a friendly one. With just some very simple guidelines, they have achieved both critical and personal success. The group has won 1st Place

awards for their club layouts in 2003 and 2005; and as part of a team, with the Milwaukee club, in 1992.

The club shows no signs of slowing down in the future, either. They will be entering their layout at eight different model train shows in 2011, including Milwaukee's own Trainfest on November 12th and 13th. 

Trainfest Influences Product Development



In 2004, the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry honored KATO with a special acknowledgment for the three KATO HO SD70MAC's BNSF locomotives operating on the museum layout for completing the actual real mileage between Chicago and Seattle.

Leon Waldack shared, “of course there was periodic maintenance along the way, such as lubrication and wiper replacement. It’s great to know the locomotives completed 2,206 actual miles and it’s a fun award. In fact, it’s one of my personal favorites.”

Trainfest Express Editor note: Maintenance or not, that’s a pretty remarkable achievement.

When you talk, KATO USA listens

When you are a manufacturer to the model railroad hobby, come November there isn’t a sweeter place to be than Trainfest. Just ask KATO USA.

To KATO, being at Trainfest is more than the opportunity to display and sell their products at a well-attended nearby venue. It’s the opportunity to listen to what train hobbyists want and need in products...and they readily acknowledge that they pay very close attention to what Trainfest attendees are saying.

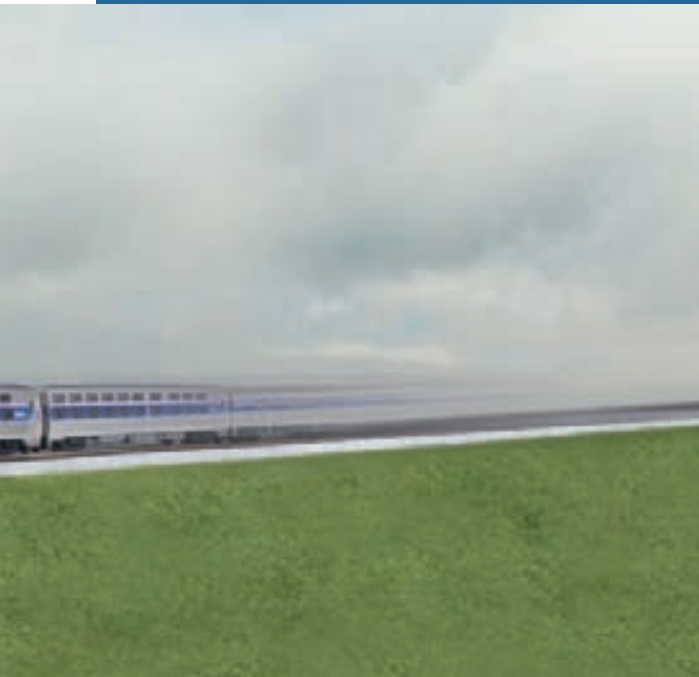
The information shared is extremely important to them.

Just ask Leon Waldack of KATO USA. He’ll tell you how KATO is on a continuous quest to improve and diversify their product line. He also will tell you that what is said at Trainfest, doesn’t stay there. He happily shares it with new product development.

“We listen carefully and closely to what our fans and Trainfest visitors say. They directly influence the possibility of future products,” stresses Waldack.


“At KATO, our goal is to provide our customers with the very best products and that’s why we continually improve and expand our product line,” says Waldack. “It’s also why we listen to our customers. It may sound common sense, but many companies forget to do it. At KATO, we know





◀ KATO's new Amtrak products.

the company is committed to not affecting its performance per cost formula.”

When you attend **Trainfest**, let the folks at KATO know what you are thinking. They'd love to hear from you. 

KATO USA is headquartered in Schaumburg, IL. Founded in 1986, from the Japanese subsidiary of Sekisui Kinzoka Co, Ltd, KATO is known for its very accurate HO and N-class cars and locomotives, as well as for its snap together Unitrack system which combines nickel-silver rail with realistic looking roadbed utilizing Unijoiners to ensure a precise fit.

While there are no display facilities at the Schaumburg location, new product announcements can be found on their website at www.katousa.com.

customers need a voice in the process if we are to achieve our goal. Everyone wins.”

So what's new in the offering from KATO?

Known for N scale Classic trains, one of their newest additions is the UP “City of Los Angeles” (106-080) with EMD E9 A-B-B-A combination offered (176-5315, 176-5316, 176-5352, 176-5353) since the train was usually pulled by an A-B-B-A consist.

There are new Amtrak products, a new N scale Gunderson MAXI-I (a single car with five sections) and a Double Stack TTX car that comes with 10-40' APL containers.

The new N scale Amtrak GE P42 Amfleet & Viewliner Locomotive and five car set (106-0101) is a beauty too.

From Waldack's view, these types of new products are just one of the things that set KATO apart from the competition. To him it's about value – what you receive at the price-point that you receive it.

“KATO offers great detail and reliability at an affordable price,” proudly states Waldack. “From a market point of view, some of the greatest challenges that KATO has faced recently have had to do with the exchange rate of the yen in relation to the dollar.” That being said, he “believes that there is some stabilization there and

The Vote's are in... introducing the Trainfest 40th Anniversary Logo

A big thank you to all **Trainfest EXPRESS** readers who cast a vote to select the logo design commemorating the 40th Anniversary of **Trainfest**. The response was great. The votes poured in...along with a few suggestions too! We are in the process of applying the winning logo design on everything from pins to promotional pieces. This celebration is going to be fun!



Trainfest®

America's Largest Operating Model Railroad Show.

Saturday & Sunday
Nov. 12 – 13, 2011
9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.



60 Amazing Railroads.

Enormous Fun.

Endless Discovery.



Demonstrations
and "how-to"
clinics

•

Learn tips and
techniques

•

60 manufacturers

•

60 hobby dealers

•

12 historical
societies

WI Expo Center
at State Fair Park
8200 W. Greenfield Ave.
Milwaukee (West Allis), WI



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