



New Tracks Modeling Observations

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Brennan's Model Railroading

<https://www.brennansmodelrr.com/>

(816)-252-4605

Happy New Year 2024!

Welcome back to the New Tracks Modeling Observations Newsletter. Updates to our regularly scheduled parts of the program are also included along with the advance schedule for February and March (see schedule on page **13**). Current news about the New Tracks Modeling Scholarship is also included. As always, if you want to write an article, send in a tip about any aspect of model railroading, or share a photo of a model you are building, just contact me directly. Send your questions and suggestion for this newsletter to:

Martin.Brechbiel@newtracksmodeling.com.

From Jim Kellow, MMR:

New Tracks Modeling has created a Facebook group so all modelers who read our articles in S Scale Resource and O Scale Resource magazines, or watch our Zoom and live streamed YouTube shows or videos can continue to discuss the material or presentations they read or observe, and offer suggestions for future material or presentations to be included. We hope this New Tracks Modeling Facebook group will help expand the enjoyment and learning of our readers and viewers. Join in and help make our articles and shows better.

Major Announcement for 2024 - The Pacific Coast Region of the NMRA with New Tracks Mentoring Inc. have released the following joint announcement!

Pacific Coast Region of the NMRA joins with New Tracks Mentoring Inc. to provide a \$2,000 scholarship for the 2024/25 Academic Year

The Pacific Coast Region of the NMRA is joining with New Tracks mentoring Inc. to sponsor a \$2,000 scholarship for the 2024/25 academic year for a model railroader pursuing a STEAM degree. The New Tracks Modeling Mentoring Scholarship sponsored by the Pacific Coast Region will be one of three \$2,000 scholarships awarded this year by New Tracks Mentoring Inc., a registered 501c3 charity organization. Each of the three scholarships will be awarded to a deserving young model railroader to assist in their pursuit of a higher education degree.

All three scholarships can be applied for in a single application. Links are below to the scholarship page and the applications.



The goal of the New Track Modeling Mentoring Scholarships (NTMMS) is to help model railroaders pursue higher education in the STEAM disciplines. For calendar year 2023/24, NTMMS awarded a single \$1,000 scholarship. For 2023/24 the scholarship was awarded to Ethan Bernstein, a junior this year at Johns Hopkins University. Ethan is an NMRA member and works on N scale issues on the Conformance Committee of the NMRA.

Frank Markovich, MMR President of the Pacific Coast Region said about the scholarship, “The PCR, being the first NMRA region, is excited to take a leadership role in offering scholarships to young modelers to help them pursue a degree. Young modelers are the future of the model railroad hobby and the NMRA. The skills and knowledge young modelers gain while participating in model railroading are all STEAM based and lead to great educational opportunities. We hope the scholarship will help a young modeler not only get a degree, but also continue to participate in the model railroading hobby.”

Jim Kellow, MMR, President of New Tracks Mentoring Inc. thanked Frank and the PCR Region of the NMRA for their forethought and leadership in helping to educate our young model railroaders. “We are looking forward to working with the PCR to develop this special Scholarship and hope other Regions and Divisions of the NMRA also choose to participate in our Scholarship program. The young people who apply for our scholarship will help provide the leadership for our hobby’s future.

More details about the scholarship can be Found [HERE](#)

Apply for the scholarship using an on-line form [HERE](#)

Apply for the scholarship using a pdf form [HERE](#)

New Tracks Mentoring Inc. is a registered 501c3 charitable organization focused on promoting the model railroading hobby to young people by sponsoring scholarships for model railroaders pursuing higher education.

Donations to the New Tracks Mentoring scholarships can be made [HERE](#).

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
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(816)-252-4605



O Scale Central
<https://oscalecentral.com/>



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

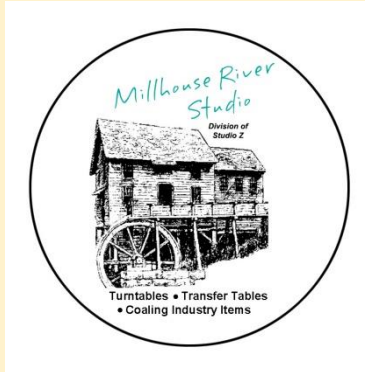


National Capital Trains
<https://nationalcapitaltrains.com/>

Mainline Hobby Supply
<https://mainlinehobby.com/>



New Creations Victorian Railroad Buildings, LLC
<https://newcreationsvictorian.com/>



Millhouse River Studio

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

Regularly Scheduled Segments that you can see weekly on New Tracks Modeling

Scratchbuilder's Corner

by Martin Brechbiel, MMR (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 to teach & share techniques and "tricks" that can be adapted into your own scratchbuilding projects working from simple projects up through ones of increasing complexity. This is not so much to provide projects that you are intended to build yourself, although that is certainly possible. Segments in December and January have continued to introduce basic structure building projects as well as completing scratchbuilding another basic structure, Lomax's Welding. Thereafter, in January this part of the show will move back to scratchbuilding another piece of rolling stock, which will most likely be some sort of maintenance of way car of some purpose yet to be determined as we move forward into 2024.



New Tracks Modeling Mentoring Scholarship

For Modeling's Future

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

We've recently announced that we will now be offering three (3) \$2,000.00 scholarships for the 2024-2025 academic year! This is due in no small part to the generosity of our donors, especially our anonymous donor who matched \$1,000.00 in small contributions made between September and January, and the Pacific Coast Region of the NMRA which is sponsoring a \$2,000.00 scholarship.

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

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.

We're continuing to raise funds for future scholarships. Please consider making a donation by visiting the scholarship site (newtracksmodeling.com/scholarship) and clicking on the donate link.

If you have any questions, please contact Bob Davidson at NTMMS@newtracksmodeling.com

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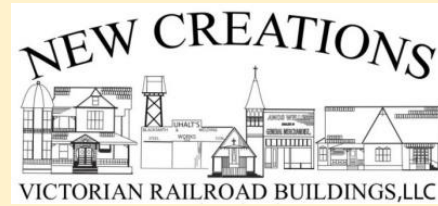
Great Scale Model Train Show
<https://www.gsmts.com/>





The Model Railroad Resource LLC

<https://sscaleresource.com/WP/>
<https://oscaleresource.com/WP/>



New Creations Victorian Railroad
Buildings, LLC

<https://newcreationsvictorian.com/>

New Tracks Modeling “MY BUILD”

by Chris Course (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 January My Build is on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnzTgoWq5Fw>

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

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.
-

The On30 Rustic Buff & Old Gothic Railroad's Shantytown!

by Tom Farrell (tfarrell60@comcast.net)

On the shores of the Salt Creek River stands Shantytown, a small, run-down workingman's fishing village. If you listen very hard, the currents whisper tales of the broken and forgotten dreams of the fisherman that live and work here. In the evenings, the fishermen gather at the local tavern, "Skippers" and exchange tales of the day's catch, sharing laughter, and finding solace in their camaraderie.

Bait and tackle shops line the muddy, unpaved streets, with oddly named signs: Gilligan's, Skippers, Thurston's, and the Professor's (some say named after some future show, but no one is entirely clear on this). Tied-up to the bait shops are a couple of small fishing boats, their hulls worn by the daily ritual of casting out before sunrise and returning at sunset for years on end. The stench of freshly caught, cleaned, and prepared fish is always in the air, mingling with the scent of diesel fumes from the boats.

A prominent fixture of the town, the Rustic Buff & Old Gothic's covered railroad

bridge, spans the Salt Creek River. It is an impressive structure that connects the towns of Turtle Creek and Shantytown. Daily, a RB&OG passenger train makes its pilgrimage to the Shantytown Depot from points west. The local fisherman can set their watches by the noon sounds of the rhythmic chug, bell ringing, and whistle that only a narrow gauge steam engine can voice.

And yet amongst all this apparent bleakness, Shantytown has a dilapidated charm and a rustic resilience that thrives and clearly shines through in this workingman's riverside town.

To see more of the ongoing modeling of Shantytown please tune-live on the New Tracks Modeling Live YouTube every Wednesday at 7:00pm ET. The shows are recorded and posted on YouTube for future viewing.

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

We have had many discussions with modelers who ask, "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 may be G, O or O Hi-Rail, S, HO, or N, and there are others yet that modelers choose to build in today. However, we frequently know little about the details of other scales, are possessed of misinformation, or simple mythology.

To discuss this on a regular basis, 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 2024 schedule for "The Scales that We Model In" is:

February	7th O-HR	14th O, N	21st HO, 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

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 (2/28)**

Jan. 31 See: https://youtu.be/qT3sc_NBt0
(Steve.Bittinger@newtracksmodeling.com)
Sponsored by New Creations Victorian Railroad Buildings LLC



O Scale Modeling hosted by **David Schultz (2/14)**

(David.Schultz@newtracksmodeling.com)
Jan. 10 See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sygpAM3VDnQ>
David continues presenting O Scale on a budget
Sponsored by O Scale Central

O Gauge Hi-Rail Modeling hosted by **Dennis Brennan (2/7)**

(dennis.brennan@newtracksmodeling.com)

Jan. 3 See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iXs81kDcEQ>

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 February I'll continue on featuring my take on moving stock Plasticville models to scale detailed models for on your layout using just a few evenings work.

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 (2/21)

Jan. 31 See: <https://youtu.be/DDtLsq9ANaY>

(Timothy.Huebner@newtracksmodeling.com)

I will be going over a few new S scale products from scale trains and discussing options for affordable S scale locomotives by going over the American Models RS11 briefly.

Sponsored by National S Gauge Association (NASG)

HO scale Modeling hosted by Ed O'Rourke (2/21)

(Ed.ORourke@newtracksmodeling.com)

Jan. 10 See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ty8aumEmEgg&t=4s>

In February, I will continue on talking about using older kit materials in different ways. 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 (2/14)

(Clem.Harris@newtracksmodeling.com)

Jan. 17 See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H20wEIHA3wQ>

Sponsored by National Capital Trains

The newest member of the New Tracks Modeling Team in charge of our advertising to the Pre-school group.



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)

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

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.

Vendors: For table information, availability, admission and fees please email us at milcreekrr@yahoo.com for detailed information.

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".

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.

The largest all O scale Narrow Gauge event in North America



Saturday March 9, 10-5
Sunday March 10, 10-4
The Clarence Brown Conference Center
5450 GA Hwy 20, Cartersville, GA

8 Operating Layouts, 170 Vendor Tables,
"White Elephant," Layout Raffle, WBHF Radio
and Train Set Give a way.

Early Bird Tickets are available this year!!!

Early Bird tickets are \$25 to admit you at 9am on March 9 for the Model Train Enthusiasts to get first picks at the vendors!!!

Admission is just \$10 for regular show hours
Kids 9 and under are FREE
\$25 for Early Bird Entry, 9-10 AM on Saturday March 9

Purchase tickets on line!!!
ThePiedmontDivisionModelTrainShow.com



www.Piedmont-Div.org

NERx is Coming March 18-21

Back by popular demand, NERx, the virtual convention of the Northeastern Region, NMRA, is coming to a screen near you in March. The team is hard at work putting together another fantastic lineup of content, including Clinics, Layout Tours, and Roundtable Conversations.

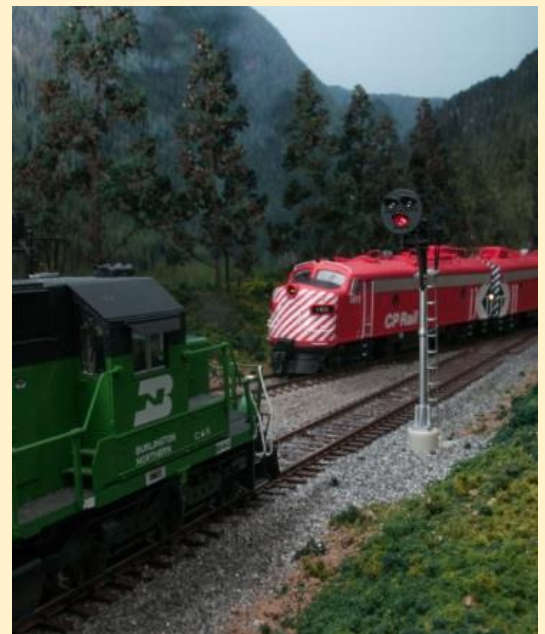


Photo is of Drew James' HO scale Canada, Spokane and Pacific (photo by Ed Olszewski).

We will also be sharing your work in the Model Showcase and this year we are introducing Tips & Tricks, short video segments showing modeling tips that do not fit into a full clinic. Drew James will be leading a Roundtable during NERX on managing a crew of friends helping build his layout.

If you are interested in presenting a clinic or have a layout you would like to have on the layout tour, then please reach out by sending an email to info@nerx.org with a short description and we will be in touch! See <https://www.nerx.org/> for more information.

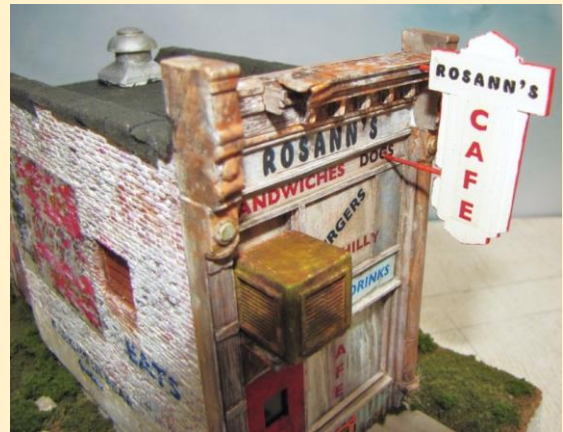
New from → [PREORDER HERE](#)



Frenchman River
Model Works

O/On30 1:48 Scale Run Down Rosann's Café (designed by Thomas Yorke)

Looking for a new addition to your Main Street lineup? Look no further than Rosann's Café! This brick building with stamped metal store front is loaded with character whether you want a run down version, or a well maintained iteration. This kit boasts all of the special attention to detail you've come to expect from a Thomas Yorke designed kit that features extensive decals and signage. Footprint is ~3" Wide (not including details on side), 7.75" Deep (not including sidewalk), and 4.75" Tall. This kit is scheduled to begin shipping on or around March 15, 2024.



New Tracks Show Schedule – February/March

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

<p>February 7 Welcome & Announcements; Jim Kellow O scale H-R with Dennis Brennan Build Along of SpaceX Dragon with Alfonso Moreno Build Along - Frenchman River Model Works with Tom Farrell 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>February 14 Welcome & Announcements; Jim Kellow O scale Modeling sponsored by OSC with David Schultz N Scale Modeling with Clem Harris Build Along Announcement of Crystal River Models with Rand and Seth Johnson 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>February 21 Welcome & Announcements; Jim Kellow S scale Modeling Tim Huebner HO Scale Modeling Ed O'Rourke Build Along of SpaceX Dragon with Alfonso Moreno MY BUILD with Chris Coarse</p>	<p>February 28 Welcome & Announcements; Jim Kellow Local Hobby Shops with Mark Poggendorf 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>
<p>March 6 Welcome & Announcements; Jim Kellow O scale Modeling sponsored by OSC with David Schultz O scale H-R with Dennis Brennan Decals off; Dry Transfers on! with James Taverna Announcement of Ipswich Hobbies Section House kit with Jack Dziadul Build Along - Crystal River Models with Rand and Seth Johnson Scratchbuilder's Corner 20 with Martin Brechbiel Scratchbuilding his layout with Tom Farrell “What Do You Want to Talk About” with Steve Sherrill</p>	<p>March 13 Welcome & Announcements; Jim Kellow N Scale Modeling with Clem Harris HO Scale Modeling Ed O'Rourke Decals off; Dry Transfers on! with James Taverna Build Along - Crystal River Models with Rand and Seth Johnson Scratchbuilder's Corner 21 with Martin Brechbiel Scratchbuilding his layout with Tom Farrell “What Do You Want to Talk About” with Steve Sherrill</p>
<p>March 20 Welcome & Announcements; Jim Kellow S scale Modeling Tim Huebner Setting the Stage with Scenery with Bob Geldmacher MY BUILD with Chris Coarse Build Along - Crystal River Models with Rand and Seth Johnson</p>	<p>March 27 Welcome & Announcements; Jim Kellow Local Hobby Shops with Mark Poggendorf G Scale Modeling with Steve Bittinger Build Along - Crystal River Models with Rand and Seth Johnson Scratchbuilder's Corner 24 with Martin Brechbiel Scratchbuilding his layout with Tom Farrell “What Do You Want to Talk About” with Steve Sherrill Catzpaw InVista traxx Diorama with Sherri Johnson</p>

Congrats to John Sacerdote and his Amherst team for a very successful Train Show last weekend that had 26,000 attendees. All the vendors I talked with were very impressed with the show and their sales. They felt the Amherst show put to rest the fear our great hobby is dying. Coming up this weekend is Scott Geare's Great Scale Model Train Show in Timonium Md. Early comments Point to this show also being a major success that is expected to break all previous records. We are honored to have New Tracks Modeling and our Scholarship program included in each show.

Coming up in future shows!

WATCH ME BUILD Railroad Models

These segments provide modelers the opportunity to build a model to not only demonstrate their modeling skills and techniques but to help other modelers improve their skills. These segments may be for one or more shows depending on the details included for the modeling presentation. Viewers can ask questions and learn from experienced modelers various facets of modeling. Upcoming 2024 Show Segments:

Starting June 12, 2024 Frenchman River's Spillane Building in O Scale will be built by Tom Farrell as currently occupied, and by Tom Yorke as vacant and dilapidated. This project will be done in a number of 15 minute separate show segments. These segments will be a great way not only to watch two very talented modelers show how this kit can be build, but also how it can be bashed to become something entirely different.

Starting July 31, 2024 For 4 show segments ending on August 28, Tom Grossman, owner of Tag Team Hobbies will discuss and demonstrate which Airbrush modelers may need to buy, the air source you will need for an airbrush, and how to use various techniques with your airbrush. Tom has been helping modelers with airbrushing for over 30 years across various hobbies and for all skill levels. He believes you get the best results if you learn the basics of airbrush control.

We have had many requests for this kind of show and I think Tom is the perfect person to help us learn and improve our airbrushing skills. Visit his website at: <http://www.tagteamhobbies.com/>

Is it Art?

We have often looked at the models for a modeler or the layout and remarked, "What an Artist!" This of course leads into the thoughts that Jim has expressed questioning whether model railroad models can be considered an Art form. I for one have frequently related and embraced the philosophy of Andy Warhol that "Art is anything you can get away with."

What many may not be aware of is that there is a very real and vibrant constituent of art that is related to miniatures. During the course of far too many bland and boring bowl games this past December while struggling to maintain consciousness, I wandered off to one of the several PBS stations and stumbled upon a series, "Craft in America." What caught my interest was that this specific installment (S15E2) that was titled, "Miniatures", which features a rather extensive international show in Santa Fe, the International Folk Art Market. Watching that opening was enough to stimulate my flagging brain from a state of somnolence for another hour that was spent most worthwhile in fascination. The episode is available on-line at <https://www.pbs.org/video/miniatures-episode-ktse0u/>

No, model trains were not evident. But there was a segment about Cuban artist Leandro Gomez Quintero who builds trucks from scratch using what we might describe as scrap and trash found in his daily travels. These models are what we might term "super-detailed" and highly creative representing vehicles that he has seen in his life. Watching him carve tires from Styrofoam packing and then weather those with real dirt really depicted the sense of frugality interesting with creativity. And, who has not used real dirt, real stones, etc. on their model train layout?

But then what really caught my attention were the furniture miniatures created by Mark Murphy. He uses tools very much from the same catalog that model railroaders employ to make strikingly accurate copies of 18th & 19th century American, 20th century Japanese and Arts & Crafts furniture in 1/12 scale. This is a common doll house scale, but I do hasten to add the 1/48 (O scale) is also a scale with an active doll house miniatures arena. Take a look at his craftsmanship: <http://www.markmurphyminiatures.com/>. If you peruse his web site you will find that he does sell a selection of chairs, some of which I am familiar with in 1:1 scale. And, if you search for his work on eBay you might find a corner cabinet available for a mere \$3,999! As some have argued about model trains not being just toys, neither are these chairs and more just children's doll house furniture.

Those were just two of the artists featured that rose to the top in interest as they might be related to model railroad models and their relationship to Art. The others were also quite impressive and form the basis of recommendation of watching all of this show. I have always appreciated the works of Gustav Baumann beyond just his color woodcuts, but also his oil paintings and furniture.

So, let's go back to the beginning. One can connect our hobby to Art in miniature form, the replication of reality, or even something fanciful without too much effort. In any case, Art is in the eye of the beholder as well as quite probably, whatever indeed that you can get away with, and I'm sticking with that as my position here, too!

Collections, Inventory, and Estates

By Jim Kellow

I heard David Vaughn, President of the O Scale Central Association discuss what will be a series of presentations on Estate Planning during a Zoom call in December. His comments caused me to write these comments.

Why do wives not get the value of their deceased husband's model railroad collection? It seems to be related to P... Poor Prior Planning by their husbands. Frankly, until I started writing a monthly column for my local newspaper on Model Railroading I had no idea how widespread the problem was across our community. I normally get calls after each article from wives asking for help to get rid of their husband's trains, plus those wives who ask my wife to see if I can help them. In fact, I think my wife may be asked for my help more than I am directly. In all cases their husbands have passed away and while the surviving wife understands how important the trains were to her husband, but she has no idea about what is included in the train collection, their worth, or what options she has to dispose of them.

The wives always ask the same questions, too.

“Can you help me dispose of these trains?”

“Could you come over and let me know how much my husband's trains might be worth?”

While I try to put these people in contact with individuals or organizations that can help them, what is needed before anyone can evaluate a collection is an inventory. Guess what the husband didn't bother to make? His wife has no idea how to do one lacking the required knowledge of what she's looking at, so she calls me!

While I am glad to try to help answer anyone's questions about trains, or suggest other people better suited to help her, it is really a shame we guys are stranding our wives in this position. And we don't have to.

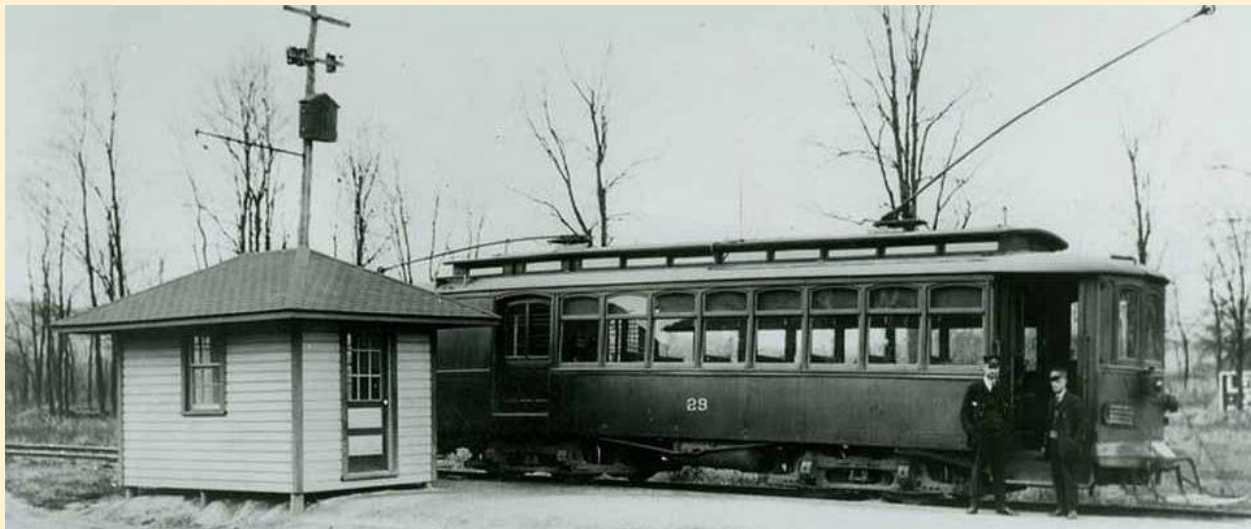
We are just too lazy to make and keep a current inventory and valuation of our prized model railroad items. I truly feel sorry for the wives who have to dispose of their husband's model trains without any information about his collection or who to call for help. But unfortunately I hear it all the time. If you are a husband with a train collection, please do your wife a favor and leave her a complete inventory, value estimates, and guidance as to who to call for help once you have passed away. If you need help preparing this information ask your Model Train Association or your buddies for help. But please leave her the information where she can find it, and make sure it's current. It's your responsibility to make sure your wife gets the value or it goes to someone who will actually appreciate it. You know what your collection is really worth.

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.



New Tracks Modeling “Modeler’s Path to Success.”

Is this you? **“But everything is so expensive!”**

But is this really true or even new? Decades ago when I was finally able to revive my interests in model railroading, I looked about at prices and thought something similar. I now had some time available (key component there), a measure of career security (another key component), family and house, etc. under good financial control (key component – check!), and then some disposable funding (really a pair of words to couple together?) available for hobbies. And I was confronted with what I then thought at first were high prices. Mind you that was 20+ years ago. Also, I was and still am painfully cheap. I’ll not mince words and state frugal. Going to shows and meets I was able to find many good buys and rooting about in boxes under tables at shows was able to build up what might be more than excess parts, details, projects, etc. in some areas. Ultimately I was also able to bring myself to acquire the locomotives and traction items that I wanted (no, need is never correct and only serves as an illusion in this hobby). This took considerable patience and the unbending of a very tightly clasped wallet. But it was doable. For under \$500 you could get a decent diesel and 10-20 freight cars, eschewing brass. Track was something you hand-laid since doing that was a very real bargain. Time was involved, but when did rushing about in a hurry ever become part of model railroading as a hobby? Savor the moment and hone one’s skills with care seemed more important at that time vs. today when I hear “But I don’t have the skills to....” Skills don’t come out of a Crackerjack box! So, I cut my own ties from scrap wood. There was a sugar pine shortage, commercial ties were scarce, scrap wood was at my feet, and I had a band saw. Shortage solved and mine had nice saw marks that took stain well. But that was then. What has changed? What has really changed?

So, fast forward to today where I am still painfully cheap. But there’s been a lot of change. Between back when I got started and now, income significantly increased (by a factor of 10), there’s no mortgage, there’s no car loan, and the rest is what it was. Yes, everything else increased, but so did income and earnings which when you look at the numbers actually outstripped increases in costs. We’ll come back to that as I can already hear the distant screams of “inflation”. Well, no. When I started inflation was in double digits, I had a 12% mortgage, and a 16% car loan, and we were happy to have it that good then. Remember the 80’s? You were there! In 2023 the market was up 20%, every sector was up, employment was up, job participation was up, unemployment was down, and income increased while inflation decreased. Even gas decreased, but then what few want to acknowledge is that the US is the #1 producer and exporter of oil, and exported record amounts of natural gas, too. So.....

We’re spoiled by all comparisons to the rest of the world. Yup. Spoiled. After many years of just being handed everything along with cheap goods from China no longer being available, now we have to pay the bills for what we want (not need!) during what is an unrecognized or denied boom.

We’re spoiled.

Okay, so young people are challenged by all this as opposed to the grey-bearded dinosaurs in the hobby that walked to school in the snow uphill both ways. But hold tight to that word spoiled. They've never even had the opportunity to acquire the skills and abilities to create from what seems like nothing but scrap locomotives, rolling stock, build kits, etc. Until recently you could just go down to the store and buy it ready to use.....until the store disappeared. Now, you just go on-line and buy it ready to use until the China bubble burst.

Now we're heading back in time to when this hobby was dominated by kit building, scratchbuilding, and everything DIY. However, 3D printing is exploding to fill many gaps and this opportunity merged into the boutique products shops and garage/basement entrepreneurs is where our future seems to be heading.....for now. And, it's also the very real opportunity where the younger generations can make their presence known creating and using their generation's skill-sets to advance the hobby. There are costs involved in that as well, but they seem to be decreasing more and more while the technology advances to higher quality.

And will AI get folded into all this too? Probably at some point, but in the meantime instead of artificial, let's apply our inherent real intelligence to our hobby and see where we can take everything forward vs. sitting back stopping before starting embracing "It's too expensive."

New Tracks Modeling can help you get started. There have recently been some presentations by Bob Geldmacher on 3D printing that really help to clarify this technology and just what can be done realistically. There are also issues surrounding file sharing IP and more that need to be resolved, but everything has growing pains as they mature. Go to our website 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:
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Thanks for reading!

Happy Modeling,

Jim Kellow, MMR

