

In the spirit of sharing, Master Model Railroader Chuck Ricketts will be creating a series of emails to describe how Jim Elder and he are constructing a sectional layout in the garage. This layout, while a pure fantasy model railroad, is operations oriented. This first email describes Chuck's model railroad background with a brief look at some of his previous layouts and why, in his mid-eighties, he is starting a new layout.

## **Fantasy Island Layout - Article 1**

### **Chuck's Model Railroad History**

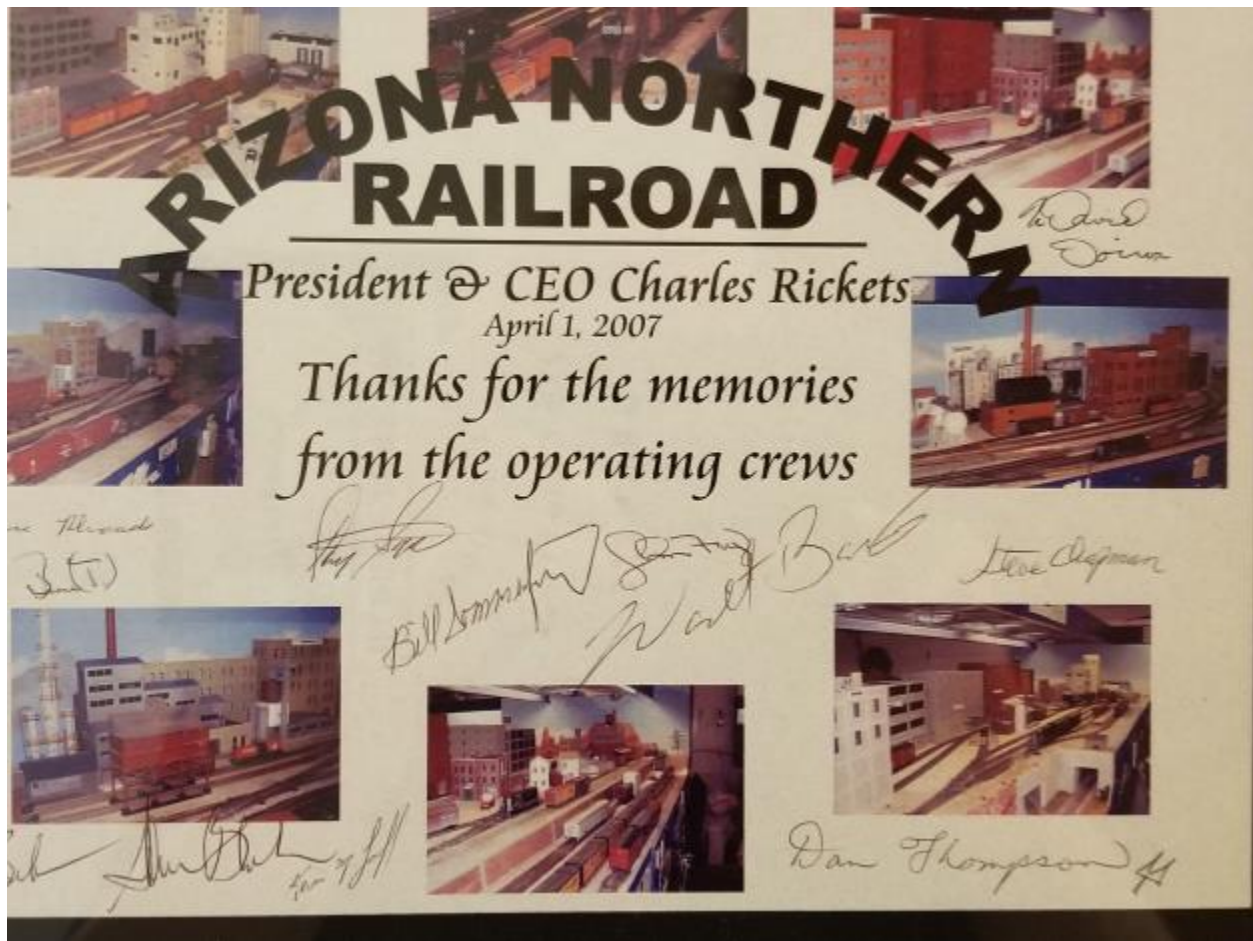
I have been "playing with trains" since I received an electric train on my first birthday. That first American Flyer diecast train was replaced with a Lionel smoking steam engine train before I was 10. In 1949 I discovered HO scale and began modeling until I discovered girls. In my early 20s, in Germany, I built a Marklin HO layout in my apartment. It didn't survive my return to the US. I had a few other layout starts and was making some progress, until another move caused the of selling of my models. Even a short early experiment with HOn3 on a shelf did not last long.

Once settled in the mid-1970s, I started over in N scale. After a larger space was acquired, I built a new N scale layout that consisted of three, 3' x 6' sections in a C shaped arrangement. Another move came about, so I sold that layout and ended up in a small apartment.

A period of building HO and HOn3 scale models began without a layout. I remarried in 1985, but the house did not have room for a layout. In 1992, my wife and I sold our home in California and moved into a motorhome. I continued building models and doing research as we traveled around the United States.

Then, in the mid-1990s, I secured a 10' x 12' storage shed on the lot where we spent the winters in the motorhome. The HOn3 Fantasy Island layout concept started. Unfortunately, my wife passed away and little progress was made on the HOn3 Fantasy Island layout.

I remarried; we purchased a home with a three car garage in the Mesa area. I began constructing the HO standard gauge Arizona Northern, a Santa Fe proto-freelance layout, based on the Pea-vine in Arizona. This DCC powered, switching layout required seven or eight people to operate. This is the first time I had found enough model railroad friends to operate with me. The certificate below was presented to me by my regular operating crew. You can see a few pictures of the railroad around the edges of the certificate.



In 2007, my wife and I sold our home in Arizona, the AZN was taken down; some of it was pieced out to become part of other people's layouts.

I had acquired some pieces of On30 equipment, found the house in Olympia with a basement, and began construction of the SS&S. The SS&S operated with a crew of nine or more from 2011 until last year when the layout is sold with the house. (At this time it is unclear what the new owner might or might not do with the layout). Operators and visitors from literally around the world came to my layout over the years as a part of local, regional, national open houses and operating sessions.



*The town of Elder on the SS&S*



*Sawmill, and operating jill poke to push logs into the log pond on the SS&S*





*Oyster Bay Business District on the SS&S*

*See the SS&S track plan attached to the original email.*

### **Why a New Railroad Now?**

As you can tell from my story, I have been a model railroader all my life. Operation of a model railroad is in my blood, hence the intense desire to build another railroad. I enjoy the challenge of creating a moving model of a transportation system and sharing it with friends and visitors. I have drawn a number of visitors into the hobby over the years. Building a new railroad I can share with others is exactly what I want to do now. Sharing it with you via these emails is just another way to spread the joy of model railroading.

### **What's Next?**

In Fantasy Island Layout – Article 2, Chuck will describe the concept and history supporting the new layout. Hope you enjoy the series.

