



# *Great Scale Model Train and Railroad Collectors Show*

*Especially for New Sellers*

## **IN GENERAL:**

The Great Scale Model Train Show is dedicated to producing an exciting and memorable experience for visitors, an unmatched value proposition and friendly community for vendors, and a rich resource of products and expertise for buyers. The longevity of the shows (over 30 continuous years!) is evidence that we've been substantially successful in this mission. But, in truth, the credit is owed to the vendors who have made the shows a "must" destination for everyone connected with the hobby - or connected to a hobbyist.

On this page, we would like to help you become familiar with what to expect, and the nuts and bolts of establishing yourself, be it for just one show, or many more to come. Knowing what to expect before hand will help you find a comfortable fit, from the moment you arrive. We are passionate about your positive experience at our shows, and at your service to assure that result.

## **THE CONSTITUENCY:**

There are 4 basic groups of people who make up a show:

- The Vendors: Ranging from an individual with a few items to sell, to major manufacturers and expert modelers, the vendors are a true community of people whose collective, vast variety of products, and knowledge and friendly engagement of customers, makes the hobby accessible and enjoyable. No matter your size, experience or level of expertise, you are a key member of that community. Thus you should not dismiss the opportunity to present your product simply because your inventory is small, or your knowledge is limited. And there is every possibility that an item which seems of little value, to you, may in fact be rare and in high demand.
- The Clubs: These dedicated individuals build up sections (modules) of a master layout which takes shape as the modules are erected and assembled into a massive and stunning operating display. They contribute the action, imagination, inspiration and knowledge which thrill the casual observer and draw people to take up the hobby, or to improve upon their efforts.
- The Attendees: Some are serious buyers, looking to fulfill a particular need. Others are just getting started, or thinking about it. Intermediate modelers seek good prices and values to build their inventory, expand their operations, or create scenic elements. Casual visitors -often as families- appear for the experience of immersion and stimulation. We could further subdivide the audience, but suffice it to say, it's "everybody."
- The Show Staff and Management: We're principally in the "satisfaction business," both as producers of a wholesome and memorable experience, and as facilitators of and providers to the vendor community. We are friendly, engaged, helpful and interested. Most important, we have years of experience. Everyone works together, and everyone works for you.

And this brings us to a very important reason for you to be a vendor. Aside from the material reward, you're here to have a good time - it would be hard to find better company!

## THE NUTS AND BOLTS, FROM ARRIVAL TO DEPARTURE:

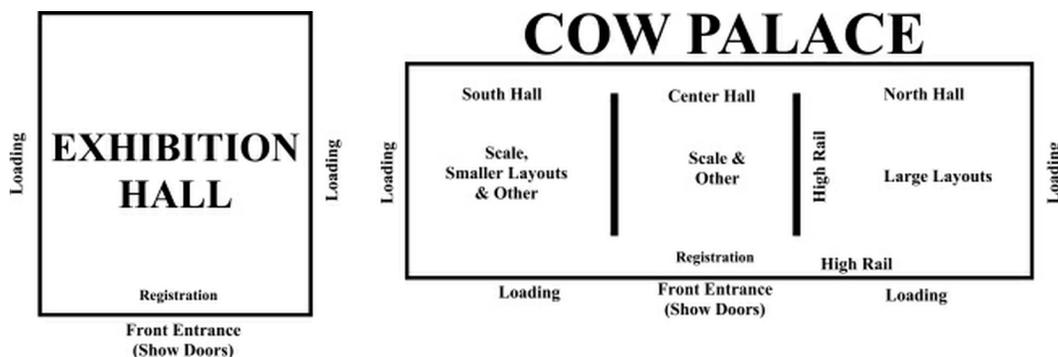
### Setup Times:

Group	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Large Display Layouts Vendors with over 10 tables Vendors with specialized displays	1-10 pm	7-9 am	8:30 - 10 am
All Other Vendors ( most vendors)	2-10 pm		

Please be aware that the show staff, itself, is very busy prior to opening for vendors, and any interruptions to our activity (even something as innocent as asking your table show floor location) delays everyone else. Disruption of our preparations is one area where we may be a little bit stiff on enforcing the schedule, so, please, observe the above, and understand our priority of a smooth and efficient process for all.

**Initial Arrival, Registration and Credentials:** Park your vehicle within convenient distance of either the Cow Palace or Exhibition Hall, but wait until you know your location on the show floor before moving to unload, and don't obstruct others who may already be in the process. Once show doors open, approach the smiling staff at the registration desk to secure your vendor credential packet (various forms, badges, etc.) and see your table location on a floor plan of the show. As a new vendor, the diagram may seem confusing, at first, since you've never been in the building. No problem! Just say this is your first time, and a helpful staff member will assist you.

**Best Point of Entry - Moving In:** In general, once you've located your tables, you'll want to look around for the most convenient place to bring in your merchandise. The diagrams below give you a very general orientation. In the 3.5 acre Cow Palace, large layout displays and High Rail (large scale) are generally located in the North Hall, roughly as indicated on the diagram. In the Exhibition Hall, which is essentially one huge room, space will be assigned based with an eye to keeping "like with like," but final placement is based on the specific mix of vendors and product type. The Exhibition Hall is used only for the June show, because it is air conditioned. It is a large facility - but not as big as the "CP."



**Trolley:** Other show operators don't provide trolleys to wheel in your merchandise - but we do! However, you may need to wait a few minutes for one to become available. When it does, load as much as you safely can, then immediately unload on or under or between your tables, so the trolley is available for others. Do not block aisles with your merchandise.

Before setting up your tables, move your vehicle away from the building, so others may approach.

**Table Set Up:** We don't require it, as do other show operators, but table covers can do much to enhance appearance. Whether or not you use them, you should drape your tables to cover the merchandise once set up is

complete, and before you leave on Friday and Saturday evening. Anything at all (old sheets, for example) may be used for this purpose. Plastic picnic table covers are cheaply available at Party Stores, "Dollar" stores and similar. If you forget to bring them, not to worry. Again, unlike others, we won't sell them to you -we'll give you some to use. Just return them, after the show closes on Sunday.

Need electricity? We've got it, all you want -and, yet again, unlike other shows, it is free. But you'll need to bring your own extension cord. If it crosses an aisle, let us know and we'll tape it down, for you.

**Enjoy the Perks:** Vendors enjoy free donuts and coffee during Saturday morning setup, and free coffee during Sunday setup. Unloading and set up can fire an appetite, so the food concession is open during Friday evening, with selections at reasonable cost.

**During the Show:** No special requirements, so relax and enjoy. If you don't make a sale, then make a friend. The way in which you engage people reflects on the entire vendor community, so be ready to assist customers in whatever way you can. Otherwise, here are some tips that might be helpful:

- *Consider the "show before the show":* An early Saturday arrival gives you and other vendors a convenient opportunity to buy and sell among yourselves. We can't make an iron-clad promise, but vendors and dealers often negotiate generously on price with one another as a kind of "professional courtesy." Otherwise, scouting the show floor will help you direct buyers to particular products, when you don't have what they need. Finally, a fly-by of other vendor tables will help you determine, in general, whether your pricing is in line with the market.
- *Bags:* New vendors sometimes forget to bring bags to hold customer purchases. Most vendors use thin plastic bags typically found at the supermarket or a drug store; others save such bags, and paper grocery bags, for use at the show. If you forget, a nearby Staples at the Timonium Square Shopping Center directly across York Road carries cartons of plastic merchandise bags. Too busy to leave your booth? Ask us to help.
- *Opening Cash:* Again, sometimes overlooked, you'll need enough money to make change. How much? And how denominated? Generally, \$75-\$125 should be adequate, depending on the price range of your merchandise and how much you have for sale. Your "stash" should be rich in 5's and 1's, especially. The most frequently proffered payment is a \$20 bill.
- *Sales Tax:* You are required to collect and remit the Maryland 6% sales tax (you will receive a temporary collection license if you sign up a few weeks before the show; otherwise, one will be sent to you, afterward). But coin can complicate making change. Consider pricing your product with the tax "baked into" the price. In this format, a sale of \$20 assumes that \$18.87 is the amount of the sale, and \$1.13 is the sales tax (\$1.13 is 6% of \$18.87). You and your customer have a convenient sale, the State gets its pound of flesh, the tax becomes a deductible expense on your income taxes - and, well, everyone is "happy." After the show, simply divide your total sales by 1.06. The answer you get is what you keep - the rest goes to the State of Maryland.
- *Squatters Rights:* Regardless of whose show it is, most have extra tables, here and there, to accommodate late arrivals. And some vendors fail to appear, some are present for just one day, and a few actually sell out and have nothing but empty tables. No matter the cause, if you find empty tables next to you, grab 'em. They are yours, and, unlike others, we don't make you pay for them. But be sure the tables are actually available before you take them -just ask us for the green light.
- *Show Hours:* Nominally, the show "closes" at 4 pm both Saturday and Sunday. But there's more to it, than that. On Saturday, we don't admit anyone after 4 pm, but the show stays open until 5 pm for those already in the building. On Sunday, by contrast, the show does, in fact, shut down at 4 pm -all visitors must vacate by that time. For vendors, this mean the Saturday exit is not sooner than 5 pm. It is true that the crowd thins out in the last 30 minutes. But it is also true that major purchases are made during this time, because that's when

buyers return to the tables which they determined offered them the best value - and that could be your table.

Be aware, too, that many vendors and prospective buyers agree on an "11th hour" discount, in which the vendor and a prospective buyer agree to a certain discount price if an item has not sold by closing time. The buyer assumes the risk that the item may have sold, but receives a price benefit if it has not. The seller assumes the risk of a lower selling price, but benefits from the assurance (although not the guarantee) of a sale. This is a perfectly reasonable arrangement, and one that can turn an inactive time slot into a very productive one for seller and buyer alike.

***Sunday Take Down:*** The show closes totally on Sunday at 4 pm. The building must be clear of all visitors, and vendors begin packing. Frequent announcements count down the time intervals until closing. But you, as a new vendor, may notice that some sellers start to tear down as much as an hour before. We discourage this practice. The visitor paid for a certain time period, and, as long as the show is open, should receive what was paid for.

Even so, we allow some reasonable latitude in terms of some advance preparation for the final move out. The essential point is that every vendor should be prepared to do business up to the final moment. If that means you must unpack a box, then that is what you do. Thus your preparation should never give the impression that you are "closed" for business. As long as we are open, then you are open. This is not a Mickey Mouse regulation. The simple fact is that the buying public must be able to rely on our stated hours of operation. Bottom line, keep your sales area looking good and looking ready for business.

Once the doors are closed, the move out process is basically the same as move in, but in reverse. Draw your vehicle to openings only when you are ready to load, cooperate with other vendors who may have a struggle, return your trolley as soon as practicable so others may use it. Pretty simple.

That's about it. Consult the links below for Seller Tips, and Safety and Security, for additional information. Please let us know what we do to improve on your experience.

Contact us with any questions or for clarification. By phone to 434-823-4809, or by email to [jsgeare@yahoo.com](mailto:jsgeare@yahoo.com).