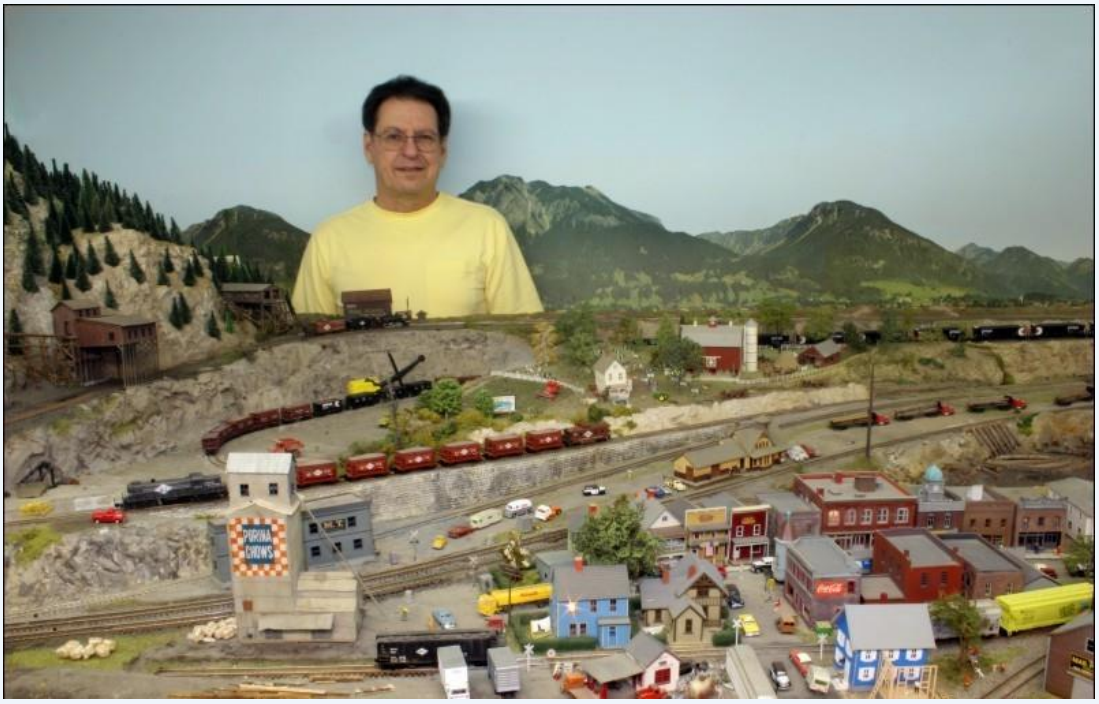
SUSQUEHANNA SIDETRACKS

An Official Publication of the Susquehanna Division 11, Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA

Volume 29 Number 5



Rick Spanos's N scale Sceniced & Undecided Railway is a masterful layout with many animated features. Here Rick stands behind the Ripov Taconite Mine in the town of Anachron.

AMTRAK, VIA and CP Rail stand ready to leave Union Station. See the full article and photos by Rick Spano on page 8.

In This Issue

tailgating railroad style

courtesy of the Billings Gazette

From the Superintendent's Desk

It is hard to believe that Labor Day is just a few days away. The summer has gone by very quickly.

We have a few events coming up in the Fall. The first event is the Mainline Hobby Supply Open House Tour. This will take place in September the weekend of the 18th and 19th. All you need to do is visit the hobby shop in Blue Ridge Summit, PA and pick up the tour guide. Mainline Hobby will offer special discount rates during the weekend.

In October, the LSOP (Operate Till You Drop) weekend has been cancelled, in spite of the best efforts of Wayne Betty and his crew.

Also, in October from the 21st through the 24th is the MER region convention sponsored by the Chesapeake Division. The convention will be held in Hunt Valley, MD. Many of you probably passed by Hunt Valley on your way to visit the Great Scale Train Shows in Timonium, MD. Hunt Valley is just one exit north of Timonium. I have already registered for the convention. You can do so by using the link for the Mt. Clare Convention located on page 5.

The Division-wide Open House Tour is again set for the month of November. If you have participated in this event in the past you should have received an email asking you to sign up for the 2021 Open House Tour. If not, all you need to do is go to https://www.modelrailroadopenhouse.com . There you can enter your information for the days you want to be open.

This has been another very trying year. Hopefully, we can have more events next year.

Our Division needs your help serving our members. We need someone to take over as Clerk and someone to assist our web master. Please see the article on page 7.

It would also be nice if you could write an article for Sidetracks about your model railroad. Rich Wurst, our Sidetracks editor is always looking for printed material to include in Sidetracks. After all, we are a model railroad group and too many of our issues of Sidetracks are lacking articles about modeling projects or even prototype railroad features.

I am looking forward to meeting again in person. I realize that the past year has been difficult for all of us. I guess I just miss seeing some of my friends. Time to decide which of the many projects I have planned to start on next.

Tim Himmelberger

Second Section

Susquehanna Sidetracks

Official Newsletter of the Susquehanna Division
Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA
5 Hardy Court, Lancaster, PA 17602

Contributing to Susquehanna Sidetracks:

Sidetracks welcomes contributions from the Division membership. Letters, articles, photos and other items may be sent to the Editor at the e-mail address listed below or the street address above. Deadline for submission for the next issue is October 15, 2021.

Membership Information

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www.susquehannanmra.org

Mid-Eastern Region website:

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Pennsylvania Railroad E44 electric locomotive #4465 resides in the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania.

2021 Division Events

~~**April** – New Holland - Pat Mulrooney and Jeff Thompson~~ – Canceled

May 1st– Columbia Railroad Day – Bill Lesjak and Barry Schmitt

~~**June** – New Oxford – Phil Peters and Howard Oakes~~ Canceled

July 10th– East Broad Top Railroad – Lee Rainey

September 18 – 19th, Mainline Hobby Supply Open House Tour

~~**October** – LSOP – Wayne Betty~~ Canceled

October 21 – 24, Hunt Valley, MD, MER Convention, Chesapeake Division

Go to this link for information: https://mtclarejct.com/

November – Division-wide Open House Tour

MER Division Events

PhillyNMRA News
Upcoming Meet!

Join us for our September Division Meet held in person!

When: Saturday, September 11, 2021 at 9:00 AM (doors open at 8:30 AM)
Where: Knights of Columbus Hall, 235 Limekiln Pike, Glenside, PA 19038
Why: We love trains!

Highlights:

- **Steve Wysowski** – Running Trains in Prototypical Fashion
- **Mike Dettinger** – Non-railroad Figures for Your Layout
- **Show & Tell** - Participants encouraged to bring projects and discuss them
- **50/50 Raffle**
- **Door Prizes**
- Wawa across street for refreshments
- Layouts to visit in the afternoon

See the upcoming August issue of ***The Dispatcher***, or go to http://www.phillynmra.org/events/philadelphia-division-meet-091121 for complete details.

Admission is free to all NMRA members. We welcome guests at no charge, but ask that you join the NMRA if you want to continue attending events. Nine-month, introductory memberships are available at reduced cost.

Hope to see you there!

NOTE: Given the present high transmission situation at the meet location by the Montgomery County Board of Health, the use of masks is encouraged and may be required by the venue on the date of the meet.

Opportunities to Serve the Division

Chief Clerk

Paul Tice has faithfully served the Division as our Clerk since day one. Yes, he is the only person who has held this position in our Division, in fact, he remembers when our treasury was so small that we did not have enough to even open a checking account. Paul's health has been declining and he has asked that we find a replacement. Technically, this is a Secretary / Treasurer position. Anyone interested in serving the Division in this capacity please contact Tim Himmelberger at tlhimmel@comcast.net or call 717-454-8033.

Assistant Webmaster

David Collison, our Webmaster, has requested an Assistant Webmaster be appointed. With his work schedule, David has found that the current Webmaster position precludes him from doing regular and routine site work. Anyone who is interested in serving the Division in this capacity please contact Tim Himmelberger at tlhimmel@comcast.net or call 717-454-8033.

Sceniced and Undecided Railway

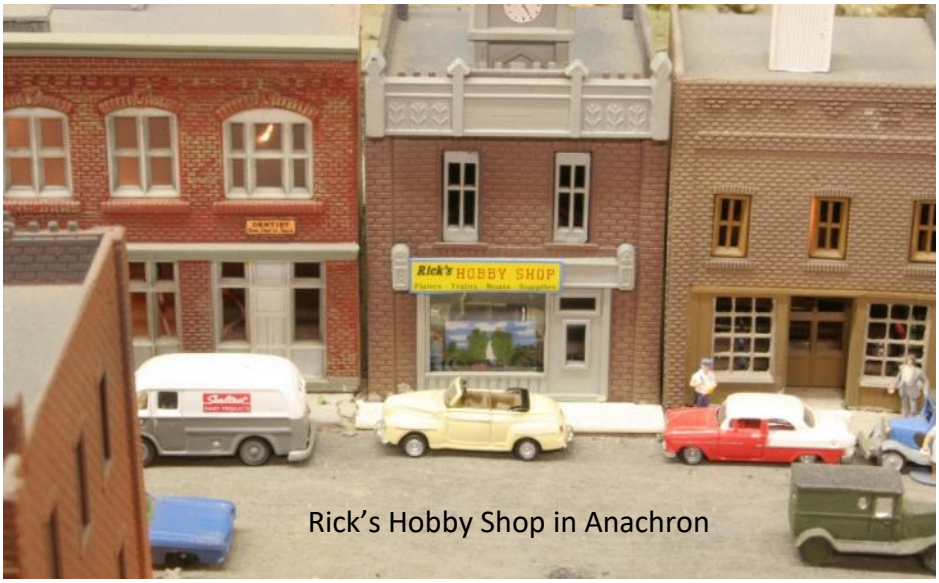
Like many people born in the 1940's, I remember a Lionel train running around the family Christmas tree when I was a young child. Later I watched the Jersey Central bringing loads to a coal and lumber yard one block away from our home. In the mid 1950's, as a young teenager, I discovered model railroad books and Model Railroader Magazine, with photos of John Allen's Gorre and Daphetid RR, at the local library. This inspired me to build my first layout which was a 4 ft x 6 ft HO layout made of scrap aluminum, scrap wood pieces and Homasote. It was a simple loop with one turnout.

In 1967 I discovered N gauge at a local hobby shop in Trenton, New Jersey and I built my first (very small) N scale layout. Arnold Rapido and Aurora /Trix were the products available at the time.

In 1969 I married the love of my life, Linda. She is a railfan and has supported me in model railroading. Her cousin, Pat Tenterelli's Sn3 layout ignited the spark to build another N scale layout. I built it in our apartment and its ten foot long benchwork and some of its scenery became part of the current Sceniced and Undecided Railway when we moved into our new home in 1971.

wedding at Latham Cathedral

Since I grew up near the waterfront in New Jersey, ten miles from the New York City sky scrapers, and ten miles from the Watchung mountains, I wanted harbors, rivers, lakes, big cities and mountains on my layout. John Allen influenced me greatly, because his Gorre and Daphetid RR embodied the above.



Rick's Hobby Shop in Anachron

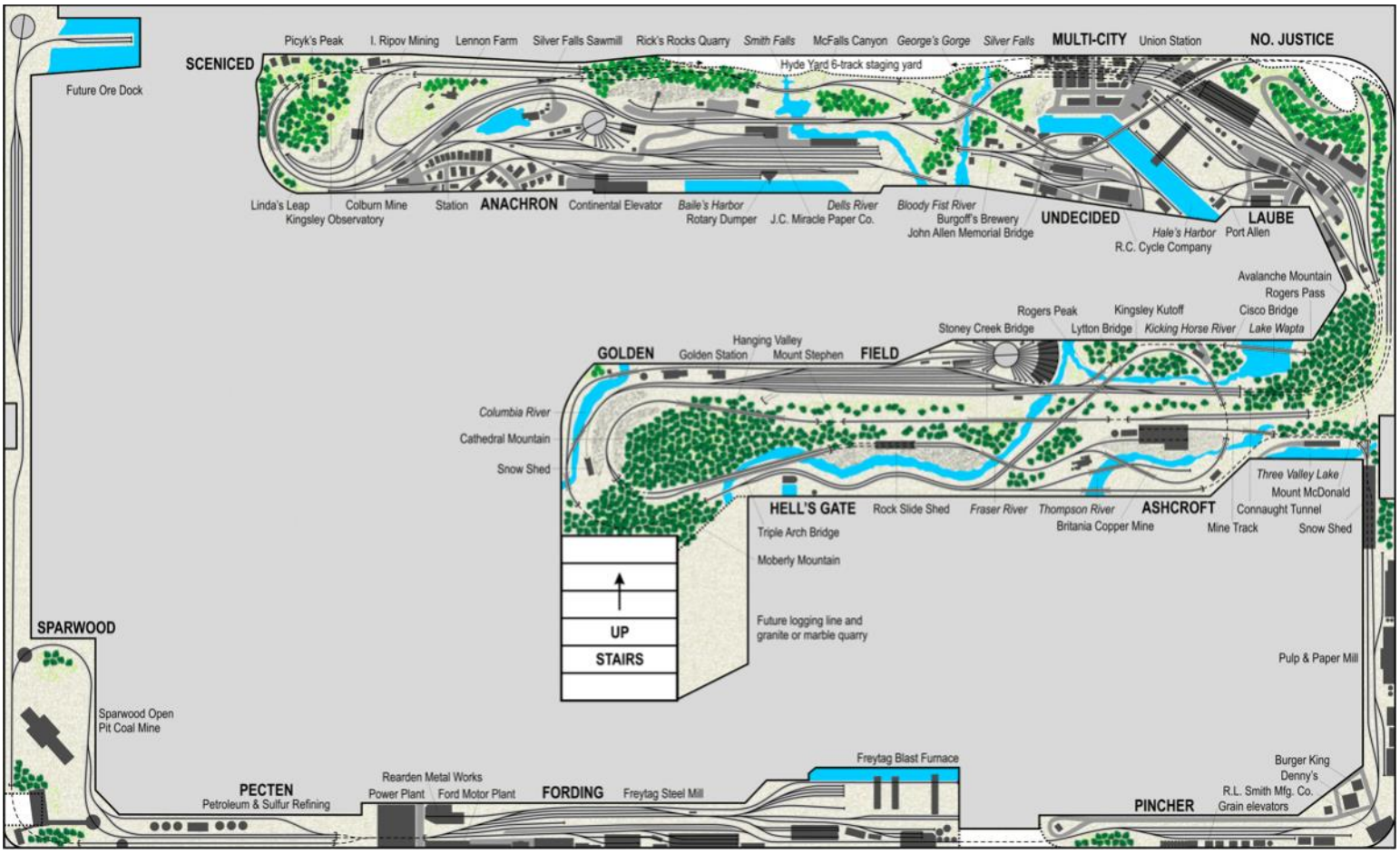
The Sceniced and Undecided Railway was built in three phases.

Phase I was a 4 ft x 36 ft dog bone style layout with laminated curved roadbed that allowed me to have broad sweeping curves and a minimum radius of 20 inches. This was a far cry from the 7 5/8 inch minimum radius of my previous two layouts. The modified "L" Girder benchwork is about 20 inches away from the back wall of the basement to allow access to hidden track.

Sceniced and Undecided Railway (cont.)

Phase II is a 4.5 ft x 26 ft peninsula whose benchwork is a combination of "L" Girder and open grid-work with half inch plywood used for sub roadbed to deal with the "s" curves proceeding up "Big Hill". There is an aisle space of 4.5 ft separating Phase I and Phase II.

Phase III, with a length of about 60 ft and an average width of about 2ft, is an around-the-wall shelf design. It is reasonably level with a reversing loop at the Sparwood Open Pit Coal Mine.



Phase I and Phase II make up the East-West Mainline. Phase III represents the North-South Branch Line.

My website www.scenicedandundecided.net shows the 3 phases. There are also 28 videos of animated scenes and many photos, as well a history of the Sceniced and Undecided Railway.

Google "Sceniced and Undecided You Tube" to find 2 videos of Operations on the S&U and a visit to the S&U by NJ Southern NTRAK Club.

Golden Station

Sceniced and Undecided Railway (cont.)

The Sceniced and Undecided is a freelanced layout based upon numerous locations in British Columbia and the western border of Alberta.

Originally I had planned to model my scenery based on post cards and magazine photos of BN locos hauling consists along the Columbia River in Washington and Oregon.

A train trip from Vancouver to Calgary by VIA in 1979 showed Linda and me the spectacular scenery of the Fraser, Thompson and Kicking Horse Canyons. That caused me to shift my emphasis from BN and UP to CP Rail, CN, BC Rail and some BN.

operating wheel excavator at Sparwood Open Pit Mine

Much of the S&U scenery is based on parts of the CP Rail in the 1980's in western Canada, but towns and stations are not necessarily in proper geographical order. Op Sessions start from Sparwood coal fields, Pectin oil refineries, Fording, Freytag Steel, Pincher graineries and JC Pulp and Paper at Kamloops. All loads from these locations travel north on a branch line to Field/Golden Yard on the CP Rail mainline, then west to Multi City (representing Vancouver), Port Allen and Anachron Yard (which represents Roberts Bank coal shipping facility).

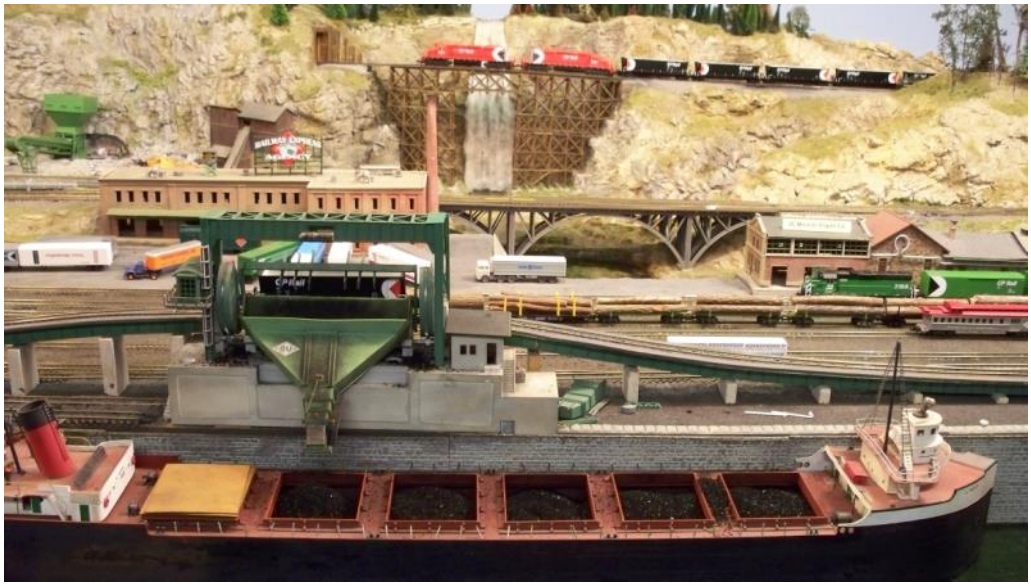
operating water wheel and fisherman in George's Gorge

Sceniced and Undecided Railway (cont.)

OPERATIONS:

The S&U was originally developed with way freight in mind, but the BN, CP Rail and CN in the Pacific Northwest in the USA and Canada ran mostly unit trains. In April 1999 Jimmy Judge, the operations GURU of the HO Garden State Central Model Railroad Club, developed a Time Table Operation Schedule for the S&U. Eight club members and myself had the first formal OP Session. After that first session the club visited for one or two OP Sessions per year.

A time table was necessary since freight runs north-south on the branch line and passenger and freight run east-west on the mainline. Primarily, loads travel north on the branch line to the mainline at Field/Golden. After crew and/or loco changes, the unit trains climb Big Hill, traveling west to their destination. Coal, Oil, and Sulfur travel from Sparwood and Pectin to Anachron Yard, Port Allen and Hyde Yard. Automobiles and steel products go north to Field then west to Port Allen. Grain, finished wood products, pulp and paper go from Pincher and Kamloops to Field then west to Anachron Yard.



operating rotary dumper and Great Lakes ore boat at Anachron Yard

close up view of operating rotary dumper

Sceniced and Undecided Railway (cont.)

Empties travel east to Field, then south back to the original location. Taconite and pulpwood travel south from Hyde Yard (interchange point) to Freytag Steel and JC Pulp & Paper on the branch line. Way freight operations proceed from Anachron Yard to Rick's Rocks, to Undecided and Port Allen.

Some of the trains carry live loads. Coal is loaded at either Colburn mine or Sparwood open pit mine and unloaded at the rotary dumper at Anachron Yard. Rocks are loaded by a crane at Rick's Rocks and unloaded by another crane in Undecided. Wood chips from the sawmill in Anachron are unloaded at the rotary dumper at Port Allen. The bridge crane unloads ships and barges at Port Allen.

Multi City with Royal Hudson train on John Allen Memorial Bridge

Usually, two passenger trains are run between Union Station at Laube and the passenger station at Anachron, one traveling east and one traveling in the opposite direction over the mountains.

My wife Linda designed a new Timetable Op Session Schedule with my help which matches the description above. This was used for an OP Session at the joint MER/NER Convention in 2015. The layout track plan clearly identifies towns and stations along the operating routes. The Op Session usually takes about 2.5 to 3 hours.

bears by Cisco Bridge

Sceniced and Undecided Railway (cont.)

Modeling Methods and Materials:

About 90 linear feet of the layout contains mountains which were created with hard shell and Styrofoam as the subbase forming the mountains. Pre-colored Hydrocal was cast in place using large latex rock molds that I made. The pre-coloring varied from very light cool grays to very light colored tans. This cost very little and prevented numerous white plaster chipped areas from being produced. Final coloring was by the use of a variety of water based and organic solvent based stains. Some of the staining was produced by mixing Rainbow limeproof dry colors. Raw umber, burnt umber, raw sienna, burnt sienna and lamp black were the colors I frequently used. I carved some of the Hydrocal in a few places to control rock and earth appearances. Pre-colored Sculptamold was used in some places along with the rock molding.

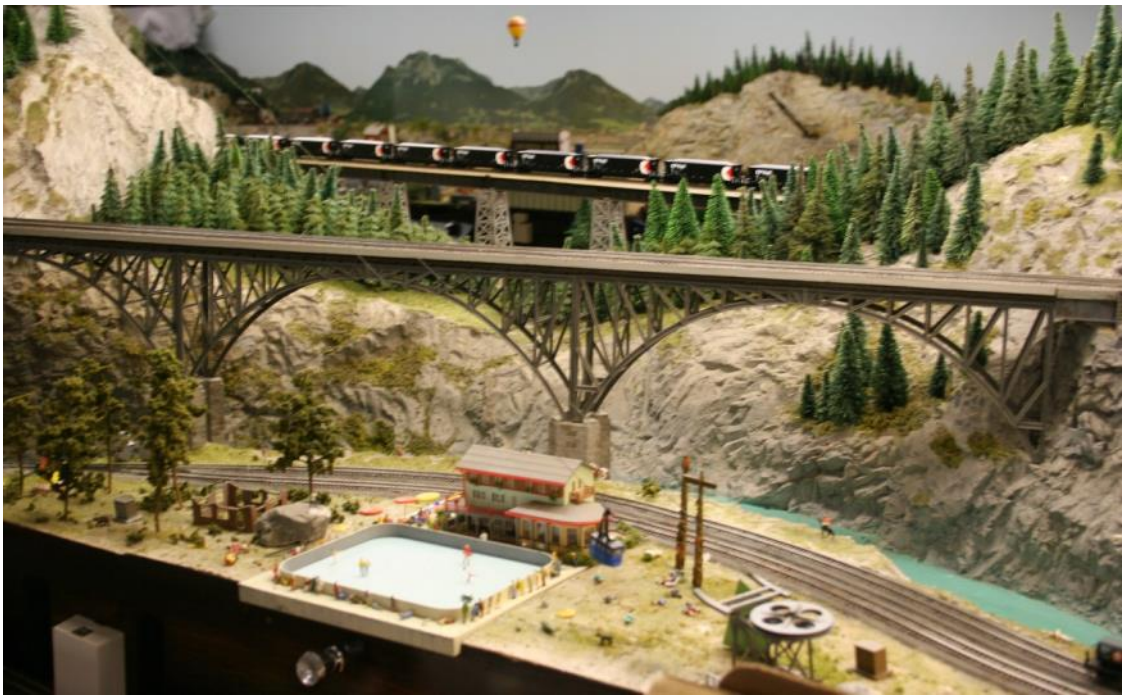
operating claw crane loads barge at Undecided Wharf

operating bridge crane unloading coal at Port Allen

Sceniced and Undecided Railway (cont.)

Matte-medium and diluted white glue were used as a bonding agent for track ballast. Hecki and Noch flock and a variety of ground foams were used on rock crevices along with more level surfaces. A couple of thousand trees are mostly commercial evergreens. A couple hundred deciduous trees were made by me along with a few hand-made redwood giants. Round toothpicks stained gray were used to skewer pieces of lichen to cover the hills of North Justice (North Justice is a town in WV where the road sign said "Entering No. Justice", but the period had been erased, so on our layout we pronounce it No Justice!).

Kingsley Kutoff entering Field Yard

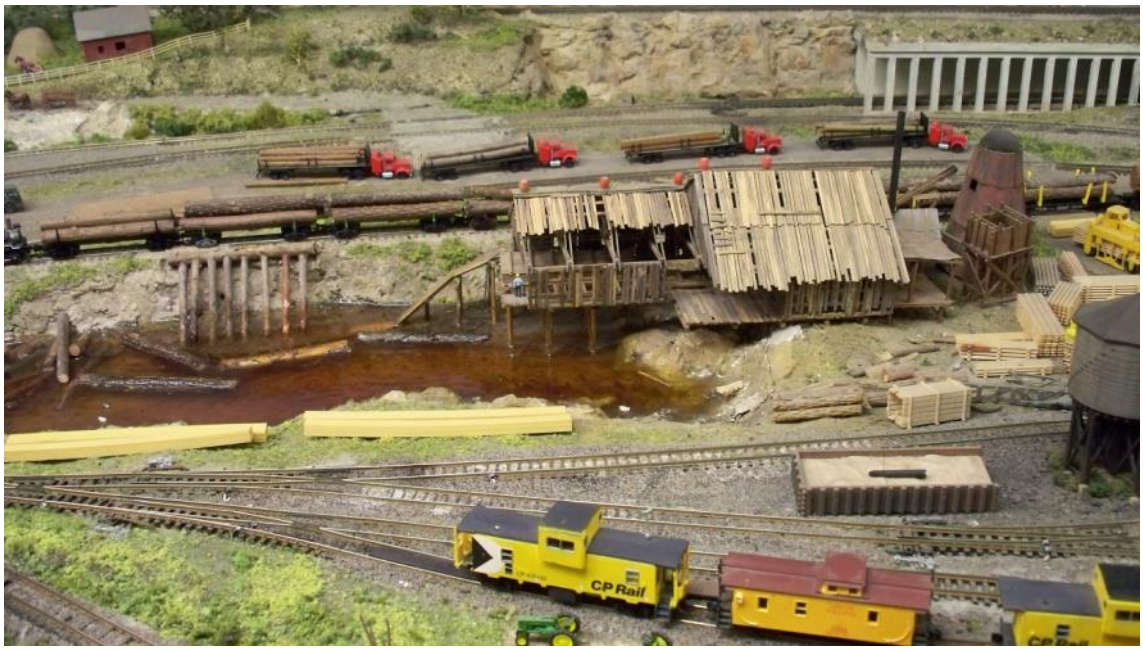


Fraser River below Triple Arch Bridge

Sceniced and Undecided Railway (cont.)

I never got enough nerve to paint clouds, but used polyester pillow stuffing as clouds to cover corners at the ceiling and to hide pipes. The sky back drop around the wall was made of sheet rock, Masonite and 0.030 inch thick white sheet styrene. I punched holes about two feet apart near the top edge of the styrene sheets and suspended them from lathing near the ceiling with screws. A roll of aluminum flashing would be less expensive, but tends to get creases and dents, if one is not careful. I would advise at least three or four people to hang aluminum flashing as a sky drop. Its advantage is a seamless sky.

Freytag Steel Blast Furnaces and Hulett Unloaders at Fording

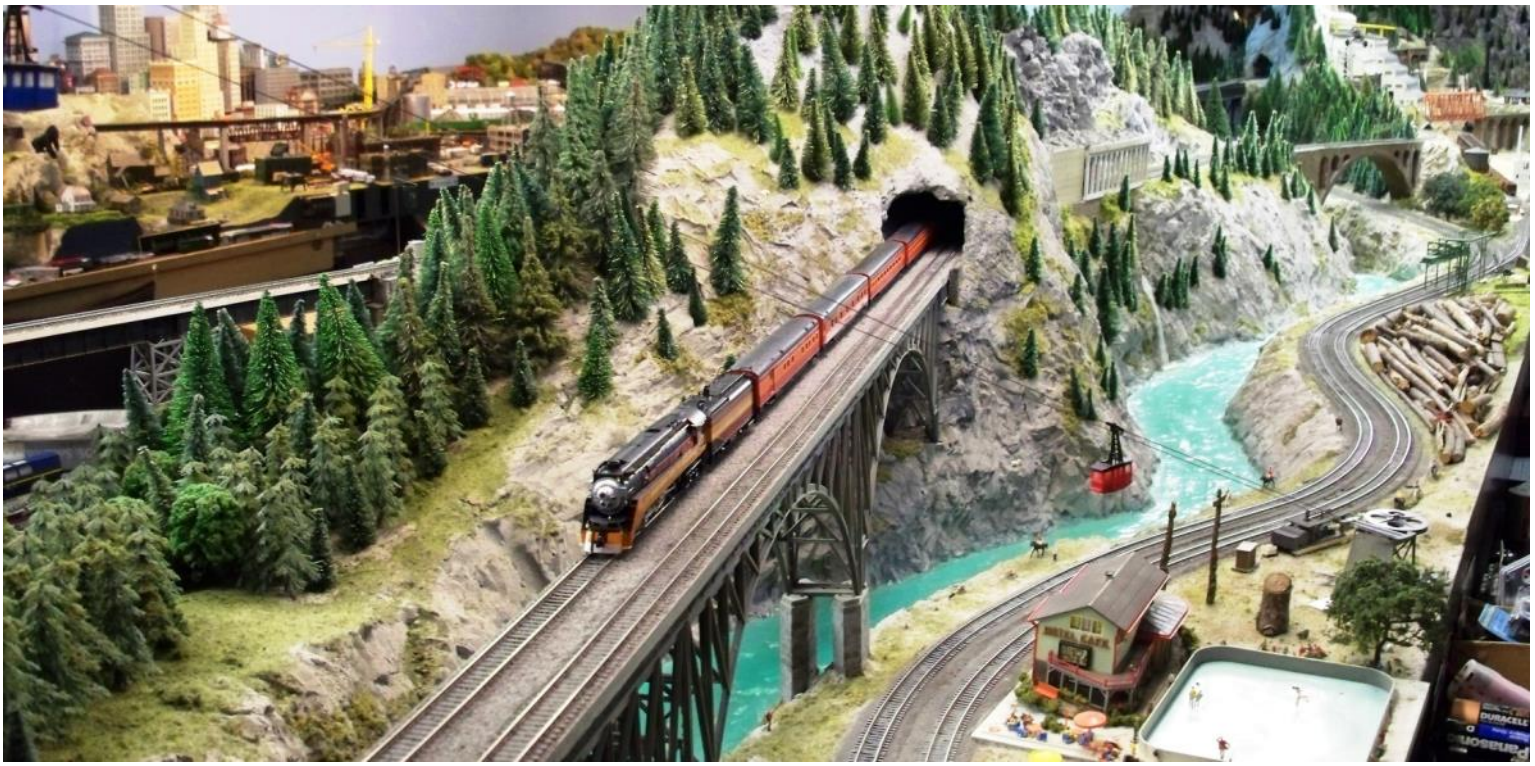


Silver Falls Sawmill at Anachron

Sceniced and Undecided Railway (cont.)

I have used a variety of methods to create waterways: dyed clear casting resins, painted rivers coated with gloss medium or Varathane varnish and colored rippled plastic sheets.

I built an electrical/mechanical timing device to control day and night. Originally I used red, orange, and blue 7 watt Christmas lights to create sunrise and sunset. Later I used manually controlled strings of similar color LEDs to also create day and night scenes. I built an operating fireworks display. Lastly there is a rising and setting illuminated moon, along with numerous lighted buildings and Miller Engineering animated signs and many animated scenes and devices.

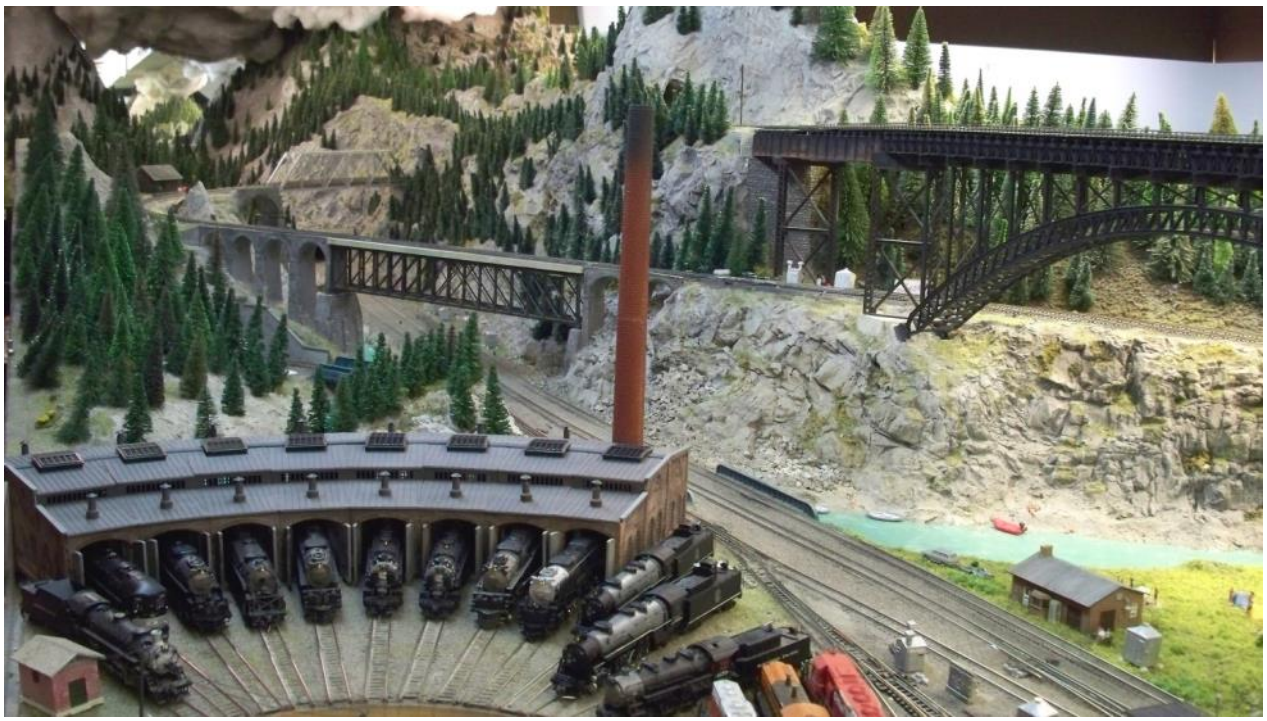


Southern Pacific Daylight exits tunnel above Fraser River at Hell's Gate (operating skating rink and tram visible in lower right foreground)

fast food restaurants in Pincher

Sceniced and Undecided Railway (cont.)

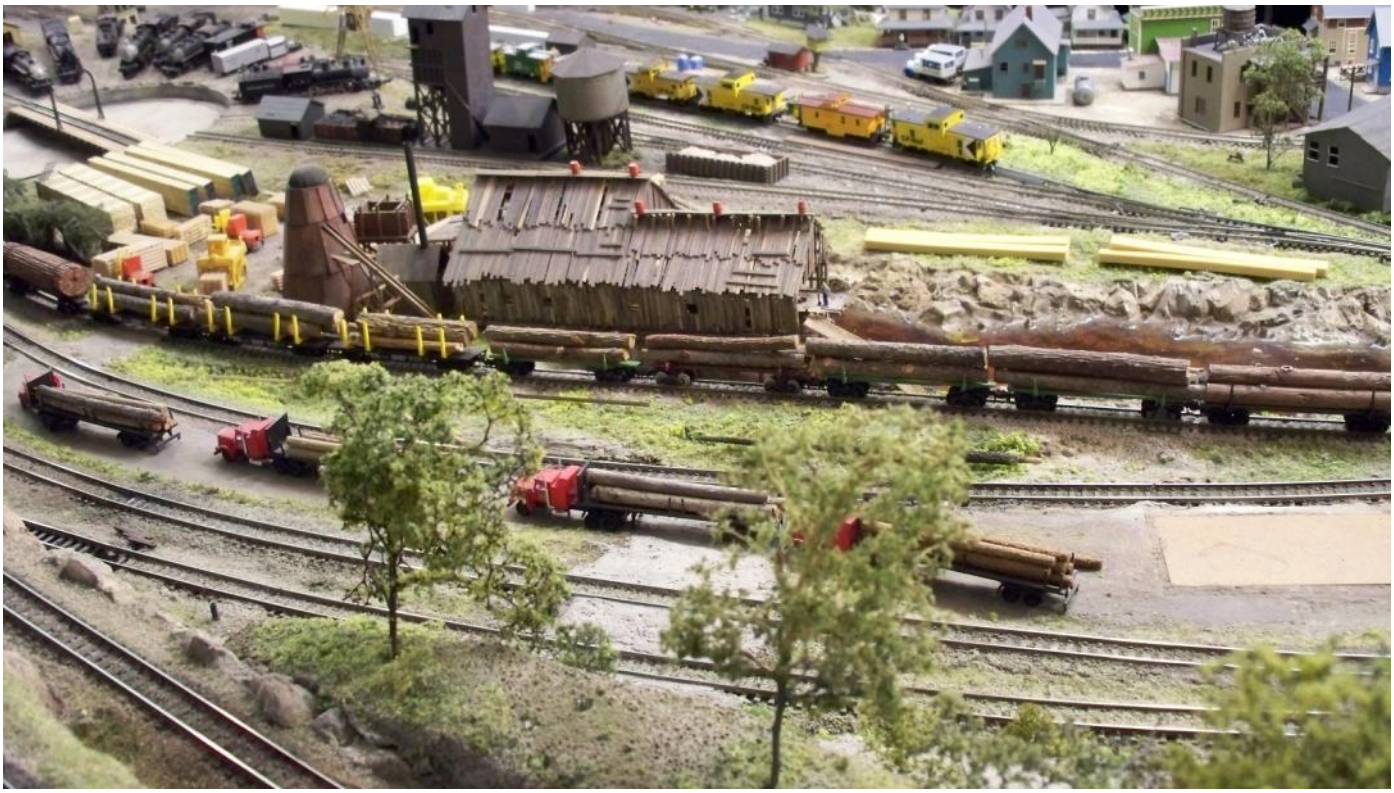
Freytag Integrated Steel Mill in Fording



Field Roundhouse below Stoney Creek Bridge with Kingsley Kutoff, Lytton and Cisco Bridges in back-ground.

Sceniced and Undecided Railway (cont.)

Three Valley Chateau



rear view of Silver Falls Sawmill

Sceniced and Undecided Railway (cont.)

operating fork lift and assembly line at RC Cycle Factory in Undecided

Fraser River at Hell's Gate

Sceniced and Undecided Railway (cont.)

BC Rail climbs Big Hill on its way to Stoney Creek Bridge

operating pile driver and bridge crane at Hales Harbor between Undecided and Port Allen

Editor's Note: Special thanks to Rick Spano for sharing his N scale masterpiece. It is highly recommended that readers view Rick's website http://www.scenicedandundecided.net/ to experience all the operating features highlighted in this article.

Intermodal Movements

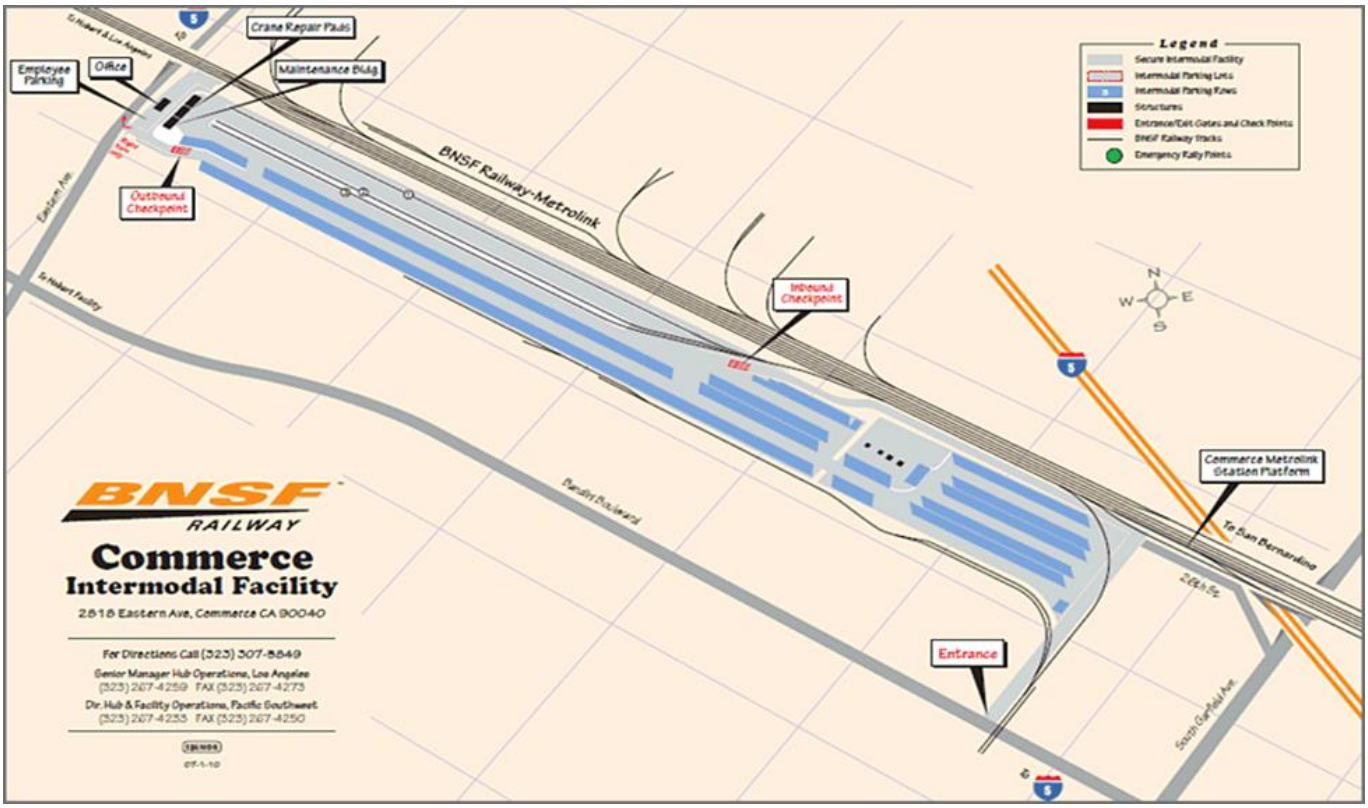
This article has been a few years in writing. I had been requested, on more than one occasion, to write about the company, J.B. Hunt Transport. I am employed as a Senior Manager for Regional Safety in the Northeast Intermodal Business Unit.

The beginning of intermodal operations for J.B. Hunt was in 1989 when Johnnie Bryan Hunt partnered with Michael Haverty, then President of the Santa Fe Railroad. They attached a passenger car on the rear of a freight train and a few miles down the track Mr. Hunt agreed to a deal. The rest is history as J.B. Hunt Intermodal was born under the name Quantum.

J.B. Hunt is the largest domestic intermodal carrier with more than 100,000 containers, 89,000 chassis and some 6,000 drivers nationwide.

Intermodal Movements (cont.)

A day in the life of an intermodal load finds a driver coming to work in Southgate, CA near Los Angeles. It is 0200 hours and our driver heads to a customer for a load of wine starting on a journey to Pennsylvania. Our driver picks up his loaded container at the customer and heads to the city of Commerce, CA to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail ramp.



Once at the rail yard, our driver drops the container for loading into a well car for the trip east.

Intermodal Movements (cont.)

The trip from California to Chicago can take 64 hours on an average train length of 8,000 feet, with some trains reaching 16,000 feet on the transcontinental route . The 8,000-foot train is made up of approximately 100, 77 foot long well cars, each car carries two 53-foot containers for a total of 200 containers stacked.

As the Burlington Northern Santa Fe does not reach all the way to the east coast, the train will terminate in one of the Chicago, Illinois railroad yards. J. B. Hunt employs many independent contract drivers to rubber tire inter-change the freight to a Norfolk Southern or CSX rail yard in crosstown Chicago moves.

Burlington Northern Santa Fe has facilities for intermodal service at, in or near Chicago. They include:

Corwith, Il

Cicero, Il

Logistics Park, Il

Willow Springs, Il.

Once the crosstown move has been completed, we are back to the steel wheel ride to the east coast. The largest locations utilized are the Norfolk Southern Yards in Harrisburg, PA and Jersey City, NJ.

The ride can take anywhere from 24 to 48 hours with some exceptions.

Intermodal Movements (cont.)

Croxton Terminal, Jersey City, NJ.

Upon arrival at the rail facility the train is off loaded. Appointments for delivery by tractor trailer are arranged. Deliveries by our drivers extend to a 250 mile radius from the terminal. We do have a 40 truck regional fleet in Harrisburg, PA to run freight down the Route 81 corridor. This phase of delivery generally is completed in a one day round trip. However, it is not uncommon for traffic delays/congestion for a local driver to make it back home within normal work hours.

article and photos by Tedd Pounds

The Tool Maven

Standard practice for model train wheel performance is checking that each wheelset has the proper gauge to fit the track rail. Like many hobbyists I have used the NMRA HO Standards Gauge for verifying correct wheel spacing (see figure 1). This gauge is invaluable for many HO railroad standards. Just recently, I came across a unique tool that performed only one function, that being checking wheel gauge. The HO scale Wheel Gauge (see figure 2) is distributed by https://railcast.wixsite.com/railcast, however, I purchased mine from EBAY ($5.60 plus free shipping). The unit is a chrome plated device which is of sturdy construction. The gauge is simple to use (see figures 3-5).

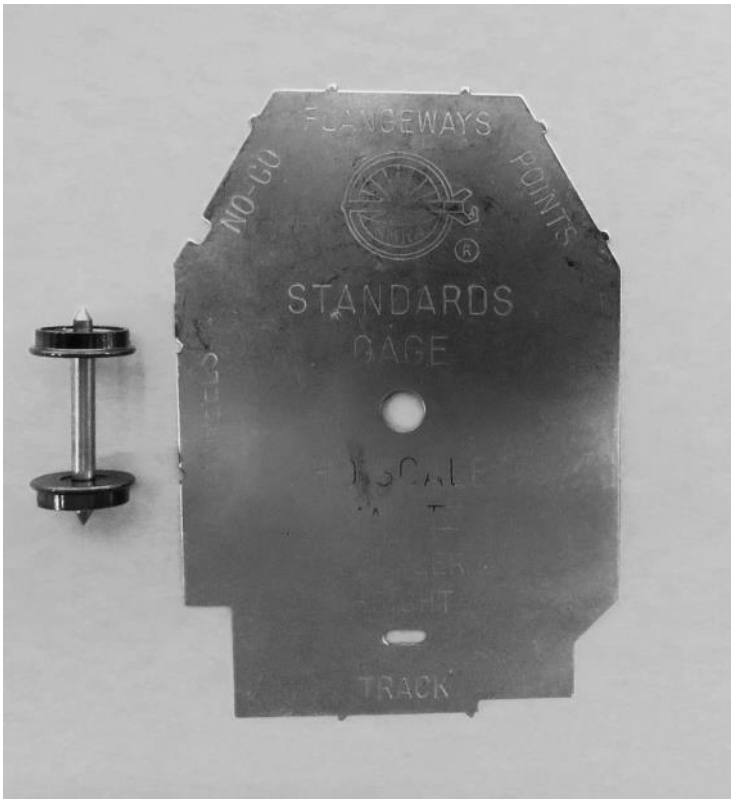


figure 1

figure 2

figure 3

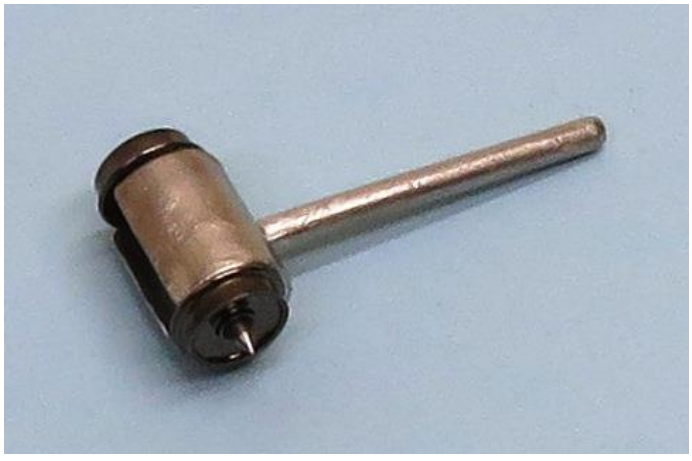


figure 4

The Tool Maven (cont.)

figure 5

If the wheel gauge indicates too narrow a wheel spacing (gauge will not fit snuggly between inside wheel backs) or too large a wheel spacing (gauge will rock between wheel backs), the wheels will need adjustment. This task can be accomplished by twisting and moving the wheels with your left and right fingers, increasing or decreasing the distance. The correction can then be verified by applying the wheel gauge. This procedure may be repeated as necessary.

Besides checking wheel sets for accuracy on freight cars, passenger cars and locomotives, there have been numerous times where Proto 2000 locomotives have required replacement of axle gears due to cracking (a common manufacturing defect by Life-Like). These models used a split metal wheel/axle connected by a plastic axle gear (see figures 6 and 7). To accomplish this task I designed a jig.

figure 6

figure 7

The Tool Maven (cont.)

The jig was made of scrap maple (mine measures 1' h x 1 ¾" w x 3" l) with a 11/64" hole drilled to accept one end of a new gear hub and a 3/32" hole (counterbore 3/16" to a depth of 1/16") to accept the axle wheel face (see figure 8). I also fabricated two .54 mm thickness plastic gauges that would slide around an axle and allow clearance between the axle and wheel bearing (see figure 9).

figure 8

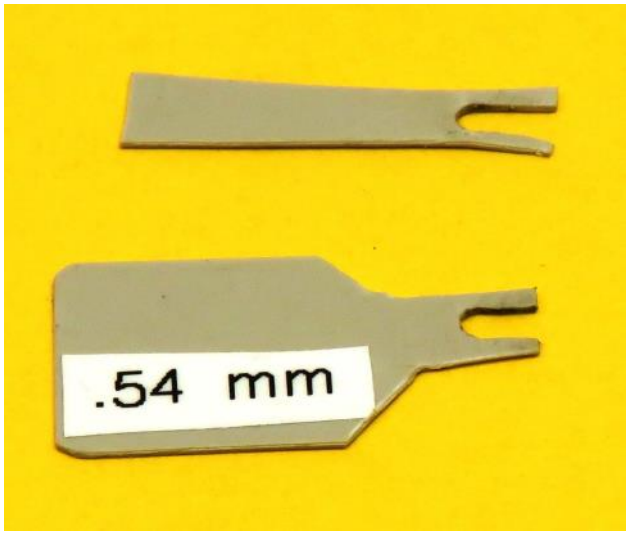


figure 9

To begin the bearing replacement, remove each axle from the diesel truck (carefully) and then pull apart the two wheel/shafts using only your fingers. The axles will come apart very easily due to the cracked plastic axle gear. Place the new gear into the jig. Using a tack or other light hammer, gently tap the axile of the existing wheel onto the new gear (see figure 10). Next, turn the assembly upside down, place the axle nub into the axle hole of the jig and insert one of the .54 mm gauges between the axle bearing and the gear hub. Now, insert the second .54 mm gauge between the opposite gear hub and second wheel/axle (see figure 11). You can also inset the HO Wheel Gauge took for extra accuracy as you tap and seat the wheel/axles and bearing into the correct HO gauge standard (see figure 12).

figure 10

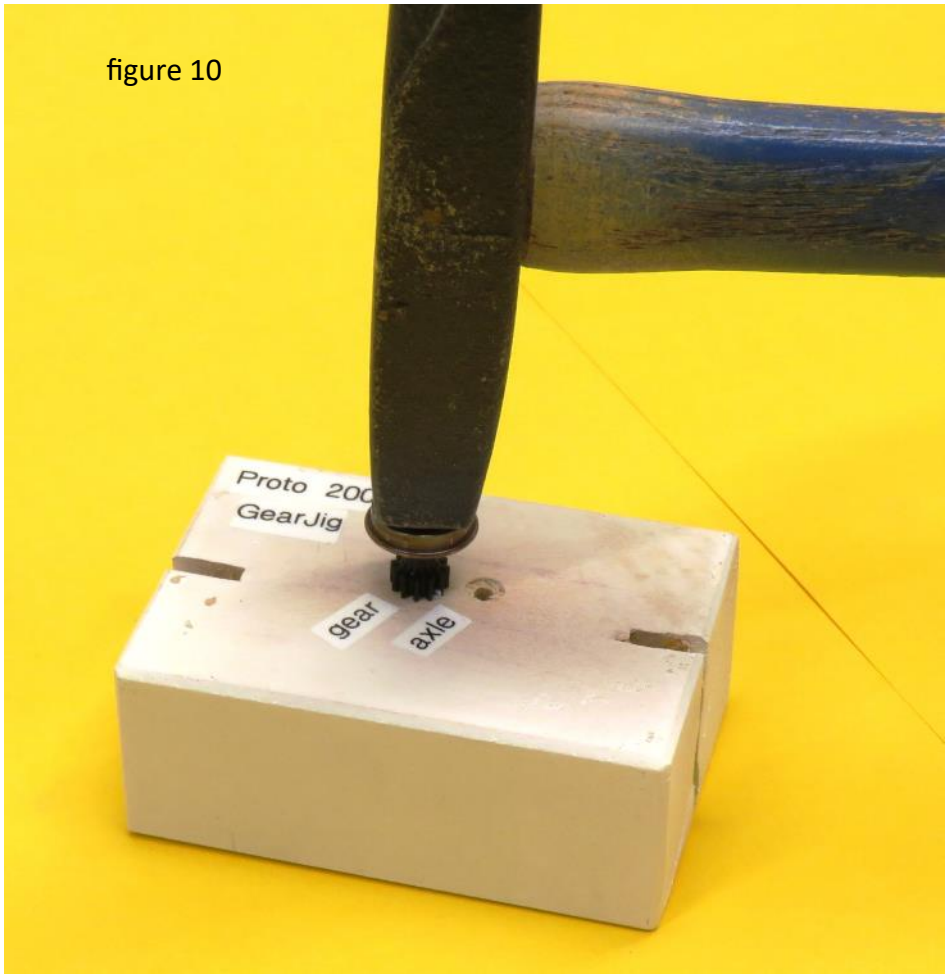
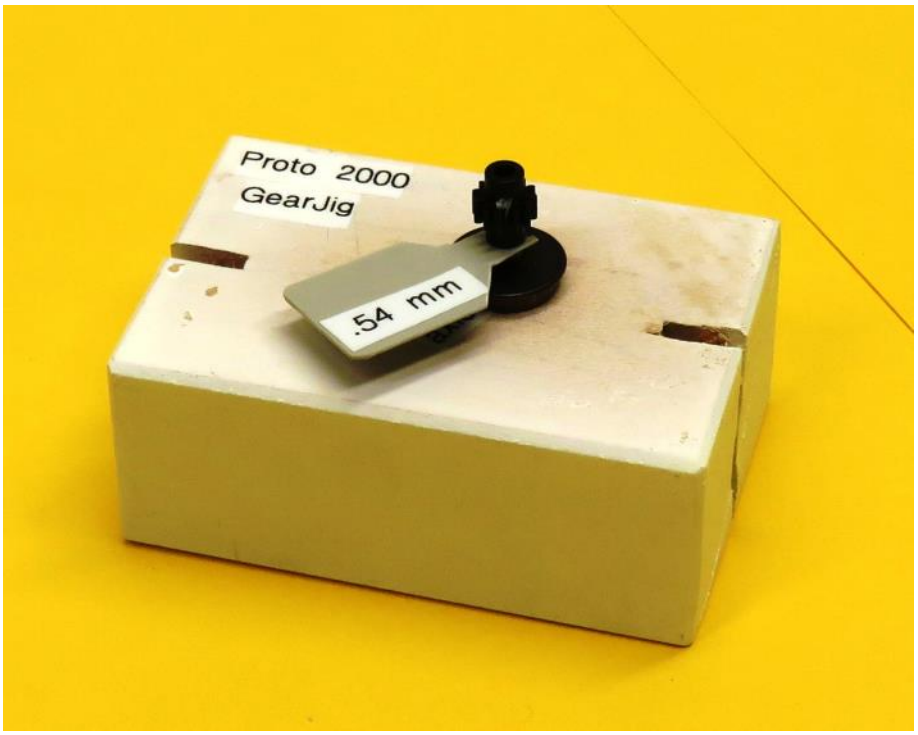


figure 11



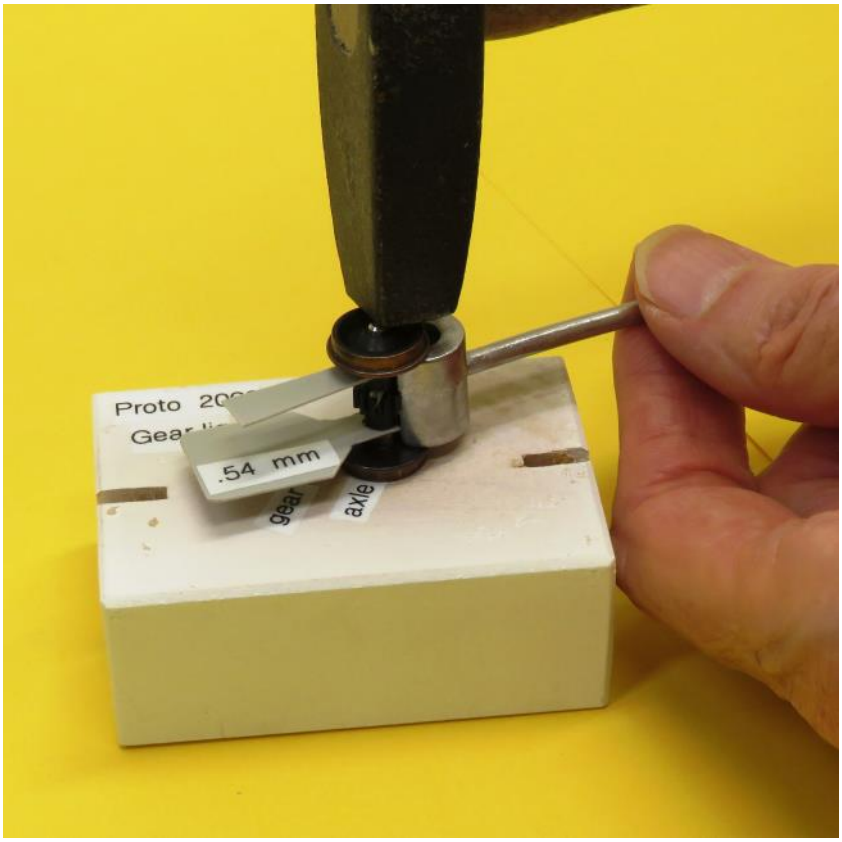


figure 12

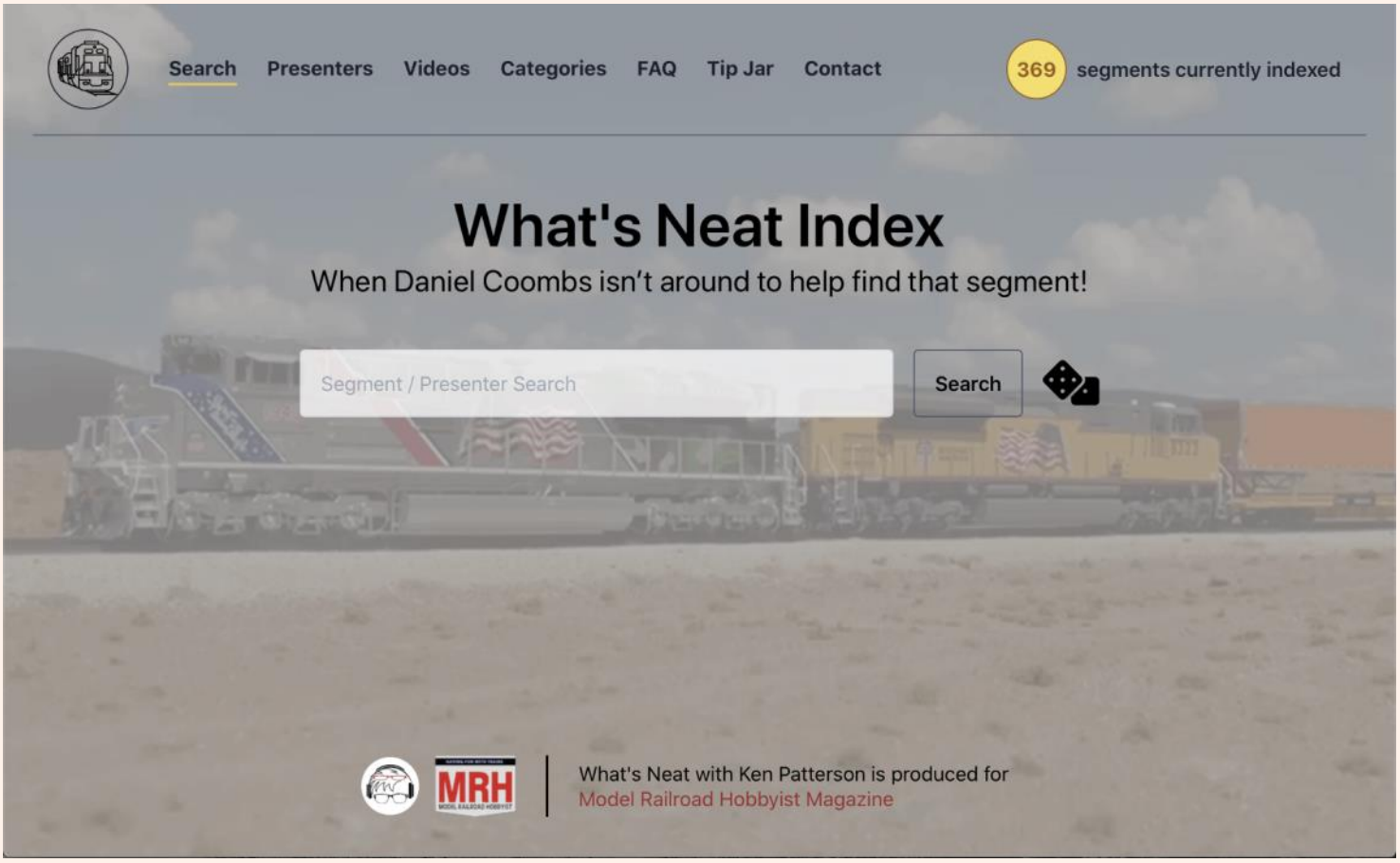
Happy Modeling,

Claude Hammer, The Tool Maven

Reference Section

Robert Getty has built a web application that indexes every segment of Ken Paterson's “What's Neat” YouTube show for Model Railroad Hobbyist Magazine. It's free to use and member’s might find it quite useful: https://wnindex.theconsist.com/search

Sample screen shot below:



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Rolling artwork spotted in Norfolk Southern Lancaster Yard.