

# 'Kangaroo' inspired entry into hobby

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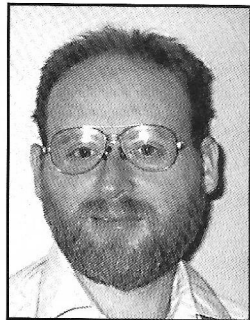
Blame Captain Kangaroo for Rick's interest in trains. Just before first grade in the early 1960s, he discovered this popular TV program and was fascinated at the visits to a layout where the Capt. would "run trains"—no doubt with the help of some behind the scenes engineers. Rick's maternal grandparents, who had become his legal guardians, soon found themselves pestered with requests from their grandson for a set of trains of his own.

Ironically, the real train that three times a week visited the north side of town, which was the end of the Camas Prairie's Grangeville branch (second Subdivision), had no involvement in this early exposure.

His grandparents relented, and, after a futile search for an O-scale set, obtained an HO set with a basic loop, switcher

locomotive, and three cars ordered through the Sears catalog store. The Switcher probably ran twice as many scale miles around that loop as its prototype had run real miles before it was reluctantly retired after a couple of major rebuilds at a nearby lawnmower shop. Needing a new locomotive, the adults were again pestered for a new train set.

Rick's grandparents told him to stop pestering his father and allowed him to go to Sears and order one. No sooner had it arrived than Rick's father showed up for a visit with yet another



er set. Now he was really in business!

But, he had trouble finding additional, aftermarket equipment in the little home town of only 3,000 population. A few cars would occasionally show up in the toy bin of a hardware chain store and were eagerly snapped up. The manager was asked if he would set up a small corner with train accessories and he explained that retail space was just too expensive to devote to such "slow moving" merchandise.

Rick dearly wanted to begin adding turnouts, but they were simply not to be found in Grangeville, Idaho. Rick's father came to the rescue. Probably thinking that he wanted to add a siding, he obtained two turnouts, one in each direction. Rick felt that what he really wanted was a half dozen, so he could add a yard to store extra cars.

Rick thought his worries were over when a hobby shop opened on the main street in town, but by the time he knew about it and got a chance to visit, it had closed.

Rick remained frustrated about buying supplies for his hobby until a hobby shop opened in a shopping center in Lewiston, Idaho, about 70 miles from his home. Every couple of months, on a Saturday, Rick's grandparents would take him there during the trip to Lewiston to shop and visit his father.

In Rick's own words, "At the start of each trip, grandpa would give me a \$20 bill to spend on trains at this shop. I accumulated quite a collection of HO equipment over the next couple years or so, until the shop suddenly moved from the center to cheaper quarters downtown.

After I found out where they had moved, I asked to be taken to the new location only to be informed that they were no longer opening on Saturdays! The shop was closed entirely not

much later and was moved to Seattle, where the owner perceived the grass was greener."

Rick remembers fondly the times his father, who worked for the CSP, took him on tours through the roundhouse, yards and other facilities including the old station where he worked. One of his favorite memories is of a caboose ride his father arranged up the Lapwai canyon switchback on the Grangeville Local for Rick and his half brother.

When Rick was about half way through high school, another hobby shop opened up in Lewiston and since the family had moved to a smaller house Rick sold his HO equipment to switch to N scale, but had to wait about a year for the new shop to begin stocking N equipment.

Rick graduated from a two-year bookkeeping program at Lewis/Clark State College in Lewiston in 1979 and began taking art classes during the 1980s at Boise State University in Idaho's capital.

At college he joined a short-lived HO club that was starting up in Lewiston, with the intention of modeling the CSP. Rick maintained N as his primary scale inspite of pressure to return to HO.

During his second year he found the Idaho Southern (IS), one of the two HO clubs in Boise that were building layouts under the auspices of the Idaho Historical Society. The IS immediately put him to work as their primary structure builder.

Shortly after he joined the IS he discovered N-Trak and in the mid 1980s tried to start a Boise N-Trak modular group, but could not find enough serious N scalers to make it viable. By mid 1990, both clubs in Boise had lost their leases and the lay-

outs ceased to exist.

The remaining members of the IS founded the Tuesday Night Turnaround (TNT), a round robin group not centered around any particular scale. Rick is currently a member of this group.

His friends in the Tuesday Night Turnaround group took up a collection in 1992 to get Rick to rejoin the NMRA.

This was the start of participation in the Achievement Program. Rick earned his first Merit Award for a fire car he had entered at the Spring, 1993 PNR 3rd Division meet.

Rick has earned Certificates of Achievement as a Master Builder - Cars, Structures and Scenery, a Model Railroad Author, a Model Railroad Engineer - Civil and Electrical and

a Chief Dispatcher.

Rick is a self employed freelance fine artist, and has long considered the scratch building part of the hobby as another art medium. He has taken on the duties of treasurer for the 3rd Division.

Rick says "I am grateful to all the TNT guys who have encouraged me over the years, and especially those cruel, hard-boiled judges who let me know in no uncertain terms when I have gotten lazy on a model. Special gratitude goes to the hobby of model railroading, which has been an anchor of stability in an otherwise dysfunctional incarnation."