



# The FUSEE



Volume 57 Number 1

www.thousandlakesregion.org

Fall 2010

## Three TLR members make their mark at the NMRA National Convention

Three members of the Thousand Lakes Region each made a major splash at the NMRA's 75th Anniversary convention in Milwaukee this past July 11-17.

Shown at left, Mike Engler's "Mills at Pino Grande" diorama walked away with First Place/Scratchbuilt Display in the judged contest, First Place/Display in the People's Choice contest, and the Mt. St. Albert Scale Lumber Company Award. Mike's diorama was also displayed at last May's TLR convention, where it received both First Place/Display and the Jock Oliphant Craftsmanship Award. Mike, who lives in Lakeville, MN, is the TLR's new Contest Director. Congratulations, Mike!



Making a superb show for herself was 12-year-old Amanda Wade of Chanhassen, MN, whose "Town Park Gazebo" brought home the Third Place/Scratchbuilt Display award in the

judged contest, as well as Iwata's Most Deserving Youth Award, and the Fantasonics Engineering Award. Her diorama and awards, as well as Amanda herself, are pictured below. Way to go, Amanda!

Third, TLR Public Relations Director and erstwhile FUSEE editor Gerry Leone, MMR, was given the President's Award for Service to the NMRA by NMRA president Mike Brestel at the Convention Banquet, held at the Milwaukee Hilton, on Saturday evening. Leone is also NMRA National Communications Director and Deputy Chair of the NMRA Member Services Department. In addition, one of his color model photographs won the First Place/Popular Vote Award, and two others received Honorable Mentions in the National convention's photography contest.

All photos: Gerry Miller



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# Random thoughts... from last July to next September

I hope everyone has enjoyed their summer, the heat, humidity, and of course, rain. The recent weather patterns here in eastern Iowa have my neighbors and me thinking of building an ark.

My wife and I volunteered for three days at the NMRA National Convention in Milwaukee in July. Peggy worked in the Contest Room, while I helped to load tour buses. We both met a lot of nice people, some from as far away as Japan, Germany, and Australia.

The TLR faired very well at the National convention model contest this year. Mike Engler's "Mills of Pino Grande" received first place in Scratchbuilt Display, and People's Choice Best of Show Award. (See page 1.)

Twelve-year-old Amanda Ward received 3rd place for her "Town Park Gazebo" Scratchbuilt Display, as well as the IWATA Youth Award and Fantasonics Engineering Award. Yes, I did say she is 12!

Gerry Leone received First Place Color Print, Model Popular Vote, and also received the President's Award at the banquet.

Congratulations to Amanda, Mike, and Gerry!

The Fall TLR board meeting will be held September 25th at the Pizza Ranch in Dilworth Minnesota. The meeting will start at 11:00. Feel free to attend and participate.

This is the last issue of THE FUSEE by Editor Gerry Leone. For six years he has done a great job keeping us informed of what is going on in the Region. Thank you, Gerry, for all your hard work and good luck on all your future endeavors.

With fall approaching many of us return to our modeling. Keep in mind as you're building and detailing a car, engine, or structure, to document and photograph your work. It might earn a Merit Award that will lead to an AP Certificate!!

## TUNNEL VISION

by Editor Gerry Leone, MMR

# So long... and thanks!

There's lots of stuff that needs to be done to put together an issue of THE FUSEE. But the very very very last thing I always do is this column. It's sort of like putting a signature on a letter.

And so it is with this issue. But this time, I actually feel like I'm saying goodbye to an old friend. I guess, because I am.

This is the 25th issue of THE FUSEE that I've edited. Every three months for the past six years it's been "FUSEE Time," and while it's been work, it's been fun. It's been gratifying and it's been a pleasure.

When I came on board for the Winter 2004/2005 issue, it was supposed to be a temporary deal. At that time, nobody'd seen an issue for 9 months or more, the meeting minutes hadn't been published for well over a year, and things were kind of a mess. I think we're back on track.

Who says you can't steer a train?

And every three months for the past six years I've sat down at the computer and thought the exact same thing: "Ohmygod ohmygod ohmygod, I don't have enough stuff to fill up this issue!" And it was always unfounded. Over the last six years people came out of the woodwork to supply me - no, you - with articles. Of everything that has to do with THE FUSEE, I found that the most gratifying. To me, it meant that members felt THE FUSEE had become something worth reading, and worth being published in. I sure do appreciate that.

I've said it a million times, and I'll say it again: I appreciate everyone in the Region, but there are a handful who I could just hug (in a manly sort of brotherly way, of course) because they were my "go-to" people... the people I could count on in a pinch, and not even in a pinch. They were the people that made THE FUSEE worth reading.

So to **Ron Einarson, Les Breuer MMR, Paul Ullrich, and Terry Davis**... I owe you guys big-time. You kept me in business, you made me look good. Someday I hope I can return the favor.

And to **Alan Saatkamp**, who so generously agreed to shoulder the editorship, I wish you the smooth sailing I know you'll have. And if the waves get choppy, you know my number.

Of course, I'll still be around. My jobs as NMRA Communication Director and Deputy Chair of the Membership Services Department keep me hopping. At times it's like working a second job. But it's fun.

And that's the last thought I want to leave you with:

### **Volunteer.**


Get involved. Do stuff. Give a little of your time. Please. All of us need you, and need your talents. We really do.

For the first three years after I got back into the hobby I was a lone wolf. Didn't want any part of any organization, didn't need the camaraderie, just let me be, thank you.

But after I volunteered to edit the Twin Cities Division's newsletter, the gates opened and I actually discovered I was having more fun being a part of an organization, than I was not being a part.

And the more I volunteered, the more fun I had. Sure, modeling time suffered a little, but the added enjoyment actually more than made up for it.

So please: give us some of your time and talent. At your Division, in the TLR, or at National. You'll really enjoy it.

Ok, I'm out of here. Thanks for everything! 

<p><b>THANKS!</b></p> <p>Contributors to this issue (in plain old alphabetical order for a change):</p> <p>Bob Beaty MMR, Les Breuer MMR, Terry Davis, Ron Einarson, Jack Hamilton MMR, John Hotvet MMR, Gerry Miller, Greg Smith, Paul Ullrich, and Ken Zieska</p> <p><b>Next issue's deadline:</b> <b>November 10, 2010</b></p>
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# Achievement Program Update

By John R. Hotvet, MMR

Last year (May 2009-April 2010) was a very slow year for the Achievement Program. We only awarded two achievement certificates and no Golden Spikes in that timeframe.

They were awarded to the following individuals:

**Alan Saatkamp**, Harrisburg, SD: Association Official  
**Craig Symington**, Thunder Bay, ON: Model Railroad Author

The next year is looking more promising, though. Three AP awards have already been processed by National, as follows:

**David Hamilton**, Plymouth, MN: Chief Dispatcher  
**Don Dawkins**, Plymouth, MN: Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical  
**Alan Saatkamp**, Harrisburg, SD: Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical

In addition, three more AP awards have been submitted to National for further processing, and two Division representatives are working with their membership to generate some more applications.

Finally, one Golden Spike was awarded recently, to Art Van de Water, River Falls, WI.

## Thanks to the people who never got thanked

Sure, the editor gets the glory job. But there are several people without whose work THE FUSEE just wouldn't be as good:

**Karen Hamilton** – I know Dave puts you up to printing out those Canadian labels every issue. I appreciate your doing that!

**Lesley, Kurt and Dave at Minuteman Press** – you guys are so good. You do top-notch work and were even nice enough to deliver the newsletters to my doorstep. It's been a great nine years! I'll miss you guys!

**My wife Renay** – this poor woman has proofread every one of these issues and never complained once. You're the best. Thanks, honey!!  
-Gerry

# Start thinking: Dubuque!

It's not too early to make plans for the 2011 Convention in Dubuque, Iowa. "Three Rails, Three States" will be held May 20, 21, 22, and 2011. Our headquarters will be The Holiday Inn in beautiful downtown Dubuque.

There are three operating railroads within the Dubuque area. The ICE and CN run through Dubuque. The BNSF runs through East Dubuque, Illinois, which is just across the Mississippi River from Dubuque. The ICE and CN average four to five trains per day. The BNSF averages 20 to 30 trains per day.

There are many attractions to satisfy all convention goers. Dubuque has two casinos and The National River Museum, which is partially housed in the former CB&Q freight house/depot. Also, scenic Eagle Point Park overlooking the Mississippi River and many historic homes.

Our tentative schedule looks like this:

Friday:

Contest entries in the morning, industrial tours, dessert reception, and board meeting.

Saturday:

Clinics in the morning, river boat ride/lunch aboard the paddle wheeler Spirit of Dubuque, evening banquet, awards ceremony, and Chinese auction.

Sunday:

We will have our annual membership meeting, followed by a few layout tours in the city of Dubuque.

Check out this link for photos of the Dubuque area. [www.flickr.com/photos/52931405@N08/?saved=1e](http://www.flickr.com/photos/52931405@N08/?saved=1e)

We'll have a full article featuring the details of the Dubuque convention in the Winter edition of THE FUSEE.

## Introducing the new NMRA Western and Central District Directors

Many of you know that the two Directors who represent the Thousand Lakes Region have recently changed. Early this year Jack Hamilton, MMR, was voted in as Western District Director. (North and South Dakota are both part of the Western District.) At the NMRA Board meeting in July, Central District Director Dave Thornton was named Vice President-Administration. In accordance with NMRA regulations, NMRA president Mike Brestel appointed a new Central District Director to replace Dave. He chose Bob Beaty, MMR.

I asked each of these new Directors if they'd like to introduce themselves in the pages of THE FUSEE, and both heartily accepted. -Gerry

**Jack Hamilton - Western District Director**  
[westdir@hq.nmra.org](mailto:westdir@hq.nmra.org)

First, allow me to offer my thanks for the trust and confidence you have placed in me to serve as the Western District Director. On a personal note, I am the only Board member with a primary interest in N scale. I also dabble in HO and G. I also serve as the PNR (home Region) AP chair and am active in my home Division in the Seattle area.

When I asked for your vote, I pledged to bring about improved communication with the membership (in both directions), greater emphasis on support for Division level activi-

ties, and bringing real value to the benefits of membership.

I have begun the work to make these things come to pass. I shall do my best to communicate with you through your Region newsletter and I ask that you communicate with me either through your Region leadership, or if you consider it appropriate, to communicate with me directly. My duty as a Director is to operate the Corporation properly and in the best interest of the members. I will need your input to help make that happen.

**Bob Beaty - Central District Director**  
[centdir@hq.nmra.org](mailto:centdir@hq.nmra.org)

My name is Bob Beaty, I am the appointed interim Director of the Central District of the NMRA, filling the remainder of Dave Thornton's term. I am also a candidate for election to the position. At the request of your editor I would like to provide you with a short introduction.

I live in Alabama. I am a retired career Naval Officer, completing 25 years of service as an aviator. I am also retired now (thank goodness) from ATT Mobility. I hold an MBA from the University of Alabama, Birmingham School of Business, and a Master's in Operational Strategic Planning from the Naval War College. I have been in model railroading

**"Directors" continued on page 10**

# Twin Cities Division wraps up an educational season

By Ken Zieska  
TCD Assistant Superintendent

The Twin Cities Division wrapped up a great year with its annual business meeting on May 13. In addition to reviewing the year's activities, the Division membership re-elected Ron Bodin for a third term as Division Superintendent. Don Carlson won the TLR's Convention Attendance Grant.

Division meeting highlights include a great presentation on ideas for kitbashing buildings by Neil Hovind. Neil brought excellent ideas that work well for modelers in any scale. Dave Hamilton gave a great clinic on "getting started in operations". Dave showed off the resources he has used to get operations going on his Burlington Route. In addition to showing the car card system and paperwork he has prepared, Dave shared the internet sites he has found that provide important support resources for anyone looking to get their railroad "operating". Later in the season, Dave Hamilton gave the Division an update on the NMRA Achievement Program. Dave is the Achievement Program Director of the Twin Cities Division and is actively working on his MMR so his presentation was full of personal experiences and insights. More important



The Twin Cities Division meets at the MN transportation Museum's Jackson St. Roundhouse, which features a fully operational turntable.

was Dave's commitment to sharing his experience with other Division members. Having the resource of skilled model railroaders such as Dave is one of the real values of our NMRA membership.

Learning about the prototype is always an interest and presentations this season included The DRG&W and Great Northern Railway. However because the Division meets in the Minnesota Transportation Museum's Jackson Street Roundhouse, we were able to have an exclusive backshop tour of the Museum conducted by knowledgeable Museum Docents. The Museum also gave us

a look at a new display being prepared around historic maps of the Minneapolis and St. Paul railroads.

A look back at the highlights of the year would be incomplete without mention of the fall and spring layout tours organized by Art Hill. Tours offer Division members the opportunity to visit and talk layout construction and operations while viewing some of the finest layouts in the Twin Cities area. To continue reaching out to the wider model railroad public, the Division's participation in several shows and flea markets including the National Train Day show organized by the National Park Service.

The Twin Cities Division will begin meetings again in October with a full schedule that includes more "hands-on" clinics where members will walk away with examples of what they learned in the clinics. Art Hill is also busy scouting layouts for the fall tour and there are several Division layouts that have offered to conduct operations training sessions for interested Division members. Division meetings are at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month beginning in October, and are held at the Jackson Street Roundhouse. Full information is posted on our website at <http://www.tcdnmra.org/index.html>

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All Aboard!

ST CLOUD, MINNESOTA

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## TLR donates \$750 to the NMRA's Diamond Club

The Thousand Lakes Region's Board of Directors voted unanimously at the Board meeting in May to donate \$750 to the National Model Railroad Association's Diamond Club, on behalf of the Region. The TLR is one of only two Regions to make a donation to the Club.

The Diamond Club was founded in early 2010 to coincide with the NMRA's 75th, or Diamond, Anniversary. Given that the internet is a driving force of the 21st century, the Diamond Club is a fundraiser specifically designed to help bring the NMRA's website, [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org), fully into this new, digital, online world. Funds from the Diamond Club will provide NMRA members with expanded content – the kind of useful content people today and tomorrow will expect to find on the Internet. The NMRA needs to raise \$75,000 to cover the expected expenses.

Some of the expanded [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org) content includes:

- downloadable scans of all of the photos in the Kalmbach Memorial Library (KML) – about 100,000 in all
- a "Members Only" area that will contain a wealth of information accessible exclusively to NMRA members (such as the newly developed Data Sheets)
- expanded NMRA Magazine content
- streaming or downloadable videos of clinics
- sound sample downloads
- an "Ask the Masters" question and answer site
- an up-to-date online model railroad magazine index

Donations to the Diamond Club can be made at [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org)

## Welcome to the new NMRA logo



Those of you who don't subscribe to NMRA Magazine (formerly Scale Rails) or who didn't go to the National convention in Milwaukee may not realize that the NMRA now has a new logo.

Here's a nice explanation of this wheel-on-rail logo that was handed out at the National Train Show when the logo was revealed.

Regardless of whether you like or dislike the logo please don't write to THE FUSEE. Instead send your opinions to our District Directors, Jack Hamilton or Bob Beaty, whose email addresses are beneath their names on page 3. -Gerry

**Welcome to the new NMRA logo...** and in many ways, the new NMRA. On its face this wheel-on-rail symbol represents the oldest of the NMRA's objectives: interoperability.

Yet, it also represents the future. It's a symbol of our willingness to keep pace with the changes all around us. Changes in our world, in our lives, in our hobby. While it honors the achievements of the past 75 years, it commits us to the continuation of those achievements in the next 75.

Most important, our new logo is a symbol of the NMRA's commitment to you. As your wants and needs evolve, so will we, with expanded content on our website, easier accessibility to the information in our Library, and programs designed to position us well for another seven-and-a-half decades.

"NMRA" now replaces "National Model Railroad Association" and becomes our brand, just as "NFL," "AARP," and "CBS" have become brands in their respective fields.

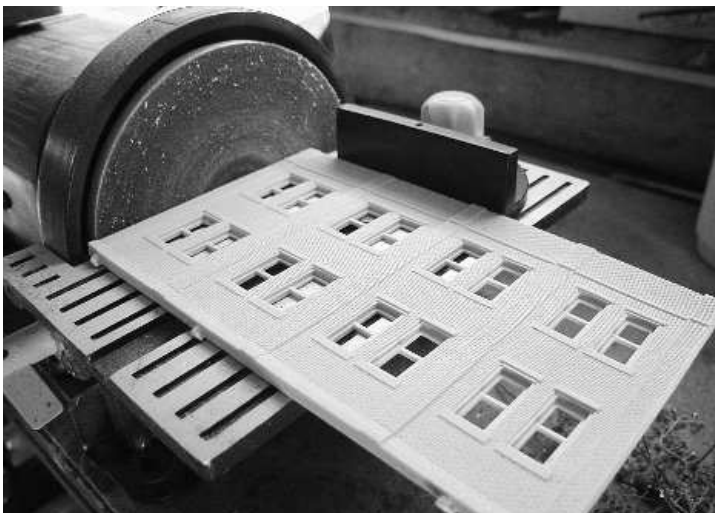
We've even renamed our magazine "NMRA Magazine" to further reinforce that brand. And our website, [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org), will become "your portal to more fun in scale model railroading."

So as we move into tomorrow, think of our new NMRA logo as a symbol of our promise to you – and our promises to each other – that we'll all keep the hobby of scale model railroading alive, vibrant... and ready for the future. ✨

## An easy way to true-up DPM walls

By Ron Einarson

Have you ever spend an hour or more sanding the wall sections of a DPM kit to true it up to get ready to assemble it? I have. I love these kits, the details, the variety, the cost factor and how great they look on your layout. What I disliked was spending time squaring up the wall sides.



One afternoon while in the garage the idea light came on when I looked at my portable sander: why not use it to do the squaring up? As you can see in the picture, I laid the wall on the table using the guide and lightly touched the wall to the disk sander. A couple of short touches and the wall end is square. Quick and easy. What seemed to take hours of hand sanding now takes seconds. Plus the dust is in the collection system rather than in the layout room.

The only drawback to this method is that if you press too hard while sanding, you'll heat up the casting and warp it or take too much off the end. Slow and sure is the best advice for this method. ✨

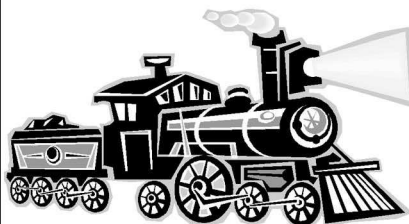
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# You know you're a train nut if...

## From the internet

...you put your kid's toy on your workbench to fix it and end up taking parts off it to use for a load or something to put alongside a layout building or a junkyard.

...you go into a fast food restaurant and buy the Kids Meal simply because you get a wind-up toy that has gears you can use for parts on a flatbed car.


...you "trim" all the bushes in the backyard when your wife is gone so you can get logs for your saw mill.

...you start planting flowers and bushes just so

you can pull them up after a hard frost and use the roots for trees on a hillside on your layout.

...you tell your wife that the rocks and dirt in the back of your car are really weight for the winter.

...you can hear a train whistle two miles away but can't hear your wife call you from the next room.

...your wife blows in your ear, tells you she's going upstairs, and asks how soon you'll be up. And you tell her you'll be there as soon as you finish detailing your new engine...about two hours. 


# The case of the missing FUSEE

**T**LR Contest Director Mike Engler was recently going through some old issues of THE FUSEE and noticed he was missing the Summer 1974 issue, an issue in which he had written an article on scratchbuilding five 1897 wooden boxcars.

TLR Historian Tom Mauszycki, checked the TLR archives and came up empty-handed, concluding that that there must not have been a Summer 1974 issue. Brent Lambert, librarian at the NMRA's Kalmbach Memorial Library, also spent some time researching the missing issue and concluded that there must have been a Summer 1974 issue since it was referred to in the first issue of 1975. Brent also found that there was a Winter 1974 issue, but the Fall 1974 issue had been eliminated.

So now we're trying to both complete the TLR archives and help Mike find a lost article of his.

If you have a copy of THE FUSEE from the Summer of 1974, could we borrow it to photocopy it?

If you have one, please contact Mike Engler at 612-306-5535 or write him at Mike Engler, 16719 Iredale Path, Lakeville, MN 55044 or [mike@entagra.com](mailto:mike@entagra.com). 



## New Brass Car Sides Sets

UP 5200-5211 C&NW 6160-6166 Plan 7386 1937 *Challenger* 56-seat chair car with nurse room, later UP 1502-1523 Club Lounge N-scale sides (#567, \$23.75). HO sides for this UP/C&NW prototype will be produced if we receive a few more reservations. PS 14-4 B&O/KCS/MP Plan 4153 N-scale sides (#528, \$23.75).

Next set will be the PS "Pass" series 8-4-4 sleeper for the 1947 *Empire Builder* in HO and N. Reserve now. See our website or write us for updated list of over 100 items for GN, NP, SP&S, CB&Q, BN, MILW, UP, PRR, NYC, SP, C&NW, IC, RI, B&O, C&EI, L&N, KCS, N&W, ERIE, ATSF, MP, CN, CP, VIA & Amtrak. Use HO sides with TSP, Rivarossi, Con-Cor, ECW, Bachmann, Kato, Walthers, our HO Body Kits, or in N the ALM core kits or plastic dome car overlays. Send 2-oz. SSAE for catalog and bulletin. Available through hobby shops or direct from us (\$4.50 for shipping, plus \$0.50 per ALM core kit if ordered.) Add 6.875% MN sales tax for MN orders. See our website for current information sheets, forms, bulletins, DVD, CV trucks, and magazines.

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# Adding telltales to your railroad

By Lester "Les" J. Breuer, MMR

If your railroad has tunnels or bridges your railroad, depending on the era, should have telltales. Telltales were located along the railroad right-of-way prior to a tunnel or bridge entrance to warn the brakeman, who might be up on top of the car turning down brake wheels, of the approaching structure.

Telltales consisted of a pole and crossarm with sixteen ropes hanging from it. It was the hanging ropes that provided the warning to the brakeman on top of a car. The hanging ropes would hit the brakeman, who would know to get down if he did not want to end up hitting the tunnel or bridge entrance.

If you decide you want to add telltales to your railroad I recommend those made by Creative Model Associates or CMA, part number 1004. In my opinion they're very nicely done. The package contains two telltales molded in gray plastic, one for each entrance of the bridge or tunnel.

Maybe you want to scratchbuild the telltales rather than purchase them. If so you will find articles in the commercial press that will help you do that. One good article appeared in the January 1979 *NMRA Bulletin*. It was "Telltales Two At A Time" by Steve Solomon, and includes drawings with dimensions that match the CMA telltales. You can contact the NMRA Kalmbach Memorial Library at lib@hq.nmra.org, to purchase a copy of the article.

Prior to installing the telltales you will need to paint or weather the poles and crossarms. I keep a jar of dirty Floquil thinner and brush cleaner around for this type job. The dirty thinner, a grayish black, is the dirty paint thinner that you end up with when cleaning paint brushes after using Floquil or other solvent-

based paints. Many of you probably throw the dirty paint thinner away after paint brushes are clean. Rather, I save it to use as a weathering agent.


If you do not have dirty paint thinner around you might want to make up a weathering mix of alcohol and India ink. Mike Engler, in his hand-out from his weathering clinic (presented at the Thousand Lakes Region 2009 convention) suggests visiting the "how-to" section of [www.rustystumps.com](http://www.rustystumps.com). There Mike Chambers has three articles on using alcohol-India inks and formulas. If you have a formula you really like I would encourage you send it to our editor to share with other readers. Once you have a weathering mix you can proceed.

I brushed a couple of coats of the dirty Floquil paint thinner on the poles and cross-arms. In their instruction sheet CMA, says to paint the ropes a black or tan color. I chose black for mine. If you use the base for the telltales that comes in the package you will need to paint that a concrete color.

I didn't like the shape of the base CMA provided so I made one to my liking. I shaped the master from clay and made a rubber mold of it. I used the mold and casting resin to create the base I wanted. I drilled a hole in each



cast resin base for the tell-tale pole and painted the cast resin base a concrete color.

Once the base is dry and the pole is installed in it you are ready to install the telltales on your layout. I installed mine on my Minneapolis & Northland Railroad Company at the entrance of the concrete tunnel at Tunnel City and the wood tunnel entrance at Bass Lake Junction. I still need to get the telltales installed at the ends of the Howe Truss bridge crossing Bass Lake. It's one more enjoyable project to fill my modeling time. 



## 32nd Annual Spud Valley Hobby Show

Sunday,  
October 17, 2010  
9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Admission: \$5  
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- ★ Door prizes -- No need to be present to win
- ★ Valley RC Flyers displaying their planes

# Building plywood benchwork

Text and photos by Greg Smith

In 2007, we completed an addition to our home that included a full basement, and after years of wishful thinking it looked like I would finally be able to finally build my home layout. I joked with my friends that I had the land grant, now I just needed to secure the trackage rights.

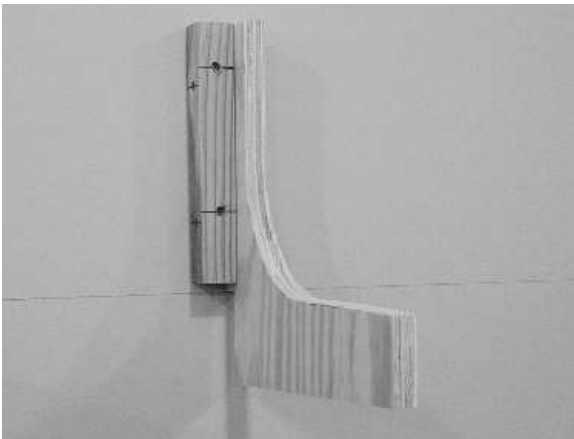


Figure 1

With my wife's blessing, and the help of my teenage sons, construction began in the summer of 2009. Like many other modelers, my hobby interest gravitated back to the trains I remembered as a youth, which would be railroads of the Twin Cities area, particularly passenger trains, of the late 1950's through my high school years in the late 1960's. This would naturally include all the name trains like the GN Empire Builder and NP North Coast Limited. Growing up in south Minneapolis near Lake Harriet, I would accompany my friends to the Hub shopping center in Richfield where we would go to race our slot cars, and regularly see MN&S #15 on the high line at 65th St.

## Layout concept

The layout room was a good start, but in order to get as much layout as possible, I decided to go multi-level with the design so I would be able to operate the longer trains I wanted. My 15-car Builder with the full complement of four covered wagons up front measured 19 feet, so that was to be my minimum siding and yard track length.

The lower level is to be an urban setting loosely based on downtown Minneapolis. A number of years ago, I purchased a scratch built model of the GN Minneapolis depot that would fit in nicely. A small six-

track transfer yard is also in the design to simulate the various roads making their trek across the layout to deliver and pick up cars from one another.

The upper level will feature a couple of small granger towns, each with passing sidings, and industries that typify our area, such as small prairie grain elevators, oil distributors and local lumber yards. A staging yard tucked under the lower level will provide parking for all the equipment and a helix will tie it all together.

## Construction design

The idea of using plywood for the benchwork was inspired by a club from Waupaca, Wisc., that displayed at area railroad shows. My understanding was that one of the members was a wood shop

instructor at the local high school who highly recommended the technique. By using 3/4" plywood ripped to stock for the bench work, I would hopefully eliminate the characteristic twisting and curving inherent to the pine that I had used in years past. I am fortunate in that I have a friend that was able to supply me with scrap 3/4" birch plywood, ripped to 3" stock and 1-1/2" stock for the front edge of the upper deck. However, using plywood, instead of pine, I found it necessary to dado and glue all the joints, which did represent some extra labor. I also blocked all the joints and secured them with an air nailer.

Once the layout room was finished to my satisfaction, it was finally time to start on the lay-

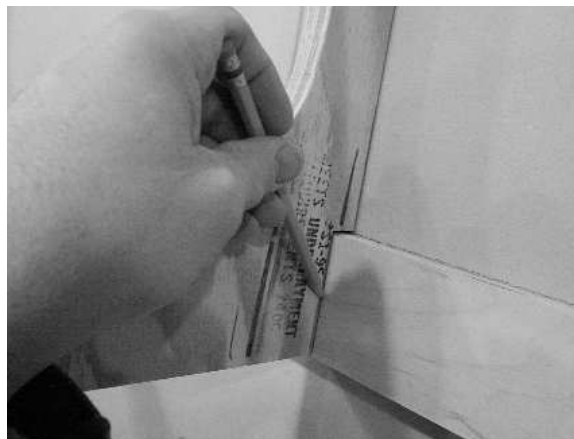


Figure 2

out. This is a large project for me, and time is at a premium, so keeping enthused about the project is key. The plan is to build the upper level first, and try to get trains running as soon as possible. I hope this will help me push on to the lower level, staging, and eventually the helix.

I began by determining the three levels, which

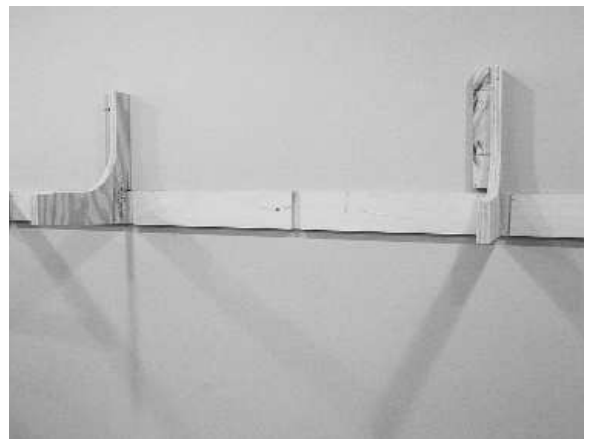


Figure 3

are contingent on the helix design. After doing this, I snapped a chalk line (with level) on the walls to mark the actual location of the top of the bench work grid. I didn't want upper level support members obstructing the view on the lower level, so I constructed some brackets also from 3/4" plywood and 2" x2" blocks in a kind of inverted truss design.

I will also point out here that wherever I used drywall screws, I took the time to drill countersinks and glued most joints. I did not glue any joints where I thought adjustments might be necessary.

Figure 1 shows one of the wall brackets built from 3/4" plywood with a 2"x2" block anchored to the wall on the chalk line. I made sure to align the brackets on studs to assure they could handle the load of supporting the layout. Also note the bracket is notched at the bottom to clear for the rear stringer. I was careful to align the bottom of the bracket so that the notch lined up with the chalk line, which will be the top of the grid.

Next, (Figure 2) I positioned a length of 3/4" X 3" stock behind the brackets and marked the location to cut the dado. To cut the dado, I positioned the 3" stock, along with the 1-1/2" stock in my radial arm saw and cut them both at the same

**Continued on next page**



**Continued from previous page**

time to assure they would line up perfectly. I used two brackets to support an 8' length of benchwork, so I cut additional dados on the ends of the 8' lengths, and some intermediate cuts as needed. I'm using Homasote ripped to 1-1/2" stock and laminated on edge for my roadbed, so I found it necessary to support it about every 16" which worked out nicely lining up with the wall studs.



Figure 4

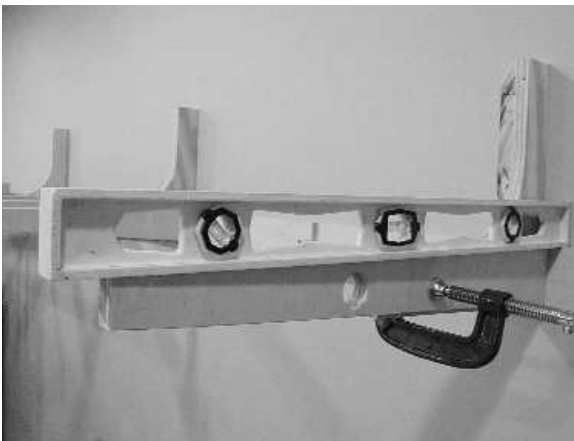


Figure 5



Figure 6

Figure 3 shows the rear stringer positioned behind the wall brackets and screwed to the wall. I was also careful to anchor it to the wall joists. Also visible in the photo is the intermediate dado I cut for a support joist between the wall brackets. To position the rear stringer, I simply aligned the top of the wood with the chalk line.

**T**he next step (Figure 4) was to apply some glue to the back of a joist and push it into the dado groove at the bracket. I am using Titebond 3 Aliphatic resin for adhesive. I am also using this adhesive to glue my ties (I'm handlaying the track) to the Homasote because it is waterproof and will resist loosening when I ballast.

I pre cut all my joists. They are 3" at the back and taper to 1-1/2" in the front. For this particular area of the layout, I cut them to 2' lengths before cutting the taper. I used a

level and some clamps (Figure 5) to hold everything in place so I can screw, but not glue, the joist to the wall bracket.

After the two joists are secured to the wall brackets, I added the front stringer using the 1-1/2" stock that I dadoed with the rear stringer. I added some glue in the joint and hit it with the air nailer. (Figure 6). Now I simply added the intermediate and end stringers, and air nailed pre-cut blocks to all the joints. The blocks are also glued.

Conclusion

So far I'm very happy with the characteristics of the plywood. I'm very pleased with how level, true, and flat everything has turned out, and have not had to work with any twisted wood, or put up with any warpage or sagging, and the price is right. I haven't done a cost analysis of plywood to pine, but I suspect using the plywood ripped into stock will be cheaper. As of now, my roadbed is down and I'm progressing on laying ties. ✂

## 16th Hutchinson Model RR Show

**Sat. Sept. 25, 2010**  
**10 a.m. - 4 p.m.**  
**McLeod County Fairgrounds**  
**780 Century Ave. S.W.**  
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**Admission: \$4 adults, 12 & younger free**

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**“Directors” continued from page 3**

since 1969 (not easy to do on active duty). I am an MMR with all eleven certificates. I have been involved in NMRA activities since the 1980s, predominantly in the Southeastern Region (SER), most recently as the SER President for 6 years. The SER is split between the Eastern and Central Districts, my residence is in the Central District.

I believe my professional experience and involvement with directing a seven-state region of the NMRA will be an asset to the Board of Directors that will shape the future of our hobby during the coming years. I can offer a fresh perspective to the critical issues that will determine the viability of our organization.

**W**e have completed 75 years of phenomenal growth in the hobby of model railroading, from paper rolling stock to computer controlled trains. The focus has been on craftsmanship, innovation and hands-on involvement in a leisure time activity. As we move further into the twenty-first century, there is less emphasis on the craft, more demands on our time, and more products available to rapidly achieve enjoyment from the hobby. The organization’s focus must change also.

The NMRA’s future goes beyond the new logo and the quest for interoperability and compatibility. Those elements are fundamental to our charter and can not be ignored. We need to clarify our vision of our future, establish the goals and objectives to achieve our end and effectively use our resources and the established lines of communication (pardon the military reference) to provide modelers at the grass roots the tools and information to make his/her hobby enjoyable.

**T**he 18,000- plus members are stockholders in this 501(c)(3) corporation. We purchase a share of stock in our company each year because it has an intrinsic value to us. When the value of the stock is deflated (no perceived value), no one will buy it (renew) and the organization will perish. The responsibility of the NMRA BOD, in my view, is to develop, guide and direct the corporation to provide value to the members through sound business practices, and a protective umbrella to establish an environment that ensures the stock value is perceived and appreciated.

The NMRA is a multi-national social network with all the tools, bells and whistles available to make it responsive to the needs of its stockholders. Without a plan to ensure that it happens, the corporation will die from within. I have been integral to attacking the problem at the “grass roots level” and I believe I can add value to the national Board of Directors. 🌟

## ***Dassel Depot Museum to be auctioned this fall***

***Via Terry Davis, as reprinted by the Herald Journal, Winsted, MN***

*[Many TLR members will remember that the Dassel Depot Museum was one of the tour highlights of our 2009 Hutchinson Convention. -Gerry]*

**A** caboose, telegraph, and real box cars and railroad crossings are among the numerous items that will be placed on the auction block in the fall at the Old Depot Museum in Dassel.

“I just think it’s time,” owner Howard Page said, who has mixed feelings about selling the thousands of items he has collected throughout the years.

Though the auction is not scheduled until Thursday, Sept. 16, the auctioneers are already preparing for the four-day event by photographing and cataloging all the items.

“[The depot] has history from all over the world,” auctioneer Mangold said, with some of Page’s items coming from China, Italy, Austria, and England.

“It’s bittersweet,” said auctioneer Benoit, about auctioning off one of Dassel’s landmarks.

“I’m sorry to see it go, but just thrilled to have

it here and happy for the sellers who can do something else and follow another dream,” Benoit added.

As a real estate investor, Page purchased Cokato’s former Great Northern Depot in 1985. It was cut in half and the two pieces were then hauled to its current location along Highway 12 in Dassel.

At first, Page didn’t have a goal in mind, but then he started buying a few items to make it look more like the depot it was.

It started growing from there, and now there are thousands of railroad collectibles in his collection including a caboose and two box cars, among the larger items.

**O**ther items in the collection to be auctioned will be railroad photos, vintage sheet music, tickets, luggage, trunks, bells, whistles, baggage carts, lanterns, uniforms, signals, and much more, many from around the area. For example, there is a desk and ticket booth from Delano that will both be auctioned.

The depot, itself, will be advertised for rent.

Many of the items will be ready for viewing and bidding online at [www.mangoldauction-service.com](http://www.mangoldauction-service.com). 🌟

## **The passing of the torch...er, Fusee.**



*Fusee editor Gerry Leone (left) gives some last minute pointers to future Fusee editor Alan Saatkamp. This is Gerry’s 25th and last issue, and the Winter issue will be Alan’s first.*

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**Changes of address should be sent to the Treasurer.**

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Fall 2010

## THE FUSEE

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INSIDE:

**Introducing the  
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**Adding telltales**

**Plywood benchwork**

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Questions? Email Dave Hamilton at  
mzz64@yahoo.com.

## Train shows & events in and near the Region

*Compiled by Gerry Leone, Jim Bernier, and Terry Davis*

**Sunday, 9/25/10, 16th Annual Hutchinson Model RR Show, 10 AM - 4 PM**, McLeod County Fairgrounds, 780 Century Ave. S.W., Hutchinson, MN. Admission: \$4, 12 and younger free. Operating model railroads, large flea market, modeling clinics, model contest. For more info: 320-587-7820 or [ptdavis@hutchtel.net](mailto:ptdavis@hutchtel.net).

**Saturday, 10/9/10, Fifth Annual Dakota Southeastern Division Model Train Home Layout Open House Tour, 12 PM - 5 PM**, Admission: \$5 per individual or \$10 per family. A total of six home layouts in Harrisburg and Sioux Falls, SD, plus the Sioux Valley Model Engineers Club layout at the Sioux Empire Fairgrounds, South Dakota. Railpasses available at HobbyTown on west 41st Street in Sioux Falls, beginning at 10:00 that morning. Check our website at: [dsed.svmes.net](http://dsed.svmes.net).

**Sunday, 10/17/10, 32nd Annual Spud Valley Hobby Show, 9 AM - 3 PM**, Ramada Plaza Suites, Crystal Ballroom, 1635 42nd St. S., Fargo ND Admission: \$5, under 12 free with paid adult. "Plastics on the Prairie" model contest, large and small operating model railroads, vendors, door prizes. For more information, call Don at 701-234-9351.

**Saturday, 12/11/10, Granite City Train Show, 9 AM - 3:30 PM**, National Guard Armory, 1710 Veteran's Drive, St. Cloud, MN. Admission: \$5, kids 12 and under free. Model and toy trains, accessories, books, videos, collectibles, antique toys, more. Operating displays. For more information, call 320-255-0033, email [edwardolson@cloudnet.com](mailto:edwardolson@cloudnet.com), or visit [www.granitecitytrainshow.com](http://www.granitecitytrainshow.com)

**2011 Thousand Lakes  
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**2012 Thousand Lakes  
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