

NMRA NORTH CENTRAL REGION DIVISION 2 NEWSLETTER VOLUME 5 / NUMBER 4 FALL 2019



DIVISION CALENDAR

TC Yard Meeting

Saturday January 18th

1:00 PM

Peninsula Township
Town Hall

Northern Yard Meeting

Saturday February 15th

2:00 – 5:00 PM

Railroads of Northern
Michigan

621 Ingalls Ave

Petoskey, MI



Super Sez...

Happy New Year! Sigh... this was supposed to be the Fall 2019 edition of our newsletter, instead I am writing this in January 2020. New decade, new leaf, etc. I hope you had a happy holiday season and have been able to get some work done on your railroad during the holidays (did Santa bring you anything special?) We are now in prime model railroad season as the days are shorter and the snow piles up. What do you do to energize your modelling? I will occasionally find myself stalling out when contemplating big projects, as it turns out there are a couple of ways to get me moving again.

One, is to have a friend (?) sit down with you and create a list of priorities. I know Dave (Capron) is currently doing this with both Pete and me to help us focus our efforts. Doesn't mean that is all you work on but gives you a place to return to so that you can keep pushing that bowling ball up hill.

The second way I help energize my work is to keep several small projects in the hopper. If I just can't seem to lay straight track today, I swap over and work on an electrical project, or replace plastic wheels

with metal wheels, or check and replace plastic couplers, and on and on.

The thing to remember is that it all contributes to moving your railroad and your modelling forward.

We are starting 2020 with a great pair of clinics at the TC Yard Meeting in January (1/18/2020 1:00 PM), Dave Capron is going to give his clinic '**Full and Complete Operations on a Room Size layout**' which he has presented at the national convention and was well received, our second clinic is by first time clinician Mike Cipko on using '**CAD Drawings**' (Computer Aided Design) to design your railroad. This will be a great opportunity to see how Mike has used CAD to aid his layout design and how he does it. Don't forget to bring your Show and Tell items and think about your AP project.

Our February Northern Yard Meeting will try something new, since so many of our 'northern' members are 'snow birds' we are not going to have a formal meeting, but I encourage you to participate in the 'Historical Railroads of Northern Michigan' Open House and Sale (2/15/2020 2:00 – 5:00 PM). Dave Comer indicates that they have made progress on this club layout, and that they have a many items for sale to serve as a fund raiser.

Happy Modeling! *Scott*

SEPTEMBER TC YARD MEETING

The following is a photo synopsis of our meeting held in September. The following photos are from show and tell.



Terry Skoglund brought a sample of his work on his #1 gauge (1/32 scale) system.



Take a close look at the car ferry that is destined for Elberta on John Campbells early 20th century Ann Arbor railroad.



See those Aspen trees? Awesome, spectacular, can't say enough about Dave Zolniereks skills!

SEPTEMBER TC YARD MEETING



Scott Pandorf has had a busy summer. Despite his normally busy schedule, he has found time to replace a helix and install a screw drive operated lift gate.

BENCHWORK CLINIC

Following a short break, Scott Pandorf put on his clinicians hat again and presented information on benchwork construction.



More information will be available in a separate article. Thanks Scott!

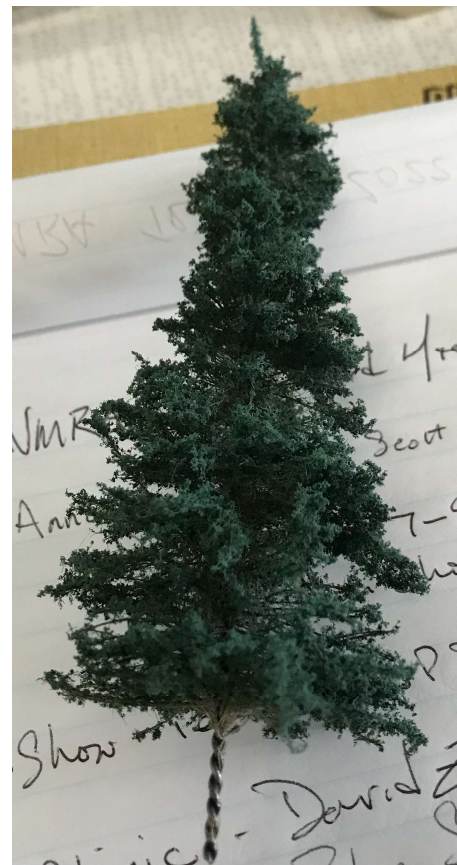
OCTOBER NORTHERN YARD MEETING

Our October Northern Yard Meeting was at the Gaylord Library, which was a great venue. We had Show-N-Tell and a clinic by David Zolnierek. David builds beautiful



models of Colorado Narrow Gauge railroads.

The clinic was hands-on and David shared not only his techniques but also his tools for creating evergreen trees.



OCTOBER NORTHERN YARD MEETING

Everyone had a chance to try Dave's tools and techniques.

Neal Baerman and Al Johnson



Patrick Burdo and Dave Capron



Mike McDougall at the twist tool.



David Z also brought Show-N-Tell



OCTOBER NORTHERN YARD MEETING

On our way out of town we visited Mike McDougalls layout. Nice layout!



AP CORNER – PETE MAGOUN, MMR

October 2019

Annnnd Ka-Schwaam! Summer has suddenly given way to Fall [and now winter! Ed] and it's time to get back in training! With the days getting shorter, the prospect of outdoor fun and games receding into memories, and the seasonal wind and temperature changes limiting the quality time on the deck, it's time to pick up the soldering iron and commence tracklaying.

I've been asked about scratch building the turnouts, crossings and such required for the Civil Engineer certificate, so that's where we're headed this month. Scratch building this stuff can be a terrifying process, and I had no intention of doing it until I realized that my oh-so-careful engineering of thirty years ago had placed me in a position where I needed a crossing (think "diamond") to be able to access a yard and an engine facility. Not too bad, except that one leg was curved, the other straight. The Railroad-Line Forums on the Web have a wonderful animated "banghead" emoticon, and this is a good place to insert a couple.

Well, it finally occurred to me that this wasn't going to build itself, so I got things together, traced out what I'd need and proceeded to build on top of the tracing. I started with the easy part... the straight legs, then carefully fitted everything around it, soldered it all in place, piece by piece, cut gaps with my Dremel tool, and admired my efforts. Not too shabby! Then I secured it in place, made sure all the gaps were in the right place, and fired it up. Yuck. The straight leg was fine, but the curved one was a disaster. After fussing with this for far too long, I bit the bullet, pulled it out and started over.

AP CORNER – CONTINUED

Same basic process, but this time, the curved leg went in first, followed by the straight leg, the guardrails and so on. With the rails secured to the appropriate ties, the requisite gaps were cut in the rails, and the testing commenced. This one worked well and was still in service twenty years later when I finally consigned that portion of the railroad to the dumpster in favor of a much better design. The hardest part of the whole process was getting over the “I can’t do this” concept and replacing it with “OK, I need this... Make it so.” With that attitude, things worked well.

OK, so much for the diamond. What about switches? There are all kinds of instructions on the Web and in print, with videos and so on showing you the One True Path to scratch building your turnouts. If you stop to think about things, though, you really need only a few “tricky bits” to work to make the turnout function. The frog must be sharp and at the correct angle for the switch. The point rails need to mesh in with the stock rails in order to set the train on the correct route. And yes, the guardrails and everything else must be in place and properly spaced (gauged) and gapped. If you’re using copper-clad ties to help keep everything lined up properly, then the ties need to be gapped in several places as well.

So, let’s have a look at the components to see how hard this will be. We’ll start with the frog, as that requires some filing and soldering. Ideally, you’ll file the tips of the frog rails to a point in precisely the right angle for the turnout, so you have metal on metal and a thin bead of solder holding the point together. And ideally, we’ll be in perfect health for the rest of our very long perfect lives. Reality may have other plans, though.... So how “perfect” does this joint really need to be? Well, when you place the tips together, they need to mesh closely, and the individual point rails need to sit precisely on the drawing/template you’re using to make the switch. The operative concept here is “pretty closely,” as you can fill gaps with solder. You do want the outside of the tips meeting in a point, though, and not some blunt blob, as this will determine whether the train goes through on the desired route or goes bumping through the weeds in a hail of embarrassment and laughter from others. Do that part carefully, let the solder fill the interior gaps and drive on.

The point rails need to mesh firmly with the stock rails... manufacturing folks call that “intimate contact.” This means that you’re going to have to file the point rails to a pretty good point, and then file the stock rail enough to allow the point rail to snuggle up against the stock rail. Don’t file this a long way out, as it weakens the point rail and will also allow a locomotive to bend things, thereby causing derailments. Somewhere around an inch or so in HO will be plenty. You also want to leave enough of the point rail intact to be able to solder the throw bar to it so it can do its job. Beware of filing too much, as you can also cause the point rail to split right where the vertical rib meets the horizontal base of the rail. Don’t ask how I know this.

And as you solder things together, remember to make good use of your NMRA Gauge to ensure that all of the rails are properly spaced (gauged), that the flangeways are wide enough, that the guardrails do their jobs and so on.

AP CORNER – CONTINUED

With the switch done and dusted, you are well on the way. But things may require adjustment, which means really figuring out what is not working well, then filing or firing up the Dremel tool or the soldering iron to make things right. With things working properly, though, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that not only have you done this on your own, but also that you can now diagnose and repair issues that come up with commercial turnouts, too. This is powerful knowledge!

And that brings me to the issue of tooling. There are several tools for building turnouts available on the Web. One popular brand is Fast Tracks, which offers all sorts of jigs, fixtures and tools to ease the burden of hand-laying your own track. But are these tools worthwhile, and can a switch made with them qualify for a Merit Award under the NMRA rules? The answer to both questions is "yes," as you are still required to make your own frogs.

So, give this process a go and see how you like it. I'm available to answer questions, and there are several others in the Division who also hand-lay track and have answers. This is a tremendously satisfying process, and once mastered, you are no longer tied to the standard turnout sizes available off the rack in the store. This opens a whole new world of possibilities, and you've expanded your reach. Go for it!

High Green!



AROUND THE DIVISION – MIKE CIPKO

Otsego & Mackinaw Railroad

W. D. Carver – Vice President & General Manager



I went out on a road trip the other day to visit Doug Carver and see and learn about his railroad. Many of us grew up with either a Lionel or American Flyer train set and Doug is no exception. He fondly remembers his first train set at the age of six, an American Flyer, two-rail system. Doug grew up in the downriver suburbs of Detroit and has memories of the Pennsylvania Railroad in the area. The Pennsy is his favorite prototype and his motive power, steam and diesel, along with rolling stock all reflect that.



After joining the Army, he was in the Military Police and stationed overseas. Doug served in Korea for a year, returned to the States, and was stationed in various locations around the country before being discharged. Winding up in California, he found employment with the City of Sunnyvale in the Public Safety Department. While there, he became more involved in model railroading, visiting many of the clubs and layouts in the area. Among his most memorable were those belonging to Charles Schulz (Peanuts) and John Allen (Gorre & Daphetid). After several years in California, he and his wife returned to Michigan and settled here in the northwestern part of the state.

AROUND THE DIVISION – CONTINUED



He has been working on his current layout for about eight years or so. He is now working to complete items needed to earn the Golden Spike Award. The layout is powered by an NCE DCC system and the track plan is a large loop that is folded back on itself. Twice around the room and you traverse the upper and lower levels to make a complete run.



It's now in the late summer of 1958 and we've caught up with Doug in Au Train, where he has invited us aboard the business car *Shelby* for the trip south. We settled into our comfortable seats as the attentive steward brought our favorite beverages for us to enjoy. A short time later we rolled through Chatham, where a local freight was doing some switching, then headed through the north woods to Eben Junction for a twenty-minute station stop to allow cars to be set out for the Pere Marquette interchange. Back on the road, we rolled past the log yards in Guelph and on up by the massive cement plant at Irons.

AROUND THE DIVISION – CONTINUED

Eventually we made Jamestown, for another twenty-minute stop, this time to set out cars for the C&O. Onward, we paused at Mokane for a brief station stop, then down through Ocqueoc, home of the highest waterfalls in the lower peninsula, Ocqueoc Falls (they're six feet high, so don't get your hopes up!). Ten minutes here and then it was off for the run to North LaSalle, which marks the entrance to the largest town on the northern end of the railroad . . . LaSalle. We detrain in LaSalle, thank Doug for the ride, and the train continues southward to Zeeland, where it will terminate.

And there you have it... A to Z on the Otsego & Mackinaw!



Doug's favorite part of the hobby is operating at other layouts and, of course, his own. Typically, he is running milk and passenger trains, two fast freights, two locals and a cement train during his operating sessions. Along with the dispatcher, yardmasters and engineers, Doug has a clerk that keeps track of train consists along with set outs and pick-ups for each location along the way.



AROUND THE DIVISION – CONTINUED

The clerk keeps a card for every car, and cards are grouped together for a train. The clerk also has card boxes for each town and location where cars could be spotted. A box holding cards has cars spotted at that location, empty box, no cars there. As trains come and go, cards are moved as switching is done.



This is a fun layout to visit. Hope you can see it for yourselves.

Thanks Doug!

TRAINMASTERS REPORT – JENS HENSEL

It's time to consider another open house or other type of event for some time this year.

I thought having an open house involving the Boy Scouts was a great idea, but we ran into a roadblock with a disinterested Scout Exec (or maybe just someone who did not have time).

I would really like some feedback from all of you on what we can do to help promote our hobby.

Open House or other type of event?

Invite the TC Newcomers Group again? (Lots of new members have joined). Or?

Time of year?

One day event?

Please let me know your thoughts.

Thanks, Your Trainmaster,

Jens Hensel

SELECT UPCOMING TRAIN SHOWS AND EVENTS

Date	Show	Location
3/22/2020	Mid-Michigan Model Train Show	Mt. Pleasant, MI
4/8/2020	Greater Grand Rapids Spring Train Show	Wyoming, MI
4/22/2020	NMRA NCR Extra 2020 (One Day Event)	Kalamazoo, MI
7/12 – 7/18 2020	NMRA National	St. Louis, MO
10/15 – 10/18/2020	Black Swamp Junction 2020 (NCR Regional)	Toledo, OH
11/22/2020	Train Show and Sale	East Lansing, MI

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Be Aware! The street address of the meeting space is 13235 Center Rd – but Google Maps shows that as a different location. The correct location is shown as the Peninsula Twp Town Hall at right.



Pike Ads: Support your division by advertising your layout or business here!

Pike Ads are \$5 per issue (\$20 per year – we publish 4 times per year)

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**YOUR LAYOUT
 COULD BE
 HERE!**

OHIO AND MISSISSIPPI

2305 OHIO AND MISSISSIPPI

“Linking East and West through Cincinnati”
 Scott Pandorf - Lake Leelanau, MI