



Photo Etched Projects Creating a Phone Booth and Newspaper Machines



Thomas Gasior, MMR

Photos by Author

Looking to add more details to my city scene, I found these etched metal kits for creating a couple of items that were commonplace before cellular phones and the internet. Gold Medal Models Phone Booths, and Micro Structures Newsstands, are real eye-catchers and make a fun weekend project.

Photo Right- I began by gathering the tools needed to create the finished projects. I had ordered an Etch-Buddy from Micro Mark awhile ago, and finally had a chance to use it. I filled my work space with some Xuron fine metal cutters, tweezers, scapels, and some specialized products from VMS, otherwise known as Vantage Modeling Solutions. I found these products byatching YouTube videos by military modelers and how they deal with etched brass parts and preparation.

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View from the Cab ***President Jay Manning***

THESIS: Commitment to the Hobby

As I sit here contemplating how to approach this issue of THE FUSEE, the news dealing with Covid-19 or Covid, whichever you accept, has been at best “bleak.” When

I asked a doctor how long this was going to go on, the answer “another year”, first shocked me, then caused me to wonder just where the model railroading hobby should fit into life. As I thought about it, one word kept coming up, “commitment.” As I see the horizon, I think there are three areas that this word touches related to the hobby: commitment to my self-development; commitment to maintaining the hobby; and commitment to the public. I chose to list these in this order as I firmly believe they are intertwined, but start with the commitment to self-development.

Self-development begins with taking an inventory of your skills, both developed and underdeveloped. In my case, I enjoy building modules and developing scenery. Until I got interested in this, I paid little attention to the scenery in the surrounding areas where we lived, then I started noticing colors rock formations, and right of way scenery. I know when it comes to scenery I am weak on colors; a little color blindness is recognized, so I have Marion as my chief inspector. I can think in terms of a module but not in terms of a complete layout in a room, so I work within the DSED and the SVMES to maximize the use of my skills. In the middle are my skills related to weathering. I have done research and collected albums of examples to guide me toward realism. When I started on the weathering path, one of the first articles I read emphasized that this is art-work and once I am satisfied with my work product, that is the end of the process. I am very weak when it comes to DCC. I can install a decoder in an N scale engine and a plug and play in an HO engine. I can run trains using DCC and understand those fundamental principles. BUT I have not learned how to wire a decoder into a Blue Box engine or program various functions that decoders have available such as speed matching and consisting.

So, where does this lead? I still work on my scenery observation skills when traveling, looking for the little (and sometimes big) things that add to the quality of my scenery efforts. I still collect pictures of weathered model railroad equipment off EBay listings—if it is worth \$40, there must be something unique. Lately I have had an emphasis on engine trucks. As for my DCC skills, it is time to do lots of studying, and talking with the members who seem to have all the skills. I picked up the owner’s manual on a Broadway Limited engine and was totally lost in the terminology and functions.

Commitment to maintaining the hobby requires a national effort. I believe that begins with emphasis on the need for the hobby by various associations around the United States and the world. What I see today is numerous organizations failing to emphasize the need to grow the hobby to ensure its demise does not occur. I believe, with my relatively brief participation in

the Thousand Lakes Region (over 10 years now), that this not an issue in “our part of the world.” I experienced the “we don’t want to get along with each other syndrome” in the 1990s which showed itself with the formation of groups that defined their “turf” and basically said “we don’t see any benefit to any other organization” in our version of the hobby. There were wide divides based on unwillingness to recognize each other and the potential benefits of working together. There are still divides between interest groups, just not as deep as they used to be.

Commitment to the hobby today requires understanding the competition for “leisure time” available in today’s world. As the internet has grown and flourished so too has the ability to use it to maintain the hobby as an alternative to all of the other activities available for “free time.” Most of you and I remember being told “turn off the boob tube” and do something else. We must recognize the propensity of the public to use the internet for everything from conducting a business to generating interest in new areas for leisure activities. We must generate a commitment by model railroaders to explore ways to take advantage of this tool in expanding the hobby, thus insuring its survival. “Turn off the computer and do something else” needs to be the new mantra.

A secondary issue of the commitment to the hobby is the effort required to keep sources of model railroad equipment and supplies in business. It seems lately that many firms are shutting down for various reasons such as death of the owner with nobody wanting to take it over, and the internet being the primary source of equipment. If you are a “hands on” person who likes to examine purchases and contemplate how they would fit into your version of the hobby, the loss of hobby shops will stifle your interest in the hobby. On top of that, with the COVID restrictions on model train shows, there are fewer and fewer opportunities to see, feel, and contemplate. There must be a commitment that fosters growth of the hobby to which we ALL need to be committed.

Thirdly, there must be a commitment to the public in order to grow and ensure the existence of the hobby. Interest in the hobby is grown every time there is a model railroad show advertised and open. In these times of COVID fear, running a train show requires very careful planning and coordination. Many, many annual shows that have existed for years have been cancelled. I don’t believe there is any way to effectively measure the impact of the cancellations on the future of the hobby. We recognize that patrons, other than model railroaders, come to train shows to explore the hobby as an alternative to spending leisure time playing computer games. With the current emphasis on “distancing everything from virtual meetings to schoolwork” there needs to be recognition that viable alternatives to sitting in front of a computer hours on end create an opportunity develop the hobby as an individual or family activity.

It is very difficult to get in front of the public with a “virtual train show.” The individuals participating in a virtual train show are already committed hobbyists. A “public welcome” train show opens the door to the hobby to those not already hobbyists. It also provides those of us who are an oppor-

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View from the Cab (Cont)

tunity to shop and talk to vendors and other hobbyists. In the past month, there were 3 public train shows in the Midwest. Vendors did come with their merchandise. The public was welcome and came. It is possible to conduct a model railroad show during the Covid era. Yes, it takes extra planning and coordination well beyond what was required in the past, but it can be done. The sponsors, site officials, and state health department officials all worked together to develop a plan to safely operate the show. Some traditional activities from the past such as opening home layouts for tours will have to be dropped, but the show itself can be conducted safely.

Before Marion and I left home, we got advice from a doctor on how to travel and participate safely. It was not that difficult, key to the advice was wear a mask and wash your hands frequently. At this point in the Covid saga, there must be a recognition and

commitment to the public that the hobby can grow when the public is welcomed and given the opportunity to participate. It may be some time in the future that the ability to have model railroad shows and public appearances of layouts will again support the growth of the hobby. The time to start planning is now, it is a more complicated process than it was in the past, but the best way to generate interest in the hobby is public appearances.

The commitment to the hobby in these three phases will support growth of the individual; maintain the model railroading hobby as a viable alternative to the internet; and ensure that the hobby is taken before an audience that can and will support its growth.

BE COMMITTED. BE SAFE. PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF THE TLR.

2021 TLR Convention Update

Bismarck, ND May 20-23

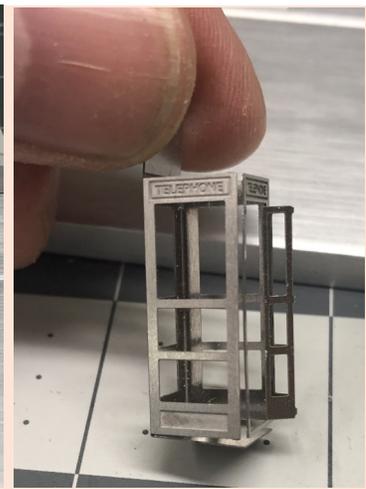
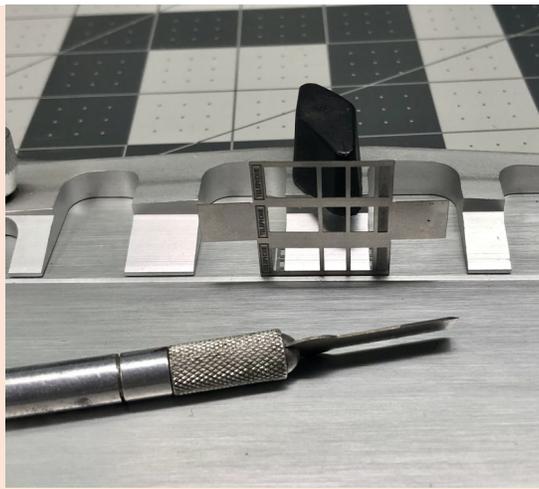
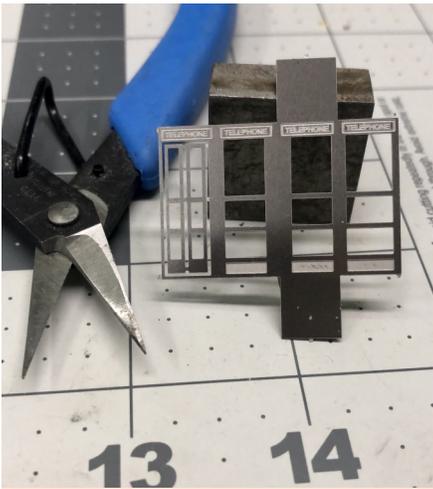
The 2021 TLR Convention will be hosted in Bismarck, North Dakota next year, May 20 to 23, at the Ramada Inn, just off Interstate 94 in Bismarck, ND. The room rates are \$89 per night for a double Queen room, and \$99 per night for a single King room.

We will be visiting Ed Duke's Live Steam layout on Saturday (see photos), about 40 minutes from the hotel. On the way back we will tour the Soo Line depot in Wilton, ND.

COVID concerns are being addressed and we have sufficient space to allow socially distant seating. Face mask use will be required and enforced throughout all the indoor functions, along with whatever regulations may be in effect at the time. We are investigating a switch to an all video, remote "convention" if circumstances demand cancellation. This would result in a clinic-only convention that attendees would be able to view from home, using their computer, iPad or phone. We hope that this will not be needed! We will continue to keep

everyone updated and adjust things. We hope to see you in May!





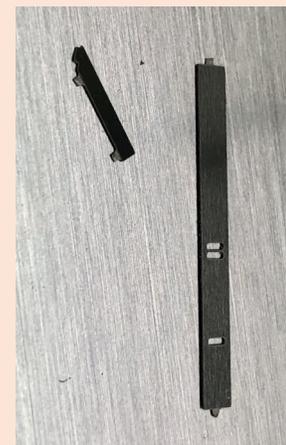
The phone booth was chosen first since it was larger and provided a good warm up. Also there are two booths in the kit, so if I messed up the first one, I could apply the lessons learned to the second booth. The instructions are just six parts, written word. No diagrams. I cut the parts out and reduced down the metal spurs with a small file (**Left Photo**). There are only five parts per booth, yet I only removed the parts I was currently working on. I used the Etch Buddy (**Center Photo**) to hold one side of the booth as I bent the other three sides into a box using a flat hobby knife to pry it into a 90 degree bend. Bending the bottom upwards came next and attaching the walls to the floor using VMS Flexy 5K, a special CA type adhesive for etched metal parts (**Right Photo**).

Next step is to cut out the actual phone and bend it into the shape of a classic rotary dial phone. It had sides, top and bottom. Also two tabs that were to be used to attach the phone detail to the booth. Pre painting of the phone was next, black with white rotary dial. This was set aside to dry.



Now I learned that I needed some clear acetate for the glass. This is not included in the kit. I had some clear 0.010 styrene in my scrap box. Cutting that to size to fit the three walls and attaching them using transparent canopy glue from the inside. The etched metal door was set aside and it is bendable like the prototype. I did not put acetate in the doors as it was too thin, plus no one will really notice when I have the door open. I wanted to have a scene where a person is either entering or leaving the phone booth.

The rotary phone was dry now, so I attached it to a metal corner piece they provide using the slots for the tabs. There is also a shelf that fits in the booth, so you can rest the phone book on it, and that has a tab below the phone in the supplied corner piece. It fits into the booth at a 45 degree angle to the walls.

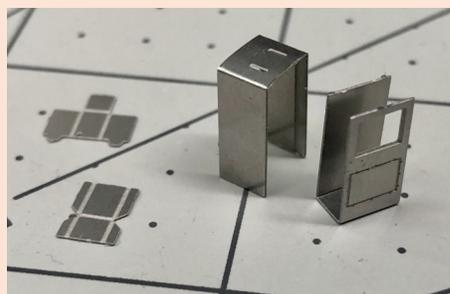
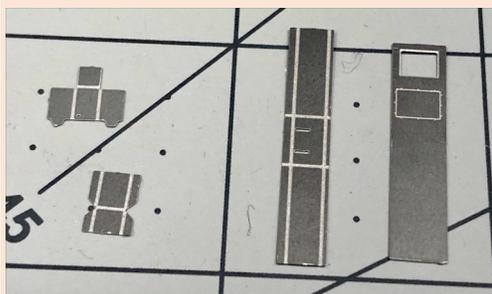
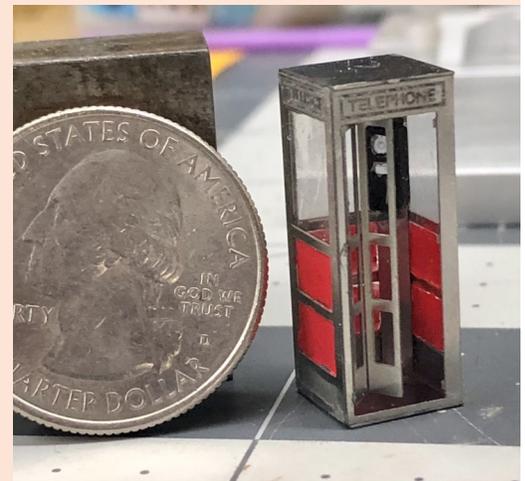


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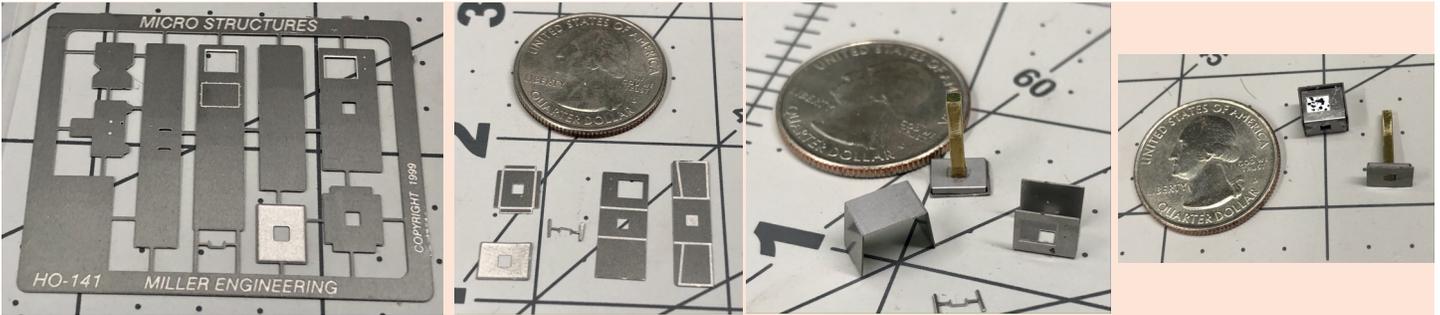
While the glue for the phone was drying, I painted the glass panels to represent photos I had found on the internet (**left photo**). Phones were usually red or blue. I went with red. I used Vallejo red, thinned with some distilled water. Two thin coats work much better than one thick coat of paint, another tip I learned from the war gamers (**center and right photos**).

Once dry, I used a tweezers to attach the phone and corner etched metal piece to the booth with the Flexy 5K. I then moved the shelf into position and attached it to the booth. I could now add the roof and folding doors. The citizens of Agate Bay can now use their dimes and quarters to call anyone when not at home.

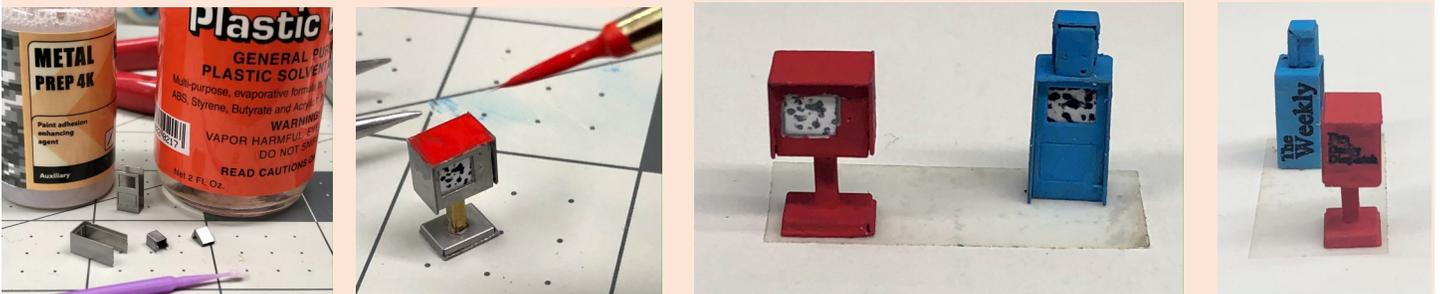


The newsstand machines are another sidewalk detail that can be seen in many cities and small towns. Miller Engineering Micro Structures kit contains two machines of different designs. Miller did the opposite with their directions, and only supplied a exploded diagram of the parts. They show the folds and use arrows to denote the order of assembly. I started with the classic tall one. It consisted of two parts. One was the sides and bottom, the other had the top and front window display and rear (**right in the above photos**). Two more parts made the coin collector on top (**left in the photos**). It fit on the top of the base, and lined up using tabs in slot design. I used a pliers with smooth grips and a flat end to bend these smaller parts. The window was open, so to simulate the display paper, I used a blank piece of copier paper. I added some marks with a gel pen to simulate writing. I did not think going to the trouble of reducing newsprint to HO scale was worth it. No one could read it anyways. I attached this to the inside of the window using Elmers stick glue. Attaching all four parts together with the Flexy 5K finished the assembly. Now I prepared it for painting.

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The square newsstand had a similar design. Two major parts made up the box. I created a display paper for the open window the same as the first newsstand. A solid brass square post is used for the single stand. It attaches into a two part etched metal base for the foot portion. It took me a few moments to realize that the post goes all the way into the top paper box. Otherwise it sits too high for my HO scale citizens. I had to bend the box again, and if you bend etched metal parts more than once, they break. The Flexy 5K to the rescue once again. The last detail to add is a small, etched metal door handle. It would make a great detail, but it was way too small to attach without creating a mess of glue and sorts. I didn't have a tweezers small enough to hold a HO scale door pull. I left it off. I prepared it for painting as the other ones.



Painting etched metal involves three steps, with painting the final one. I start off by cleaning the models with liquid plastic cement. You probably saw this in the photo and thought I used it as an adhesive. No, it is great for cleaning the surfaces and removing any oils, fingerprints and glue residue. Using a cotton bud is a good way to clean these surfaces. I then apply VMS Metal Prep 4K. This is a surface primer specially made for etched brass. It helps paint adhere to the slick surface and resist scratching when paint is dry.

Once these two steps are done, it is time to paint. I used red on one box and blue on the other. This shows competing newspapers and adds to the detail of the sidewalk scene. Once the paint was dry I added the supplied decals. They give you an extra set of each decal. I used Micro Sol to get the decals to snuggle down and then coated everything with a dull coat spray. I attached the boxes to a small cardstock sheet with double sided tape to reduce the handling of these small parts.

Now the main street in Agate Bay has some places for people to get information and communicate with the world!



Achievement Program Report

October, 2020

John R Hotvet, MMR

The last nine months have been about average for certificates awarded in the Thousand Lakes Region. There have been Six Achievement Certificates issued and three Golden Spikes since January, 2020.

The following modelers received the listed certificates:

Kevin Dill – Model Railroad Engineer Electric

John Niemeyer – Master Builder Scenery

John Bate – Association Official

Dave Hamilton – Master Builder Scenery

Neil Maldeis – Model Railroad Engineer Civil

Art Suel – Model Railroad Author

The following modelers have been awarded the Golden Spike

Bob Williams, Dyersville, IA

Don Westerfield, Dubuque, IA

John Davis, Emmetsburg, IA

By Jared Seliger

Model railroading is such a wonderful and unique hobby and it has provided me with a tremendous amount of self-satisfaction and sense of accomplishment. There is no better feeling than finishing up a new structure, successfully



Image 6: Using the loaded and unloaded weights, the scale is programmed to display the weight for the car.

customizing CVs on a locomotive, or publishing a video online to show off my work. I love being part of a community of modelers who are committed to ensure the hobby will continue to thrive for future generations. Part of that community involves my membership in the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA). When I joined the NMRA several years ago,

Minneapolis & Northland



Railroad Company

I enjoy model railroading and want to share my experiences with you! You can see my build of kits, how-to's, painting information and much more on my internet blog. Check out <http://mnrailroadcab100.blogspot.com>.

Lester Breuer, MMR

Adding a Transponder to a Boxcar

By Jared Seliger

Disclaimer: This is not a paid endorsement of this product. The opinions are those of the author. The author is not responsible for any issues or damage caused by trying to replicate the techniques described in this article. Please consult the manufacturer's instructions before installation.

If there is a silver lining to a dreadful 2020, the “safer-at-home” approach most people have been implementing has allowed some of us to work on home projects that we might not have ordinarily tackled during the summer months. A lot of the model railroaders I have spoken with have taken advantage of this time by working on their pikes to provide a distraction from the pandemic. The typical slow summer months for model railroading proved to be very productive for lots of us!

One of the projects on my to-do list for the last few years was to build a portable layout that incorporates more of the advanced model railroad technology that I can take to model shops and train shows for in-person demonstrations of advanced aspects of the hobby. Over the span of about three months, I was able to complete my goal and I will be showing off my portable layout on my YouTube Channel ([search for ck7813](#)) over the winter months with a how-to railroad build series. This includes the installation and wiring of a Digitrax BXP88 module. The BXP88 is a detection/transponding device that communicates via Digitrax Loconet system to provide the user with block detection and transponding location identification for transponding-enabled decoders.

The addition of detection and transponding is a valuable resource for many modelers who have large layouts or hidden staging tracks. The transponding feature allows the DCC system to locate what block that transponding-equipped locomotives or rolling stock are in. The locations of transponding-enabled decoders can be determined several ways, including through the DCC system (throttles), control panels, or JMRI-compatible programs.

Unfortunately, the addition of transponding to a model railroad is a very intricate process. The railroad needs to be wired in a manner where blocks of track are electrically isolated from each other and the blocks must be connected to an electronic module which provides detecting and/or transponding. Decoders have to be equipped with a transponding feature compatible with the DCC system you are using. Most rolling stock are not equipped with decoders nor do many have power pickups connected to the trucks providing a power source of decoders. In spite of these challenges, the ability to utilize detecting and transponding is a valuable asset to be used.

The purpose of this article is to describe the addition of a transponding decoder to a boxcar. However, it is important to understand the basic function of how a layout needs to be prepared to provide transponding. Since the layout used for transponding utilizes Digitrax components, the manufacturer's instructions for proper wiring were followed. Digitrax's BXP88 is the module which controls the detection and transponding functions. To use the BXP88,

Digitrax recommends a “direct home” wiring process which uses a common rail A wire and individual rail B wires for each block (Image 1). Bus wires are run from the command station to the BXP88 and the feeder wires for each block run from the BXP88 to the track. To create a block, a gap (or insulated rail joiner) needs to be included for each block section. A single BXP88 can control 8 blocks. The layout for this demonstration was a new construction so integrating the direct home wiring was easily integrated. For existing layouts which were wired with normal a DCC convention (bus wires with feeders directly connected to the bus), it is significantly more challenging to retrofit a BXP88, but not impossible.

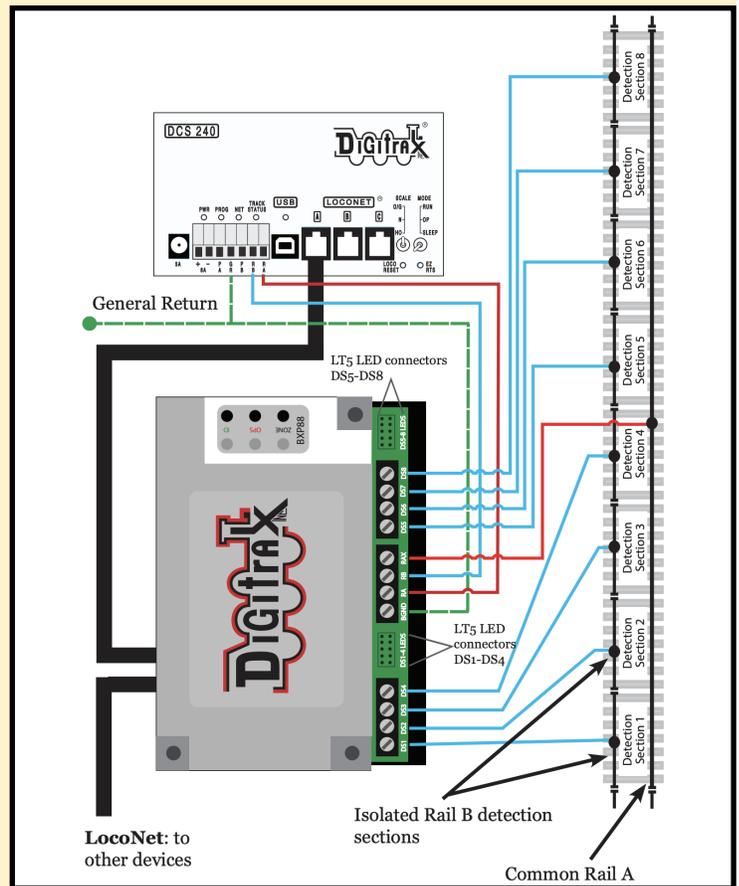


Image 1: Digitrax BXP88 Wiring Diagram

The BXP88 can be used for detecting and transponding. It is crucial to understand the difference between the two. Detection senses a draw in current from a section of track. The draw can come from any powered locomotive or rolling stock equipped with a resistor wheelset. Detecting shows which section of track is occupied, which can be very advantageous for layouts with areas not easily visible by the operator. This could prevent possible collisions by moving a train into an occupied block. Another advantage is that any powered locomotive can be detected and does not require any modifications to be detect

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ed. The disadvantage is that detecting does not give the operator any information about what is occupying the section of track.

Transponding is similar to detecting in which it shows that blocks of track are occupied; however, transponding additionally provides information back to the operator about what DCC address is occupying the section of track. This is advantageous when trying to determine the location of a specific locomotive or piece of rolling stock. The disadvantage of transponding is it requires a decoder capable of transponding. All Digitrax decoders can be used for transponding, but if you are using a non-Digitrax decoder, it may not be compatible with the transponding function.

Because few, if any, pieces of rolling stock come equipped with a transponding-enabled decoder, the process of adding a decoder is described in detail. For this project, an Athearn Ready-to-Roll 40' box car was equipped with a Digitrax TL1 decoder (Image 2). Digitrax produces several transponding equipped decoders and this one is a single function decoder. It does have the capabilities to serve as a single lighting function which could control a fixed rear-end device (FRED) or other lighting function. For the purposes of this demonstration, the light capabilities were not used.



Image 2: The Digitrax TL1 decoder and the soon-to-be transformed Blue Box Athearn Boxcar.

The first step in adding a decoder is to ensure an adequate power supply is available for the decoder. Since the boxcar was not equipped with any power feeders connected to the trucks, the first step is to add a set of trucks with feeder wires. Even though it is possible to add power feeders on factory-installed trucks, several manufacturers produce trucks with power wires already connected and I decided to purchase a set of Athearn powered trucks (70-ton as per the prototype). To add the trucks, the boxcar needed to be disassembled. The couplers and trucks were removed and set aside with a small screwdriver. Additionally, the box was removed from the frame. Using a 1/8" drill bit, two small holes were drilled through the frame to accommodate the feeder wires (Image 3, red arrows). After carefully pushing the feeder wires through, the powered truck was secured in place with a screw.

With the power supply wires in place, the TL1 decoder could be installed. The TL1 has 4 wires connected to the decoder: red, black, white, and blue. The red and black wires are connected to the power supply and the blue and white wires may be connected to an LED or light output. As described above, controlling a lighting function was

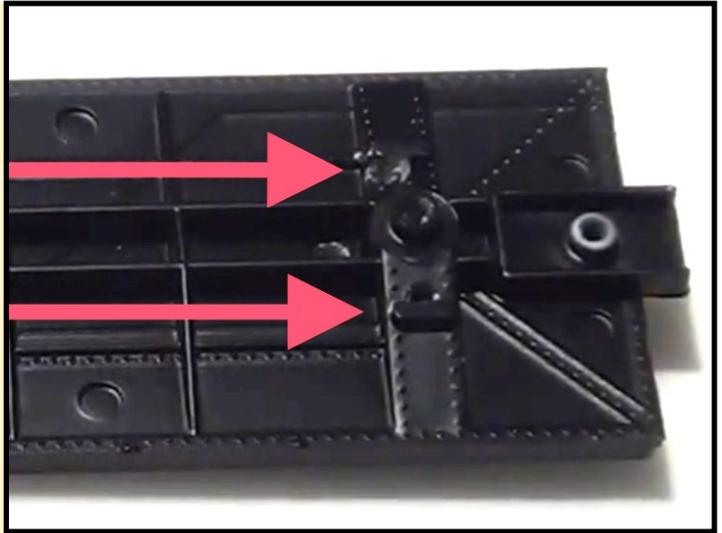
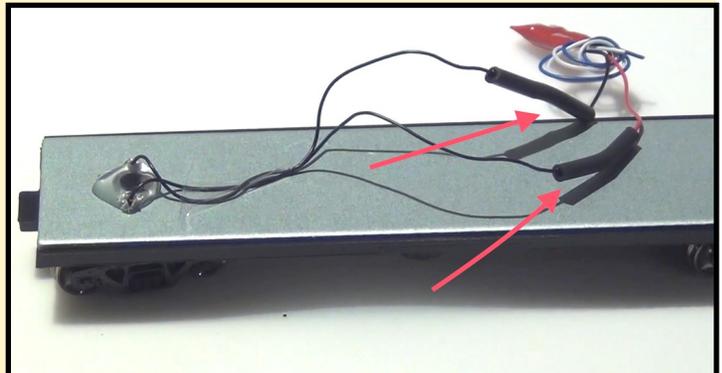


Image 3: Two 1/8 inch holes are drilled into the bolster to allow the wires from the new trucks to pass through.

not used with this decoder so the white and blue wires were not used. The ends of the black and red wires were stripped and tinned and soldered in place with the feeds from the powered trucks. Since the solder joints were exposed without insulation, the likelihood of a short increases if the bare wires touch. To prevent a short and to protect the joint, 1/16" heat shrink tubing was used (Image 4, red arrows). The shrink tube was slid onto the wires before the wires were soldered. After the soldering was completed, the tubes were slid over the joints and shrunk into place using a heat gun.



Images 4 and 5: 1/16 inch shrink tubing was placed over the soldered wire connections (top). The decoder and wires were secured in place with clear tape (bottom).

With the wires soldered, the final step before reassembly was to secure the wires and decoder onto the frame using a small amount of clear tape (Image 5, previous page). This technique ensures the wires and decoder remain in place while reassembling and using the car. The top box was replaced and the couplers and reaming truck were then reinstalled.

With the car reassembled, the final step before operation was programming the decoder. As with most digital decoders, the default address is a short address of 03. The address needed to be reprogrammed with a unique identifier for this car for accurate transponding identification. The road number on this boxcar is 4029. Unintentionally, the road number for this boxcar happened to be only 4 digits, some road numbers are much longer. If you are trying to program a road number longer than 4 digits, it is suggested to use the last 4 digits and be consistent on how you program (e.g., use the last 4 digits for all rolling stock) to avoid confusion during operation. The address on the TL1 programmed in the same manner a locomotive address is programmed. I typically either use JMRI or my command station to complete the programming updates. In this example, I used my command station (Digitrax DCS 52) connected to a programming track. The 4-digit address was programmed to "4029." A unique aspect of programming the TL1 is that after you program a 4-digit address, you must change CV29 to a value of 38 so the 4-digit address is enabled.

With the decoder installed and programmed, a formal test on the layout could be performed. As described earlier, the layout was appropriately wired and configured for detecting and transponding using the Digitrax BXP88. The feedback mechanism for detecting and transponding

was an LED-equipped map of my layout created on the fascia of my layout. Additionally, Digitrax throttles like the DT400 and 500 series have a "FIND" button which will broadcast the zone the active transponding decoder is in. For transponding to work, the address of the rolling stock must be selected and active in the DCC system. When the BXP88 is detecting, it will show occupied block has a solid LED. When transponding, a block with a transponding-equipped decoder has a flashing LED. The LED feedback does not provide information about the actual road number of the transponding decoder. Therefore, the "FIND" button on the throttle must be used.

On my layout, several things are occurring in **Image 6**. The transponding-equipped box car is in block 0 and a non-transponding locomotive is in block 1. Even though this is a static image, the LED in block 0 (Image 6, red arrow) is flashing. The locomotive in block 1 shows a solid LED (Image 6, blue arrow). The DT402 with address "4029" active on the left throttle in FIND mode confirms the box car is in block 1 (Image 6, yellow arrow). Note: the throttle shows "Zn 0000" where Zn is the abbreviation for zone, a term that can be synonymously used for block.

The installation and test of an LT1 decoder on a transponding-enabled layout was extremely successful. Although implementing transponding requires specialized wiring, modules and decoders, the application of this approach could prove to be very beneficial for modelers who have large layouts or hidden track areas. Because of the value provided of transponding, I am looking to expand my use of it by modifying my main layout to accommodate transponding and also configuring a panel within JMRI to have a computer readout of the location of transponding-enabled decoders on my layout.

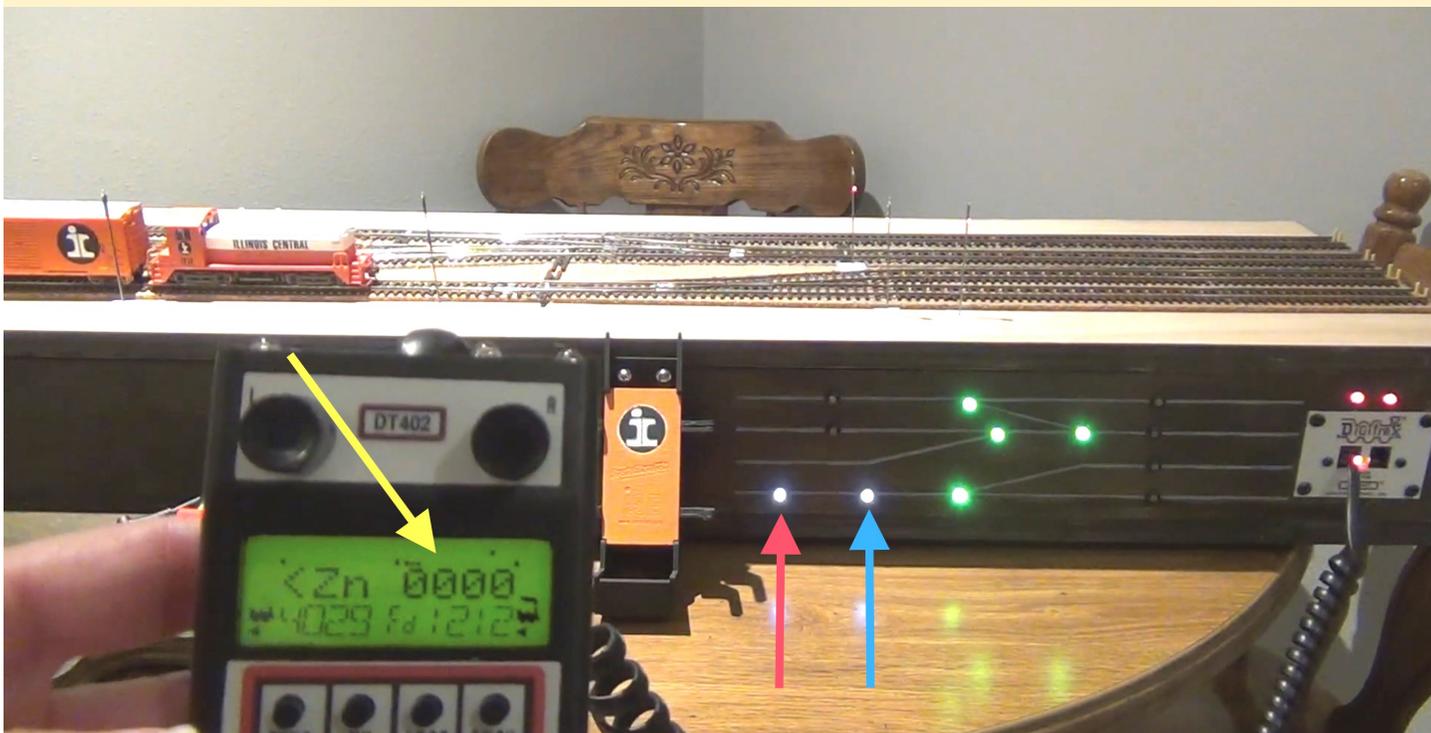


Image 6: Yellow arrow indicates "Zn 0000" on the throttle, which means Zone 0, equal to block 0. 4029 is visible below it, indicating decoder 4029 is active (boxcar). Red Arrow: Blinking LED in real life, is Block 0 indicating decoder 4029 is in it. Blue Arrow: Solid lit LED, showing track occupancy with a DCC, non-transponding Loco in Block 1.

Digitrax DT602 Super Throttle Article Update

Jared Seliger

Article Update: Late in August Digitrax released a firmware update for the DT602 Super Throttle. I was able to successfully update the firmware on September 10 and I wanted to provide an update for one of the areas I identified as a deficiency of the new throttle. Before the firmware update, I noted that the DT602 only had 10 functions (0 - 9) on the keypad without entering the extended function menu. This was problematic because the majority of my locomotives have the brakes mapped to F10 and to access F10, it required an extra keypad click to get into the +10 function range. The new firmware update added 3 more functions to the throttle without needing to extend the functions. Functions 10-12 were mapped to soft keys D, E and F (refer to Image 5 on page 5 of the Fall 2020 Fusee). The firmware update makes the DT602 have 13 function keys which is equivalent to the DT400 and 500 series throttles. I would suspect that it will take Digitrax some time to ship throttles with the firmware update so if you have already purchased a throttle, or will do so soon, you will need to upgrade to take advantage of this new feature. When you power up your DT602, it will show what version of firmware you are running so if it shows anything prior to August 2020, it is an old version. By mid-September, I will upload a video on how to update the firmware on the throttle on my YouTube channel (search for CK7813).

Seeking Clinicians for the 2021 TLR Convention (May 20-23) in Bismarck, ND:

We are looking for clinicians for our 2021 convention for a range of topics, including for general arts and crafts for the non-rail participants. Please contact Kevin Dill, Clinic Coordinator, at Dillkev@aol.com if you have clinic you'd be willing to present.

Publishing Deadlines

<u>Publishing Date</u>	<u>Submission Deadline</u>
March 1 Edition	February 1
July 1 Edition	June 1
September 1 Edition	August 1
December 1 Edition	November 1

Building Celebration Room Photography Stands for the TLR

By Kennedy Gauger and Jim Bennett

Introduction

During the Joint Convention between the Thousand Lakes Region (TLR) and the Midwest Region (MWR) in 2019 held in La Crosse, WI, we had issues with enough displaying space in the Celebration Room, which is not uncommon when there are many entries submitted. Photographs were placed facing up on the tables along with other entries. This posed two main issues:

- They required more space, and
- They were are not easy to view

We are accustomed to viewing photographs that are placed on a wall or easel so we can view them directly. Looking down on them on a table is awkward and after a relatively short period of time, becomes uncomfortable.

To address these concerns, the Thousand Lakes Region (TLR) Contest Director undertook the project, with TLR Board Approval, of constructing three sets of photography stands, with each stand having the capacity of holding a minimum of 16 photographs in a near vertical manner. An important requirement for this project was that the photography stands should be durable enough for use at TLR conventions well into the future. Other criteria were that they should be attractive and not detract from the photographs, they should be constructed of durable materials, and they should be relatively easy to assemble and disassemble. Attractiveness and durability were addressed by selecting a hardwood. Although several options existed, Ash was selected as providing a readily available and cost-effective option. It is an attractive wood that generally will not detract from photographs presented on the stands. Ash is a hardwood that will hold up to years of use. Finally, with a suitable design, the photography stands can be assembled and disassembled for repeated use.

Design

Rather than developing our own design, the author contacted Mr. Ryan Moats, MMR of the Mid-continent Region (MCoR) of the NMRA, and asked what means did MCoR use for viewing photographs in their Celebration Room. He referred me to a design that was published by the Southeastern Region (SER) of the NMRA. This was published in the 2005 winter issue of the SER newsletter called the E SouthErneR. **Figure 1 (next page)** presents a schematic of the photography stand design, used with permission of the SER. We adapted it in several minor ways which will be addressed in this article.

Principally, we modified:

- T-Nuts with Screw-In Slotted Insert Nuts (Type IB, 1/4-20 thread, 0.472" length). This was done because over time, in the experience of the authors, T-Nuts become loose and, especially in a hard wood, are difficult to emplace. The Screw-In Slotted Insert Nuts will not easily come out of the hardwood with repeated assembly and disassembly and their insertion is facilitated by careful selection of a hole drilled in the Ash wood. Screw-In Slotted Insert Nuts allow placement in the wood without being visible on the back side and thus are visually more appealing, whereas T-Nuts require drilling through the wood and are unsightly by comparison. The inserts were used on all of the runners shown in **Figure 1**.

Some of the bolts used for assembly had to be changed slightly as being either shorter or longer for better ease of assembly and because the screw-in inserts were blind to the backside of runners.

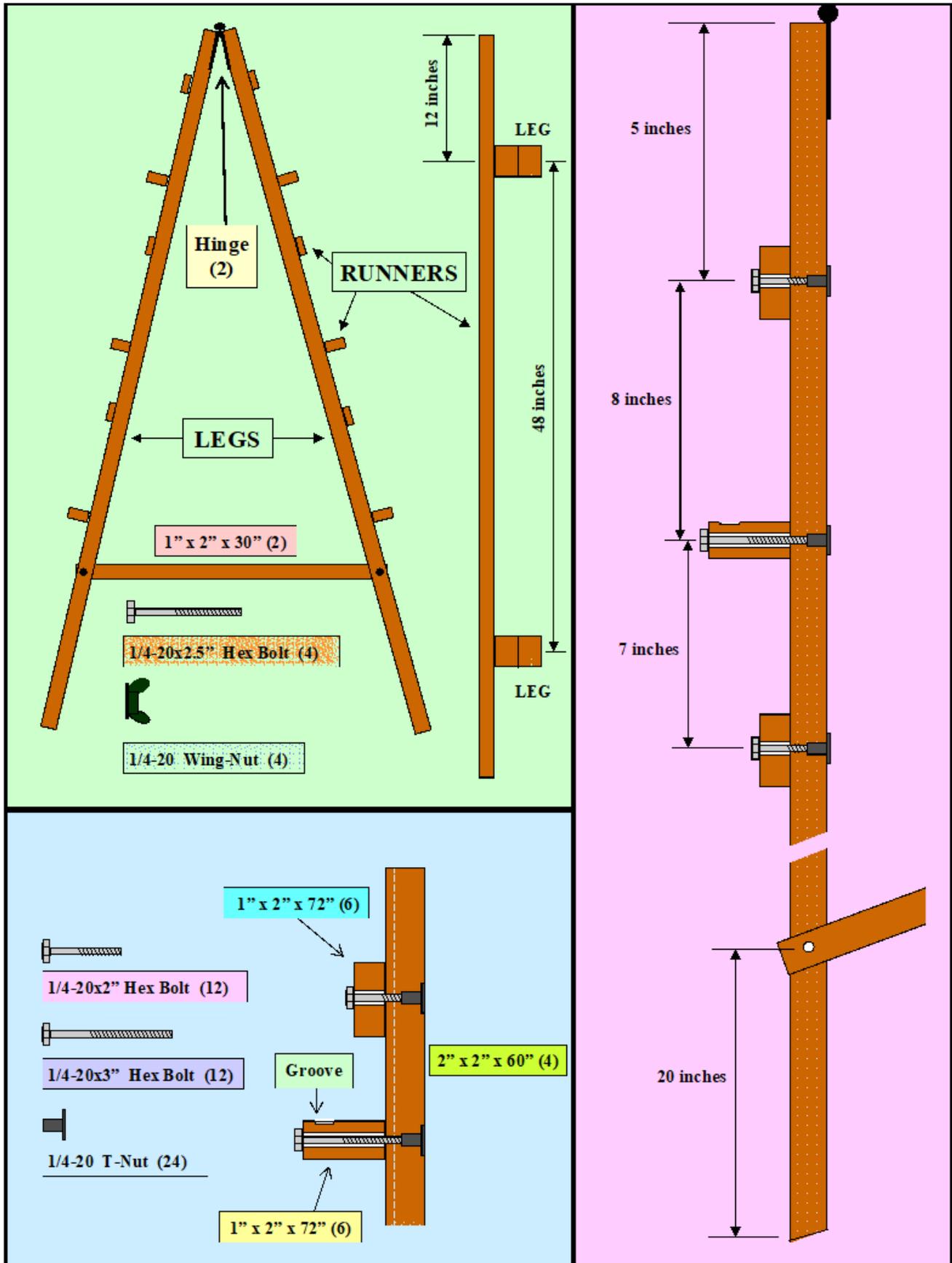
A long cross member was added spanning from the lower side of one vertical support to the upper side of the opposite vertical support of the pair of uprights on each photography stand to aid in stability. This was done because in a crowded Celebration Room, it is probable that the photography stands may inadvertently be bumped by attendees. Also, during evaluation by judges, photographs will be picked up and removed frequently so a more stable stand is advantageous.

Wingnuts were only used on the cross members.

The uprights and runners were all 72" in length. It was believed that the 72" height of the upright will be preferred to 60." Also, it facilitated cutting a uniform length of wood used in construction of all of the stands.

Three stands depicted in the schematic of **Figure 1** were constructed for the TLR Celebration Room. It is estimated that as many as 12 photographs may be displayed on each side of each stand, for a total of 24 photographs per stand. Adjusting for the number of large photographs, this will allow for 60 to 70 photographs to be displayed on the three stands at any given convention.

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Materials and Equipment

The amount of Ash needed would be prohibitively expensive to obtain if it were available and purchased at a lumber supply store. However, in the Sioux Falls area Ash was readily available from a local lumber mill that sources rough sawn lumber. "Rough sawn" is the term used to describe lumber as it exists after it is cut at a sawmill. Rough sawn lumber requires added steps of material handling before it is ready for use in a project. This involves planing the sides and edges (using a planer and joiner, respectively) to eliminate the "roughness" and to dimension the boards for ultimate use.

We obtained slightly more than 200 board feet of five quarter Ash. The amount of Ash needed, is shown in the workshop prior to beginning the project (**Figure 2**). The stack is ~ one foot high, one and one-half feet deep, and between eight and nine feet long. Most of the rough sawn Ash boards were 4" to 6" wide and 1¼" (hence, five quarter) thick. The hardware including nuts, bolts, washers, and hinges (purchased at a home improvement store) and screw-in slotted insert nuts (purchased at Ace Hardware) were obtained locally. All of the shop equipment was owned, operated, and donated to TLR for use in this project by the co-author of this article (Jim Bennett).



Figure 2. Five Quarter Roughsawn Ash (~200 board feet) on Workshop Rack (the stack is about 1 ¼ feet deep, 1 foot tall and eight to nine feet long)

Woodwork

The initial stage in the building process was to make dimensional lumber out of the rough sawn Ash. This necessitated that the boards were planed to the desired thickness and that they had a finished edge (**Figure 3**). All boards used were planed to the same thickness.

After the rough sawn wood was planed, each board was passed through a joiner, so they had a finished edge. When this was completed, the boards were ripped using a table saw (**Figure 4**). **Figure 5** (next page) shows all of the ~ 1" x 2" boards stacked together and ready for project use.



Figure 3. Fifteen-Inch Planer for Finishing Ash to Consistent Thickness



Figure 4. Ripping the Ash Boards

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Figure 5. All of the Dimensional Ash

The next construction was to cut all of the boards shown in **Figure 5** to 72" length. Twenty-four of these boards (eight for each stand) were used to make the uprights (triangle portion shown on left panel of **Figure 1**), and the remaining boards were used for runners (12 for each of the three photography stands). There were three pairs of runners on each side of each stand. The top runner of the pair is used to allow the top of the photograph to stand out from the upright and the bottom runner of the pair has a trough routed into it to allow the photograph to sit on the bottom without falling out of the stand. There are three pairs of these runners on each side of the uprights so that photographs may be displayed at three levels for viewing. Thus, each photography stand is fitted with 12 runners. This resulted in a total of 36 runners for the three stands.

Eight 72"-long boards were used to make 2" x 2" legs for the uprights used for each photography stand. A side-view of these is shown in the lower left panel of **Figure 1**, which also illustrates the arrangement of the runner pair attached to the upright (recall, that we made the uprights 72" long instead of the 60" length indicated in the schematic).

To make the 2" by 2" boards, we glued two pieces together using wood glue. We did this for two sets at a time and clamped them together until the glue dried. The process of gluing the boards is shown in **Figure 6** and the paired uprights clamped together is depicted in **Figure 7**. Both 1"x 2" boards used to form an upright had glue applied to them after which they were put together. This was done for a second pair of boards and the two pairs of boards were clamped at the same time. The bead of glue apparent in each of the 1"x2" pairs seen in **Figure 7** is glue squeezed out under the pressure of clamping. Subsequent sawing or joinery removed the dried, excess glue.

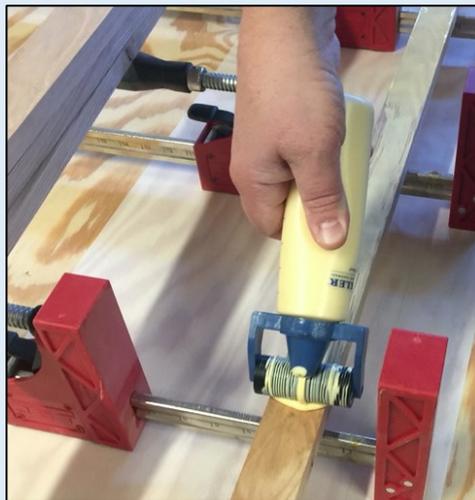


Figure 6. Application of Wood Glue to Make 2"x2" Uprights



Figure 7. Two Sets of 2" x 2" Glued Uprights Under Clamping

Cont page 15

All of the Ash dimensional lumber (runners and uprights) had sharp edges, so the next step was to smooth these edges using a 1/8" round over bit in a 2¼ hp router. **Figure 8** shows the process of routing these edges where the end of each board was clamped to the work bench to stabilize the board. This was done for all thirty-six 1" x 2" runners. **Figure 9** demonstrates routing of the 2"x2" boards used as uprights. It can be seen in **Figure 10** that some sanding was required after routing was done due to small elevation of wood from the router bit. **Figure 11** shows sanding of the edges and the surface of the boards was done with a palm sander fitted with 60 grit sandpaper.



Figure 8. Routing Edges of Ash Boards used as Runners



Figure 9. Routing Edges of Ash Boards Used as Uprights



Figure 10. Rounded Edges After Routing. Note the edge left by the route that will be sanded away.



Figure 11. Sanding of Routed Boards

After the uprights and runners were sanded the runners were prepared for mounting on the uprights. As mentioned above, all of the bottom runners were attached perpendicular to the upright and had a trough routed into it using a ½" wide straight router bit in a 2¼ hp plunge router installed underneath a router table. This was to allow photographs to sit on the bottom runner without falling out of the stand. Routing of the groove in the bottom runners is shown in Figure 12.

Cont. page 16



When all of the bottom runners had been routed the next step was to drill holes into which the screw-in inserts were added. This was done for all of the runners. For the top runner, in each runner set, the screw-in insert was placed in the middle of the wide part of the board as shown on the right side of the lower left panel in **Figure 1**. In contrast, for the bottom runner, in each runner set, the grooved runner was installed perpendicular to the upright and was placed in the narrow side of the 1" x 2" board, also shown on the right side of the lower left panel in **Figure 1**.

A key difference between the lower left panel of **Figure 1** and the way we made our photography stands is that we installed the inserts into the runners instead of the uprights. This made it possible to keep the face of the runners free of any hardware. All of the hardware entered through the back side of the stands where it would be less obtrusive.

As noted earlier, we used Type IB slotted screw-in inserts which had a $\frac{1}{4}$ " internal diameter and number 20 threads. These were 0.472' in length. Other dimensions of these were as follows:

Outside body – $\frac{23}{64}$ "

Outside splines – $\frac{29}{64}$ "

Insertion hole (thus bit size) $\frac{25}{64}$ " drilled in each runner to a depth of 0.5"

Figure 13 shows drilling of holes in the runners using a $\frac{25}{64}$ " bit using a drill press and a clamp to ensure that the board did not move during drilling. Use of a drill press ensured that the holes were vertical and that when assembled, they would lay flat against the uprights. Blue tape was placed on the bit to provide a visual indication of the vertical progress of drilling, but a stop on the drill press prevented going too far or all of the way through each Ash board.

Although the screw-in inserts were slotted such that a wide screw driver could be used to install the inserts, we chose instead to use the drill press to ensure that they went in straight and not at a slight angle.



Figure 13. Drilling Holes for Screw-In Inserts Used to Mount Runners on Photography Stands

Cont. page 17

To accomplish this, we made a special bit by cutting off the head of a 1/4" bolt (**Figure 14**). The unthreaded portion of the bolt was held within the drill press. Two nuts were placed on the threaded portion, one on top of the other. Space was provided between the top nut and the drill press so that nut could be unscrewed using a wrench (**Figure 15**). The lower nut was tightened against the upper nut and the screw-in insert was placed on the threads up against the bottom nut. The board and its 25/64" hole were lined up beneath the insert and the bit lowered to the runner (**Figure 16**).



Figure 14. Shop-Made Bit Used to Install Screw-In Inserts



Figure 15. Wrench Used to Drill in Insert and Release the Bit

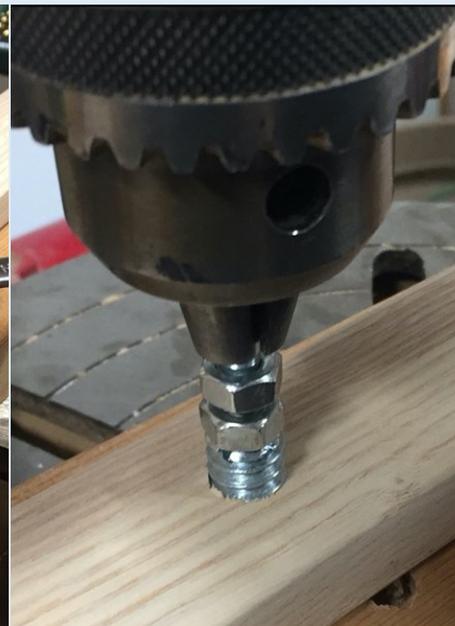


Figure 16. Drill Press Emplacement of Screw-In Insert in Runner

Figure 17 shows a bottom runner with two inserts. The insert on the left has been screwed into the narrow edge of the runner (hence, a bottom runner). The insert on the right shows what these inserts look like prior to installation. The groove that had been previously routed in this board (**Figure 12**) is on the back side and out of view. In the example of the insert on the right, the outermost splines can be seen. Both examples illustrate the slotted feature of this appliance.



Figure 17. Insert in the Narrow Side of the Board Used as a Bottom Runner. Also shown is an insert prior to emplacement.

During part two of this series, rough assembly of the stands, finishing and final assembly details will be provided. Also, a detailed list of hardware used for this project will be presented.

From the Archives of the Thousand Lakes....

Matt Lentz, Historian

NEW CLUB FORMED IN BISMARCK

Members of the newly-formed Slope Area Model Railroad Club took time out from a recent tour of the Bismarck, N.D., Soo Line marshalling yard to pose before the line's snow plow just before it was put into service breaking snow drifts. From the left are Jack Coppin, Soo Line Bismarck trainmaster, Duke Ellingson, club vice president, Fred Hauser, club president, and Frank Vyzralek, North Dakota State Archivist.

Photo courtesy of the Bismarck Tribune.



THE SLOPE AREA MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

At the convention in Fargo last May, James MacLeish of Bismarck discussed the problem of low attendance at region rallies by North Dakota modelers. Returning to Bismarck, he set out to find other interested modelers in his area. Beginning with an ad in the TV section of the Bismarck Tribune he enticed the editor into including a feature on model railroading in the weekend supplement of the paper.

The result was a response from about 26 modelers, eight of whom came to a meeting at his apartment. A hard core of six experienced HO modelers is included in the initial group. The group elected officers and selected the name: "The Slope Area Model Railroad Club". This group shortly expects to become 100% NMRA. Meeting dates are irregular, with a minimum of one per month.

While the club does not yet have a clubroom it is working on plans to construct mobile, very portable layouts for display purposes in public spots such as shopping centers.

Jim reports on recent activity; "November proved to be a busy month. At the Thousand Lakes Region rally in Minneapolis Jim MacLeish informed the membership of the SAM club formation and asked region members for any guidance they could provide concerning the attaining of a club meeting spot, setting up of constitution and bylaws, fund-raising, publicity and membership drive proposals. "On December 3, club members took a three hour tour of the Bismarck Soo Line freight marshalling yard. Playing tourguide was Jack Coppin, Soo Line trainmaster for the Bismarck yard and Soo Line pike covering 300 miles to

the towns of Drake, Max, Wishek, and Pollock. Coppin explained his duties in moving 250,000 tons annually out of the yard, scheduling train crews, supervising three outbound and two inbound trains, and worrying about track conditions.

"As ten inches fell on Bismarck, Coppin also provided a tour of the line's snowplow just before it went out to break through drifts up to sixteen feet high.

"Shop foreman Jerry Blahosky spent about an hour with the club explaining on train the mechanical systems of the Soo Line's 1500 horsepower covered wagon "C" unit of an F-7 "consist", now disappearing from the line. Club members also were treated to a tour of a new GP-30-2, a blower-type 2000 horsepower model of the 700 series, which just joined the yard inventory.

"Finally, technicians from Minneapolis demonstrated their talents at locating faulty rails with the Soo Line's only track testing car, located temporarily at the Bismarck yard. According to the technicians, the railroad checks all of the main pike for breaks annually and all spur lines every five years. The inspection car covers about 10 miles per day using magnetic and sound signals to find track faults. About 16,000 rails are replaced annually as a result of the tests.

"Also in December, the club selected a logo endemic to the Northern Plains: a silhouette of a windmill-supplied watertower. Future plans include production of posters to be posted at local hobby shops informing railroaders of the club's existence and meeting places and a systematic review of the members' trainboards to include advice on layouts and troubleshooting."

Jim MacLeish
SAM Club Secretary.

Planning for the 1981 TLR Convention

NEWS FROM THE SLOPE AREA MODEL RR CLUB

Our big board has been in storage for over a year now, the erection delay being due to the financial clamps on our new landlord which have precluded his constructing the building at RAWHIDE CITY which will hold the layout. Depressed tourism really hit his operation last summer. However, we have recently heard that he has lined up a long-term investor who will provide new construction funds. Hopefully we will have the layout in service in time for Meet 1981.

The State Highway Department has invited us again, this year, to prepare two model train layouts for display during our National Transportation Week in mid-May, one for each major shopping center. We have agreed to furnish and operate one (16' x 4') at the newest center. Right now our efforts are aimed at getting this display completed.

Our club members are enthusiastic about the upcoming Meet 1981, which will start Friday evening, May 16, 1981 and close on Sunday afternoon. Many details are still in the planning stage. We have selected the Town House Motor Inn as the Meet headquarters. A block of rooms has been reserved, as well as suitable rooms for our banquet, clinics, meetings, etc. The Town House is just south of I-94 at the main Bismarck exit. Within walking distance there are many other motels, with varying rates and many eating places offering great variety.

Friday evening will include registration and a wine and cheese mixer. Saturday morning a tour will be made of the Mandan Yard of the BN. They are currently being expanded to provide for major repairs of coal hauling gondolas.

Special events planned for the young people will include a splash party at the Town House pool on Saturday morning, followed by a pizza or hamburger picnic.

Special tours will be provided for the ladies, including a tour of the Kirkwood Plaza and the Gateway Mall, two superb shopping centers with many stores. This tour will include lunch at the East 40, a most unusual and fascinating restaurant. The Capitol, the only skyscraper type in the USA, is a short distance from the convention.

Clinics and films will be arranged in the afternoon, with a social hour at poolside an hour before the banquet. Plans for post-dinner and layout tours are not yet firmed up. Currently six home layouts in Bismarck are being readied for the Meet.

Those conventioners planning to camp are reminded that there are several spots near the headquarters which are highly recommended.

Jim MacLeish.

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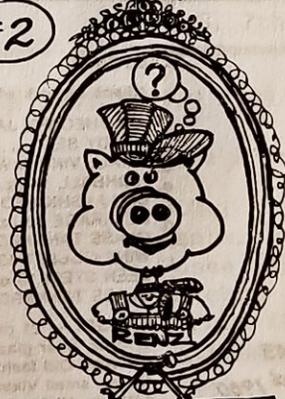
RAILWAY JAMBOREE IN 1983

Although the above slogan may not be familiar to you, it's the official "handle" of the 1983 NMRA National Convention to be held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada on July 18 to 24th.

(continued on page 12)

RAILWAY PORTRAITS:

#2



HOG HEAD!!

AGASSIZ VALLEY RAILROAD John Mahaffy 453-5143 1175 Grosvenor Ave R3M 0N1		CNR — HUDSON BAY DIV. Vern Gibson 667-9558 124 Cobourg Ave R2L 0H5
CENTRAL NORTHERN George Myer 632-1328 79 Maynard Close R2P 0C2		ST. CLAIRE AND CAROLE LAKE Roger Wood 222-2534 25 St. Claire Blvd R2C 0T9
CRAIGELLACHIE PASS & STONEY BROOK CANYON Hilt Friesen 667-2598 737 Nottingham R2K 2C7		SMITHVILLE WESTERN Moe Smith 452-9543 1222 Corydon Ave R3M 0Z2 Club Conductor
100% NMRA TLR WMRC Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada		

SOO TOWER

There is another prototype spot which may be more familiar to readers of THE FUSEE. This is a location which I have visited many times and which has many train movements past it each day.

The subject which I am referring to is known as Soo Tower and is located in Minot, ND. Situated at the crossing of the Burlington Northern and the Soo Line mains, this interlocking is manned 24 hours every day. It is about 1½ blocks west of the Amtrak (ex-Great Northern) station and about one block west of the former REA Express building.

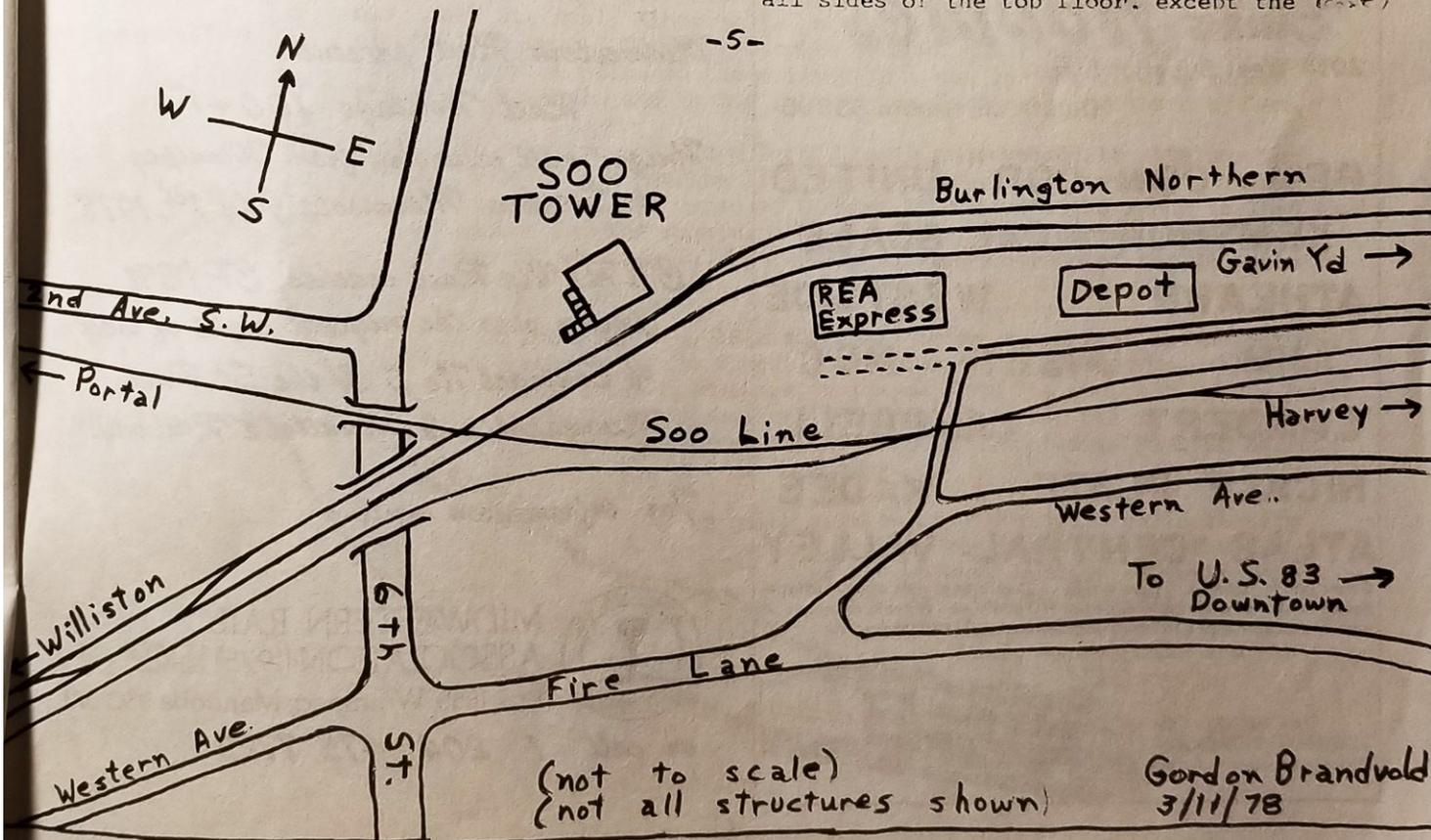
At this point, the BN main is double track while the Soo main is single track. The BN line (at this spot) runs NE-SW, and the Soo is NE to W.

Fuel pumps are located between the BN tracks, just east of the diamond. Westbound Amtrak #7, the "Empire Builder", is serviced at this point (as were the GN's diesel-powered Westbound passengers). BN #3 (also known as the "Pacific Zip") is often serviced at these same pumps, instead of at Gavin Yard. The Eastbound "Builder" and BN #4 are fueled east of the depot (as were Eastbound GN passenger trains).

Because of the number of movements over this segment of the Cascade Green Giant, it is necessary to keep someone in the tower at all times. The line up the hill to the Gassman Coulee Bridge is double track, as it also is west of this massive structure. (Moe Smith referred to this bridge in the Winter '78 issue of THE FUSEE. Those attending the Fall 1974 Rally at Minot also had a chance to visit and photograph the trestle.) The line east to Gavin Yard is at least double track all the way.

Partly depending on the season, and on the economy, the number of BN trains past Soo Tower may vary from 10 to 20 each way, excluding Amtrak. Soo operations usually have no more than a fourth of that figure moving through Minot. If the proposed BN-Frisco merger takes place, there will likely be even more freight traveling over the preferred route to Seattle.

The tower itself has been painted white as long as I can remember. The staircase, window trim, etc. on this wooden structure are painted green. The operator's room on the second floor contains the track levers, line schematic, etc. There are windows on all sides of the top floor, except the (east)



North wall. Just outside the building, near the foot of the stairs, is a pole to which the operator sometimes attaches train orders (Westbound only). It's quite a sight to see the engineer of an SD45 lean out and snag the string which holds these orders on the V-shaped arm.

I've found that the best time to catch a lot of action is anywhere from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Soo Line operation is usually unpredictable, as far as any regular schedule.

When I worked for the Great Northern back in the mid-60's, we often got a chance to work the passenger trains. Men from the freight house at Gavin were used for this job. At that time, there were three tracks in use past the depot. These still remain, but the West switch on the center track has been removed.

For instance, the Dakotan (#3) was due in at 6 p.m., the Western Star (#27) at 6:25, and the Empire Builder (#32) at 8:40. While we were getting the mail and baggage off #3 on the center track, and then the baggage from #27 on the first track, there would often be east or west movements on the outer

track. Then we had to unload the storage mail set-out before working #32. For a railfan-modeler, it was harder to keep my mind on what I was doing with all this activity going on around me.

Anyway, today's Soo Tower location offers quite a bit of operation, even without daily passenger trains.

Gordon Brandvold.

-HO-



-N-

Two locations

775-2869

POLO PARK SHOPPING CENTRE

338-3680

GARDEN CITY SHOPPING CENTRE

WINNIPEG

CARR'S *Hobbies*

2014 West Superior Street

Duluth Minnesota 55806

PFM CON·COR UNITED

KEMTRON CAL SCALE

ATHEARN WESTSIDE

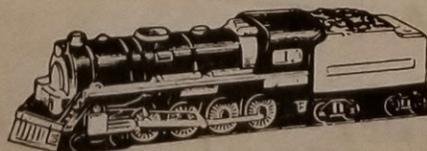
AHM SUNSET MDC

LAMBERT CAMPBELL

NICKLE PLATE KADEE

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Neil Carleton builds a new Free-Mo module

By Paul Ullrich

No. 1 Northern Superintendent Ian Plett recently emailed members, asking them “how they spent their summer vacation”. Long time member Neil Carleton sent some images of the excellent module he created.

Neil had originally planned his module for display at a train show in Regina, Saskatchewan, which was cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns. It's built to the original NMRA specs but using code 83 rail and with my existing 2 foot adapter modules will fit in with Free-mo style.

The streetcar tracks are girder type to allow a clear groove for the wheels. They are soldered to copper pc board ties. Tinted spackling was troweled with home made tools to leave the rail heads a bit proud of the road to allow for cleaning. He painted and weathered the road.

The overhead wire works. The Bachman streetcar is switchable from two rail to one rail and overhead. The poles are brass and connected to the wiring bus. The power goes to the span wires attached to the poles and are soldered to the running wire using lost wax brass castings. The span wires are not soldered to the poles to allow slight adjustments.

He used a special tool to bend the girder track and some turnouts, so the next modules will have loops to allow continuous running. He used information online at East Penn Traction Club and Trolleyville School as well as a multipart article he downloaded from Model Railroader.

The poles and small brass parts were sourced from a fellow in Ohio, the track from Customtraxx in California and the wire from Cloverdale. A few others are from Micromart. The sanding tower is a Kanamodel kit as is the water tower. The oil tanks are ABS plumbing pipes with added details. The lunch stand is a Bar Mills kit.





How to Plan an Exhibition in the Middle of a Pandemic

Jim Morrisey
Photos by author

Spud Valley's 42nd annual hobby show, one of the few in the NMRA in 2020 that took place as originally scheduled, is as much a lesson in luck as it is in planning and preparation. The October 18 show drew over 300 visitors through the gate; only a moderately smaller crowd than in years past. In the midst of a pandemic, this turnout was nothing short of remarkable.

Back in March, when the North Dakota Governor's Office began putting business, gathering, and venue restrictions in place, club members began weighing the financial risk of holding the 2020 show. (Proceeds from its annual exposition provide Spud Valley with the lion's share of operating revenue.) Because the club has a unique business relationship with its host – the Cass County Historical Society – Spud Valley's only expenses are its utilities. This allows the club to keep its annual dues lower than many others in the region, currently \$72. (Spud Valley has a fluctuating membership of about 10-12 dues-paying members each year.)

The Delta Hotel, which had hosted the Spud Valley Hobby Show for many years in part of its sectional Crystal Ballroom, gave the club until July 31 to sign the contract for the 2020 show. As an incentive to retain the event, the hotel offered up the entire ballroom space.

This left two basic scenarios for the club to consider at its June and July business meetings: (1) Follow the lead of other regional shows and cancel. This option posed the least



Duane and Don manning the front entrance. Masks were mandatory to participate in the show.



Spud Valley had its first-ever fundraiser with an HO layout donated for silent auction. To allow safer viewing and reduce congestion, the layout was placed outside the exhibition hall.

financial risk to the club, as its forthcoming expenses for the 12 months after the show would be easy to forecast; (2) Go forward with the show and absorb any revenue shortfall.

For any club that depends largely on one community event for its annual operating budget, this is a heavy decision. To give some context: Spud Valley operates on an annual budget between \$3,500-4,000. In 2019, Spud Valley paid a \$2,500 rental to Delta for the ballroom rental. This rate and the

rest of show expenses in the past had been met by revenue made up of \$40 table rentals and \$5 adult gate admissions. There were lots of ways to come up with math in order to meet the break-even point, which was the club's primary goal.

In discussion leading up to the July vote, members had concluded that the opportunities created by the pandemic outweighed the risks. Largely due to circumstance, the Fargo exhibition was

the only show remaining in the northern plains to not fall victim to local or state COVID orders. Several conclusions were reached: (1) Families, railroad fans, hobbyists and hobby show vendors would all be starving for our type of event by October. (2) Mask and distance requirements for anyone participating in the event would be simple for the club to execute.

(3) Limited liability legislation passed in the state legislature would protect Spud Valley from illness- or death-related legal action. (4) Club members informally agreed to cover a revenue deficit from the show up to \$100 per

member if show proceeds came up short.

Past efforts to communicate with vendors for the annual hobby show had been largely with paper and phone calls. In order to gauge enthusiasm of vendors for the fall show, the club sent emails in early July to the addresses it had on file, and made a few phone calls to others. The results were positive, but the



Looking left from entry.

survey pool and response were both small, and didn't give the club a big enough signal to draw conclusions. This will play a bigger role in future hobby show communication.

On July 21, ten days before a deadline to opt out of the contract, members voted to move forward with the 2020 show. In the contract was an "Act of God" clause. It specified that only circumstances beyond the club's control relating to a show cancellation would relieve Spud Valley of the hotel rental fee. This effectively left the hotel or state or local government in control of the cancellation.

In mid-2019, the club had voted to increase its adult admission by \$1 (to \$6) effective for the 2020 show, as the gate fee had been \$5 for many years. At the August meeting, club members voted to repeal that increase, believing that an admission price increase during a time of economic hardship was inappropriate. With the additional space available in the Crystal Ballroom, the task for show chairman Don Radeck was design a floor plan for the event that provided COVID-appropriate spacing. In previous



Looking center.

years using two-thirds of the ballroom, an average of 80-90 tables would have made for a full exposition space. Radeck chose a limit of 100 tables for 2020's expanded, "50 percent more space" footprint, and eliminated the traditional row-patterned floor plan.

The club reviewed attendance protocol for the show at meetings in September and October. Without a national or state mandate for masks, members felt that this requirement of all participants in the show – vendors, guests, and staff – would be essential to prevent COVID spread, especially important for the large demographic of older adults who would attend the show. The club added the requirement to the conditions of participation, and began communicating it to vendors and the general public, including repeated messaging on the club's Facebook page.

On October 14 in response to an increase in positive COVID cases statewide, the North Dakota Governor's Office tightened its guidelines for gatherings and events in public spaces and venues. After reviewing language in the new guidelines, the club felt that it had created enough safeguards in what was going to be a well-spaced retail event with a minimum amount of congregation. A set of COVID media talking points was drafted and distributed to all club members within 24 hours so that any member could address questions from local news reporters who



Looking left from entry.

might be eager to cast a negative light on the club or the show.

The event on October 18 transpired as planned, without any major issues. The club had facemasks available at the front entrance, and compliance with the mask mandate was overwhelmingly followed. The 100 table limit was reached with around 50 rentals, and the club did wind up with a small profit after over 330 paid admissions passed through the gate. Two local TV stations visited the show to file filler stories for the evening news, but both reporters were respectful of the event and presented positive stories.

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
Thousand Lakes Region NMRA
October 22, 2020
Via conference call

1: Call to Order- President Jay Manning called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm

2: Roll Call- Secretary Art Suel conducted the roll call. Present were the following: President Manning, Secretary Suel, Treasurer Tom Gay, Public Relations Director/ Fusee Editor Kevin Dill and Contest Director Kennedy Gauger. Superintendents present were DSED Terry Anderson, SRRV Matt Lentz, MRVD John Given, SED Gerry Miller and No. 1 Northern Ian Plett. Suel is also Superintendent of the TCD.

3: Approval of Minutes

A: Minutes of March 25, 2020. There were no corrections to the minutes as written. Gay moved and was seconded by Dill to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

B: Minutes of May 28, 2020. There were no corrections to the minutes as written. Gauger moved and was seconded by Gay to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

4: Treasurer's report- Gay reported on the region's fiscal health. For a complete report, a member can request a copy of his report from him at his contact info in the Fusee. Dill moved and was second by Gauger to accept Treasurer's report. Motion passed.

5: Convention Director Report-

A: 2021 Bismarck ND - Dill reported the following on the 2021 convention to be held in Bismarck North Dakota. The group is planning the convention even with the uncertainty of the COVID virus which could affect attendance. Budget is lean at \$2500.00 and can cancel the hotel booking with just a 30-day notice with refund of the deposit. Breakeven point is 32 attendees. Usual format, Thursday evening thru Sunday morning. Registration will be around \$80.00 for the convention. Friday night reception at the ND Train Museum.

Saturday afternoon the convention attendees will visit Ed Duke's Live Steam layout and then go to Wilton ND to tour the Soo Line Depot there. Saturday Evening will be the banquet, awards, and Chinese auction. Sunday morning the convention will conclude with the Annual General Membership meeting. There are four layouts that will be open for viewing that day.

B: 2022 Brainard MN- Suel reported that the host hotel has been secured. Convention is Victoria Day Weekend (one weekend before Memorial Day). Hotel rates go up for the summer starting Memorial Day. The Twin City Division is monitoring the COVID crisis currently. Will contact the Brainard Lakes tourism Bureau to assist in locating excursions for the convention.

6: Contest Director's Report – Gauger stated his primary tasks have been reviewing the TLR Handbook, sent thank you messages to individuals who had agreed to judge at the 2020 convention in Sioux Falls that was cancelled due to the COVID virus. Work on contest rules that will apply to the 2021 convention including the Arts and Craft category. Identified the special contest category for 2021. Also designed the TLR Form Supplement, Entrant's Intent Form.

7: Public Relations Director Report

A: PR in the Region – No report currently due to COVID

B: FUSEE - With the cancellation of the 2020 convention, he was able to fill the space that convention reports and photos would have occupied with other articles. Next issue deadline for articles is November 1st.

8: Division Superintendents Reports

A: Dakota Southeastern - Superintendent Terry Anderson reported that the division tried to stay active during the pandemic. Monthly meetings were held according to COVID regulations. Members started on their T-Trak modules. Their HO modular railroad only went to one event, that being the Granite Threshing Bee in Granite Iowa. Till the COVID-19 pandemic is under control, they will conduct activities according to guidelines.

B: Prairie Lakes – no report

C: Southeastern - no report

D: South Red River Valley – Superintendent Matt Lentz reported that the division had a gain of 4 members. Suggested that the NMRA develop a system to alert divisions of new members. The T-Trak layout was tested at the recent Spud Valley Train Show and was successful. As a result, Deputy Superintendent Ben Tretter was awarded the SRRV Award for Merit for leading this effort. The Spud Valley Train show was a huge successful with more vendors and over 300 attendees.

E: No. 1 Northern - Superintendent Ian Plett reported that because of the COVID pandemic, activities within the division have been quiet.

F: - Minnesota River Valley – Superintendent John Given reported that there is not much to report.

G: Twin Cities – Superintendent Art Suel reported that due illnesses, the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent had to step down. Elections were held in September via ZOOM, with a new slate of officers stepping up including a new member. If meetings cannot be held in person, the division will go to virtual meetings.

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9: Committee reports

1: Achievement Program - Suel read Chairman John Hotvet, MMR report. The past year six modelers received AP Certificates and three received the Golden Spike Awards.

2: Webmaster – no report

3: Social Media Platforms - no report

4: Historian – Lentz informed the Board that the archives consist mainly of FUSEE’s which are being added to the website. Will need money appropriated for archive storage boxes.

5: Membership – Suel informed the Board that the region has ten new members but is down 12 members since February 2020.

10: Old Business – There was no old Business scheduled.

11: New Business

A: Bob Dew Sr Award - send nominations to President Manning

B: Stafford Swain Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award – Send nominations to President Manning

One other award was added, the NMRA Service to Division Award. Manning asked that Superintendents to nominate an individual from their division who has made the division a success. Asked that a resume with highlights be sent with that person’s nomination.

12: Other Business

Miller moved and was seconded by Gauger to approve an appropriation of \$150.00 for the Historian for archive supplies. Motion passed

Manning asked board members to think about what we can do to regenerate interest in the division when the COVID pandemic is over.

Gauger recommended that the region get a ZOOM account. Manning asked the tech savvy individuals to recommend a platform to use for virtual meetings. Anderson stated that the region should choose a platform that works on multiple electronic devices (computer, smart phones etc.).

13: Adjournment

Gay moved to adjourned and was seconded by Dill. Motion passed

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm

Respectfully submitted

Arthur C. Suel

TLR Secretary

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Region Round-up

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ber. If meetings cannot be held in person, the division will go to virtual meetings.

Region Roundup—model railroad-related events in and around the TLR

Jan ?	Newport Model RR Show	Pending , Check Website: www.newportclub.us
Feb 5 (Tentative)	Greater Upper Midwest Train Show	Century College West Campus, White Bear Lake, MN
Mar 20-21(Tentative)	LaCrosse and 3 Rivers RR Club Train Show	The Omni Center, Onalaska, WI
April 10 (Tentative)	Greater Upper Midwest Train Show	Century College West Campus, White Bear Lake, MN
May 20-23	TLR/Convention	Bismarck, ND
July 4-11	NMRA National Convention	Santa Clara, CA

COVID-19 has made predicting a show more than a few months out very hard. Please visit your favorite show's web site, or Google "Train Shows" and enter your state of interest. Here is a list of shows I could not confirm, so you can check on them heading into the New Year:

Red Cedar Train Show	
Great Midwest Train Show	DuPage County Fairgrounds, Wheaton, IL
Great Tri-State Rail Sale	LaCrosse Center, LaCrosse, WI
Arctic Run Train Show	2021 CANCELLED
Mad City Train Show	Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI
Model Railroad Garage Sale	Holy Trinity Church, Dubuque, IA
North Metro RR Club Flea Market	Coon Rapids VFW, Coon Rapids, MN
LaCrosse and 3 Rivers RR Club Train Show	The Omni Center, Onalaska, WI
Twin Cities Division Spring Modeler's Retreat	Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church of Plymouth.

Model Railroad Advertising

Advertise your railroad here! Send me a photo, business card or whatever contact info you want to provide. This a service for the TLR and there is no charge for the ad.

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Fargo, ND 58104
701-298-0132



Burlington Route

**CB&Q – Chicago/Aurora/C&I
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Scott & Nancy Stearns
Scott: 507-358-0126 scott_b_stearns@hotmail.com
Nancy: 612-308-8468 nancy_stearns@hotmail.com
Facebook: CB&Q Chicago-Aurora-C&I Model Railroad
20375 County 4 Blvd, Zumbrota, MN 55992

Burlington Route

Dakota Division of Soo Line Railway
Thomas Gay



2015 Rose Creek Drive
Fargo, ND 58104
701-219-0300
tomandkath@hotmail.com

The Thousand Lakes Region of the NMRA

Board of Directors

President

Jay Manning
7100 West Stoney Creek St
Sioux Falls, SD 57106
804-712-8056
Chessie@manningperry.com

Vice President

Caleb Van Der Brink
1226 8th Ave NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250
712-578-1029
calebvanderbrink@yahoo.com

Secretary

Art Suel
14500 Alabama Ave
Savage, MN 55378
952-440-6409
artsuel1956@gmail.com

Treasurer

Tom Gay
2015 Rose Creek Dr
Fargo, ND 58104
701-219-0300
tomandkath@hotmail.com

Convention Director

Scott Nesbit
5415 W. Dardenella Rd #107
Sioux Falls, SD 57106
605-360-0185
drthud@msn.com

Public Relations

Kevin Dill
3920 15th St S
Fargo, ND 58104
701-298-0132
Dillkev@aol.com

Contest Director

Kennedy Gauger
4500 South Lewis Ave.
Sioux Falls SD 57103
210-573-1294
wkgauger@gmail.com

Department Chairs

Membership

Art Suel
14500 Alabama Ave
Savage, MN 55378
952-440-6409
acsuel@integra.net

Achievement Program

John Hotvet MMR
5100 Nicollet Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55419
612-822-5788
johntrain@aol.com

Historian

MK Lentz
2825 Elm St N
Fargo, ND 58102
701-298-8408
mkl@janushd.com

Webmaster

Caleb Van Der Brink
1226 8th avenue NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250
712-578-1029
calebvanderbrink@yahoo.com

Fusee Editor

Kevin Dill
3920 15th St S
Fargo, ND 58104
701-298-0132
Dillkev@aol.com

Social Media

Thomas Gasior, MMR
763-291-0708
tgasior@hotmail.com

Division Supers

Dakota Southeastern

Terry Anderson
109 Milwaukee Ave
Harrisburg, SD, 57032
605-838-5778
topcop@iw.net

Minnesota River Valley

John Givan
1401 N. 5th St.
Montevideo, MN 56265
jpgldg@hotmail.com

No. 1 Northern

Ian H. Plett
337 Regent Ave W
Winnipeg, MB R2C 1R5
ianplett@gmail.com

Prairie Lakes

Jay Davis
207 Ocheyedan St.
Everly, IA 51338
712 834-2073
jdandice22c@hotmail.com

South Red River Valley

MK Lentz
2825 Elm St N
Fargo, ND 58102
701-298-8408
mkl@janushd.com

Southeastern

Gerry Miller
1040 Hawkeye Dr
Dubuque, IA 52001
563-557-9646
millerg20@gmail.com

Twin Cities

Ron Olsen
8245 Henslowe Ave. S.
Cottage Grove, MN 55016
651-768-7181
rono@iee.org

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Enclose payment in U.S. funds, international money order, or by check drawn on U.S. banks. Checks should be made out to **TLR**. Contact the editor if you have questions.

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Commercial advertising from hobby shops, manufacturers, and businesses associated with model railroading interests are accepted. All ads can be run in a single issue at 35% of the annual rate.

Railroad ads are for individual layouts, model railroad clubs, or other non-commercial groups and are FREE.

<u>Ad size (HxW)</u>	<u>Annual</u>	<u>One-Time</u>	<u>Annual Railroad Ad</u>
	<u>Business</u>	<u>Business</u>	
	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Full pg 9 5/8 x 7 1/8"	\$145.00	\$50.75	N/A
1/2 pg 4 3/4 x 7 1/8"	\$90.00	\$31.50	N/A
1/4 pg 4 3/4 x 3 1/2"	\$45.00	\$15.75	N/A
1/6 pg 4 3/4 x 2 1/4"	\$35.00	\$12.25	N/A
1/8 pg 3 3/4 x 2 1/4"	\$25.00	\$8.75	Free
1/12 pg 2 3/8 x 2 1/4"	\$18.50	\$6.50	Free
1/16 pg 1 1/8 x 3 1/2"	\$15.00	\$5.25	Free