



Volume 31

SUSQUEHANNA SIDETRACKS



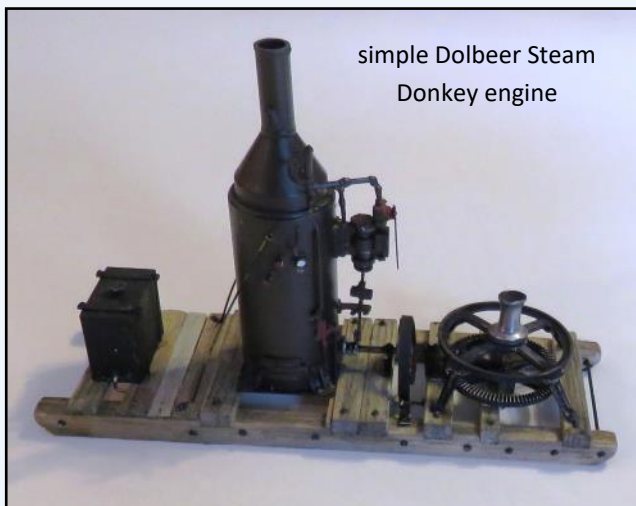
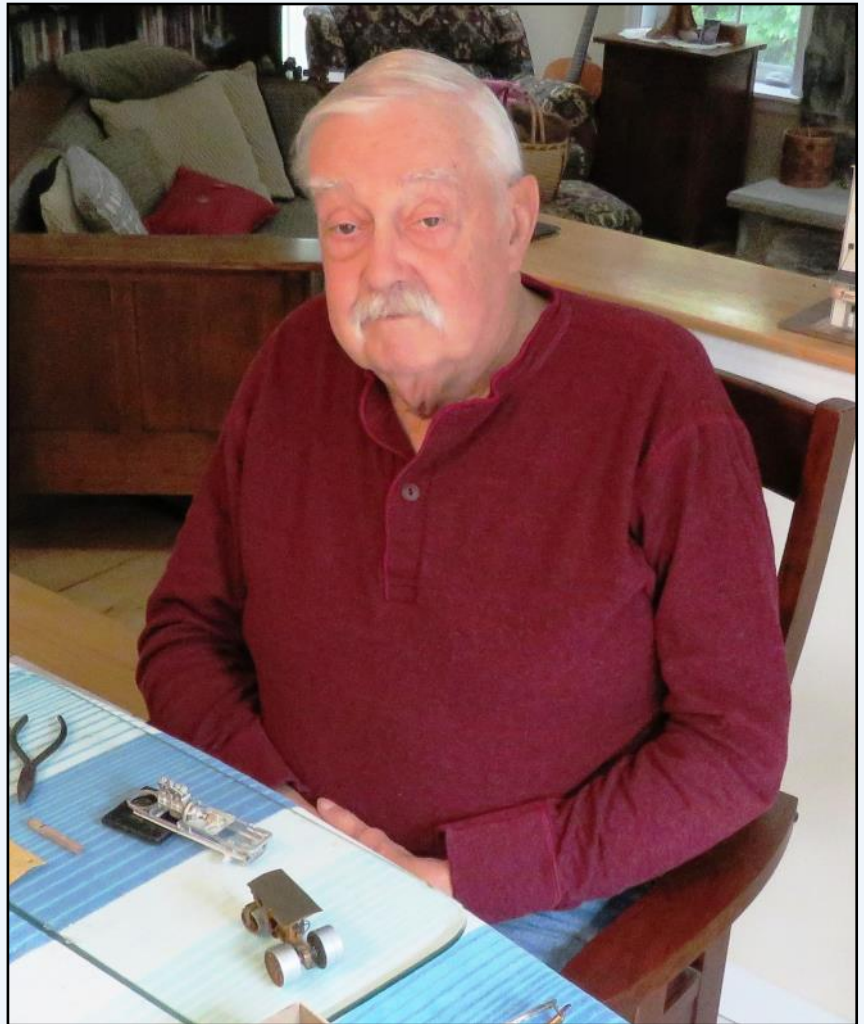
An Official Publication of the Susquehanna Division 11
Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA

Number 6

In the May/June 2023 issue of Sidetracks Tom O'Connor's Central Grove Lumber Company was the featured layout. The On3 scale model railroad filled the pages with Tom's artistic talent, masterful structures and scratchbuilt wonders.

In addition to his layout, Tom shared the storage cabinets filled with On3 scale logging equipment. Each of these replicas was scratchbuilt, kitbashed or a combination of both methods. Featured in this month's issue are just a few of the numerous models that have not found a home on the Central Grove Lumber Company Railroad. Tom has so many more models that are not featured here that another trip to his home is warranted in the future.

Seated at his kitchen table is master modeler Tom O'Connor. This unusual work area is where Tom builds each of his models. He certainly is a 'builder' at heart. Some of his creations can be seen continuing on page 7.



simple Dolbeer Steam
Donkey engine



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MODELER'S SHOWCASE

My name is Bill Lesjak and I will be taking over the hosting duties for Modeler's Showcase from John Wissinger at our meetings. John did a wonderful job with this portion of our meetings and we thank him for his work.

I wanted to review Modeler's Showcase so that everyone understands how wonderful this portion of our meetings can be for both the participants and the members. This is not only a time for displaying a prize-winning model but a chance to show a project you may have just completed or is in progress. You might have a favorite engine, rolling stock or structure you would like to share. Even a favorite tool you use that other members may find useful.

Planet Fitness claims to be a no judgment zone and this is true of Modeler's Showcase. This is a great venue for sharing ideas, techniques and pride in your workmanship but also for asking for suggestions. Bob Charles MMR, who handles our achievement program is always available for help and might even suggest your model deserves to be considered for review as part of the achievement process.

So, don't be shy and bring an item to share at our December 9th Meeting. Please bring a small sign with your name and the name of your item so that we can identify them. Presentations are limited to 5 minutes for each item displayed. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting and can't wait to see what you have brought. If you have any questions please email me at blesjak@susquehannanmra.org

Bill Lesjak, Model Showcase Chair

Superintendent's Desk

From the Superintendent's Desk

Well, I'm back from the 2023 MER convention, **Round the Curve to Altoona**. As the Contest Chair, I'm happy to report that there were 44 entries, with 34 being judged models. Fully 62% of the judged models achieved Merit Awards with 14 of them scoring 100 points or higher. Division member, Jerry Lauchle scored Best in Show with his O.W. Houts & Son & O'Neills Fabrication online display. It scored 120 out of a possible 125 points. Congratulations, Jerry!

And while on the subject of contests, we have many exceptional modelers in our division and region. Yet, the contest results for the National contest showed not a single entry from our division. Why? Yes, Texas is a long way to go, and Long Beach, CA for the 2024 National convention is even farther away. But I'll ask right now; are any of you planning on going to Long Beach next year? If you are, would you be willing to take the models of other division members to enter by proxy in the contest? (Contact me personally; I have at least three scratchbuilt steam locomotives.) Some of our members have already won Merit Awards on the regional level. You deserve recognition on a national level. Entering a model on the national level may inspire others to do the same. And because of national level judges, their comments can help you improve your modeling.

Regarding our December 9th Division meeting, we now have two model railroads who will open their layouts that day; Bob Charles' and Randy Watts' layouts will be open. Directions to both will be given at the meet. I hope you will enjoy my clinic on powering a Funaro & Camerlengo Plymouth rod-connected gas-mechanical "critter." Remember also that we'll be having a **FREE** raffle of items you no longer need or want. Already we have two brand new freight cars courtesy of Bowser, several years of Trains magazines in binders, and other hobby items. Please, please, please bring more.



Plans are progressing for more division meetings in 2024. I'm in the process of arranging a meet at Cornwall Manor, and our February meet will be a joint one with the Philadelphia Division. Last year they came to our meet; watch for details on attending their meet.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Lauchle', written on a light-colored surface.

This Just In! On Saturday, February 17, 2024 the Philadelphia Division and the Susquehanna Division will sponsor a joint meet in Southampton, PA 18966. Be sure to mark your calendar. Further details will follow.



Second Section

Susquehanna Sidetracks

Official Newsletter of the Susquehanna Division 11
Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA
655 Willow Valley Square, L-308
Lancaster, PA 17602

Contributing to Susquehanna Sidetracks:

Sidetracks welcomes contributions from our 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, 2023.

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www.susquehannanmra.org

Mid-Eastern Region website:

www.mer-nmra.com

National Model Railroad Association

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Editor's Message

This issue brings to a close Volume 31 of Sidetracks. The year 2023 just seemed to wiz by consuming large amounts of time and effort as the Local Convention Committee worked to present the 'Round the Curve to Altoona' MER Convention. Now we look towards another new year planning events that will draw greater participation and enjoyment.

Jerry Lauchle, the Local Convention Committee Chair, is congratulated for organizing and managing the total convention. Convention activities included educational clinics, two railroad prototype excursions, museum visits, operating sessions, layout tours, model contest/judging and the annual banquet.

The convention was honored to have NMRA President Gordy Robinson as a very special guest. Gordy traveled from his home in Great Britain to visit various NMRA functions in the USA. Gordy spoke briefly at the banquet and on the last day of the convention provided an excellent presentation on his leadership initiatives for the NMRA's future. Many members had the experience of interacting with Gordy on a personal basis.

Sidetracks will be devoting future issues on the many facets of the 'Altoona' experience. In the meantime, stay well and enjoy the hobby!

Rich



FIRST FROST[®] TRAIN MEET

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Pre-registered Adult **\$15** (Admitted at 8am)

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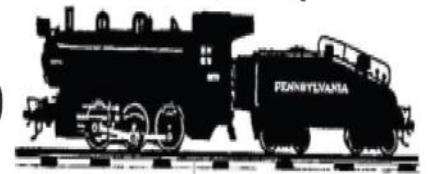
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PhillyNMRA News **Upcoming Meet!**

Join us for a joint meet with the New Jersey Division...

When: Saturday, November 11, 2023 at 9:00am (Doors open at 8:30am)

Where: Brandywine Town Center Community Center, 4050 Brandywine Parkway, Wilmington, Delaware 19803

Why: We love trains!

Highlights:

- **Clinic #1: Dave Albertson - Outdoor Live Steam: Lessons Learned**
- **Clinic #2: Joe Walters, MMR - Scratch Building a Sand Tower**
- Model Display Table/Show & Tell – bring your projects and discuss if you like
- White Elephant/Swap Tables – 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 soft pretzels
- Impressive layouts for visitation in the afternoon

You can also check out the event page for this meet on the division website at <https://www.phillynmra.org/events/philadelphia-division-meet-111123> Information will also follow in the upcoming issue of *The Dispatcher*.

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!

Division Event

Susquehanna Division Meet

Saturday, December 9, 2023

Where: Good Hope Station Community Room
1200 Good Hope Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

What Time: 9 AM – Noon

Who's Invited: NMRA members and friends

Details:

- There will be coffee and donuts (donation).
- We will have a short business meeting to let everyone know what is happening in the Division and meet our new directors.
- This will be followed by a Modeler's Showcase. Bring your latest project; completed or in process.
- There will be at least one clinic.
- Lunch will be on your own.
- Home Layout Tour information and directions will be distributed at the meeting.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: We are going to have a free raffle. Bring something railroad related, a tool, a model, or what have you that you no longer need or want. Everybody will get a ticket and if yours is drawn, you'll get to pick what you want from what others have brought.

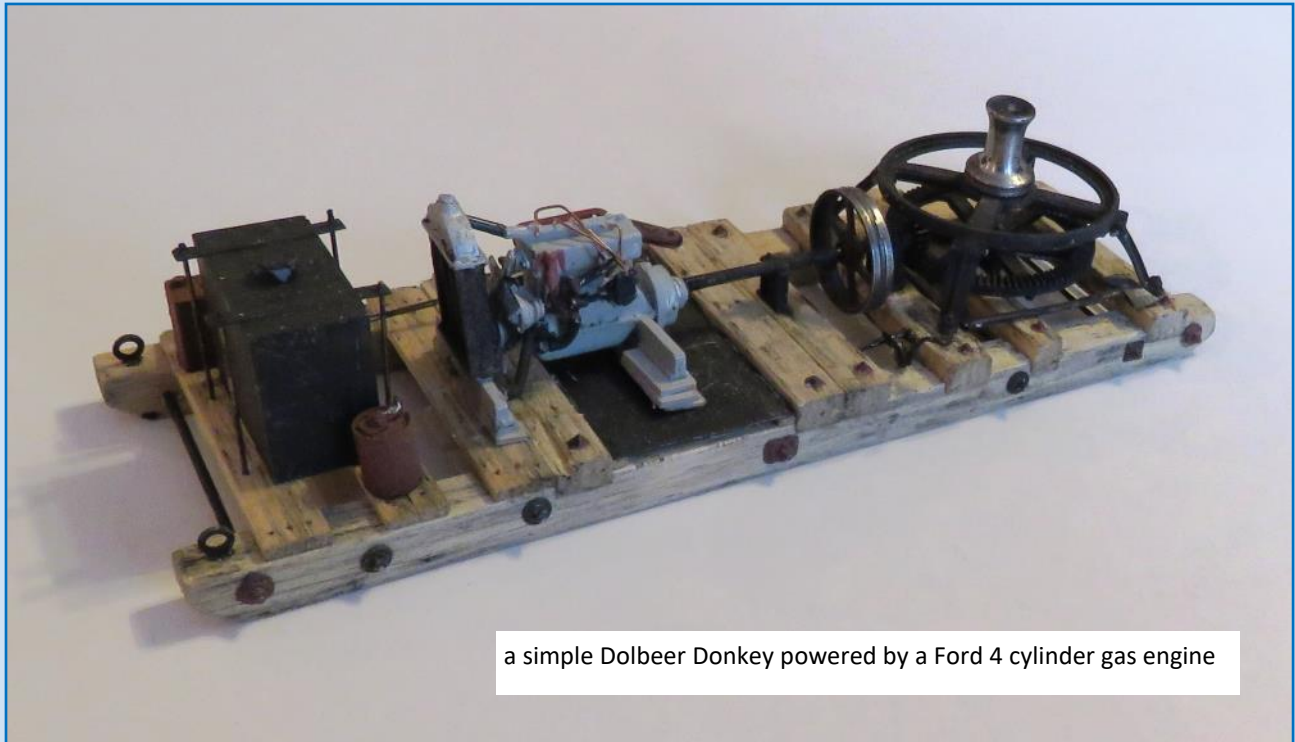
We currently have:

two freight cars courtesy of Lee English of Bowser
1978-1989 (less '82 and '83) years of *Trains* magazines in binders
cutting tools courtesy of Rich Wurst
partial decal sets courtesy of Rich Wurst

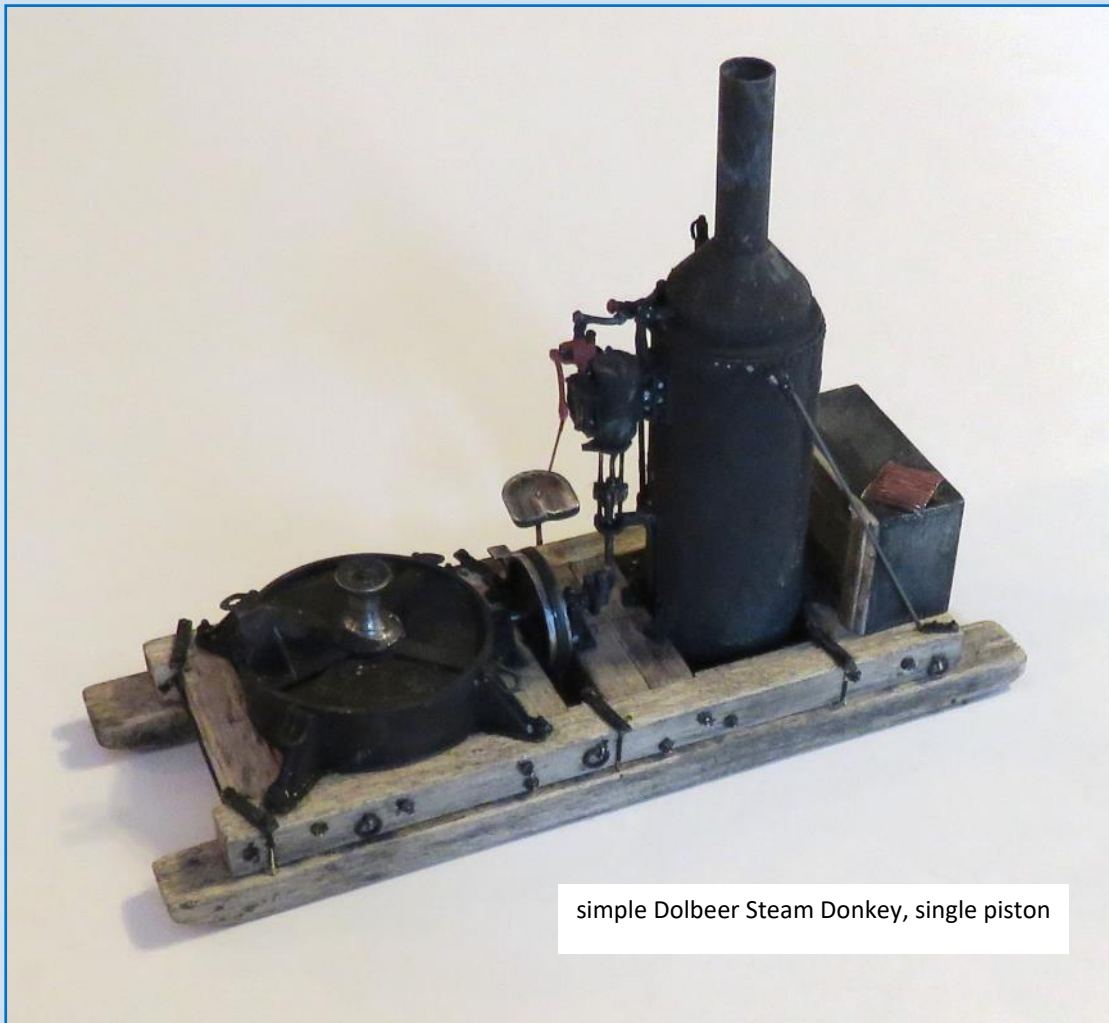
COME ON – EVERYBODY BRING SOMETHING FOR THE RAFFLE!



Tom O'Connor's On3 Models (continued)



a simple Dolbeer Donkey powered by a Ford 4 cylinder gas engine



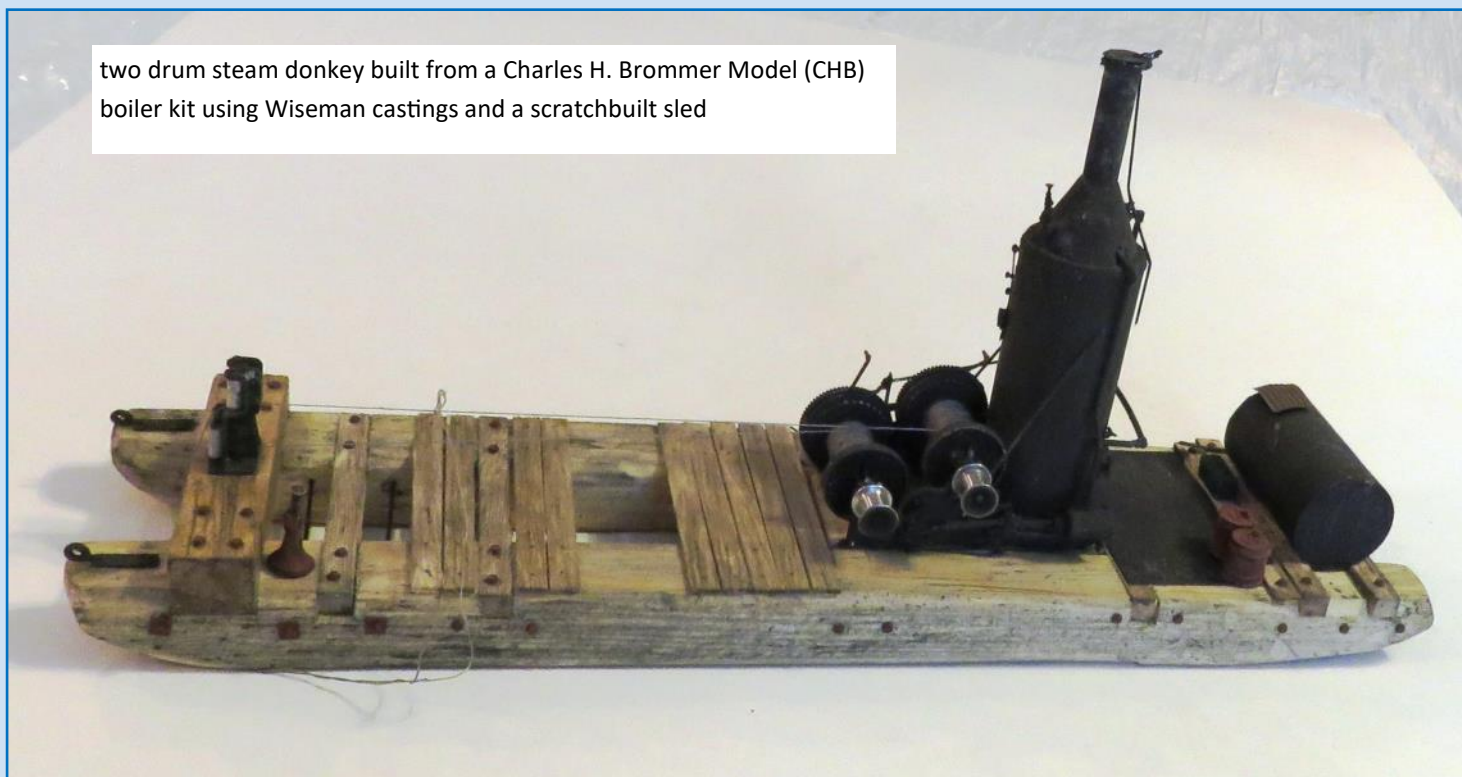
simple Dolbeer Steam Donkey, single piston

Tom O'Connor's On3 Models (continued)

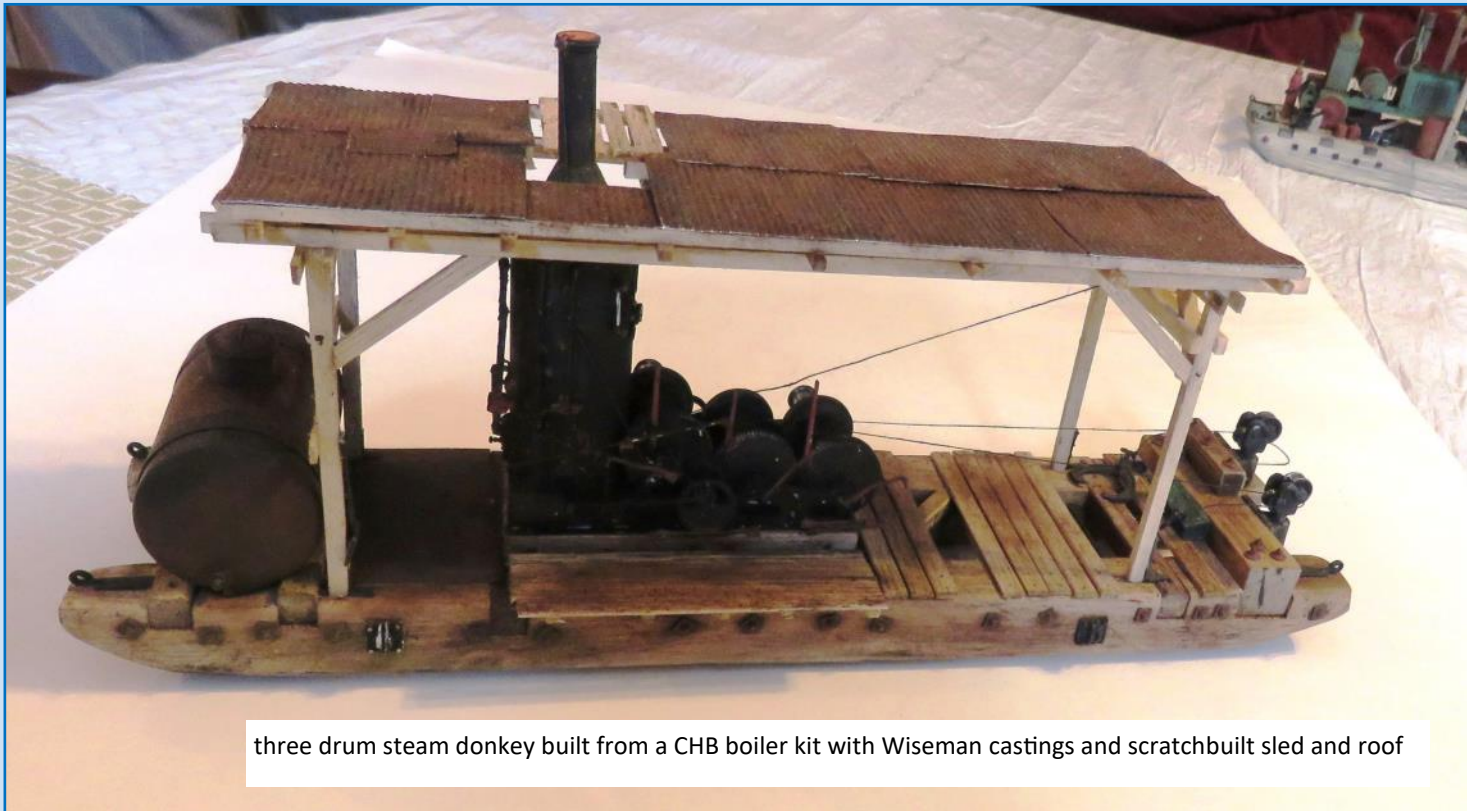
simple Dolbeer Steam Donkey with single piston and spark arrestor stack



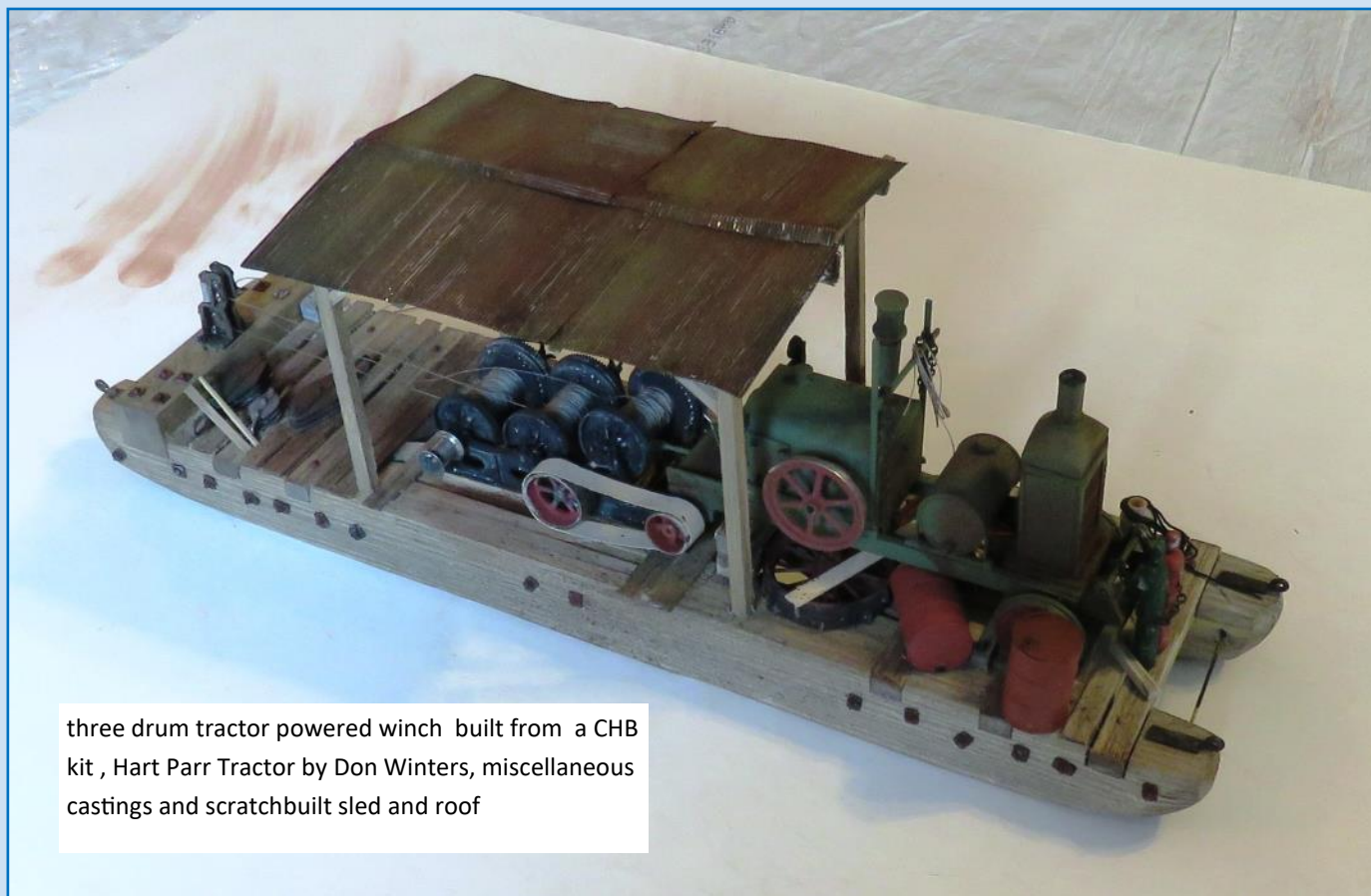
two drum steam donkey built from a Charles H. Brommer Model (CHB) boiler kit using Wiseman castings and a scratchbuilt sled



Tom O'Connor's On3 Models (continued)



three drum steam donkey built from a CHB boiler kit with Wiseman castings and scratchbuilt sled and roof



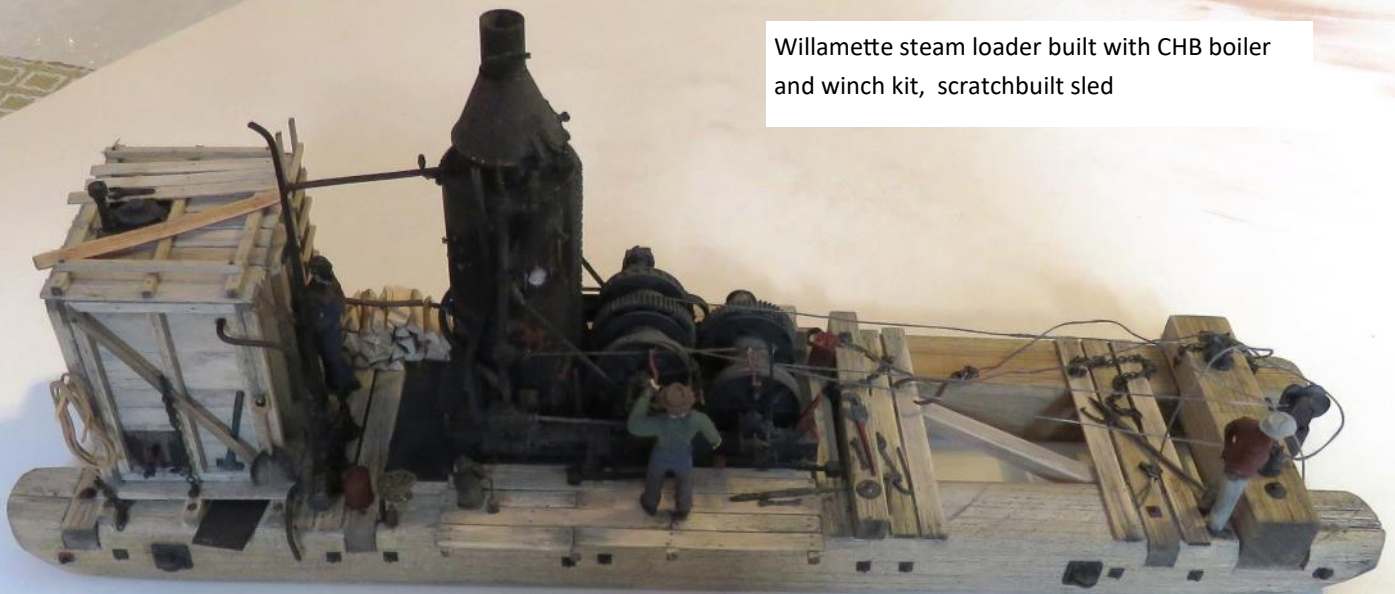
three drum tractor powered winch built from a CHB kit , Hart Parr Tractor by Don Winters, miscellaneous castings and scratchbuilt sled and roof

Tom O'Connor's On3 Models (continued)

two drum steam donkey with CHB boiler,
Wiseman castings and scratchbuilt sled and
roof



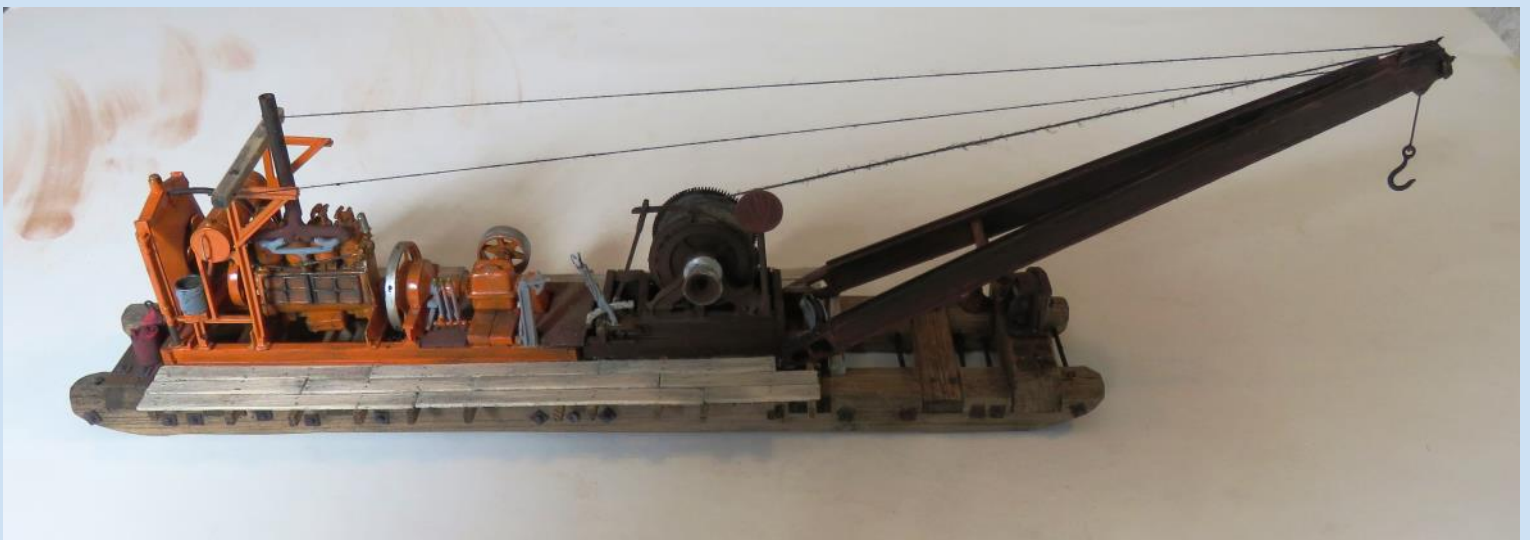
Willamette steam loader built with CHB boiler
and winch kit, scratchbuilt sled



Tom O'Connor's On3 Models (continued)



Washington Iron Works road engine used for hauling logs over long distances, from a CHB kit for boiler and winches, with a few Wiseman castings, scratchbuilt sled and roof.



single drum powered loader built from a Durango Press winch kit, McKenzie Iron and Steel engine kit and scratchbuilt sled and boom

Tom O'Connor's On3 Models (continued)



Pictured on this page is a Mack center cab On3 switcher by Precision Scale Company (PSC) models. Tom installed a DCC Soundtrax mobile sound decoder, added detail parts and applied the prototypical paint scheme. There is a surviving prototype on display at the Mack Truck Historical Museum in Allentown, PA.

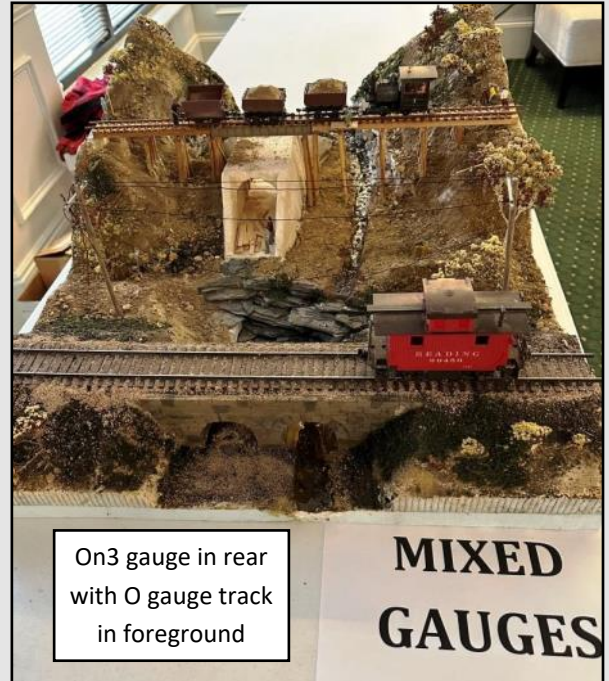


MER Altoona Convention Report - Part 1

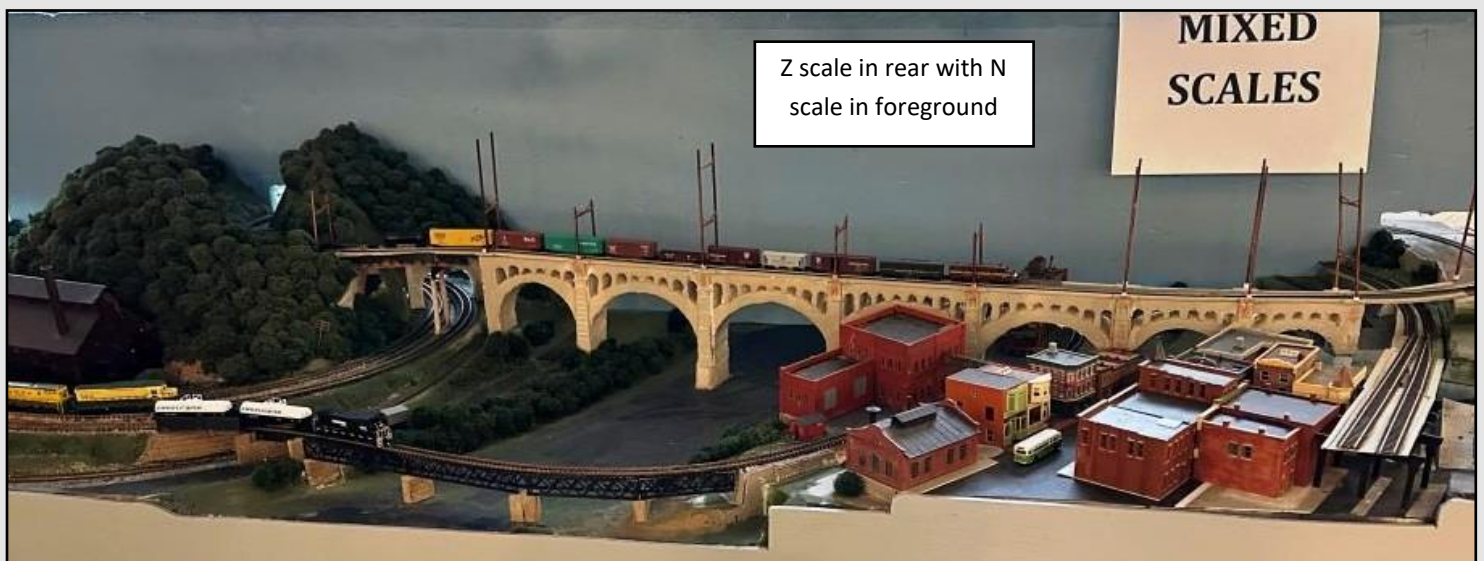
The NMRA Mid-Eastern Region's 'Round the Curve to Altoona' Convention took place from October 19-22. There were over 200 attendees who experienced the opportunities of rail excursions, museum visitations, operating sessions, educational clinics, layout tours and the interaction with other model railroaders. Starting with this issue, there will be a series of reports on various activities from the convention.

For this issue (Part 1), the focus will be modular railroads and specialized modules. These displays were exhibited in the reception area adjacent to the registrar's table. Visitors were quite surprised at the extremely high level of craftsmanship characterized by each hobbyist.

The Altoona Convention could not have occurred without the hard work of the Convention Chairman Jerry Lauchle and the members of the Local Convention Committee. Some of these members were Bob Charles, Barry Schmitt, Howard Oakes, Alan Mende, Gary Brown, Jeff Burch, Kirk Bateman, Forest Lucas, Lee Rainey, and David Ellis. In addition to these gentlemen there were numerous other individuals who supported the organizing, managing and presentation of convention activities. A hearty thank you and well-done is extended to each and everyone.



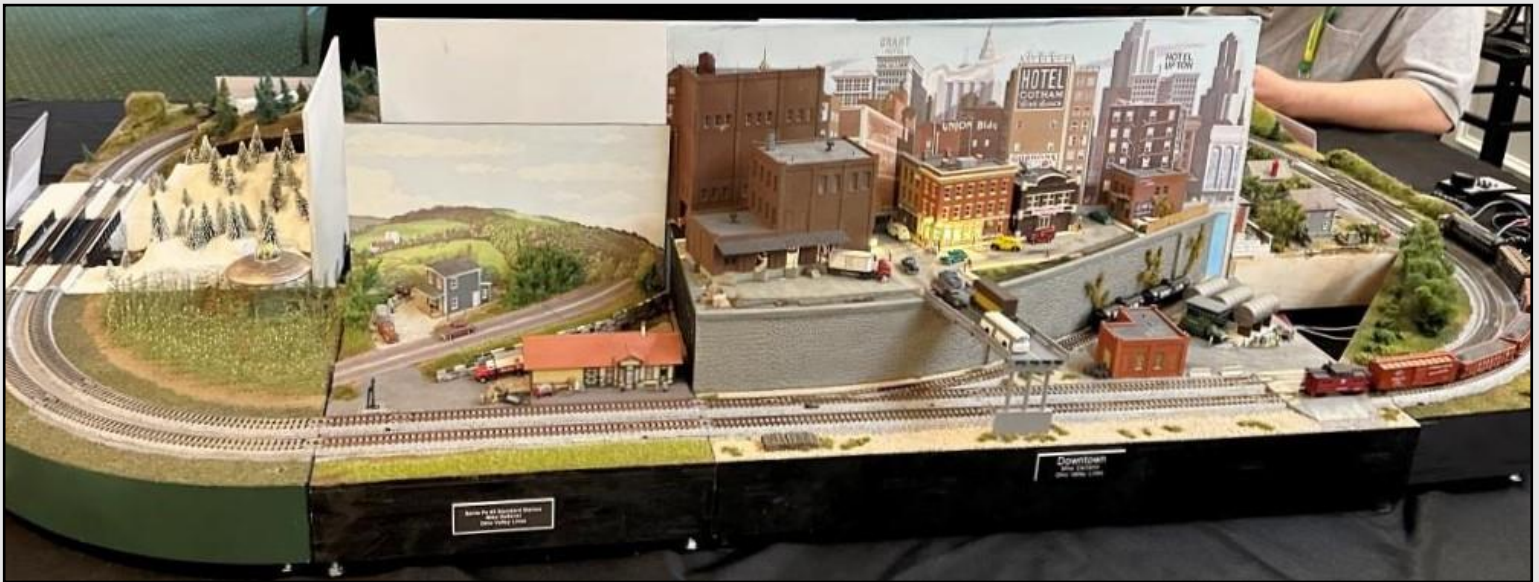
Jim Rose, President of the Friends of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, presented a clinic entitled "Consider Mixing Scales and Gauges When Planning a Layout". Jim designed and built both modules to demonstrate his ideas.



MER Altoona Convention Report - Part 1 (continued)

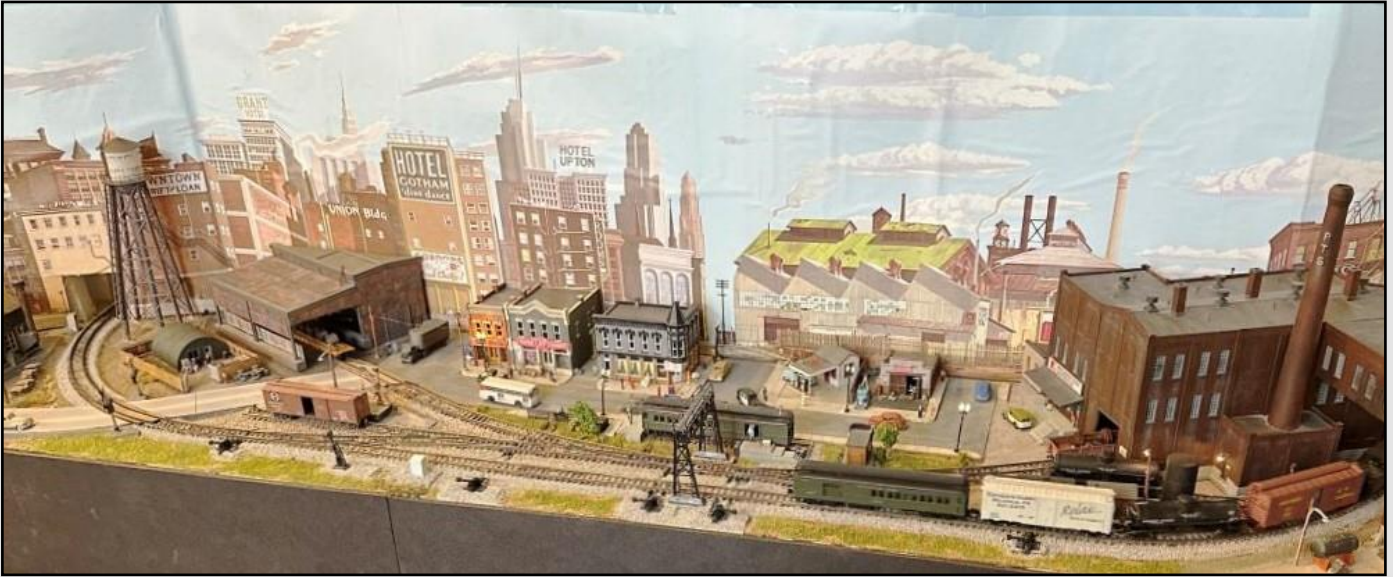


Mike DeSensi, a member of the MCR Division 2, brought two N-Scale modular layouts to our convention and were displayed in the main convention open area. He was assisted by his 30+ year friend and MCR Division member Jim Hofer. The above layout is a 2.5' x 6' T-TRAK modular layout, and the photo features the Santa Fe's San Bernardino Passenger Station. It is no longer an available craftsman laser kit from Red River Models. It took more than 30-hours to build along with many more hours devoted to painting, detailing, and lighting. It won First Place in the T-TRAK category at the 2019 Youngstown OH MCR Convention.



The above opposite side layout photo features a double T-TRAK module titled Downtown and is one of Mike's first modules. It depicts an oil supply depot at track level and a raised large city level with lots of transition era details. Mike used the Woodland Scenics Just Plug line of lighting. A truck transfer structure with both interior and exterior details is visible. To the left of the elevated city is a module simply labeled "Santa Fe #3 Standard Depot" built from an American Model Builders laser kit.

MER Altoona Convention Report - Part 1 (continued)



The above freelance West View and Santa Fe N-Scale modular layout depicts a wholly owned subsidiary of the Santa Fe and is located in the bountiful San Joaquin Valley of California in 1945. Steam is predominant but a new diesel makes occasional appearances. The main city is West View with lots of rail served industries. Mike started construction during the COVID 2020 lockdown, it is 2' x 4', uses all Atlas snap track with Caboose Industries ground throws for switch control, and can be powered by either DC or DCC. Mike earned third place in the 2021 Walthers National Model Railroad Build Off and used the layout to earn his NMRA Golden Spike Achievement Award.



The other half of the West View and Santa Fe Railroad contains the small town of Amelia. Rail served industries include RS Dee Manufacturing on the left and an icing house and citrus packing house on the right. The background photos for both layouts are from Walthers Instant Horizons line mounted on removable plastic sheets.

For more information about the West View & Santa Fe visit: <http://www.facebook.com/wvsfr>

For more info about Iron City N Scale (their T-TRAK group) visit: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/255764356305922>

photos courtesy of Jerry Lauchle

NMRA Membership Privileges



Membership has its benefits...

Your NMRA membership entitles you to all these benefits, plus the fellowship and assistance of more than 17,000 members across the globe.

Partnership Program

The NMRA has partnered with model railroad manufacturers of all sizes who have agreed to give discounts to NMRA members. Discounts range from free shipping to 20% off all purchases. From Micro-Mark to Rusty Stumps, more manufacturers are being added every month. To see the current listing, see our website's Partnership page in the Members Only section.

• www.nmra.org, Membership, Member Home, Benefits, Partnership

Model Railroad Directory

Whether you're at home or traveling, you can contact other NMRA members for a layout tour, to talk trains, or even to join in an op session! There are maps, descriptions, photos, videos, and more.

• www.nmra.org, Membership, Member Home, Model RR Directory

NMRA Online Archives

More than 10,000 photographs, slides, plans, drawings, erection elevations, paint schemes and more, with additional scans being added all the time. High-resolution files are available for download at a discount to members.

• www.nmra.org, click "NMRA Archives" at the top of the page

Achievement Program (AP)

The AP helps modelers get more out of the hobby by providing an incentive to learn and master the skills necessary. Those who've completed the AP receive Master Model Railroader (MMR) certification.

• www.nmra.org/education/achievement-program

• Email Frank Koch: achiev@nmra.org

• Contact your Region or Division Achievement Program Manager (see www.nmra.org/regions/ for Region and Division website URLs)

Liability Insurance for Clubs in U.S. and Canada

\$1 million liability insurance is available to model railroad clubs in which every member is an NMRA member. Completed application, copy of roster, and \$50 administration fee required.

• www.nmra.org/100-clubs

• Email: club100@nmra.org

Liability Insurance for Meets and Shows in U.S. and Canada

This insurance offers liability coverage for all Region-, Division-, and NMRA SIG-sponsored events up to the specific limit provided for in the policy. Standard coverage is \$1 million; higher limits available for extra fees. Please see the website for important details.

• www.nmra.org/liability-insurance

(For clarity and assurance of coverage, SIG events should be co-sponsored by National, a Region, or a Division.)

Conventions - (National and Regional)

The annual National convention runs one week and usually features about 100 clinics, more than 50 layout tours, and dozens of prototype tours. The National Train Show runs for the final three days of the convention.

Regional conventions vary in duration from two to five days. Many feature prototype and layout tours, plus clinics and other activities.

• www.nmra.org, then click on the "Conventions" tab

• www.nmra.org/regions/ for Region and Division website URLs

Special Access to Places and People

As an NMRA member, you'll have access to all kinds of railroad locations you'd never otherwise see. Often National and Regional conventions will tour prototype facilities such as yards and maintenance shops, and will charter special excursion railroads that are usually never open to the public. You'll have the chance to see top-of-the-line model railroads that usually don't accept visitors. And you'll be able to spend time talking with some of the most famous personalities in model railroading today.

For information about upcoming conventions, see the links in the "Conventions" section above

Modeling With The Masters (MWTM)

This is an intense, multi-day regimen of direct instruction by Master Model Railroaders. Modelers get hands-on experience in beginning and intermediate modeling techniques. MTWM classes are usually offered at the National convention, but MTWM courses have also been offered in various cities and at Regional conventions across the country.

• Email Clark Kooning: ckooning@msn.com

NMRA Membership Privileges (continued)

Bi-monthly NMRA eBULLETIN and NMRA TURNTABLE

Every other month, we publish the electronic *NMRA eBULLETIN*, containing late-breaking news and reports of happenings in the organization. The *NMRA TURNTABLE* is a monthly electronic publication that rounds up some of the most interesting model railroad websites, videos, blogs, and articles on the web. We do the searching so you don't have to! Every member with a valid email address receives a copy of both publications.

- Update your email info: log into the website as a member, then <http://www.nmra.org/members/update>

NMRA MAGAZINE

The *NMRA MAGAZINE* is the monthly publication of the NMRA, and features news about the organization and its Regions and Divisions, along with modeling articles, product conformance reviews, and other information. Because the subscription rate/postage depends on where you live, check www.nmra.org for your rate.

To subscribe:

- Email HQ: hq@nmra.org
- Write HQ: PO Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37379-2200
- Call HQ: (423) 892-2846
- To contribute articles, please see information in the masthead of the magazine

Online Video Library

The Members Only section of www.nmra.org features dozens of helpful "how-to" videos produced by professional video companies, as well as over 50 videos of clinics presented at National NMRA conventions.

- Log in to www.nmra.org as a member, click on "Benefits," then "Member Video Library"

Annual NMRA Calendar

Features spectacular model photographs, as well as dates for Regional conventions and more. Free to every U.S. member. Additional copies can be ordered for \$5 each from HQ. Outside the U.S., contact HQ.

- Email HQ: hq@nmra.org
- Write HQ: PO Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37379-2200
- For information on submitting photographs, call Mike Brestel 513-481-0185

Local Divisions

There are more than 150 local Divisions in the NMRA, located in large and small communities across the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Britain. Most hold regular meetings and meets featuring clinics, presentations, layout visits, and more.

- www.nmra.org/regions to find website listings for most Divisions

- Call HQ: 423-892-2846 for the name of the Division nearest you.

Once you're a member, go to www.nmra.org and register for the Members Only section of our website to get all the benefits of NMRA membership!

Discounts and Advance Registration on New KML Books

Kalmbach Memorial Library periodically offers special books and book reprints to the general public. NMRA members receive a substantial discount on the retail price and can reserve copies in advance.

- www.nmra.org, then choose "NMRA Store," then "NMRA Members Only Company Store," then "Books"

Standards and Conformance

The NMRA constantly researches and sets Standards and Recommended Practices for all scales and gauges of train models, as well as adjunct items such as DCC and modules. The NMRA continually checks new products for conformance to Standards and RPs.

- Email Di Voss: tech-chair@nmra.org
- NMRA Standard Gauges in various scales are available in the Company Store at www.nmra.org

"Members Only" Company Store

The NMRA's Company store offers many items, from apparel to mugs to gauges, available only to NMRA members.

- www.nmra.org, then choose "NMRA Store"

Collection Insurance

This service offers NMRA members group property insurance for collections, layouts, live steam, tools, slides and photographs, books, magazines, railroad memorabilia, and more. This insurance also covers an individual's property if it resides on a club layout. Members receive NMRA Group Rates.

- Free quote or brochure, contact J.A. Bash & Co: 1-800-654-2256 or 300 Mt. Lebanon Rd., Suite 225, Pittsburgh, PA, 15234.

NMRA Standards Gauges, Data Sheets CD ROM, and Turnout Templates

NMRA members can purchase Standards Gauges at significant price reductions over retail prices. Data Sheets CD and Turnout Templates are available only from the Company Store. Many data sheets are being updated and will appear in the *NMRA MAGAZINE*, as well as available for free download from the Members Only section of www.nmra.org.

- www.nmra.org, then choose "NMRA Store," then "NMRA Members Only Company Store," then "Templates and Gauges"

Beginners' Guide

The Beginner's Guide pages on www.nmra.org offer those new to the hobby help in learning the basics of track, wiring, scenery, and more.

- www.nmra.org/beginner/



We make it more fun!

Susquehanna Sidetracks

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

655 Willow Valley Square, L308, Lancaster, PA 17602