



Volume 29

# SUSQUEHANNA SIDETRACKS



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

Number 6



Lee Rainey's PRR and EBT S scale layout is profiled on pages 9-18.



Lee Rainey's Maine Sn2 FreeMo modules are a sight to behold. See full article on pages 19-23.



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## From the Superintendent's Desk

The year is quickly passing by. It is hard to believe that 2022 is just around the corner. I am hoping that we can start to get back to normal. We are working on next year's schedule of events. Scott Ungar is developing an event in Allentown for February. The exact date is yet to be determined. A continuing issue is finding meeting places that will allow large group gatherings.

The Division-wide Open House Tour is scheduled for November. If your layout was open in the past year(s), you should have received an email to sign up for this year's Open House Tour. If not, all you need to do is go to [www.ModelRailroadOpenHouse.com](http://www.ModelRailroadOpenHouse.com). There you can enter your information for the days you want to be open.

Our Division needs your help serving all of our members. We need someone to take over as Clerk, someone to assist our Webmaster and someone to volunteer as Assistant Editor. Please see the article on page 8. 2022 is an even numbered year, which means three officers need to be elected (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Chief Clerk). Paul Tice, who has served the Division since day one as our Clerk, has asked to step aside. Also, I will be stepping aside and will not be seeking another term as Superintendent. So please consider serving the Division by running for one of our leadership positions.

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

# In Memoriam

## PASSING OF LONGTIME DIVISION MEMBER ROBERT LYTER

Robert F. Lyter (Bob), 82 years old, of Dauphin, PA, passed away on September 6th, 2021, in Harrisburg, PA. Bob was born in Harrisburg on 24 July 1939, and retired from the Harrisburg Bureau of Fire after 38 years as the Administrative Assistant to the Fire Chief. In addition to his career as a firefighter, Bob was Treasurer for the IAFF Local 428, a volunteer EMT with the Dauphin-Middle Paxton Ambulance, and assisted with teaching EMT classes at Harrisburg Area Community College. He also volunteered with Mt. Pleasant Fire Company, the Hampton Fire Company, was an active Mason with the Perseverance Lodge No 21, and was a Zembo Shriner member where he served as Chairman of the Safety Committee for the Zembo Circus.

Bob had a lifelong love of trains. He enjoyed everything from railfanning real-world 1:1 scale railroad operations to all facets of model railroading. He was a very active and longtime member of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) and served on the Board of Directors (BOD) of our Mid-East Region Susquehanna Division 11 for many years. Bob was also a member of the Keystone Model Railroad Historical Society where he held several offices. He was also an equally active member of the Harrisburg Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society (NRHS) to include serving as their Chapter President. He particularly enjoyed assisting at Rail Camp in Steamtown, building model railroads, and "playing with trains" while attending operating sessions with other model railroad enthusiasts.

His other interests included patrolling the Susquehanna River at both Harrisburg and the Chesapeake Bay with the Coast Auxiliary, providing EMT services for the Hidden Valley Scout Reservation camp, volunteering as a driver for the Dauphin-Middle Paxton senior van, wood working, hunting, surf fishing, bowling, and golf.



# 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 December 15, 2021.

### Board of Directors

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Susquehanna Division website:

[www.susquehannanmra.org](http://www.susquehannanmra.org)

Mid-Eastern Region website:

[www.mer-nmra.com](http://www.mer-nmra.com)

## National Model Railroad Association

8414 Gulf View Drive, Suite A & B

Soddy Daisy, TN 37379-2200

[www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org)



Detroit, Toledo & Ironton 4-4-2 Atlantic #45 sits in the roundhouse at Greenfield Village, Dearborn, MI.



# 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

**November** – Division-wide Open House Tour



Reading EMD FP7 #902 sits on a siding at Steamtown National Historic Site, Scranton, PA.



## **PhillyNMRA News** **Upcoming Meet!**

### **Join us for our November Division Meet**

**When:** Saturday, November 13, 2021 at 9:00 AM (Doors open at 8:30 AM)

**Where:** Brandywine Town Center Community Center, 4050 Brandywine Pkwy, Wilmington, DE 19803 (Naaman's Rd. DE-92 at Concord Pk. US-202)

**Why:** We love trains!

#### **Highlights:**

- **Jeff Witt – "The Case for Building Turnouts and Hand-laid Track"**
- **Mike Dettinger – "This Rail Joiner Changed Model Railroading"**
- Model Display Table/Show & Tell – bring your projects and discuss if you like
- White Elephant Table – sell your stuff or buy someone else's
- Door Prizes
- 50/50 Raffle – take a chance to win half the pot
- Refreshments – coffee, donuts, and Philly pretzels

Layout Tours in the PM. Layouts courtesy of the November Open House

event, [www.ModelRailroadOpenHouse.com](http://www.ModelRailroadOpenHouse.com). Check that website for maps and schedules. Maps will be available for some of the nearby layouts at the meet.

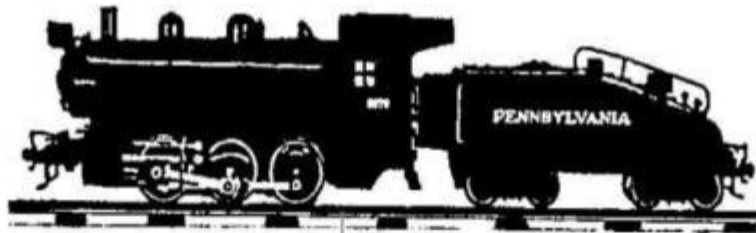
You can also check out the event page for this meet on the Division website at <http://www.phillynmra.org/events/philadelphia-division-meet-111321>.

Admission is free to all NMRA members. We welcome guests, 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!

# FIRST FROST<sup>®</sup> TRAIN MEET

November 13 & 14, 2021



Saturday 9-4 - Sunday 9-3

Allentown Fairgrounds Agricultural Hall

1925 West Chew Street, Allentown, PA 18104

**Train Races - Test Track - Switching and Operating Layouts**

Adults \$10.00 - Children under 12 FREE! w/adult Visit

our website for more info or contact us at (610) 442-2859

**[www.allentowntrainmeet.com](http://www.allentowntrainmeet.com)**

# Opportunities to Serve the Division

## Chief Clerk

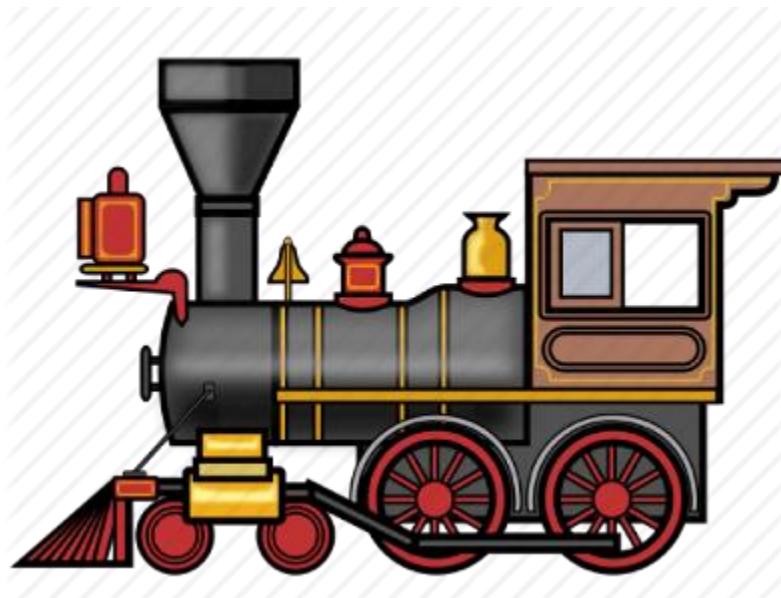
Paul Tice has faithfully served the Division as our Clerk since day one. Yes, he is the only person who has held this position in our Division, in fact, he remembers when our treasury was so small that we did not have enough to even open a checking account. Paul's health has been declining and he has 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](mailto: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](mailto:tlhimmel@comcast.net) or call 717-454-8033.

## Assistant Editor

Rich Wurst, our current Sidetracks editor, is looking for assistance arranging, writing, photographing and composing future issues of our newsletter. The only requirement is an interest in helping and timeliness dealing with deadlines. If you have any questions about the position or just want to volunteer, please contact Rich at [rjwurst@comcast.net](mailto:rjwurst@comcast.net) or cell 609-6586156.





## Lee Rainey's PRR and EBT in Mount Union layout

Lee's S/Sn3 home layout incorporates the junction of two of his favorite railroads: the narrow-gauge East Broad Top, and the mighty Pennsylvania Railroad. They met at the Central Pennsylvania town of Mount Union. Lee made the somewhat unusual decision to base his entire layout on the industries and operations of that single town.

Even though the layout was narrowly focused, it was obvious that much selective compression would be required. After all, the Harbison-Walker brick plant in Mount Union would fill Lee's entire layout space if modeled in its entirety – and it was just one of three such plants in town. Mount Union was also home to the wood preserving plant that produced ties for the eastern half of the PRR, and it had five miles of track just in the plant!

Part of Lee's compression strategy therefore is to make the modeled industries and landscape continue into the backdrop, creating scenes that are a part of the layout's story. The goal is that visitors familiar with the real setting will recognize not only rolling stock and buildings, but also backdrop landforms.



A dramatic example is the layout's handling of Jack's Narrows, the deep gorge just west of Mount Union. Its four-track PRR "Broad Way" main line was much

too large to model plausibly on the layout, but a viewer standing at the entrance to the PRR aisle (Lee refers to the spot by its real identity, as the corner of Lafayette and Small Streets) sees the same mountainsides that would confront him in real life. That's because Lee created the backdrop from his own actual on-site photos. (The F3 lash-up is from MTH, while the reefers are from plastic kits. The caboose is by Southwind.)

Similarly, a viewer at the mouth of the EBT aisle is seeing the midriff-high layout as if he were standing atop Chestnut Ridge at the south end of town. In front of him would be, in order, US Route 522, the EBT's dual gauge yard, a huge pile of coal waste from the cleaning plant, the Juniata River, the company town of Kistler, and distant mountains.

Through the magic of Photoshop, that's exactly what one sees. Lee started from a black and white panoramic photo, and sized and colorized it, relying for details on the memories of old residents he interviewed. When some modelers from the real Mount Union visited the layout, Lee was nervous, to say the least. What if the roofs were the wrong color? One visitor stared long and hard at the backdrop and Lee became more and more worried. Then the visitor pointed into the scene and said, "That's my house!" The backdrop had passed the test.

# Lee Rainey's PRR and EBT in Mount Union layout

Incidentally, that's the EBT's standard gauge switcher #6, a B.T.S. product, shunting an American Models hopper on the dual gauge trackage.



The homemade photo backdrops will be carried around the full layout. Combined with bas relief elements such as this pile of coal waste, and 3D trees and vegetation, it gives the layout a sense of existing in a world beyond the hard-board backdrop.



# Lee Rainey's PRR and EBT in Mount Union layout



Lee found the secret of photo backdrops (maybe of all backdrops) is to ensure the meeting point between horizontal foreground and vertical distance is not visible to the viewer. In this view, the board fence, passing vehicles, scrubby brush, and pile of coal waste all combine to hide the joint as US Route 522 leaves town to the south. The industry, a wood turning mill, once actually stood at this location, and is another piece of Photoshopped historic photography. The meadow on the right side of the highway was done by granddaughter Anastasia, then a fifth-grader.



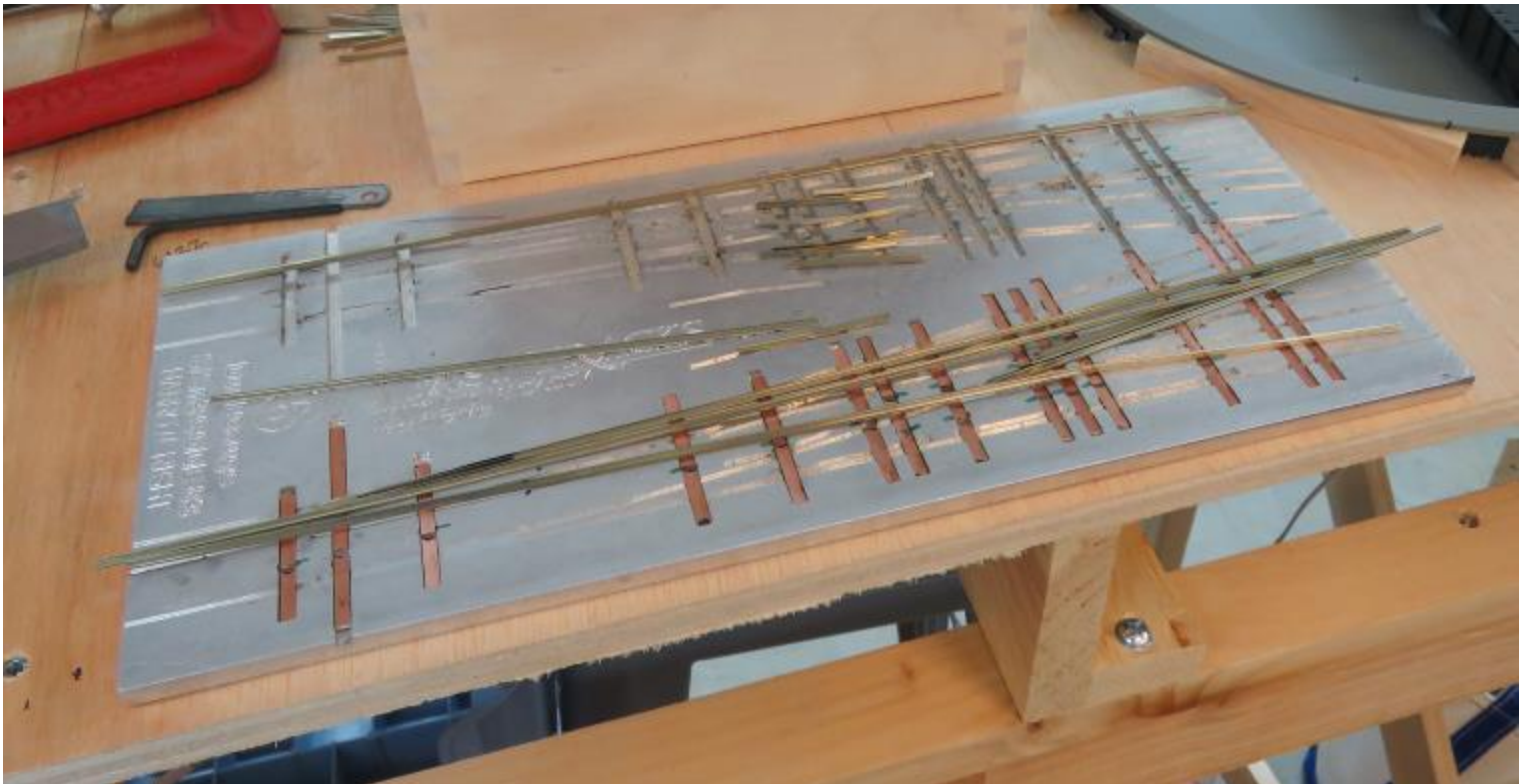
The layout is built on a mixture of plywood-backed sheet Homasote and commercial Homasote roadbed. All track other than staging is handlaid. Much of it is dual gauge, to accommodate three-foot EBT and standard gauge PRR equipment, matching the arrangement of the real Mount Union yard. The mix of gauges is very apparent in this overview of American Models and SHS hoppers in the lower end of the EBT yard. (The piece of flex track in the background is considered staging and will be covered with a building, so it does not violate the all-handlaid rule!)

## Lee Rainey's PRR and EBT in Mount Union layout

The two dozen dual gauge turnouts (and all other turnouts) on the layout were built with Fast Tracks jigs. Using the jigs, assembly is fast and almost foolproof. PC-board ties are inserted in the jig and then rail is shaped with the aid of various Fast Tracks tools to match the slots in the jig. The rail is then easy to solder into perfect gauge.

Fast Tracks supplies full size printed templates to show where to place the additional wooden ties needed for appearance. Lee became a great fan of the paper turnout templates, even using them to mock up parts of the yard full size.

The ease in neatly placing switch ties gave him an idea. He used his PC drawing program to create templates for lengths of curved and straight track, with ties spaced to match the PRR track standards. In the photo, you can see the templates under the track. Following the PRR standard, the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> and so on ties are closer together to support the fishplates – a one-upsmanship detail if ever there was one. Combined with Photoshop, the templates were also used to build a full-size mockup of a distinctive EBT item: the three-way stub switch that will be in the upper right.





# Lee Rainey's PRR and EBT in Mount Union layout



Also worth mentioning in this photo are the “billboards” that orient operators to important buildings with loading docks that don’t exist yet! The PRR M1a on the rear, to-be-hidden track is an Omnicon brass import tuned and DCC’d by fellow S scaler Bill Lane.



Lee says structures and trackwork are among his top hobby interests, which may explain why he has undertaken the kind of layout that he has. The finished layout will use some 30 structures matched to the prototype, and virtually all will have to be scratchbuilt.

Most require selective compression, as in this group of structures representing the Harbison-Walker plant. In real life the complex had 46 outbound loading doors. Lee’s compressed version manages five, plus the receiving bin for inbound coal.

# Lee Rainey's PRR and EBT in Mount Union layout

To populate the layout for operation while structure-building is underway, Lee leverages both commercial plans and his own research. For example, the Welch building, which stood across the track from the EBT station, is a scale drawing created by counting bricks in photos of the now- vanished structure. Colorizing the mockup authentically helps visualize the future scene.





# Lee Rainey's PRR and EBT in Mount Union layout

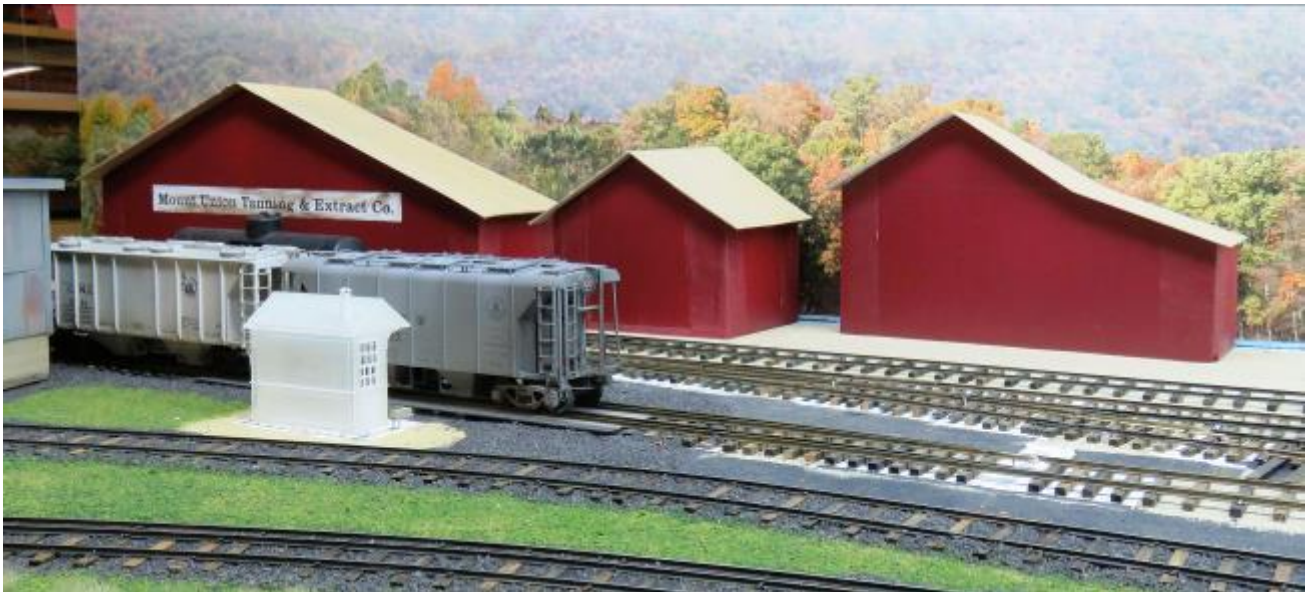
By contrast, the placeholder for the EBT's unique transfer operation was created from foamcore board and photocopies of commercial plans. In this photo it hosts cars from S Scale America and SHS.



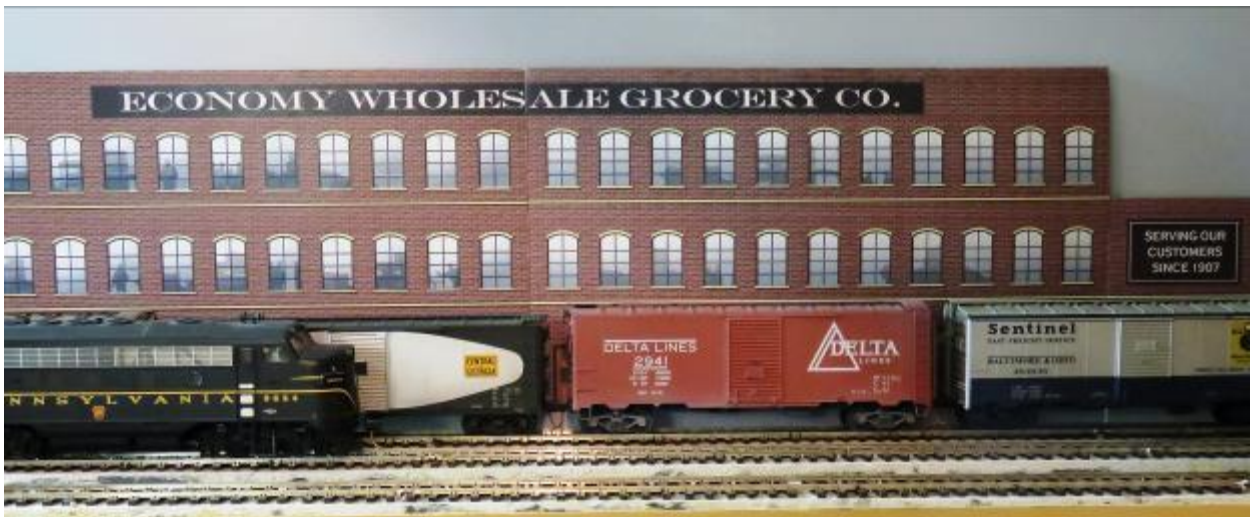
# Lee Rainey's PRR and EBT in Mount Union layout

Lee's goal to recreate the structures in the prototype yard is aided by the latest technology. A good friend, Wade Woodcock, is also modeling Mount Union, in HO scale. Wade is a master at 3D printing. Lee sends his 2D scale drawings of Mount Union structures to Wade, who designs the 3D computer files to print the key building parts in both HO and S scales.

One of Wade's latest efforts is the white building near the track scale. It's a one-piece, S scale version of a standard PRR scale-tender's house. (The B&O wagon-top covered hopper is a brass import; the other covered hopper is from SHS.)



Though the layout is far from done, it already is complete enough to handle challenging operating sessions. (The layout had just held its 30<sup>th</sup> session when COVID shut everything down.) There are two primary jobs: the PRR shifter and the EBT shifter. Both typically are staffed by an engineer and a conductor. An extra hand is likely to be assigned to handle the four mainline runs that originate in Altoona and Enola staging.





# Lee Rainey's PRR and EBT in Mount Union layout

The two staging yards are open-top and easily accessible, a lesson learned painfully in two previous layouts. The photo backdrops and building mockups extend into the staging areas, creating some viewer interest and operator orientation. (The F7 is an SHS model; the boxcars are Pacific Rail Shops kits.)

Operations are controlled by a Shenware-based waybill system. Every industry on the railroad has a front fascia box. Arriving cars have their car cards dropped behind the orange tabs. Cards in front of the orange tabs are to be picked up. The recessed "flower pots" are controls for Bluepoint switch machines.



# Lee Rainey's PRR and EBT in Mount Union layout



The PRR shifter has pulled a pair of empty hoppers from Harbison-Walker and is about to turn them over to the EBT for reloading at the coal cleaning plant. Photos taped to the wall are an aid in visualizing the backdrop still to be created for the abbreviated tie plant. The PRR hopper is a Southwind brass model; the NYC hopper and PRR diesel are from SHS. The kitbashed gondola of raw ties in the back is a venerable car that has been on Lee's layouts since his college days.

Asked about his decision to base the entire layout on a single town, Lee expresses high satisfaction. Switching is his favorite part of operation, and he has plenty of it in a basement-sized format that recalls the industries and traffic of two favorite prototypes.

**article by Lee Rainey, photos by Rich Wurst and Lee Rainey**



# Lee Rainey's Maine Sn2 Modules



Maine was home to several narrow gauge railroads with the unusual track gauge of just 24". The Sn2 Crew was a FreeMo modular club that modeled these railroads in S scale, 1/64 actual size, resulting in Sn2 scale. The layout was proto-freelanced, following scenes on the two longest two-footers, the Wasscasset Waterville & Farmington, and the Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes.

The all-NMRA group consisted of Frank Knight of Maine, Dave Keith of Ohio, and Gary Carmichael and Lee Rainey of Pennsylvania. Active from 2005 to 2016, the group exhibited at shows from St. Louis to Maine to North Carolina. At the 2014 NMRA national convention in Cleveland, several of the group's modules placed second in the judged model contest. The accompanying layout plan shows the group's Cleveland setup.



Damariscotta Station



# Lee Rainey's Maine Sn2 Modules



Forney 2-4-4T #7 passing a cow pasture

Old age has ended the group's traveling days, but many of Lee Rainey's modules are now displayed in his basement.

The control system was based around Lenz DCC. Frank Knight developed a computer system that controlled turnouts and staged trains in the end loops. It released them in sequence and threw turnouts so that the trains automatically passed at the double-ended siding in Alna.

Track was mostly hand-laid, with turnouts from Fast Tracks jigs. Rolling stock was a mixture of kits and scratch-built. The locomotives were brass imports. The club members added DCC and sound.



Mixed freight passing a hay field



# Lee Rainey's Maine Sn2 Modules



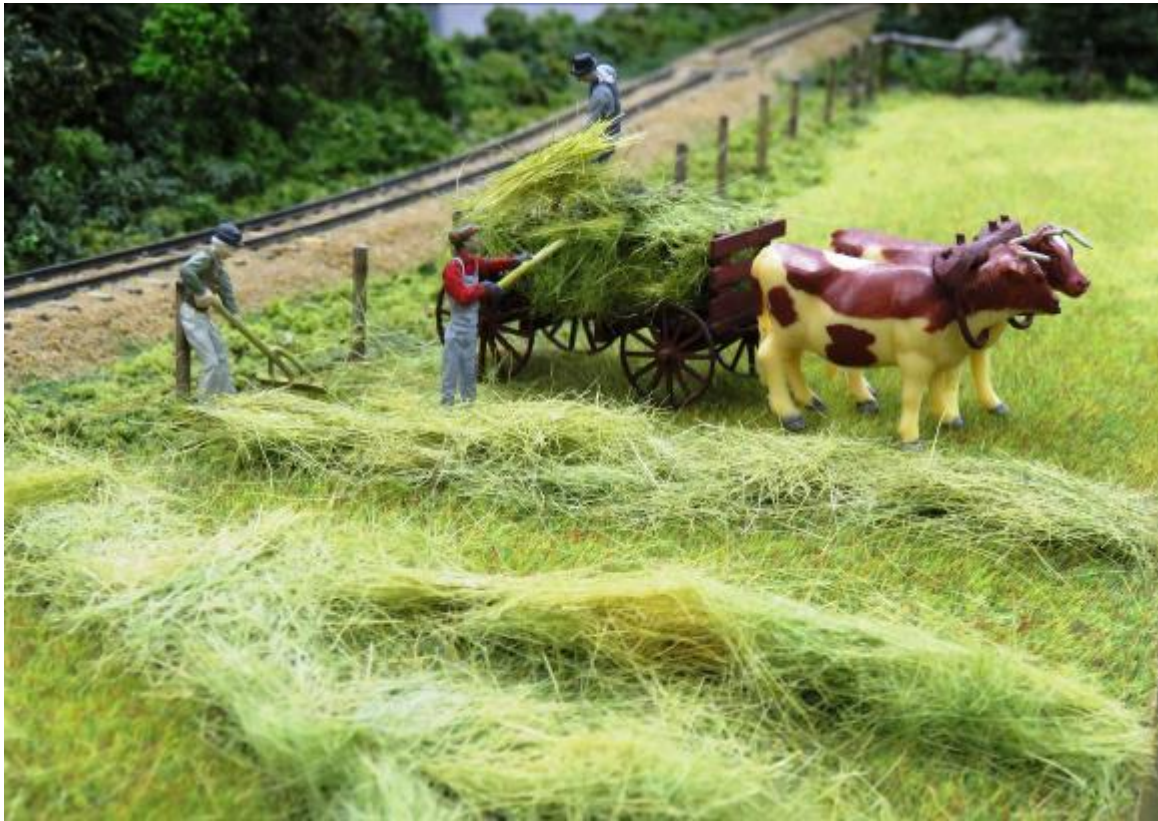
Head Tide Station



Village of Head Tide



# Lee Rainey's Maine Sn2 Modules



Hay harvesting and pitching the old fashioned way



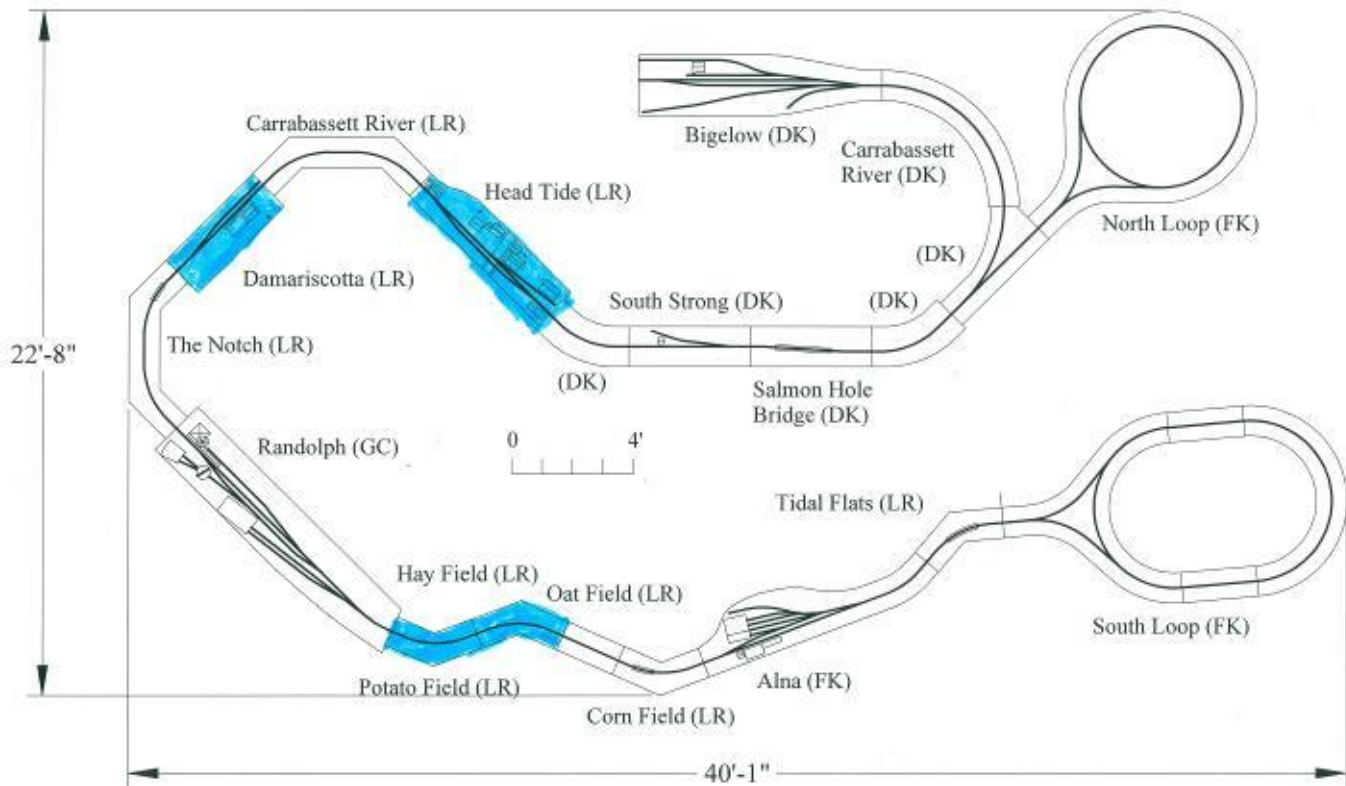
Sheep drinking at a country creek



# Lee Rainey's Maine Sn2 Modules



vegetable garden in the village of Head Tide



Maine Sn2 modules identified by builder's initials. Blue highlighted modules are represented by article photos.

article by Lee Rainey, photos by Rich Wurst and Jerry Lauchle

# The Frugal Model Railroader

Even though this feature is headlined as ‘The Frugal Model Railroader’, I must admit that the trees used for this project are commercially manufactured. They are Woodland Scenics 4”-6” Pine trees (photos 1 and 2).

My model railroad club is building an HO<sub>n</sub>3 logging line feature as part of our large sized HO layout. To simulate the forest yet to be cut, we needed a large number of trees. Even though the purchased trees varied in height they still appeared too uniform in size.

To solve the height problem, we used tree extenders. The extenders selected were floral pics (1/8”x 1/8” x 6”) which were stained green and came with their individual binding (photo 3) and pointed end. The process began by not using the manufactured tree base and attaching the floral pick by winding the included binding wire tightly around the tree trunk (photo 4). After the winding was completed, hot glue from an electric glue gun secured the wrapped wire (photo 5).

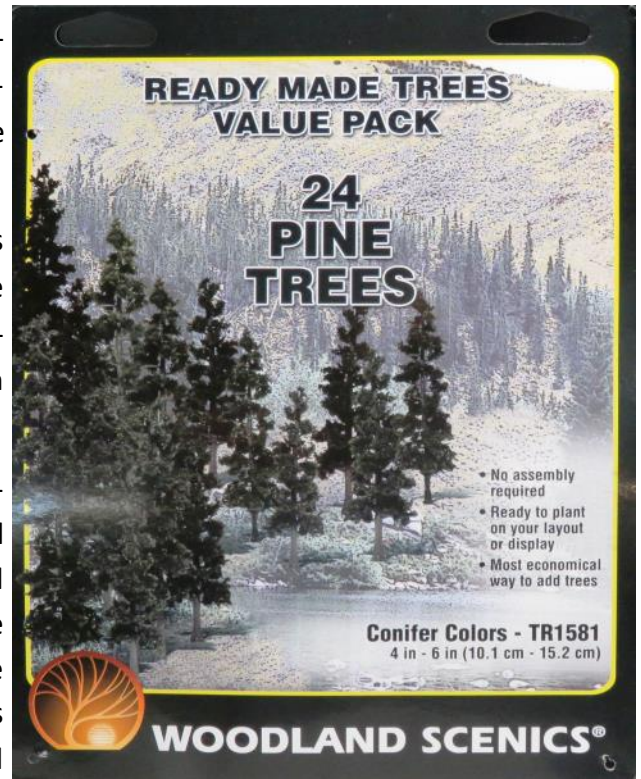


photo 1

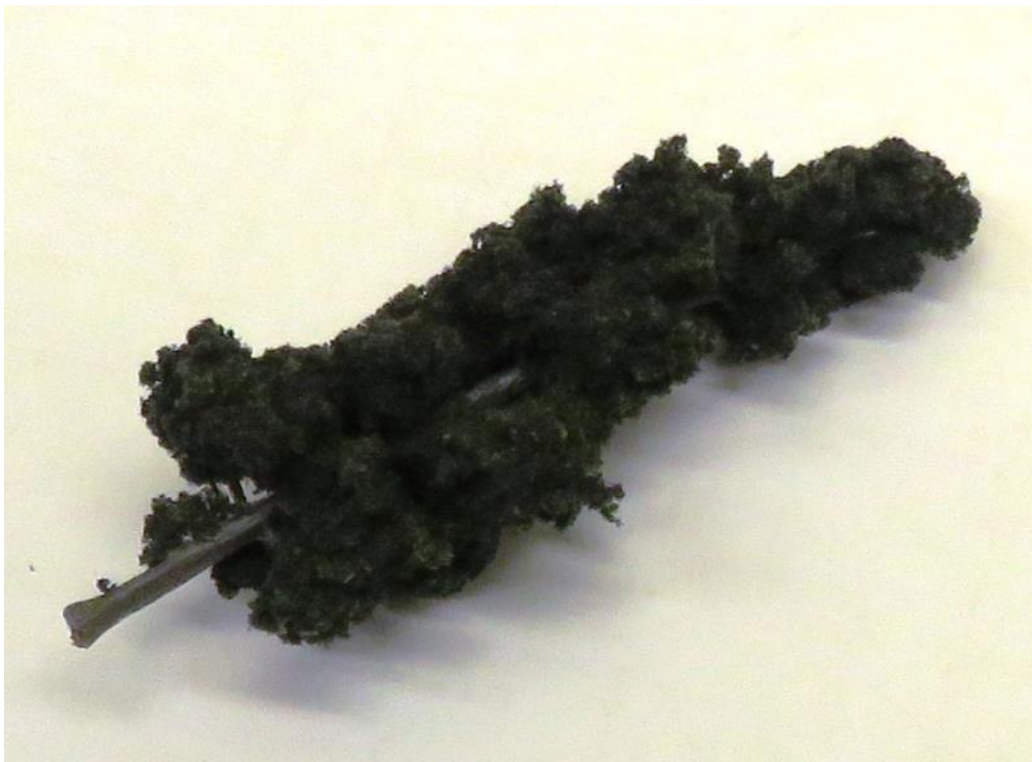


photo 2



# The Frugal Model Railroader

photo 3

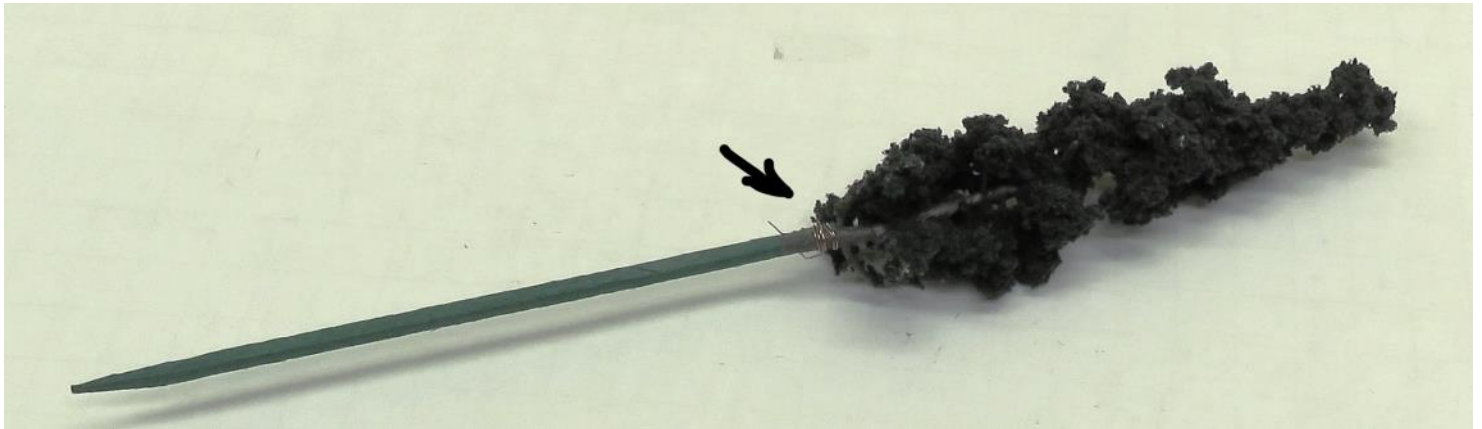
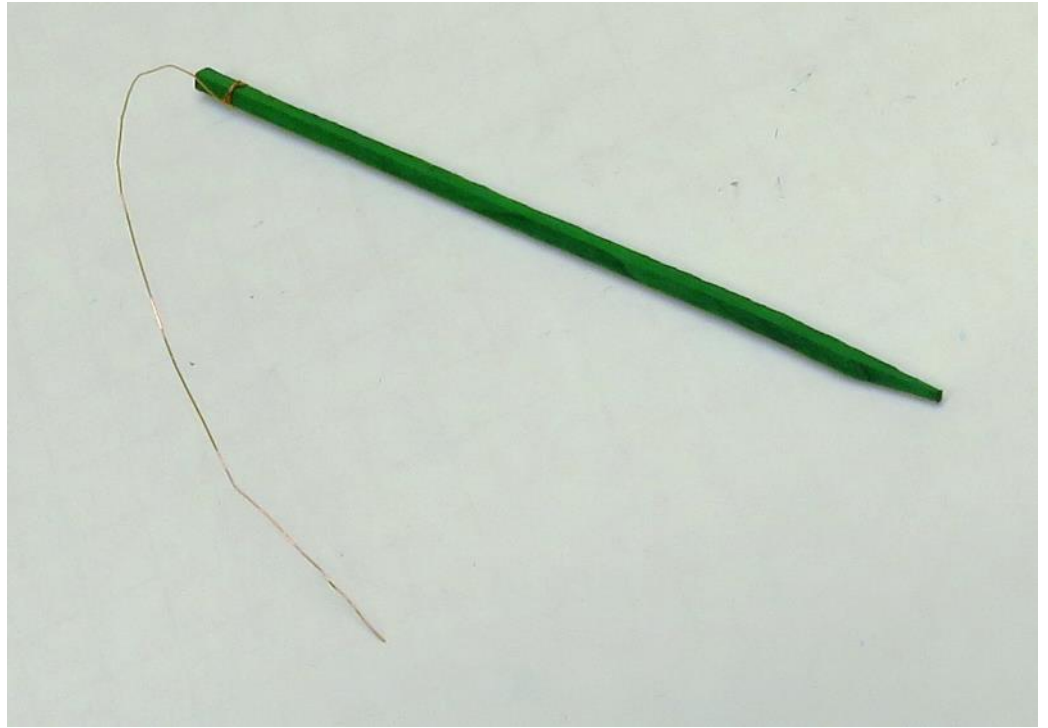


photo 4

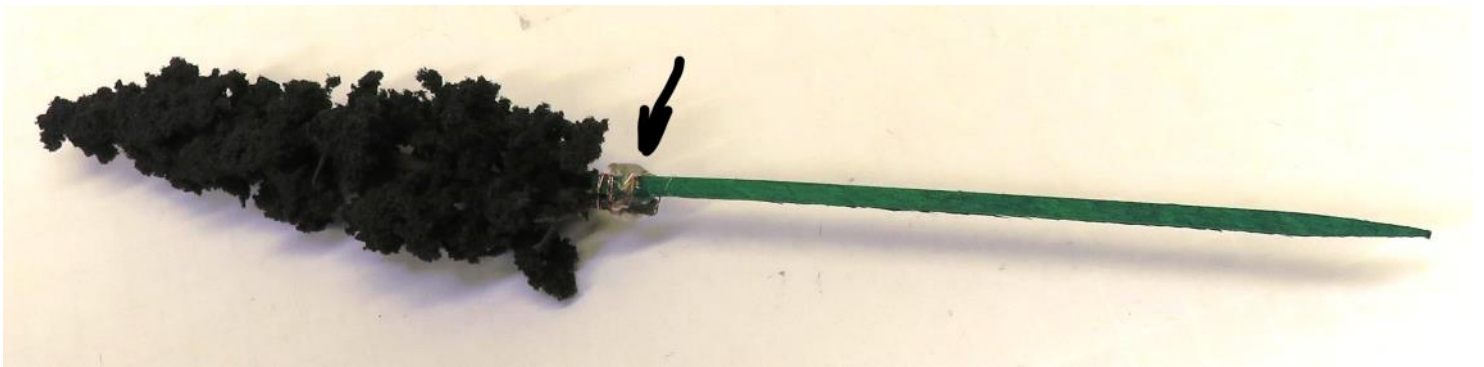


photo 5

# The Frugal Model Railroader

The area to be forested began by installing the stock trees in a tree line outlining the forested area. The next line of trees was installed using the extended trees, making sure that the floral picks could not be seen through the first tree row. Each succeeding row was installed in the same manner. Holes were drilled in the forest floor slightly smaller than the diameter of the floral picks creating a force fit. To simulate various tree heights each pick was inserted at slightly different height (photo 6). The irregular forest floor also contributed to the canopy contour. The trees were spray painted with different shades of green to avoid the uniform color which were characterized by the out-of-the box color (photo 7).



photo 6

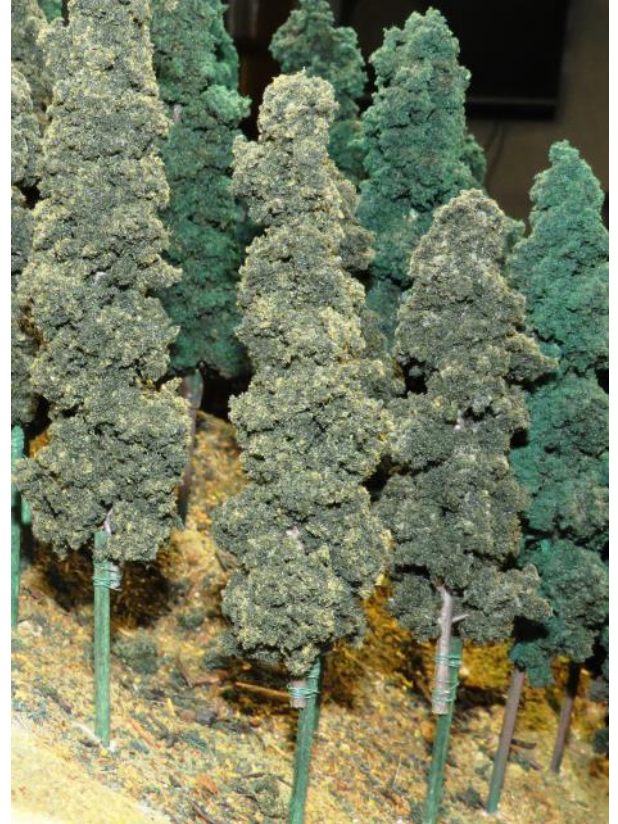


photo 7

Overall, this project made forestation an easy task. It is a fine example of modifying commercial products with using a frugal model railroader's mindset.

article and photos by Ben Kubelski



# Train Safes

## Columbia & Susquehanna Model Railroad Columbia, PA

Displaying and transporting your trains protected from dust and handling has always challenged model railroaders. What if there was a way to display, transport and drive your train onto your own or any other retrofitted platform without ever touching your train? Click on this link <https://youtu.be/6yIOnRyL-fw> to watch a video of how Train Safes work!

Model railroaders typically spend a large amount of money on locomotives and rolling stock, and then store and transport their prized possessions wrapped in paper or bubble wrap in cardboard boxes! Or, worse yet, we leave them sit out where they gather dust and can be damaged. Placing a train on a layout can be an involved and time consuming process of unpacking and “railing”. Transporting your train to another location for an operating session requires locomotives and rolling stock to be packed up, unpacked and “railed” and then packed up again to return home.

Few model railroaders seem to know there’s another way! Manufactured in Germany by Train Safe Corporation, are several versions of their main products called not surprisingly, *Train Safes*! These cases not only allow for the safe display, storage and transport of trains, but most are electrified and can be connected directly to a train layout allowing the train to be driven out of (and back into) the *Train Safe*, eliminating handling! Safes are available in O, HO, N and Z scale.

The C&S MRR was recently given quite a number of these (majority are HO) by the son of a former US distributor of Train Safes who passed away almost 10 years ago. Most of the Train Safes we have are the Acrylic Clear (TSV) version in lengths from one foot to ten feet. Lengths available vary between the scales. We have a limited number of HO Scale (white) acrylic Travel Safes (TST). Most of the longer variety are foam-lined with magnetic closures that protect trains while they are being shipped or packed for transport.

Furthermore, there are wall mounts (and some table mounts) for TSVs available. They allow the trains to be displayed and stored, while protected from UV light, dust and handling damage.

The majority of the cases and display racks are in like-new condition. Some have minor scratches, discoloration or breaks that have been repaired. Since they’re not new and carry no warranty, we’re selling the ones in like- new condition for approximately 1/3 the cost of a new one from **Train Safe**. The ones that have defects but are still functional will be less.

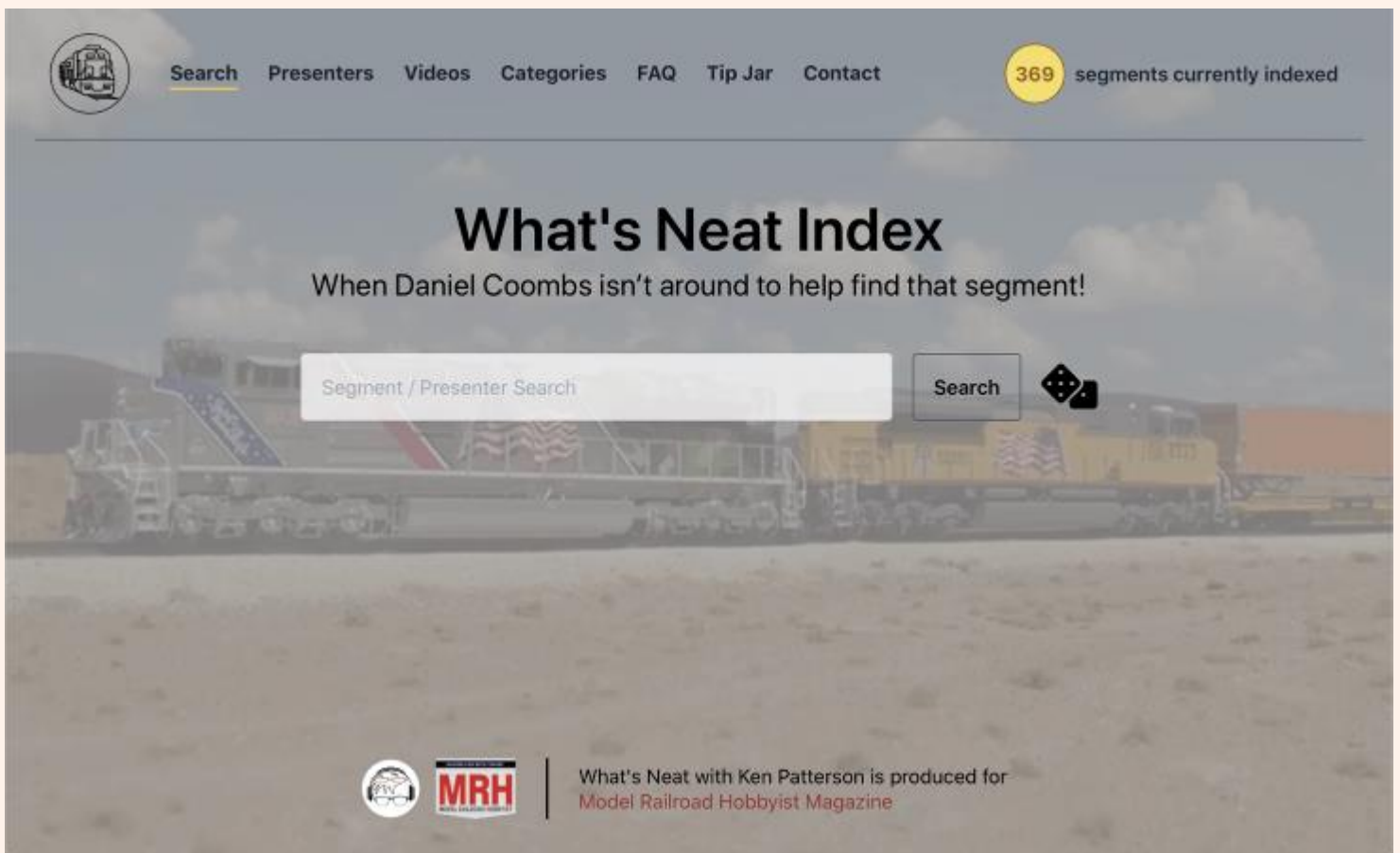
The Train Safes and display units are available for inspection, purchase and pick up on Sunday afternoons from 1-4 pm, at the C&S MRR on the second floor of the Columbia Historic Preservation Society building at 21 North Second Street in Columbia. We accept cash or check.

If you’re interested, email Rick Christopher at [rchristopher25@comcast.net](mailto:rchristopher25@comcast.net). Let us know what scale you’re interested and we’ll let you know what sizes are still available and how much they cost. Local delivery is available with orders over \$100, or if you have special needs, within 15 miles of Columbia free of charge. Shipping is not available. Watch the YouTube video via the link in the first paragraph for a better understanding!

# 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:





## Susquehanna Sidetracks

Official publication of the Susquehanna Division 11  
Of the National Model Railroad Association

5 Hardy Court, Lancaster, PA 17602

turntable and roundhouse at Steamtown National Historic Site, Scranton, PA

