

He Builds Toys That No One Else Makes

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

Loyd Jasper has a reputation in the farm toy world for scratch-building models not sold by toy manufacturers. Two models of batch grain dryers he built recently are good examples. He attributes the quality of his replicas to accurate measurements and lots of photos of the real equipment.

"A collector ordered a John Deere 458 grain dryer 5 or 6 years ago, but I couldn't find one," Jasper explains. He finally told the collector to find one - anywhere - and he would build it.

After locating the 1950's grain dryer in Illinois, Jasper made the 3-hr. drive from his Dyersville, Iowa, home to take photos and measurements.

Good photos are important, Jasper says, especially to reproduce odd shapes. He photographed the ends of the dryer and printed photos to the 1/16th-scale he needed to create a stencil.

The biggest challenge was soldering parts together without getting it on the perforated screening he used for the walls.

He built the frame out of brass, which is

commonly used for making models. A soup can cut down turned out to be the perfect size for the fan housing with a small computer fan inside.

Jasper included tiny details such as holes in the frame, in the same places as the real grain dryer. The only thing he didn't include was a door in the back that was too small for the scale.

Jasper only built four of the John Deere dryers to maintain their value. He has one left for sale.

With screen left over, he decided to make a Behlen HL 500-bushel batch grain dryer, because they were common in his area. A dealer had one that he could measure and photograph. Jasper has his mini version up for sale.

Both models were made in the 1950's, when grain was dried in batches. They were discontinued in the 1970's with the development of continuous grain dryers.

The 1/16-scale models are the latest of more than 200 models Jasper has made, including peanut combines and a variety of



Jasper made these grain dryers at the request of customers who told him no toy manufacturer carries them. He has made hundreds of toy models from scratch.

combine heads.

Jasper says he welcomes calls and orders for rare and old and new model equipment not available through toy manufacturers.

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Ford Pickups Celebrate 100th Year

Henry Ford knew a good thing when he introduced the Model TT in July 1917, the company's first pickup truck. He kept the cab and engine of the Model T, but loaded it onto a heavier frame that could handle a 1-ton payload. The TT carried a base price of \$600 from the factory, and 290 were sold the first year. By 1928, 1.3 million TTs had been sold, and Ford introduced the model AA with a 1 1/2-ton chassis. It was available with length, power train, and axle options.

By 1933 the AA had been replaced by the BB. Two years later, Ford introduced the Model 50, equipped with the famous Ford Flathead V-8. More than 4 million Ford trucks had been sold by 1941.

Building heavy-duty trucks for the military

during WWII laid the groundwork for what would become the best-selling truck series ever, the F series. The new lineup was introduced in 1948. In 1953 the introduction of the Ford F-100 replaced the Flathead V-8 with an overhead valve V-8. The model offered armrests, dome lights, and sun visors as standard features. It would continue in production for nearly 30 years.

Other innovations over the years included 4-WD in 1959, twin I-beam front suspension in 1965, crew cabs in 1966, and a continuous string of styling changes and technologies.

Today the F series is in its 13th generation, having had major changes every 3 to 5 years. It has been the best selling truck for 40 years, with tens of millions on the road.



Ford's 1918 Model TT 1-ton stake bed truck (left) and a 1935 pickup.



Photo at left shows Ford's 1948 F-1 pickup. At right is the 2018 F-150.

Steam Locomotive Kits Are Not For Kids

For more than 50 years Allen Models has been making authentic 1/8-scale model steam locomotives you can sit on and ride. Buying the kit is the easy part. Taking the project from kit to completion can take a couple of years and be a major investment.

"You start with a kit that costs \$3,200 to \$5,800," says Steve Alley, Allen Models. "We supply the castings, but there is a lot you have to fabricate yourself."

The castings, boiler and other components add up in weight, too. Alley estimates a 3 3/4 scale locomotive with its 16-in. boiler will weigh close to 3,000 lbs.

Alley warns that costs can climb quickly. If you start with a \$5,000 kit, you have to add a boiler (not part of the kit) from another supplier for an additional \$5,000. Plumbing can run \$1,000. Other materials and paint can run another \$1,000.

"Once you have an engine, you'll want cars to ride on, and they can run from \$3,000 to \$5,000 each," says Alley. "Then if you go to a club where there is an elevation change of 2 1/2 to 3 percent, you'll need brakes, which can run another \$1,000."

Alley suggests that a dedicated hobbyist might be able to build an engine in a year, doing one part a night. He personally has built 2 in a year to the exclusion of all else. If a customer chooses, they can buy individual sets of parts instead of an entire kit at one time.

He notes that while he offers detailed plans, a lot of hobbyists make changes as they go.

"There is a lot of kit bashing," says Alley. "They buy parts they need from me and build their own individualized engine."

While there are a few hobbyists who build engines to sell, most see it as a labor of love. If you choose to sell at some point, there may be a market.

"I've seen engines sell for \$250,000," says Alley.

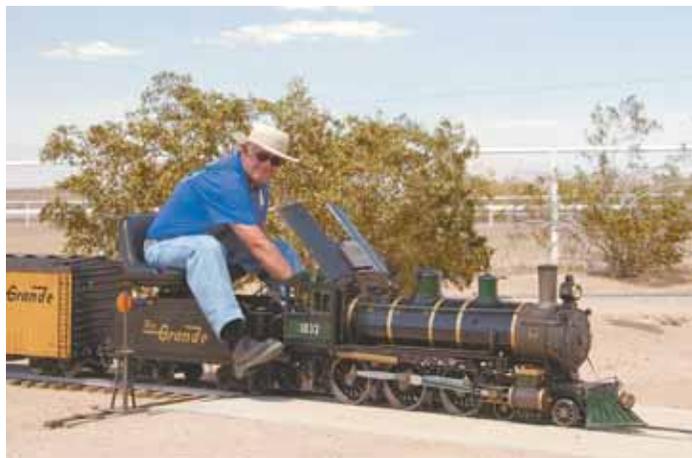
If the cost and labor seem extreme, for the hard-core railroad hobbyist it's all worth it. There are more than 400 clubs around the country with track (mostly 7 1/2 in. wide) waiting to be used by members. Join one and you can access most others. He notes that there are 24 in California alone.

Most clubs welcome visitors to see and experience the live steam locomotives. None of them are as impressive as Train Mountain, Chiloquin, Ore. It has 36 miles of 7 1/2-in. gauge track winding through 2,200 acres of land near Crater Lake.

"Once every 3 years, from June 25th through July 1st, they hold a meet," says Alley. "They expect more than 800 engines and 3,000 to 4,000 attendees."

Not all the engines will be live steam. Alley estimates 1/8-scale hobbyists are broken out with 1/3 gas/hydraulic, 1/3 electric and 1/3 live steam.

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Allen Models specializes in making kits for authentic 1/8-scale model steam locomotives that you can sit on and ride. Kits start at \$3,200 and run up to \$5,800. "We supply the castings, but there's a lot you have to fabricate yourself," says Steve Alley, Allen Models.