



## New Tracks Modeling Observations

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Brennan's Model Railroading  
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## Happy New Year 2024!

Welcome back to the New Tracks Modeling Observations Newsletter. We've got a new year's worth of shows lined up (see schedule on page [14](#)) and news about the New Tracks Modeling Scholarship. Updates to our regularly scheduled parts of the program are also included. And if you want to write an article, share a tip about any aspect of model railroading, or a photo of a model you are building, just contact me directly. I hear the hobby is dying. I've been hearing that for 30 years. Seems like a protracted death scene that lacks much of a basis. I have my thoughts on this but I'd like to hear yours. Send your questions and suggestion for this newsletter to: [Martin.Brechbiel@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:Martin.Brechbiel@newtracksmodeling.com).

**From Jim Kellow, MMR:**

**The Holidays are over and we are starting Year 7 of New Tracks Modeling. We wish everyone a very productive and rewarding 2024.**

I can't believe this starts my seventh Year doing *New Tracks Modeling*. Time sure passes fast, but, despite the work every show has been fun and I sincerely hope helpful to your model railroading efforts and interests. So now we are going to get started on our 2024 adventures.

### Major New Tracks Modeling Announcement for 2024

Bob Davidson, the New Tracks Modeling Mentoring Scholarship Chairman, is pleased to announce that we have reached our goal to be able to grant at least \$4,000.00 in scholarships for the 2024/2025 academic year. This will enable us to offer two scholarships, each of \$2,000 value to the recipients. I am also pleased to be able to announce that we have met the \$1000 Challenge grant that was put before us by an anonymous donor!

I am also pleased to announce the Pacific Coast Region of the NMRA has donated \$2,000 to the scholarship program for 2024/25 to sponsor a specific scholarship. For the 2024/25 academic year, one of the two scholarships we offer will be the New Tracks Modeling Mentoring Scholarship sponsored by the Pacific Coast Region, NMRA. The other \$2,000 New Tracks Modeling Mentoring Scholarship will be funded by the generous donors of the New Tracks Modeling community.

While we have just reached our 2023 fundraising goal, we are still actively soliciting donations to exceed that goal in ongoing preparation for the 2025/26 academic year. Please keep donating as your contributions will help young model railroaders achieve a college degree. Remember, as a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, your donation to the New Tracks Modeling Mentoring Scholarship is tax deductible as allowed by law. To donate using the Zeffy platform, please click [here](#).

To view a video of the official announcement by Bob Davidson on our December 27, 2023 Zoom show go to our YouTube Channel: New Tracks Modeling. Bob Davidson, his committee, and all the individuals, Companies, and Organizations who have made donations deserve our thanks and appreciation for making this all possible.

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## **Organizational Sponsors for New Tracks Modeling**

Thanks to our current Sponsors for their financial support to help pay for Shows, Zoom, YouTube, and other related out of pocket costs.



Brennan's Model Railroading  
<https://www.brennansmodelrr.com/>  
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O Scale Central Association  
<https://oscalecentral.com/>



National Association of S Gaugers  
<https://www.nasg.org/>

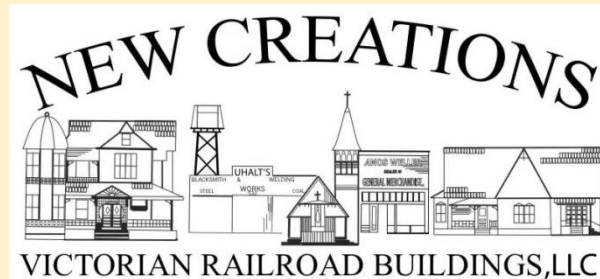


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<https://www.studiozphoto.com/Millhouse.html>

## Regularly Scheduled Segments that you can see Weekly New Tracks Modeling

### Scratchbuilder's Corner

by Martin Brechbiel, MMR ([Martin.Brechbiel@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:Martin.Brechbiel@newtracksmodeling.com))

Scratchbuilder's Corner continues to present on a weekly basis aspects of scratchbuilding primarily with wood as the medium to build structures and rolling stock, but also includes the use of other materials such as styrene, brass, and resin. Intentions here are teach techniques and "tricks" that can be adapted into your scratchbuilding projects working up from simple through increasing complexity, and not so much to provide projects that you are intended to build yourself, although that is certainly possible. Segments in November and December have continued to introduce basic structure building projects as well as completing scratchbuilding an unusual rolling stock item, a substation car to cross over into traction modeling. Thereafter, another step



forward and upward in the structure building series started in December and will continue on into 2024.

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## **New Tracks Modeling Mentoring Scholarships - For Modeling's Future**

by Bob Davidson, Chairman of New Tracks Scholarship Committee  
([NTMMS@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:NTMMS@newtracksmodeling.com))

We're excited to announce that Tom Farrell has joined the board of New Tracks Mentoring, Inc. as our Treasurer. We look forward to working with Tom as we continue to grow the scholarship program.

I am pleased to announce that we have surpassed our goal to award at least \$4,000.00 in scholarships for the 2024-2025 academic year. That said, we are continuing to plan for the future, and any gift you make to the scholarship fund is very important.

I am also delighted to be able to announce that we have met the \$1000 Challenge grant that was put before us by an anonymous donor!

Now, the simplest way to donate is to go online to [newtracksmodeling.com](http://newtracksmodeling.com) and click on the Scholarship tab at the top of the page. You can donate either through the Zeffy portal or by sending a check. Either way, 100% of your donation will go to the scholarship fund.

Most important now is that we spread the word to all high-school senior or college students who are or will be pursuing a STEAM related course of study and encourage them to apply for the scholarship. Applications for the 2024-2025 scholarships opened on January 1, and can be viewed under the Scholarship tab at [newtracksmodeling.com](http://newtracksmodeling.com)

Please let members of any train clubs or other organizations you may belong to know about the scholarship program and encourage interested students to apply. If you have any questions, please contact Bob Davidson at [NTMMS@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:NTMMS@newtracksmodeling.com)

Applications for the 2024-2025 scholarships will open on January 1, and can be viewed under the Scholarship tab at <https://newtracksmodeling.com/>

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### **Brass Corporate Sponsors:**



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<https://newcreationsvictorian.com/>

**New Tracks Modeling “MY BUILD”**

by Chris Course ([railrunner130@hotmail.com](mailto:railrunner130@hotmail.com))

Model railroading is about sharing and the monthly MY BUILD is your opportunity to share and show off your build with the world. Trains, structures, or boats, it doesn't matter. It doesn't have to be your latest build. Heck, it could even be something you found at a yard or estate sale and just thought was neat. Or, maybe if you're stuck on something, need a different technique, or are stumped on how to proceed on a project. This is a good part of the show to ask questions. Please ask. We can help. The December My Build is on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-7ktvHz04w>

Every other month, six times each year, we have a theme. These are not rigid. If you can find something to share that fits in a category, regardless of being “outside the box”, that is ENCOURAGED!

The schedule and topics for the **2024** My Builds are:

**January 17** Free for all! Anything goes!

**February 21** Oddities. Aliens, UFO dealership (for example), steampunk, a jackelope skull on the front of some oddball, backwoods engine (another example), non-prototypical trains, depressed center flatcars;

**March 20** Free for all! Anything goes!



- April 24** Spring! scenery, flora, vegetation, trees, something wild, flower boxes, vines, backdrops, planting crops, world awakening after winter, greenhouses;
- May** Free for all! Anything goes!
- June** Water. Waterfront buildings, wharves, boats, covered bridges, water tanks, anything water related;
- July** Free for all! Anything goes!
- August** Harvest. farm equipment, grain elevators, hopper cars, mills, tractors, agriculture, barns, chicken coops, livestock, cattle pens/ranching, cattle cars, reefer cars;
- September** Free for all! Anything goes!
- October** Halloween. Haunted houses, abandoned buildings, abandoned railroad cars, scarecrows, derelict engines;
- November** Free for all! Anything goes!
- December** Holiday. Santa, Christmas billboard cars, snow scenery, snow plows, people ice skating, holiday lighting, holiday decorations.
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### Scratchbuilding a Layout - Creating a Scene Based on a Theme

by Tom Farrell ([tfarrell60@comcast.net](mailto:tfarrell60@comcast.net))



Check out some of Tom's structure modeling for his On30 Rustic Buff & Old Gothic model railroad. Last month we saw scratchbuilding the Eberwein & Jensen Model Making Shop (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnlfR065Dc>).

My previous post featured the creation of a model railroading scene by first establishing a theme. On the re-boot of my On30 Rustic Buff & Old Gothic Railroad I am featuring Shantytown, a series of scratchbuilt riverfront bait shops, shanties, fishing boats, and fishermen, as a one of the themes. As you enter the layout

room this is the first scene you see, so it is important to me to finish this section first to establish an overall impression.

This past month was consumed with the scratch build of a John Allen-themed engine house in O scale for Shantytown. Now complete, the end-of-the-line narrow gauge track terminates just outside the rear of the engine house, providing a convenient point for two or three locomotives to be serviced or stored when not in use.



The next structure under construction is a “Foggy Mountain Models” On30 scale laser-cut “Carsonville Station” craftsmen kit. I don’t normally feature kits on New Tracks Modeling (or on my layout) but this one caught my eye at Al Judy’s Harrisburg Narrow Gauge Meet two years ago. This kit is based on an out-of-service

boxcar and a retired refrigerator car and is targeted for placement adjacent to my engine house as a small maintenance area. Here skilled mechanics perform routine inspections and repairs on the narrow gauge locomotives of the RB & OG Railroad. Their tools and equipment are housed in the refrigerator car and its insulated walls safeguard the valuable instruments & specialized tools from the whims of nature.

This scene also features a standard gauge line that starts at the Shantytown Depot. This is a transfer depot, marking the end of the narrow gauge RG & OG and the start of the standard gauge line, which passes in front of the Engine House and the two said maintenance buildings before seemingly continuing on through a tunnel.

My goal is to complete this scene in January before moving on to other areas of the layout.

## What's to know about The Scales We Model In?

I have had many discussions with modelers who say things like: “What is O scale or N scale all about? Does anyone really model in S scale? Can I really scratchbuild a model in N scale?” Your scale of choice can be G, O or O Hi-Rail, S, HO, or N, and there are others yet that modelers choose to build in today.

To discuss these questions, New Tracks Modeling is running monthly segments on G, O, O Hi-Rail, S, HO, and N scale hosted by knowledgeable talented modelers in each scale. These modelers will try to answer your questions, present information about what is possible to accomplish, and then present what a new modeler entering a scale might need to consider. The schedule for these shows is below as well as some information on what these modelers plan to present. If you have specific questions you want addressed, or a specific person you would like to see interviewed on a scale segment, please contact the appropriate host. Their email addresses are shown below.

### **G Scale Modeling** hosted by Steve Bittinger (1/24)

([Steve.Bittinger@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:Steve.Bittinger@newtracksmodeling.com))

Steve will be presenting his latest scratch build in his January G Scale Modeling show, No. 40 self-propelled Burro track crane. Sponsored by New Creations Victorian Railroad Buildings LLC



### **O Scale Modeling** hosted by David Schultz (1/3) ([David.Schultz@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:David.Schultz@newtracksmodeling.com))

Dec. 6 See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Mxg2wF4cag&t=10s>

David plans on doing a show on O Scale on a budget

Sponsored by O Scale Central Association

### **O Gauge Hi-Rail Modeling** hosted by Dennis Brennan (1/3) ([dennis.brennan@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:dennis.brennan@newtracksmodeling.com))

Dec. 6 See: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8Nd\\_W6e19Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8Nd_W6e19Q)

Don't overlook simple snap-together Plasticville kits. I'll show you how to turn a few of these plastic kits into models that belie their heritage.



In January I'll feature Dot's Diner. With a few evenings work, you can take the Plasticville Diner from stock to this.



In February I'll feature Kitbashing the Plasticville Suburban Station. With a few modifications and added details, this little gem will stand up to any craftsman kit.



Sponsored by Millhouse River Studio

**S Scale Modeling** hosted by Timothy Huebner (1/17)  
([Timothy.Huebner@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:Timothy.Huebner@newtracksmodeling.com))



Over the last few years farm modelers have been more exposed to true S scale model railroad equipment and away from the S gauge America Flyer stigma that has turned a lot of 1:64 scale modelers who had wanted to add model railroad aspects to their displays.

One of the major people to help in this exposure has been 2 time National Farm Toy Show Small Scale Display Competition Winner Chris Steeb with his 2022 and 2023 competition displays.



1:64 modelers may focus more on subject matter related on their specific interest but the overlap of products used by the modelers and model railroaders can be greatly improved and mutually beneficial for all of the modelers across the 1:64/S scale spectrum.

First picture with the Depot and fertilizer plant is Chris's 2023 display and the 2nd photo featuring the grain elevator is his 2022 display.

**Dec. 20 See:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPcOHSOmoIU>

**Sponsored by National S Gauge Association (NASG)**

**HO scale Modeling hosted by Ed O'Rourke (1/10)**

**([Ed.O'Rourke@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:Ed.O'Rourke@newtracksmodeling.com))**

**Dec. 13 See:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PT3YnIGcfMk>

In January, I will be talking about using older kits in different ways, Part 2 of the December presentation. This will lead into a discussion about using these ideas in a small area of a layout, possibly in February.

**Sponsored by Mainline Hobby Supply**

**N Scale Modeling hosted by Clem Harris (1/10)**

**([Clem.Harris@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:Clem.Harris@newtracksmodeling.com))**

**Dec. 20 See:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIlgXQzd0xAl>

**Sponsored by National Capital Trains**

The 2024 schedule for “**The Scales that We Model In**” is:

January	3rd O, O-HR	10th HO, N	17th S	24th G
February	7th O, O-HR	14th HO, N	21st S	28th G
March	6th O, O-HR	13th HO, N	20th S	27th G
April	3rd O, O-HR	10th HO, N	17th S	24th G
May	1st O, O-HR	8th HO, N	15th S	22nd G
June	5th O, O-HR	12th HO, N	19th S	26th G
July	3rd O, O-HR	10th HO, N	17th S	24th G
August	7th O, O-HR	14th HO, N	21st S	28th G

Sept.	4th O, O-HR	11th HO, N	18th S	25th G
October	2nd O, O-HR	9th HO, N	16th S	30th G
Nov.	6th O, O-HR	13th HO, N	20th S	27th G
Dec.	4th O, O-HR	11th HO, N	18th S	25th G

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## From the NTM Mailbag

Hello Jim,

I'm a relatively new viewer of your Wednesday night NTM sessions and I'm impressed! Great content and great variety. You and Martin have asked about future topics for discussion. So, here goes.

Remember, be careful what you ask for, you may just get it!

There has been an explosion of new technology in recent years that has applications in model railroading. I'm particularly interested in the following, and I'll bet other modelers are, too.

1. Craft cutters. We usually think of these being used by ladies making crafts for the home or their hobbies. However, I know they are used by some pretty savvy model railroaders. There are several brands, but the most popular appear to be Circuit, Cameo, and Brother. I would like to see what we can do with them, where to buy them, what they cost, and compare them feature by feature. What software do they run? Do the machines include the software or it is a separate purchase. Will they interface with my computer? PC/MAC/etc.?
2. 3-D printers. There are probably many more 3-D printers on the market than craft cutters but the same questions apply to them. I understand these machines pull a lot of electricity and require good ventilation, so some discussion here is appreciated. I also understand they're quite heavy. Where do you buy them?
3. Laser printers/cutters. Again, pretty much the same questions.
4. Which are the easiest to learn and use? If I could afford only one type of machine which would you recommend I purchase?

That should get you started!

Mike Gorczynski


Mike, you and everyone else are in luck! NMT will be starting a new series of presentations hosted by Sherri Johnson, owner of CatzPaw, that will address your questions.  
Title of Series: Understanding the New Technology to Improve your Modeling.

1. CAD Programs you can use and learn
  2. Craft cutters and more sophisticated cutting machines and their applications
  3. 3D Printing machines capabilities and purposes for model railroading.
  4. Other technology we haven't heard of!
  5. AI, the impact it is having today and will have over the next 5 years. How can I benefit?
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## Meet Ian Fainges at the Narrow O Scale Meet in Harrisburg June 2024

If you model O Scale/Gauge you are going to have a very rare and fantastic opportunity to meet Australian, Ian Fainges, one of if not the best in my opinion O scale figure painters in the world, if you attend the Narrow O Scale Meet run by Al Judy this June 7-8, 2024. Al always has a great show but with the chance to Meet, talk with, and oh my gosh, maybe get Ian Fainges to custom paint a figure just for you, makes the show a must attend for all us O scale/gauge guys. Yep, Lord willing, even Jim Kellow is going to try to get to the meet. All updates and information can be found on Facebook at Harrisburg Narrow O Summer Meet. See you there!



**2024 HARRISBURG**  
**Narrow O Summer Meet**  
**On3 – On30 – On2 - On18**  
 A two day event focused on anything and everything O scale narrow gauge.  
**Friday June 7 (11:00 to 6:00)**  
**and Saturday June 8 (9:00 to 3:00)**

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**LOCATION: New Hope Church**  
**584 Colonial Club Drive**  
**Harrisburg, Pa. 17112**

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Guest admission: \$15 for both days – Spouses and children under 12 free.  
 Clinics and Maker Spaces demos on going throughout the event.  
 Food and drinks: Available throughout the event.  
 Due to church rules and insurance restrictions: NO alcohol will be allowed

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**Vendors:** For table information, availability, admission and fees please email us at [millicreekrr@yahoo.com](mailto:millicreekrr@yahoo.com) for detailed information.

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For updated information on the event, including the vendor list, Clinic topics, Maker Space presenters and displays along with any additional information or updates can be found on the Meet's Facebookpage under the title "Harrisburg Narrow O Summer Meet".

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Most attendees have used either the Quality Inn Harrisburg-Hershey Area, 200 N Mountain Rd, Harrisburg, PA 17112 (717) 540-9339 or The Ramada Inn, 300 N. Mountain Road, Harrisburg, Pa. 17112 (717)-461-9602 in the past and found it to be a clean, friendly and a good value. Best of all it is located only .9 of a mile or about 3 minutes from the New Hope Church venue.

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*The largest all O scale Narrow Gauge event in North America*

## Digitrax?! It Might as Well be Digi-Ex For Me!

By Greg Cassidy

I'm old. Not as old as some, but older than others. You remember what this means (I hope). It means you forget where you left the spoon you got out for your cereal, whether you left the lights on over your workbench when you came up from the basement, and how to turn on the fricking operating system for your Rail Empire! I started my current HO scale Western Maryland Railway layout in 1992, and after building the benchwork and laying the track, I started the electrical wiring. At that time, it was customary to use DC transformers and break your layout into blocks (you remember that I'm sure). But DCC was coming on the market, the NMRA had just issued some standards for it, and Digitrax was a hot item. I had already wired most of my layout for block operation with DC, but thought "If I install a big switch, I can put in the new DCC and switch back and forth depending on which works better". I was younger then and had thoughts more often.

Well, I did just that and it worked. It worked so well I put decoders in all my locomotives. "Put" here means grinding space, isolating motors, and soldering tiny wires. "Oh, they have plug-ins?



Where were those a couple years ago?" I had conquered the mysteries of building a DCC system to control my layout, reading the manuals and learning how the DCS100 and DB150, along with homebuilt power supplies (thanks Radio Shack!) could allow someone who has *zero* electrical knowledge to actually make it all work. I was in DCC bliss, running consists, multiple trains, and yes, the occasional cornfield meet. Things were running great...for a while. Then, just like tectonics moved the continents around, I started noticing a shift in my model railroad passion. I found that I was building structure kits more than I was running trains. I had more enjoyment building. You could say it became my passion, and I certainly felt drawn to the workbench more than the layout every time I went downstairs. And I now have an ever-expanding client list that I enjoy building structures for, while sliding one in to the assembly line for myself every now and then.

At the layout, the cobwebs formed, the dust layers grew, and soon it was a chore to fire up the layout and cleaning was required just to run a train for a friend. One day I noticed the original Digitrax DCS100 Controller wouldn't come on. It just beeped and flashed its evil red LED at me. I found it had finally outlasted its time and I was lucky to find newer replacements for both the controller and booster at a train show for a great price. This was 3 years ago, and long enough after I had done the original installation that I needed some help from a friend who is a Digitrax guru to help with installing the replacements components. It seems while I was away at my workbench Digitrax had gone from AC power supplies back in the mid-90s to DC power supplies. After procuring the proper power supplies from Digitrax (I couldn't find any more Radio Shacks around and was pretty sure I couldn't build my own this time anyway), we got my pike up and running again, just like in the good ole days. But with the new controllers came new throttles with maybe 10 times the buttons my old one had originally. The old one, which I had forgotten what most of those buttons did as well. So, what were the odds that I'd understand the new throttle any better? OK, it can do a LOT! I've run on friend's layouts where Digitrax systems can do marvelous things. And yes, had I gone through a lot of retraining to learn what each button on the new throttle could do, and then used it often enough, I might be able to run trains now. But I'm afraid I went back to my workbench and all the information on gluing wood and rusting corrugated metal panels and weathering paint pushed out whatever I had learned about powering up the DCC system and putting together consists. I have discussed this with friends, and have gotten the "Oh man, if you had NCE it's so much simpler you could be running trains now." And I can't dispute that. I've used NCE throttles, Proto throttles, MRE throttles, and even one on a garden layout that looked like a key fob for a car (really). And they all worked fine when set up properly and when I was told what button does what at that time. But I'm not about to replace my DCC operating system in the hope of getting one that may be more user friendly when I really don't go down to run trains anymore. If I could snap my fingers and have it changed to one I can easily operate, I would. But for all the time it would take me to convert over, I can build maybe two or three structures for my clients. Thereafter, I could more easily fire it up to run a train for a friend at that odd time when someone who has not seen it run stops by, the layout would continue to sit dormant most of the time. Am I oaky with what is effectively a large diorama sitting in the basement? I don't see why not. I sure seem to be building lots of smaller ones.

**New Tracks Show Schedule** – December (Register at: <https://newtracksmodeling.com/>)  
 Subscribe to YouTube channel New Tracks Modeling and ring the Bell. All programs are always subject to change.

<p><b>January 3</b>            Welcome &amp; Announcements; Jim Kellow            O scale Modeling sponsored by OSC with David Schultz            O scale H-R with Dennis Brennan            3D Printing with Bob Geldy            Scratchbuilder's Corner 12 with Martin Brechbiel            Station Kit-bashing to represent Prototype (Part 5) with Jeff Jordan            Scratchbuilding his layout with Tom Farrell            "What Do You Want to Talk About" with Steve Sherrill</p>	<p><b>January 10</b>            Welcome &amp; Announcements; Jim Kellow            Scratchbuilder's Corner 13 with Martin Brechbiel            N Scale Modeling with Clem Harris            HO scale Modeling with Edward O'Rourke            Build Along - Frenchman River Model Works with Tom Farrell            How to use Vacuum forming for modeling with Keith Stamper            Let's Discuss the Economics of the Model Railroading Market with Bernie Kriger            Craigmount Tramway Main storage and engineering facilities with Ian Fainger            Setting the Stage with Scenery with Bob Geldmacher            "What Do You Want to Talk About" with Steve Sherrill</p>
<p><b>January 17</b>            Welcome &amp; Announcements; Jim Kellow            S Scale Modeling with Timothy Huebner            MY BUILD; hosted by Chris Coarse            Scratchbuilder's Corner 14 with Martin Brechbiel            Build Along - Frenchman River Model Works with Tom Farrell            How to use Vacuum forming for modeling with Keith Stamper            Scratchbuilding his layout with Tom Farrell            "What Do You Want to Talk About" with Steve Sherrill</p>	<p><b>January 24</b>            Welcome &amp; Announcements; Jim Kellow            G scale Modeling with Steve Bottinger            Setting the Stage with Scenery with Bob Geldmacher            Build Along - Frenchman River Model Works with Tom Farrell            Scratchbuilder's Corner 15 with Martin Brechbiel            Modeling and Art with Santiago Pineda            Scratchbuilding his layout with Tom Farrell            "What Do You Want to Talk About" with Steve Sherrill            AXM Paper Space Scale Models; Introduction and Build Along of SpaceX Dragon with Alfonso Moreno</p>
<p><b>January 31</b>            Welcome &amp; Announcements; Jim Kellow            Scenery; what's available? with Bob Geldmacher            Scratchbuilder's Corner 16 with Martin Brechbiel            Build Along - Frenchman River Model Works with Tom Farrell            Build Along of SpaceX Dragon with Alfonso Moreno            Build Along Track Ballasting with Dennis Brennan            Modeling and Art with Santiago Pineda            "What Do You Want to Talk About" with Steve Sherrill</p>	<p><b>February 7</b>            Welcome &amp; Announcements; Jim Kellow            O scale Modeling sponsored by OSC with David Schultz            O scale H-R with Dennis Brennan            Build Along of SpaceX Dragon with Alfonso Moreno            Build Along - Frenchman River Model Works with Tom Farrell            Setting the Stage with Scenery with Bob Geldmacher            Update from the MRMHR with Frederick Humphrey or Greg Warth            Build Along Track Ballasting with Dennis Brennan            Keep It Rusty with Craig in the UK - Philosophy of kit production, parts etc. with Craig of Keep It Rusty in the UK            Scratchbuilder's Corner 17 with Martin Brechbiel            Modeling and Art with Santiago Pineda            Scratchbuilding his layout with Tom Farrell            "What Do You Want to Talk About" with Steve Sherrill</p>
<p><b>February 14</b>            Welcome &amp; Announcements; Jim Kellow            N Scale Modeling Clem Harris            Build Along Announcement of Crystal River M with Rand and Seth Johnson</p>	<p><b>February 21</b>            Welcome &amp; Announcements; Jim Kellow            S scale Modeling Tim Huebner            HO Scale Modeling Ed O'Rourke            Build Along of SpaceX Dragon with Alfonso Moreno</p>

<p>Build Along of SpaceX Dragon with Alfonso Moreno                  Build Along Track Ballasting with Dennis Brennan                  Keep It Rusty with Craig in the UK - Weathering techniques                  Scratchbuilder’s Corner 18 with Martin Brechbiel                  Scratchbuilding his layout with Tom Farrell                  “What Do You Want to Talk About” with Steve Sherrill</p>	<p>Setting the Stage with Scenery with Bob Geldmacher                  Scratchbuilder’s Corner 19 with Martin Brechbiel                  Scratchbuilding his layout with Tom Farrell                  MY BUILD; hosted by Chris Coarse                  “What Do You Want to Talk About” with Steve Sherrill</p>
<p><b>February 28</b>                  Welcome &amp; Announcements; Jim Kellow                  Local Hobby Shops with Mark Pogendorf                  G Scale Modeling with Steve Bittinger                  Build Along of SpaceX Dragon with Alfonso Moreno                  Decals off; Dry Transfers on! with James Taverna                  Scholarship Update from the Committee                  Scratchbuilder’s Corner 19 with Martin Brechbiel                  Scratchbuilding his layout with Tom Farrell                  “What Do You Want to Talk About” with Steve Sherrill</p>	

**Reaching Applicants for the NMT Scholarship – Getting the Word Out!**

Every reader of this newsletter can help get applicants for our scholarships both at their local HS and college levels. Promoting scholarship availability and reaching out to college students can be done through various effective methods. Here are some suggestions:

1. College Websites: Contact the administration or career services departments of various colleges and universities, asking them to include your scholarship opportunity on their websites or scholarship portals. This will ensure visibility to a large number of students.
2. Social Media: Utilize social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, to share information about your scholarship. Create visually appealing posts and encourage students to share the information with their peers.
3. Email Campaigns: Obtain email lists from colleges and universities, targeting students who fit the eligibility criteria for your scholarship. Send out personalized emails offering information on the scholarship, application process, and deadlines.
4. College Fairs and Events: Participate in college fairs and events to directly interact with students. Set up a booth or table where you can provide brochures, answer questions, and raise awareness about your scholarship opportunity.
5. Campus Ambassadors: Collaborate with student organizations or campus ambassadors from different colleges to help promote your scholarship. These students can serve as brand ambassadors, spreading the word about your program among their peers.
6. Press Releases: Draft and distribute press releases to local and national media outlets to generate wider awareness about your scholarship program. This can attract attention from a broader audience, including potential applicants.
7. Online Scholarship Databases: Register your scholarship on popular scholarship search platforms, such as Fastweb, Scholarships.com, or College Board's Scholarship Search. These platforms are frequently used by students searching for financial aid opportunities.

Remember to include clear instructions on how students can apply, including any required documents and deadlines. Make the application process straightforward and easily accessible to maximize student engagement with your scholarship opportunity.

## Playing with Trains!

A recently published article by Dr. Salim Hashmi<sup>1</sup> that reviewed more than 1,600 other published studies revealed that playing with toy trains aids in improving motor functions starting from an early age. This includes planning, self-control, memory, and attention skills. Additionally, building tracks for the trains while playing was indicated to potentially aid in spatial reasoning development. And then at another level yet, playing with other children helps learning and practicing collaboration, cooperation, and social understanding.

According to Dr Hashmi's study and results, constructing track, arranging train cars, envisioning scenarios, and enacting them while playing with trains can stimulate cognitive development and enhance critical thinking, spatial analysis, and decision-making skills. Collaborative play with toy trains could help encourage teamwork, negotiation, and collaboration, as children share resources, ideas, and play together. Additionally, playing with toy trains provides children with opportunities to develop and practice problem-solving abilities. Overall, train play is an excellent way for children to develop key skills.

Much of these abilities can be found translated into the activities of adult model railroading hobbyists. We plan and build layouts, plan and build complex models, construct and lay track, make up trains in a prototypical arrangements, perform problem solving in operations activities on layouts, work together in teams in operations sessions, write articles and communicate with others, create technologies to advance model building. In sum, we still play with trains. Many of these same activities extend to other activities.

My most recent experience in this arena was my being confronted by a vacuum cleaner that failed to work. There were a multitude of screws to be extracted, but once disassembled, a plug of debris was extracted from the motor armature, and functionality was restored. Re-assembly was akin to putting together a complex model holding the motor, switches with springs, etc. in their proper spaces while securing the screws into place. Not too far removed from some models on my work bench!

<sup>1</sup>Hashmi, S. How Do Children Play with Toy Trains and for What Benefits? A Scoping Review. *Eur. J. Investig. Health Psychol. Educ.* **2023**, *13*, 2112–2134.



# New Tracks Modeling Provides

“Modeler’s Path to Success.”

## Is this you?

I’ve pretty much been a model railroad collector for decades. I go to shows and meets, buy lots of neat stuff, and now I have shelves and a closet full of boxes of stuff to build for a layout that I don’t have. Why haven’t I gotten beyond this point and gotten something built? Who knows?

Could it be that I had a fear of failure because of all the terrific highly detailed modeling done by other that I had seen over the years?

Was this simply that I was afraid that I could not create models and a layout at that same level of quality that I saw from others and so I was unable to even try?

And then when questioned by a friend about this while I was buying yet another kit to put on a shelf, I replied,

“But I don’t have the skills.”

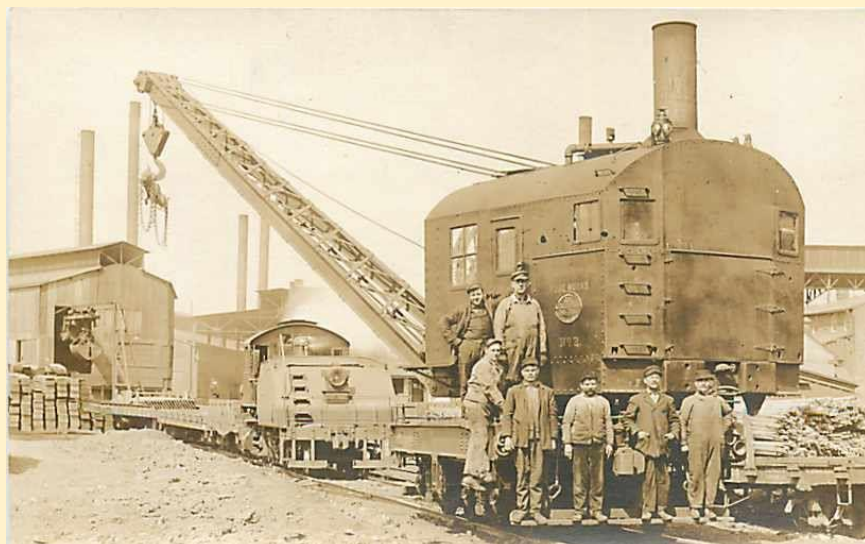
He stopped, took my arm, and looked me in the eye, “Skills don’t come out of a bottle or from a store. You’ll never have skills unless you work at getting them and practice building them. You aren’t born with skills; you acquire them over time through making an effort. All you’re doing now is buying stuff to gather dust that your heirs will have to get rid of later.”

Pretty simple, right? Sometimes folks need that poke in the eye to get their attention.

So, if you find yourself hemming and hawing about starting a project, keep in mind that everyone begins at the starting line with all sorts of differences in experiences, skill sets, abilities, eyesight, hand-to-eye coordination, and funding.

Get started and try. Do a little research, talk to your local experts, look at basic starting point kits for structure or rolling stock, work out some track plans (avoid planning paralysis!) that are reasonable and achievable, and get started enjoying all of the hobby.

New Tracks Modeling can help you get started. Go to our website [newtracksmodeling.com](http://newtracksmodeling.com) and subscribe so you can join the crew, live every Wednesday evening at 7 pm Eastern Time on our New Tracks



Modeling Zoom shows or on our New Tracks Modeling YouTube channel meet other people who have felt the same way, and learn from talented modelers who can answer your questions and help you meet your goals.

Just want to talk or comment, please contact me at: [jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com)

And here's another thought contemplate:

In 5 years I will be able to have an AI admin and all the AI operated machines in my home that can design any prototype part I want on CAD and get it printed. All I have to do is ask for the part.

In 5 years AI can design my layout to fit my space and include any scenes I want. It can design and print any structures, trucks, cars, people, etc. that I need and then print them. The AI will be able to design and print any locomotive and rolling stock I need. It can design any electrical circuits and hook-ups that I need. So far all I have to do is talk and it does the prototype research on what I want. Not any modeling for me to do. Not even paint or weathering anything. Only maybe I get to build the scenery. Is all this possible in 5 years with AI?

Combine all the above with Simulation and all AI had to do is design and get ready a simulation of the railroad I want. Is this where model railroading might be in 5 years?

Thanks for reading!

Happy Modeling,

Jim Kellow, MMR

