

National Model Railroad Association North Central Region

Division 2 Newsletter

Volume 9 No 4 Winter 2023



Newsletter Helper

Hi Opa,
I worked hard and need a break. Can we go to Moomers Today? They close for the year pretty soon. Sure could use an Ice Cream.

Division Meeting

3rd Saturday of each Month

The meetings will continue to be live and virtual via zoom. Please note the location and time change.

The new location is the Foster Family Community Health Center, located at 550 Munson Avenue, on the East side of town. Enter the north entrance (under the canopy) and proceed down the left-hand corridor. Near the end, on the right-hand side, you will come to Conference Room A. (or join us on Zoom). The meeting will start at 10:00 AM.

Invitations and other details will be sent out to Division members by email the week prior to the meeting. Following Division business and member Show and Tell, we will have a presentation (TBD).

Crew Call:

- 12-16-2023
Division Meeting – Live & Zoom 10:00 – 1:30
- 01-20-2024
Division Meeting – Live & Zoom 10:00 -1:30
- 02-17-2024
Division meeting – Live & Zoom 10:00 – 1:30
- 03-16-2024
Division Meeting – Live & Zoom 10:00 – 1:30

From the Editor

Christmas is coming. Time to make a list and check it twice!! Happy Holidays to All.

Our division Open House and Operations event was held on Oct 14. Thank you, Mike Cipko, for making this Event happen; to the layout owners for hosting the open houses and operating sessions, and to the volunteers who helped some of the other NMRA members who were not familiar with operations. Lots of fun was had by all.



Please see the pictures in the Division News Area.

This newsletter relies on articles and photos that we receive from **you**, our members. Have a favorite structure, loco or railroad? Share it with us. Thank you to all of you who have contributed to this newsletter.

Send your photos (JPEG) and articles (MS Word) to us for our future newsletters. Our goal is to publish quarterly in March, June, September, and December. Deadline for submittals will be the end of the month prior to each quarter.

On the Switch List:

	Page
• Cover	1
• Future Meetings	2
• Super Sez.....	3
• Division News.....	4-9
• Clerk's Report.....	10
• Paymaster Report.....	11
• Member Pages.....	12-22
• Guest Pages.....	23-27
• Mystery Layout.....	28
• AP Corner.....	29-31
• In Closing.....	32

**All Aboard,
Jens Hensel
jens.hensel50@gmail.com
Assistant Superintendent &
Newsletter Editor**



Super Sez...

We've moved and grown!

First things first. Welcome to our new Division members from the Traverse City area, Sydney and Reece Sivek! Hope I haven't overlooked anyone. We currently have 47 members and are creeping towards fifty.

Our **Saturday** monthly meetings are now scheduled to be held at **10:00 am** at the **Foster Family Community Health Center** (formerly MCHC) Conference Room "A", located at **550 Munson Avenue** in Traverse City. A reminder that we typically meet on the third Saturday of each month.

The Conference Room accommodates approximately 30 individuals and has equipment available to us for Zooming our activities. Use the north entrance (under the portico) and proceed down the left corridor to Conference Room "A". This should be great, easy parking, no stairs and best of all, no charges involved. Our thanks to Division member John Cambell, MD for making all the arrangements.

Our Introduction to Operations event was held on October 14th, with five layout owners and seventeen individuals participating at Open Houses and Operating Sessions, many attending multiple activities. Maybe not the level of participation we were hoping for, but everyone there had a great time.

Thanks again to all our members that contributed their time and effort to make this a success. Will there be a next one? Only time will tell!

By now boats should be winterized and golf clubs stored. More time for modelling!

Mike

Division News

Bylaw Revision Update

Having been a member of Division 2 since its inception, I never paid any attention to the coverage area included, other than it was a whole bunch of counties in the northern part of the lower peninsula.

Doing some research, I found a copy of our Bylaws, originally adopted in 2015 and amended in 2017. Looking at Article II, the territory that we cover, I found that Chippewa County in the upper peninsula was also included. Presumably we had an NMRA member in the area at that time. Found that Luce and Mackinac counties were not part of any division either.

Thinking about this further, I thought it made sense that these three counties could be included in our division. They were out there by themselves, and the rest of the upper peninsula counties were in the Midwest Regions Winnebago Division. The next step was reaching out to division board members to get their perspectives and reach a consensus.

Board members were all supportive. We then proceeded to develop an amendment to change our bylaws and present it to our members for their approval. At our September 16th meeting, a motion was made and seconded, discussed, and approved by division membership.

We eventually found out that the Region was in the process of developing a tri-fold pamphlet, providing information on the hobby, divisions, NCR, and the NMRA. Included was a map of all divisions, with Luce, Chippewa, and Mackinac counties shown as part of Division 2. They may have jumped the gun a little bit.

The topic was brought up and discussed thoroughly at the North Central Region board meeting held on October first. A supporting motion was made and seconded and discussion was favorable. However, there was a concern whether the NCR Board could make this decision or whether other procedures needed to be followed. Ultimately the board passed the motion approving our request.

Division 2 now officially includes Luce, Chippewa, and Mackinac counties north of the Mackinac Bridge, along with 21 contiguous counties south of the bridge. As we've said before, what's another 6,500 square miles between friends!

The updated list of Counties now includes Alcona, Alpena, Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Chippewa, Crawford, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Iosco, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Luce, Mackinac, Manistee, Missaukee, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle, Roscommon, and Wexford in the State of Michigan.

Mike

Division News

Division Meeting Held on Sep 16, 2023

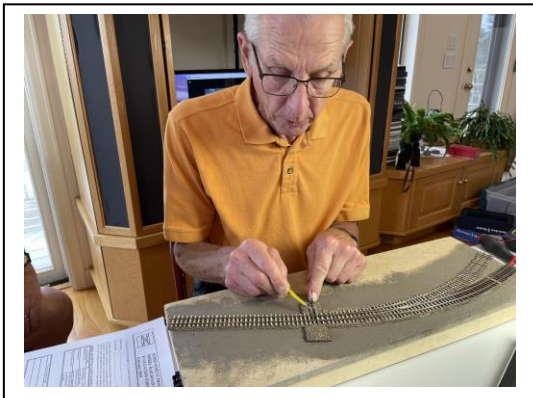
An Evaluation Clinic was held for potential AP Awards. Skip Luyk graciously returned to the Traverse City area to help demonstrate the procedure and criteria to evaluate models/trackwork. Al Johnson and Ernie Barry helped Skip in the evaluation.

First up was John Campbell, who was trying to obtain a certificate for “Scratch Building/Modifying two Locomotives. John proceeded to explain what was modified. The Evaluators then conferred and rated the model.

It was determined that some additional modifications were required to achieve the necessary points for a certificate. John Graciously agreed and will modify the models to be reevaluated at a later time.



Next up was David Zolnierek, with his 3 “Scratch Built Narrow Gauge Turnouts. Included were a #5 Wye, a curved Turnout, and a RH Turnout.



All three turnouts met the point requirements. AP Certificates to be awarded.



Division News

Introduction to Operations
Held on Oct 14, 2023
New York Central - Al Johnson's (Interlochen West)



Bill McCary



Michael Coonrod and Keith Munson



Keith Munson and Bill McCary

Division News

Introduction to Operations
Held on Oct 14, 2023
East Raton & Santa Fe - Ernie Barry's (Northport)



Reece Sivek, George Hermach, & Jim Graczyk



David Zolnierek and Bill Horning



Pete Magoun



Sydney Sivek



Pat Burdo



Thank You Ernie from the Division.
Certificate presented by Jens Hensel

Division News

Introduction to Operations
Held on Oct 14, 2023

Rio Grande Midland - Bill Horning's (Suttons Bay)



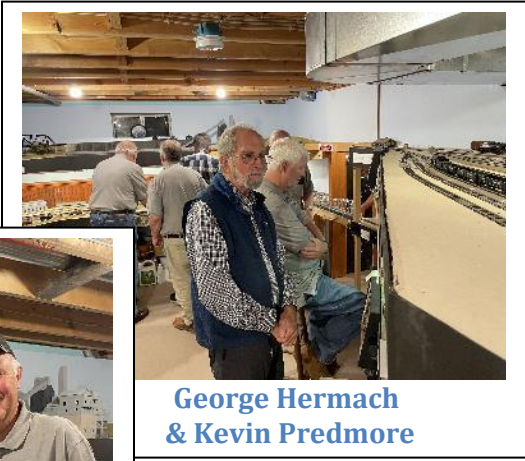
Kevin Predmore and Bill Horning



Jim Graczyk, Keith Aleo, Michael Coonrod, & Reece Sivek



Thank You Bill from the Division.
Certificate presented by Mike Cipko



George Hermach
& Kevin Predmore

Thank you Mike from the Division, for
hosting your Open House and for
organizing this Event.
Certificate presented by Jens Hensel



Division News

Division Meeting Held on Nov 18, 2023

We had the largest attendance in the last few years since prior to COVID, fourteen in person NMRA members with four additional participating on Zoom.

A new North Central Region Trifold (which shows the new UP Counties) was distributed to all members in attendance.

The Open House and Introduction to Ops held on Oct 14, 2023 was reviewed. Suggestions for the future included:

- Having the Open House separate from the Ops a few weeks prior.
- Expand the Buddy System to help the new Members inexperienced in Operations or not familiar with the layout that they are operating on.

Congratulations to Mark Albert (a frequent visitor to our group from the MCR Division 7), was announced, for his NMRA Calendar February centerfold. Nice job Mark!

Show and Tell:

Ernie Barry showed his proposed drawings for his new Raton Passenger Station.
Bill McCary brought his HO cardboard mockup of a bar.

Clinic:

A very informative clinic was held on Conifer Tree Making by David Zolnierek. David mentioned that he will share his Powerpoint with all of our NCR Division 2 Members who would like a copy. (please email Dave at: dizolnierek@gmail.com to request yours). Thanks for the sample trees and great Clinic as always David!

Future Clinic suggestions were also discussed:

- A Landscape Clinic discussing Land Forms – Ernie Barry.
- Building Paper Models - Jim Gore.
- Making Aspen and Poplar Trees – David Zolnierek.
- LED String Lights – David Zolnierek.
- A Lessons Learned Clinic on what ***not*** to do when starting a Model Railroad. (Please send your thoughts to Mike C.).
- Operating a Short Line Railroad – Bob Warrick.

Any other Clinic Requests?? – Please share with us.

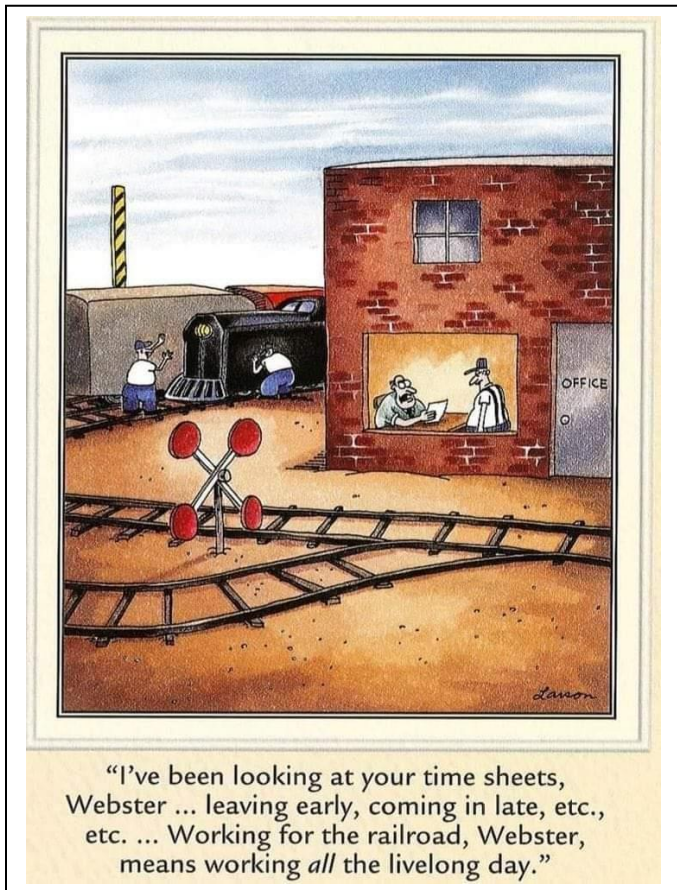
Jens



Chief Clerk's Report

Membership Information from Bob Crocker and Mike Cipko

We currently have 47 Active Members.



Motion activated Signal Crossing at our Chief Clerk's House.
We all need to have one of these at our house.

Paymaster's Report

Financial Information from David J Zolnierек Division 2 Paymaster End of Oct 2023

• Regular Share Previous Balance, End of Aug 2023	\$243.53
• Checking Account Previous Balance, End of Aug 2023	\$1381.81
• Regular Share Deposits Sep through Oct 2023	\$1.09
• Checking Account Deposits Sep through Oct 2023	\$30.00
• Withdrawals June through Oct	\$0.00
• Ending Balance Oct 2023	\$1656.43



Around the Division

A Stop at Windsor Castle

By Jens Hensel

We booked a tour to Windsor Castle this past Summer and came upon “The Queen” just outside the entrance. She was a beauty, an early steam locomotive that transported Queen Victoria between Windsor and [London](#). Victoria was the first British monarch to travel by rail, making her maiden voyage on June 13, 1842.



During her reign, from 1837 to 1901, Victoria traveled by train dozens of times.

The full-size replica of a Great Western Railway class steam locomotive No. 3041 is permanently parked at Windsor & Eton Central Railway Station. The black engine is adorned with the regal flourishes and features seen on the original machine, including the Royal Coat of Arms and the loco's name inscribed along the side.



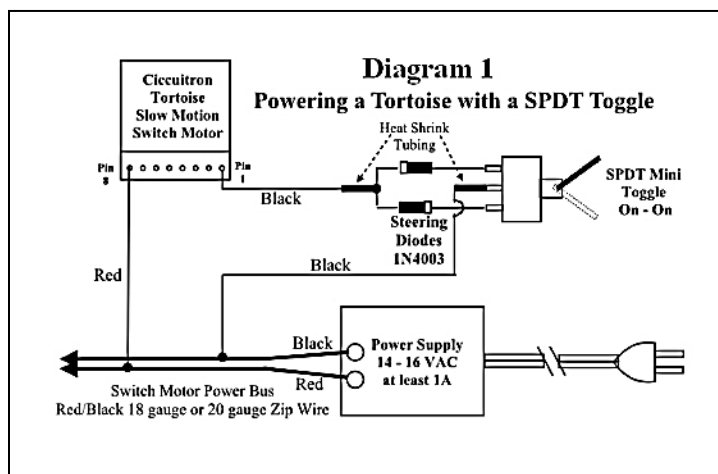
Around the Division

Powering a Circuitron Tortoise

by Bill Horning

In the early stages of designing and building my Rio Grande Midland Railroad I decided to control nearly all the turnouts using Circuitron Tortoise Slow Motion Switch Machines. Checking the installation instruction pages for the Tortoise There are three options, one uses Double Pole Double Throw (DPDT) toggles with a DC power Supply, another uses two DC power supplies and Single Pole Double Throw (SPDT) toggles, and a third that uses an Alternating Current (AC) power supply with SPDT toggles and a pair of steering diodes to provide the positive and negative pulses to the bus. This last method seemed to me to be the most efficient, and perhaps cheapest, but it had one drawback in that it required three wires to be run as a bus for each toggle. I prefer to use two conductor zip wire for the bus that powers the switch machines, it's crowded enough under the layout without introducing extra wire.

Here's an alternate method to what Circuitron suggests for powering the Tortoise. This method uses an AC power supply for the Tortoise control bus and SPDT mini toggles with a pair of diodes at each toggle. It may use several more diodes but they're much cheaper than additional power supplies and less complicated than having a three-wire power bus. Diagram 1 shows how each Tortoise and toggle combination is wired.



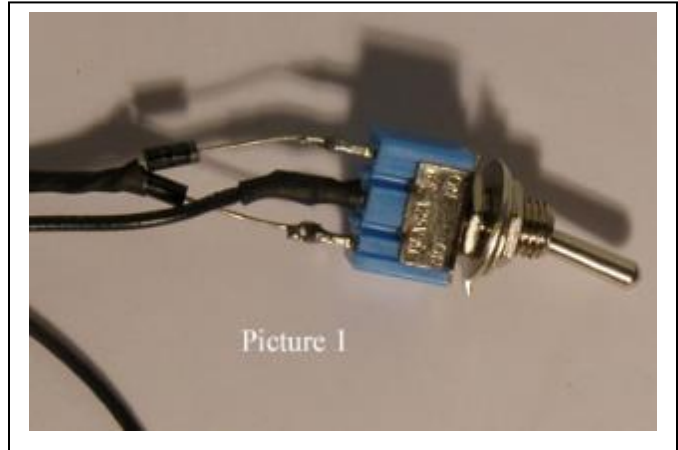
I run a bus cable of two conductor 18 gauge Red and Black Zip Wire under the benchwork to provide power to all the turnout motors. The power supply I use is 16VAC 5Amp which gives me ample capacity to power many of the switch machines on a single bus. When the Tortoise is thrown and in stall mode each machine consumes about 16mA and much less when in motion so the power supply I use has the capacity to power hundreds of machines. A 2A power supply (2000mA) divided by 16mA should be able to power over a hundred Tortoise switch motors. Each Tortoise is controlled through a SPDT mini toggle switch with a black hookup wire connected between the Black wire of the bus and the center pin on the toggle. I solder and cover this connection with a heat shrink tube. I soldered diodes to the two outer pins, one diode with the silver band toward the toggle and the other with the silver band away from the toggle.

Around the Division

Powering a Circuitron Tortoise

by Bill Horning

When the toggle is flipped these diodes provide either a negative signal or a positive signal to the Tortoise controlling the position of the Tortoise and the turnout. After soldering the two diodes to the outer two pins I twist the free ends together and solder them along with a black wire then cover the connection with heat shrink tube. This black wire is then connected to Pin 1 on the Tortoise. A Red wire from Pin 8 on the Tortoise is connected back to the Red conductor on the power bus completing the circuit. This is what the toggle looks like once it's been wired.



In a Yard I make a masonite panel with the yard track diagram. I then drill a ¼" hole at each turnout location and place the mini toggles into the panel. I route a single power feed from the Black bus wire to a terminal strip in the panel housing into which all the toggles are wired to receive their bus power. Each toggle then has the black wire from the diodes led back to another terminal strip that has leads out to each of the individual Tortoise switch machines in the yard. I label each lead on this second terminal strip to keep a relatively neat and orderly arrangement which is easy to diagnose and repair in case of a problem.

This method of controlling the Circuitron Tortoise has been very reliable over the years, easy to make, easy to install, and easy to fix in case of component failure.

Thanks, Bill

Around the Division

Pictures by Walt Wyatt



Mount Healthy Main Street Scene



A heavy interurban car on the Mount Healthy Traction line. MHT

Around the Division

A Return Trip to Agawa Canyon

By Jens Hensel

We made a return trip to the Agawa Canyon in Sault St. Marie Ontario Canada this past October. Our last trip was in 1977 when Maureen was expecting our first child. The lookout at the end of the destination is fabulous but requires that you climb 300 plus steps to see the view. Take a few steps at a time and you'll make it. Not sure how she made it up last time being 8 months pregnant since I barely made it up this time. Well, OK, it is 46 years later.

The trip leaves at 8:00am and normally returns at 6:00pm. On the way to the Canyon, we had a delay since car #14 had brake problems. We crawled for a few miles until we reached a siding, where they were able to remove the problem car.

Upon returning, we almost reached Sault St Marie, when the train suddenly stopped again. Now what we asked? The crew had to be changed since they reached their hours per day allotment. We returned to our destination 2 ½ hours later than normal at around 8:30pm.

Should we consider these types of delays when running operations. Just slip in some problems like this to make it interesting?? (Or maybe we already have enough delays during our sessions?)



Around the Division

A Return Trip to Agawa Canyon

By Jens Hensel



The View from the top of the Canyon

Our Train is at the bottom right. The hike up the path and the 300 steps took us about 40 minutes. It was worth it.

Around the Division

The Denver Narrow Gauge Convention – Sep. 2023

By David Zolnierak



For 42 years, since the very first convention in St. Louis in 1981, narrow gauge enthusiasts from all over the world have convened to meet, share information and one another's company.

In 2023, Denver was proud to host and once again welcomed us to the 43rd National Narrow-Gauge Convention. This marks the 7th time the Mile High City has hosted. The committee looked forward to giving us all the hospitality and fine fellowship that we have seen in the past Denver conventions.

From the early explorers and fur trappers to the discovery of Gold on Cherry Creek in 1859, the arrival of the railroad in 1870 and the mining/railroad boom in the 1880s and 1890s, to the record number of riders on the Colorado tourist railroads of today, the state has a rich history and vibrant present all waiting for us to explore.

In 2020, the 40th NNGC St. Louis was cancelled due to the virus. The 2021 41st Hickory that I attended was small with low attendance since the virus still around. Last year, the 42nd Tacoma, was smaller than normal again for the West Coast. I did not attend because of other commitments.

The "Mountains are Calling" me, off I go for this year's convention.

The committee has packed as much action, clinics, layouts, railroad and non-railroad activities into these four days as possible. In a nutshell, Chair Chris Lane along with his committee consisting of Mike Conder, Bill Lund, Duncan Harvey, Duane Richardson, Maria Gabrielson and other volunteers did an outstanding job in keeping us hopping and busy! Congratulations to all of you for making this convention a success.

A National Narrow-Gauge Convention is primarily for model railroaders, but all modelers have a love for the real thing. The Denver convention brought the best of modeling and rail fanning together into four plus days of celebrating steel wheels on steel rails. A narrow-gauge convention draws the best model railroaders from around the world to one place to share their knowledge with others in clinics, compete in model and photography contests, purchase high quality kits and equipment directly from the best cottage manufacturers in the industry, see the work of others in home layout tours and in modular railroads set up at the convention, and establish friendships that will last for decades.

The convention was held at the Crowne Plaza Denver Hotel located near the Denver International Airport. Not without a glitch though, one elevator was not working when we arrived, a bit of an inconvenience and aggravating. Then on Thursday night the 2nd elevator broke down! Now we have 5 floors here with an aging group! From about five o'clock in the afternoon till repairs were made at eleven

thirty this made for an interesting end to the day! But despite the small hotel being understaffed, we had free parking, excellent facilities, and got compensated for the elevator incident with a free night's lodging and breakfast.

Some 1166 attendees gathered at this year's convention. Hopefully with the virus somewhat behind us and with all these unsettled times in the world that is going on, I think we all set out to just have a "normal" convention.

The convention was organized like the previous NNGC with a Wednesday night through Saturday, August 30th -September 2nd (over Labor Day weekend). Clinics, vendors and displays run from 8:30 a.m.to 12:00 noon. Then everything shuts down for lunch, rail fanning site seeing, visiting layouts, museums, exhibits or your choice. The convention rooms (vendors-clinics) re-opened at 6:30 p.m. and shut down at 10:00 p.m.



DSP&P #191 is a Foam replica.
Seen as soon as you entered the vendor room.

Vendors & Manufactures:

A 60,000-square foot space was set up for vendors and modular displays. There was a full-size re-creation of a DSP&P #191 made of Foam. No Tender but the engine had all the details. The artist had re-created all the details, and it was hard to tell till you looked closely. We had 89 vendors in one room. It was good to see new and returning old faces doing business. 3-D resin printers, kit manufactures, detail parts, and too many others to mention were well represented. In talking with the vendors all felt that the show was good, and all had sales. I did not come home empty handed or disappointed.

Clinics:

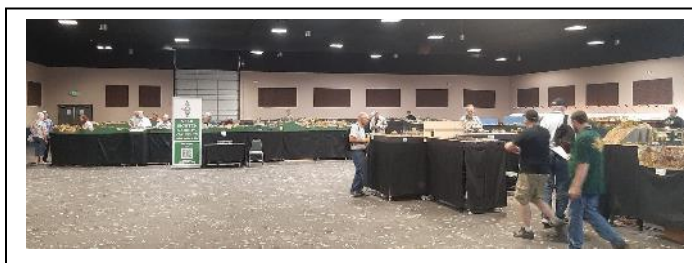
Six clinic rooms were in session morning and night. Fifty-eight clinics were listed in the timetable, and each was presented twice for a total of 108 clinics. According to the committee this was the most ever presented at a NNGC. Plenty to choose from east coast, western mountains, prototype, history, and modeling. You could learn about modeling Shore Side Structures by Sam Swanson, Scale Illumination by John Niemeyer, Pan Pastels, Operations, writing articles for the "Gazette" by author Craig Symington, Brass Rehabilitation, Scratch building, The White Pass & Yukon, Prototype Modeling, Making Trees, Rocks, Streams & amp; Waterfalls. Logging Operations, 3-D printing to name a few. I took in what I had time for but even then, missed some. I learned a lot. I have to say that these clinics are top notch for presentation.

Layouts:

45 Home and club layouts were available for viewing. 3 museum layouts: Colorado Railroad Museum, Colorado Model Railroad Museum, and the Michael Garman Museum. Traffic in and around the Denver area is a real challenge and horrendous! An express lane, pay lane, 4 other lanes? The time and distance to get someplace you had to do some real planning on what layouts that you wanted to see. One of the layouts I saw was Jim Gray's built in an aircraft hangar. An outstanding layout. Colorado Museum was my stop for photos of the prototype equipment for my future projects. The quality level of the layouts is very high and not one that you would not want to see again. Not enough time to see all the layouts.



DRGW Hon3 Jim Grays RR



Modular Layouts on Display

Modular Layouts:

Modular layouts made up for the ones that I did not see in the area. Located in the Exhibit room were the: The Mudhens, Slim Rail Modular Model Railroad Club (Hon3), Moose Creek Logging Company (On3), Mid Pacific Railroad formerly New Mexico Narrow Gauge (Hon3), The Nearsighted Narrow Gaugers (Hon3), San Juan Central V2 Hon3, SW Oklahoma On30, Ophir Modules Hon3, Banana Express On30. All the modular layouts were outstanding workmanship! The Banana Express was a tropical theme with a seaport village, rum production was their main revenue.



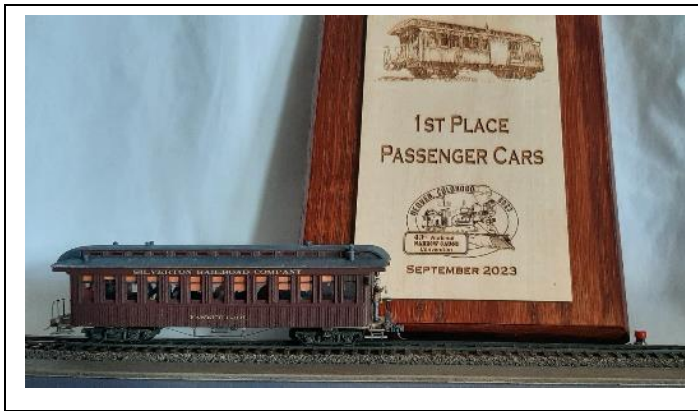
Slim Rail Modular Railroad Club
Red mountain Area Hon3

Model & Photo Contest:

145 entries in the contest room this year, 30 of which were photos. Some spectacular modeling in all scales. Voting is by ballot and popular vote, this made judging by the attendees very difficult. New to the Model Contest this year was a category called "Chopped" that comes from the cooking show called "Chopped". Nothing to do with cooking. You need to build a diorama not to exceed one square foot that includes water, something blue, a pickaxe, a door, a shovel, a freight car or locomotive and a piece of rail. Mike Engler took 1st place with his Colorado Silverton Mine. All eighteen categories had models or photos entered.

The 1st place contest winner's pictures are in the Nov-Dec issue of the National Narrow-Gauge Gazette starting on page 88 along with a listing of all the contest winners on page 87.

Congratulations to all the winners and modelers that had entered.



Passenger Car
Yankee Girl Coach HOn3
Silverton Railroad
1st Place by David Zolnierek

My entry this year in the Structure Offline category. I would like to mention that there are 18 categories in the Model Contest, and we had two special awards this year: Bachmann/Lee H. Riley Memorial Award and the Mt. Albert/Midwood Memorial Award. My efforts were worth it this year, a lot of fun competing with some excellent model builders out there in the hobby.



Structure Offline
The Mikado Saloon & Bordello
3rd Place by David Zolnierek

Extra Fare and Prototype:

This area does not lack prototype railroad activities period! Prior to the convention the Durango & Silverton and the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroads locomotive #168 pulled a special train. #315 and K-28 and RGS Goose did the same. Georgetown Loop was running and had a Silver Plume yard tour. This was one event that I took part in. The Colorado Railroad Museum had free admission and was having the engine shops open to the attendees. San Juan Model Co. Shop Tour was giving limited tours of the facilities. Open house was held at the Denver, South Park & Pacific Railway in Como. Historical towns, old mine buildings more to take in than time allowed me.

Georgetown Loop Railroad:



#111 taking on water at Silver Plume



Engine #111 Preparing to Switch on the Main

Summary:

New to the convention this year was the specialized software called Whova this allowed organizers and attendees to communicate, post messages, ask questions, and receive updates and changes to the schedule. Most useful app and having maps of the layouts and sites. Hope to see this used again in the future.

Saturday's evening's meeting was short and efficient.

Contest winners were announced, and awards presented quickly. Special awards were given To Randy Ditton – Mt. Albert Award for his highly detailed HO backwoods shop. Best of Show to Terry Stringham for his O scale engine house.

Roger Malinowski for his line of kits and Jerry Day for his historical books were inducted into the Narrow-Gauge Hall of Fame this year.

We listened to presenters for future conventions in Pittsburgh 2024, St. Louis 2025, and Minneapolis 2026 and voted on 2025 for St. Louis, Missouri. Well, a successful convention accomplished. Wonderful convention, great prototype tours, fine models in the contest, interesting vendor room, great modular layouts, informative clinics, great conversations, fine food and just being able again to get out and visit with old friends.

I may have mentioned this before but don't let the term Narrow Gauge hold you back. NG modelers are some of the most detailed oriented in the hobby, so no matter what you model or rail fan, NG can teach you something. A NNGC is not put on by an organization like the NMRA. It is run by a group of individuals, just like you and me who have a love for trains.

Pittsburg, please consider going next year. This one is within driving distance for us here, no airfare, car rental costs! There will be a special excursion on the East Broad Top (EBT) is in the works. The NNGC has never been there before so this should be a good one with new things to see and take in. The web site is up and is: www.44NNGC.com September 11-14, 2024.

Thanks David

Guest Pages

Don't Mock Those Mock-ups!

By Mark Albert (MCR Div. 7)

Artists often draw quick sketches of a scene or portrait before they apply paint to the canvas. Writers often make an outline or a set of notes before composing an essay or article. Model railroaders often build mock-ups of a proposed layout scene or structure project before they start cutting, nailing or gluing. In all these instances, the sketch, rough draft or mock-up enables the creative person to test or visualize a mental concept before the real work begins.

For the scale modeler, this preliminary step usually reveals a better idea that leads to a smoother, more effective execution of the concept. It may spot missed opportunities or avoid big mistakes which might spoil the hoped-for result. Changes and revisions can be made easily and quickly before costly or scarce raw materials are consumed.

Paper Copies

I frequently have used mock-ups while planning and building kitbashed structures for my model traction layout. For this purpose, one of the most useful tools is a computer copier. It's easy to put a wall from a hobby kit face down on the copier glass and make one or more prints on plain paper. In most cases there is no need for color ink and the copy quality is not very important. The copies can be trimmed with scissors and taped or glued onto pieces of corrugated cardboard or foam core scraps. I then cut this sturdy backing material with a hobby knife to form the shape of the wall I intend to use. Finished walls are glued together to form a shell of the structure. Pieces of balsa wood or other bracing in the corners help keep them square and rigid. No need to be too fussy about neatness unless exact dimensions are critical.

Here are a few examples of how mock-ups proved invaluable to the success of my modeling projects, especially large structures that required major kitbashing or scratchbuilding efforts.

Cardboard Carbarn

My first example is an HO scale trolley carbarn kitbashed from a Walther's Allied Rail Rebuilders kit (Cornerstone 933-3016). The mock-up enabled me to test my plan to use the upper story walls with large windows for the rear wall and for the front walls that form the entrance bays over the car tracks. It happened that the windows were perfectly sized to be turned into



Fig. 1—This cardboard mock-up helped me plan a carbarn kitbashed from a Walther's kit. I determined that I needed a simulated stone foundation to get sufficient height under the doorways.

doorways by simply removing the portion of the wall below the sill—a key to the feasibility of this plan. I could also see how strategic cutting and pasting the main walls could give me the correct length of the carbarn side walls, with added portions cut from the top of the front and rear walls. (Fig. 1 and 2)

The mock-up also helped me make sure the building would fit in the available space on the layout (Fig. 3). Test fitting a proposed model to the available space is one of the best things you can do with a mock-up. Be prepared, though, to discover that even if the mock-up does fit, other proportions may still prove to be too big or too small. You may decide that the size you have in mind just isn't right for the space.

As it turned out, I used almost every component in the kit. Looking at the mock-up in place on the layout, I noticed that I had room for a small addition representing a machine shop or repair area off the side of the building. Luckily, I had just enough leftover wall segments to put this together.

Perfecting A View-Block

My second example is a structure that serves as a view-block at the end of the same carbarn module. I was unhappy that this end module simply dropped off into space. Nothing stopped the eye from drifting off to a nearby shelving unit untidily crammed with unbuilt kits collected over decades of model railroading (and dreaming about some immense layout that I might build some day).

My original idea was to construct a shallow-depth factory building that was finished and detailed on both sides. Because the factory model was not against a background panel and was viewable when approaching the layout from the end of my layout, I didn't want a blank surface on the back facing the viewer from that angle. I also wanted a structure that was removable so I occasionally could enjoy looking down at the length of my layout as trolleys approached from the far end and swept around the return loop encircling the carbarn.

The mock-up was constructed of foam core that is a half inch thick. I chose this material to evaluate if a model only that deep would have plausible substance as a free-standing structure.



Fig. 2—The rear of the carbarn is formed by one of the upper-level walls of the kit. I used the other wall like this to form doorways for the track bays in front of the barn by simply cutting away the portion below the windowsills.



Fig. 3—The finished model fit perfectly in the space inside a return loop on my traction layout.

I judged that it did. Next, I tested several kits as a source for the walls to be constructed, using the copier for paper samples to be glued to the foam core. The one I like best was the Walthers Front Street Warehouse (Cornerstone 933-3069).

My first mock-up showed me that the proposed building needed to be somewhat longer than I originally imagined (Fig. 4). Otherwise, it would not be an effective view-block. However, a revised, suitably lengthened mock-up made me aware that a long flat wall on the end of the layout was not only visually uninteresting, but also would create an awkward, empty space at the front corner. I didn't like that. The idea for a bump-out to partially fill the space and create the context for an interesting loading dock area occurred to me while studying that mock-up. So, I mocked up this bump-out to test my concept (Fig. 5 and 6). I was very pleased with the results.

Studying the revised mock-up also helped me discover that one kit didn't provide enough wall sections to complete the entire double-sided building or enough window inserts for all the openings. This led me to figure out where I could get by with the brick blanks supplied in the kit to fill some of the window openings and thus have an adequate supply of inserts. Likewise, I resolved the shortage of wall sections by using one of the kit walls as a template to trace window openings on a plastic sheet with molded-on bricks matching the size as those of the kit. The finished model is shown in Fig. 7.

Finally, I used the mock-up to test some designs for a way to hold the model in place with rods that slipped inside the hollow interior of the finished structure. Lifting it off these rods made it easily removable for a full view from that end of the layout.



Fig. 4—I reconstructed this scene of my first mock-up for the proposed view-block background building. The objectionable corner that I filled with bump out and a loading dock is visible.



Fig. 5—Here I am testing the bump out along with some vehicles for a possible loading dock. You can see that I lengthened the plan by added three more bays.

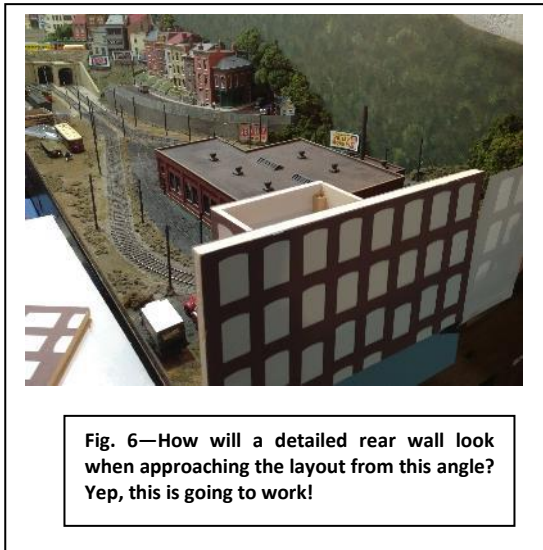


Fig. 6—How will a detailed rear wall look when approaching the layout from this angle? Yep, this is going to work!

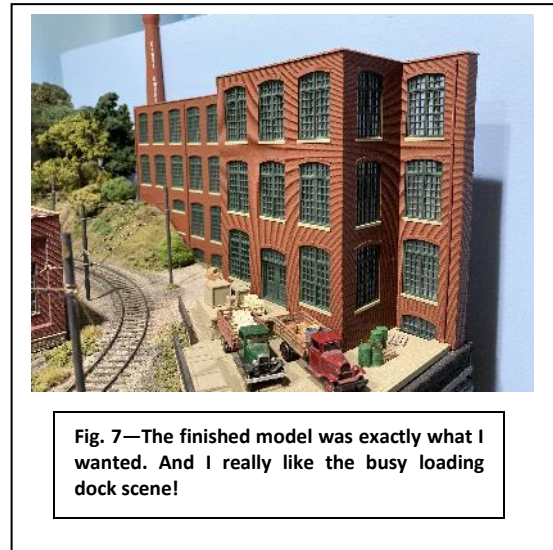


Fig. 7—The finished model was exactly what I wanted. And I really like the busy loading dock scene!

Fast But Effective

My last example is a little different. It is a mock-up for a “selectively compressed” model of the Crosley Radio factory, a local Cincinnati landmark that still stands, but in a badly neglected condition (Fig. 8). I had selected the Walthers Hardwood Furniture Company (Cornerstone 933-3044) as the basis for this kitbashing project because it sufficiently resembled the prototype.

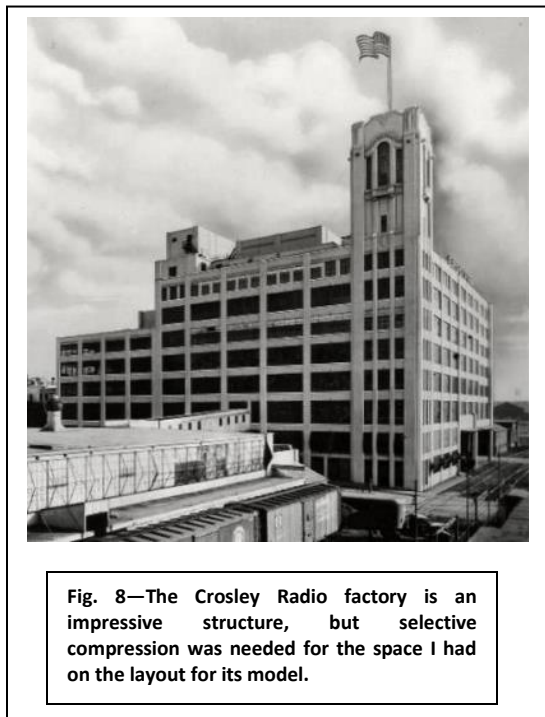


Fig. 8—The Crosley Radio factory is an impressive structure, but selective compression was needed for the space I had on the layout for its model.

For this mock-up, I could make-do by simply cutting, taping and folding paper copies of the walls from kit (Fig. 9). It wasn't necessary to glue them to rigid material to verify that the look and size of my proposed kitbashing would be affective with some alterations.

However, I did take more care scanning a photo of the factory building's peculiar and very distinctive corner tower so that the image could be resized to match the spacing of the window bays in the wall panels from the kit. Printing four copies of this true-to-scale front-on view enabled me to construct a quickie mock-up of the four-sided tower as a fold-and-tape job. This simple mock-up confirmed that a scratch-built model of this tower capturing its very unusual architectural features would be very impressive—and worth the effort.

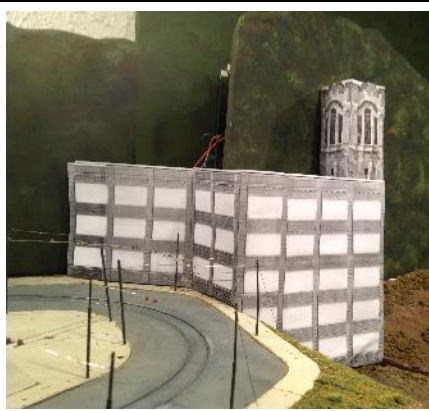


Fig 9—Trimmed and folded paper copies of walls from the Walthers Hardwood Furniture kit were adequate for testing. The tower is also folded prints taken from prototype photos and taped together. I saw that I had room to add extra bays to the front and side walls.

Of course, sizing the image to fit the dimensions of the kit had another purpose. This image served as an essential aid in scratchbuilding a scale counterpart. For example, I cut out the windows on the paper printout and used it as a template to trace the outlines on

suitable white plastic styrene sheet. These outlines represented the openings to be cut out of the plastic sheet to form the correct window shapes. Using this

template was a real timesaver, because four exact copies of the tower wall had to be fabricated and then assembled to complete the model. Indeed, the finished tower is the crowning touch to this scale structure.

Changes For The Better

In all the examples offered above, I made significant changes to my kitbashing plans based on the mock-ups. For the car barn, the mock-up verified that adding a stone foundation of suitable height was needed to give the walls an extra “lift” to provide adequate clearance for the trolley entrances.

More dramatic, perhaps, were changes I made to my plans for the double-sided factory at the end of the layout. The mock-up gave me visual proof of the dimensions required to make it an effective view block. The mock-up also inspired my solution to the empty corner of the layout that it revealed.

Likewise, how to reconfigure the width and height of the Crosley factory walls probably would not have occurred to me without the mock-up to study. To my eyes, the end result was perfect.

All my paper and cardboard or foam core mock-ups were passing steps on the way to completing these projects. Sometimes a mock-up can be a useful placeholder to evaluate how other yet-to-be-built structures or scenery eventually will come together in a pleasing arrangement. Just be sure to follow through with your ultimate plans in a timely manner.

Thanks, Mark



Fig. 10—The finished model shows how the added window bays on the front and sides contributed to capturing the massiveness of the prototype.

Mystery Layout

Who can identify this famous layout?



(Fall Newsletter's answer was:
John Campbell's Ann Arbor Railroad
(In Traverse City MI)

AP Corner

Nov 2023

Pete Magoun, MMR©

Summer, and now most of Fall, has now come and gone, the skies have moved into the “Grey Blanket” mode for the winter, the white gifts from above have put in at least a token appearance, Christmas ads are deluging us, and it’s time to get Back in Training! Regular Operating Sessions have begun here in Traverse City, and I hope in other parts of the Division as well. And that leads me to paperwork!

This kind of paperwork is easily accumulated, though, so as you attend an Op Session, take the time to print out the forms for logging your activities as you do them. They’re available in the Chief Dispatcher certificate section of the Achievement Program categories here: <https://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/2006-soq-dispatch.pdf> As you finish the Session, have the layout owner or another NMRA member verify your entry and move onward.

So why do this now, when you have no particular interest in pursuing that certificate?? Well, several years from now when Muse visits, you’ll have the necessary information logged in and verified. Easy-peasy, and no need to go find your calendar for 2023/2024 that you know you have somewhere in a safe place. Or was that part of the stuff that you tossed a couple of weeks ago? You’re going to need fifty hours of Operating, with at least ten in each of three categories, one of which must be Dispatcher. And when somebody asks, you’ll already have the data available! If you go to an Op Session elsewhere in the NMRA, log the time! It’s all good!

The Really Good News for this edition of “AP Corner” is that on 08 November Superintendent Mike Cipko and I had the pleasure of presenting Division Chief Clerk Bob Crocker with his Association Volunteer certificate. We made a point of thanking him for his unwavering support in helping to form the Division several years ago and continuing to the present.



Challenge your Skills.
Strive for the Top

AP Corner

Nov 2023

Pete Magoun, MMR©

We also have some noteworthy Awards that have been distributed recently:



Thank You Skip Luyk for hosting an Achievement Program Evaluation Clinic in Sep 2023. Certificate of Appreciation presented by Pete Magoun.



A Merit Award presented to Pete Magoun for his Elmwood Depot Model by Skip Luyk.



A Merit Award presented to John A. Campbell for his Ann Arbor Railway McKeen Rail Car #4 by Skip Luyk.

But what about the rest of you? Are any of you contemplating using the Achievement Program for its intended purpose, which is to stretch your skills and abilities to improve the quality and joy of your hobby? Are you laden with questions on how things work or what is necessary? And are any of those questions you're afraid to ask because they're "dumb," but you still don't understand the answers? If so, then ask ahead, because there are NO "dumb questions" here. Again, the whole purpose of this process is to educate you, to help You become a better modeler and get more joy from Your hobby....

As I mentioned in our last Newsletter, if you have questions or comments on any of the AP stuff, I'm easy to find. Let's hear from you!

High Green!

11/11/23

AP Corner

Nov 2023

Pete Magoun, MMR©



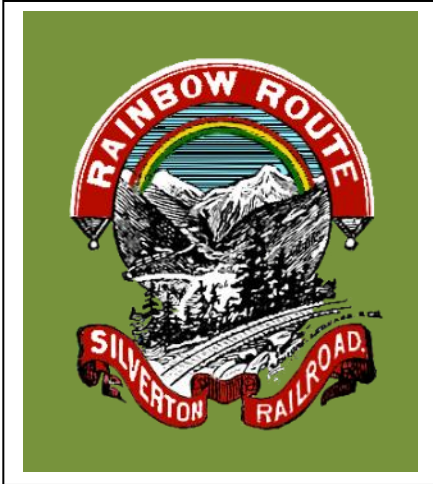
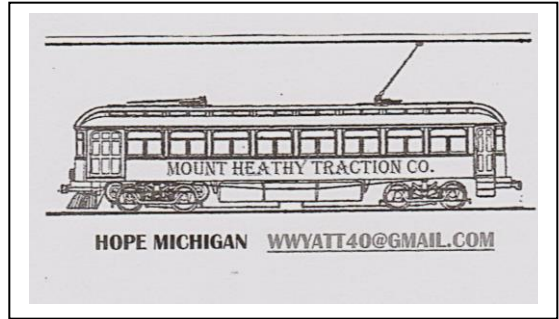
There are always pencils that need sharpening!

The NMRA Achievement Program is designed to challenge the skills of the modeler. The Achievement Program is divided into eleven categories covering different aspects of the hobby and the NMRA. As members of the NMRA earn credit in the different categories, awards are presented to signify the member's achievement. All current AP Awards are listed in the NMRA Magazine each month. Those who have earned the Master Model Railroader® award are listed both by number and by Region on this website.

Need additional information?

Please reach out to Pete Magoun - MMR©. orion@chartermi.net





**PIKE ADS: SUPPORT YOUR
DIVISION. BUY THIS SPACE - ONLY
\$20.00 FOR THE YEAR
CONTACT DAVID ZOLNIEREK
djzolnierек@gmail.com**

Coming Soon Selected Michigan Events:

12/09/2023, 12/10/2023
1/06/2024
1/13/2024, 1/14/2024
1/28/2024
2/03/2024
2/24/2024, 2/25/2024
3/09/2024, 3/10/2024
3/16/2024
3/23/2024, 3/23/2024

Detroit Model Railroad Club Open House
The GRMRHS Train Sale
Detroit Model Railroad Club Open House
Division 6 Model Railroad Sale
OLE Toy Train Show
Detroit Model Railroad Club Open House
Detroit Model Railroad Club Open House
Taylor Town Train Show and Sale
Detroit Model Railroad Club Open House

Holly
Grand Rapids
Holly
Farmington
Livonia
Holly
Holly
Taylor
Holly

Division 2 Leadership

- *Superintendent* *Mike Cipko* mcipko@charter.net
- *Asst. Superintendent* *Jens Hensel* jens.hensel50@gmail.com
- *Chief Clerk* *Bob Crocker* rc6sb@charter.net
- *Paymaster* *David Zolnierек* djzolnierек@gmail.com
- *Yardmaster North* *Open Position* ***Any Volunteers??***
- *Yardmaster -TC* *John Campbell* Jcampb1513@aol.com
- *Trainmaster* *Al Johnson* alwyn0008@gmail.com

