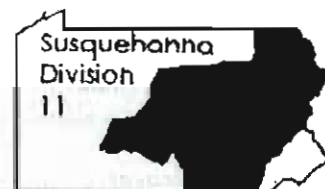

Susquehanna Sidetracks



Serving the Susquehanna Valley, MER, NMRA, Inc.

Official Publication of the Susquehanna Division 11
of the Mid-Eastern Region,
National Model Railroad Association

October 2002
Volume 10, Number 5

Please visit the Official Division web site at <http://moosevalley.org/nmra/index.htm>

Fall is now upon us, which means it is time to return to working on our railroads or time to start building a new layout.

The September meet in Columbia was a lot of fun. If you didn't get a chance to attend, you missed a great clinic by Tony Segro on scratch building structures using styrene. It was just amazing to see what he was able to do with the styrene and how easily he does it. It gives me the encouragement to give it a try. I hope to have an article from Tony in a future issue to detail his techniques in more detail and to cover the different tools he uses. Be sure to visit the Division web site for photos from the meet.

Officer Elections & Bylaws

The existing Division officers have been re-elected for another two year term. Thank you to those of you who took the time to vote! The Division By-laws have also been approved. For the official results of the election, please see page 2 of this issue. A copy of the approved By-laws will be

posted on the Division web site for future reference.

Next Division Meet Scheduled

The next Division 11 meet is scheduled for Saturday, November 2, 2002 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. This will be a joint meet with the Philadelphia Division at the Railroad Museum of PA in Strasburg. This meet will be longer than normal, but there is a lot of exciting things planned for the day, so please mark your calendar! For more information and directions, please see page 3 & 4.

General Division Info

The Division officers are always looking for new ideas for a Division meet. We would like to hear from you if you have an idea for a meet or if you are willing to open your railroad up to the division to visit. We would also like to have an idea of which Saturdays work best for you and what times work best for you. The more people we can have attend our meets, the more fun it is for everyone.

In order to improve communications with the members of the division, I am asking that if you have an email address, please let me know. I can be reached via email at scotteturner@comcast.net. This way I can keep you informed of Division events as they become scheduled so you can plan better.

I have had reports from some Division members that they have not received newsletters or they have received damaged issues. If you have experienced problems or you are missing one of the following newsletters (1/02, 3/02, 5/02, 8/02) or you know of someone not receiving a newsletter, please let me know.

Down the Tracks

Great Scale Model Train Show
Gettysburg College
Gettysburg, PA
December 14-15, 2002
9 AM – 4 PM Saturday
10 AM – 4 PM Sunday
www.gsmts.com

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Susquehanna Division 11,
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National Model Railroad Association

Superintendent

Brian Brandt
337 Bracken Drive
Lancaster, PA 17601
717-560-9542
brianbrandt3@comcast.net

Assistant Superintendent & Achievement Program Chairman

Jim Atkinson
120 Colebrook Road
Elizabethtown, PA 17022
717-367-5626
atkinson17022@juno.com

Chief Clerk

Paul F. Tice
1709 West Market Street
York, PA 17404
717-843-9572

Director & Newsletter Editor

Scott Turner
101 Hilltop Drive
Mt. Holly Springs, PA 17065
717-486-4189
scottturner@comcast.net

Director

Alan Frame
2430 Opal Road
York, PA 17404
717-767-4998

Director

Bruce Allison
50 Spring Dell Road
Lancaster, PA 17601
717-397-9469
bgapond@supernet.com

Web Master

Mel Agne
48 Oakwood Drive
Delta, PA 17314
717-862-3937
agnem@tce.com

Submissions: The Susquehanna Sidetracks welcomes any model railroad or railroad related material. Members are encouraged to send in articles, letters to the editor, reviews, etc.

Super's Corner – Brian Brandt

Greetings! It's hard to believe that another year has almost passed us by. I know it is a little early, but I want to wish you and your families Happy Holidays.

We are doing something different for our next meet. We are having a joint meet with the Philadelphia Division at Strasburg. It is going to be a full day, so please check the article in this issue for more information.

I have just returned from the convention in Cherry Hill. It was well attended and had some great clinics. I also visited two home layouts; both have been in operation for over thirty years. I came away with many ideas for my own railroad and the layout in Columbia that I am rebuilding.

Our By-Laws have been passed by the membership. Thank you for your time to vote. Our Officers are the same for the next two years. Also, our Board of Directors is up for election this year for a two-year term. If you are interested, please let me know.

Remember, November is National Model Railroad month. If you can, visit some clubs and displays, you may get new ideas, or pass some along.

Hope to see you in November, and bring a friend, they might like to try us out.

Elections/By-laws Approval Results

Results (subject to independent verification if needed):

Superintendent: Brian Brandt-- 23
Scott Turner -- 1
Invalid----- 1

Assistant Superintendent:
Jim Atkinson -- 25

Chief Clerk:
Paul Tice -----25

Division By-Laws:
Approve -----25
Reject ----- 0

Congratulations!
Bruce Allison
Director

Next Division 11 Meet - Saturday, November 2, 2002 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Susquehanna Division 11 is pleased to announce that we will be conducting a joint meet with the Philadelphia Division on Saturday, November 2nd at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania. The museum, located in Strasburg Lancaster County, is one of the countries premier collections of railroad equipment and artifacts. We are pleased to announce that your admission to the museum for this meet will only be \$2.00 (normal price is \$7.00). Show your NMRA or MER membership card at the gate and then proceed to the Auditorium. We will be collecting the fee and paying the museum. You are welcome to come as soon as the museum opens at 9:00 AM. We will have a table set up for you to register and pay, then you are free to wander the museum to your hearts content.

Schedule of Events:

- 9:00 AM** Museum opens – please register with us in the Auditorium first.
- 9:45 AM** General welcome and information session in the Auditorium
- 10:00 AM** “History of Railroads in Lancaster County” presented by a member of the museum staff. This will include information about lines as small as the Strasburg Railroad to the mighty Pennsylvania Railroad (and maybe even that “other” railroad).
- 11:00 AM** “Pennsylvania Railroad’s Schuylkill Division” presented by Dave Messer (MMR). Dave will give a presentation on the Pennsylvania Railroad’s Schuylkill Division. Dave is the author of numerous books covering the history of the PRR, so this will be an information packed presentation.
- 12:00 PM** Lunch: There are several local establishments for you to chose from, including The Dining Car restaurant and the Sweet and Treat shop at the Strasburg Railroad. There is sure to be something for all tastes and budgets in the area.
- 1:00 PM** “Strasburg Railroad” presented by a member of the Strasburg Railroad staff. This will include information on the history of the railroad, it’s current operations, and what is planned for the future.
- 2:00 PM** “Installing DCC decoders in locomotives” presented by Brian Brandt and Scott Turner. This will include a number of installations in various types of model locomotives. There will be units showing both in process and completed installations. There will be a question and answer period at the conclusion of the clinic. With the proliferation of new products in the field of DCC, this is the perfect opportunity for you to get a first hand look at how simple many decoder installations can be.
- 2:00 PM** Tour the museum: The museum will also have volunteers on hand to take small groups on guided tours of the outdoor storage yard.

The officers of the Susquehanna and Philadelphia Divisions hope that you will plan on joining them at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania for this interesting and informative meet. The schedule as presented here may change to accommodate last minute additions to the program. We will have a final schedule printed for your convenience in the auditorium that morning.

For more information about the meseum, visit their web site at <http://www.rrmuseumpa.org>

Directions from Reading:

- US 222 South to Route 30 East
- Route 30 East to State Route 896 south
- Turn right onto State Route 896 south to Strasburg
- In the center of town, turn left at the only stop signal, to take you onto State Route 741 east.
- Follow that road, bearing left at a fork in town, for about a mile.
- The Museum will be on your right, and the Strasburg Rail Road will be on the left.

Directions from York:

- Route 30 East to State Route 896 south
- Turn right onto State Route 896 south to Strasburg
- In the center of town, turn left at the only stop signal, to take you onto State Route 741 east.
- Follow that road, bearing left at a fork in town, for about a mile.
- The Museum will be on your right, and the Strasburg Rail Road will be on the left.

Directions from Harrisburg:

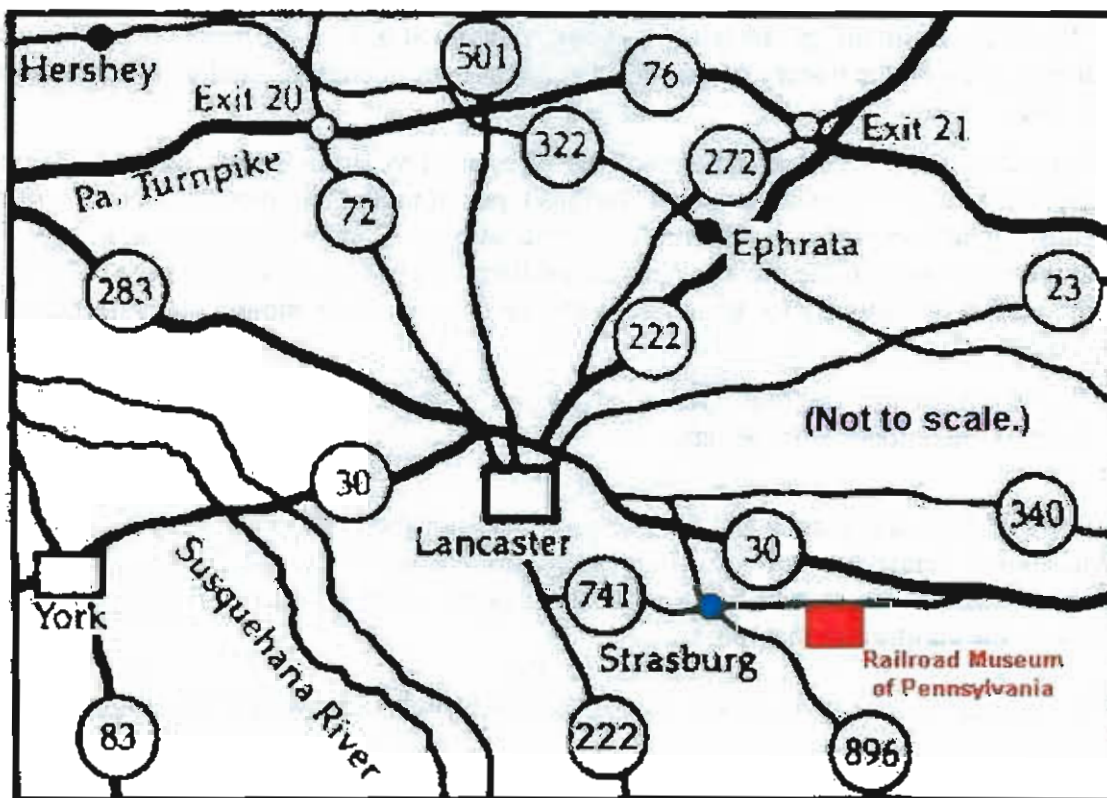
- State Route 283 south towards Lancaster to Route 30 East
- Route 30 East to State Route 896 south
- Turn right onto State Route 896 south to Strasburg
- In the center of town, turn left at the only stop signal, to take you onto State Route 741 east.
- Follow that road, bearing left at a fork in town, for about a mile.
- The Museum will be on your right, and the Strasburg Rail Road will be on the left.

Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania

Route 741, P. O. BOX 15

Strasburg, PA 17579

Phone: 717 687- 8628



Comments from Your Assistant Superintendent and AP Chairman - Jim Atkinson

I just returned from the Mid East Region's Cherry Hill Convention. The Susquehanna Division was well represented by four of your board members. The convention was well organized and I'm sure all of us enjoyed ourselves. If you share a room at our typical convention, you can usually keep your total cost to around two hundred dollars. That's not bad for a fun filled three day weekend. The comraderie with other modelers alone worth it. Give some thought to attending the next one. You will enjoy yourself.

A minority in the National (NMRA) board of trustees is pushing to cut the number of trustees from 17 (one for each region) to a much smaller number. This would mean even less local representation of us at the national level than we already have. If you have any strong opinions about this, I suggest you contact your regional and national officials to be heard. The major dues increase last year has resulted in a loss of almost three thousand members so far. I personally feel this is wrong for the membership and dangerous for the longevity of the NMRA it self. Our trustee doesn't seem to care about the region and it's members. His idea of financial security for the NMRA is to raise our dues - driving more members away. I feel we need to keep every present member and strive to increase membership to keep the NMRA a viable organization.

We seem to be in a period where manufacturers have promised many nice new products, but few have been delivered. I'm personally looking forward to quite a few and have been frustrated at not finding them at the hobby shop yet.

As your AP judge, call me (717-367-5626) if you have questions or want to schedule a judging session. E-mailing won't cut it. We need to talk to set up times and co-ordinate getting two judges to your home.

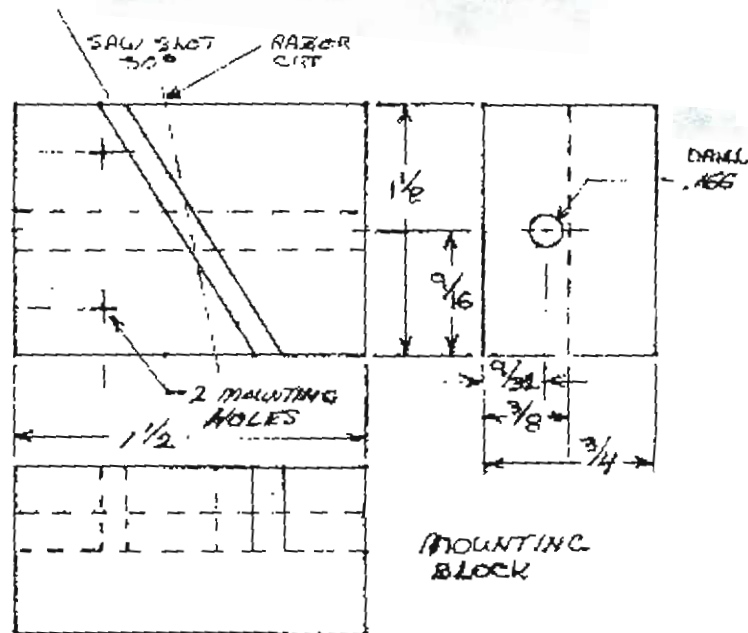
Our next meeting is a combined event with the Philadelphia Division at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania (Strasburg). See you there.

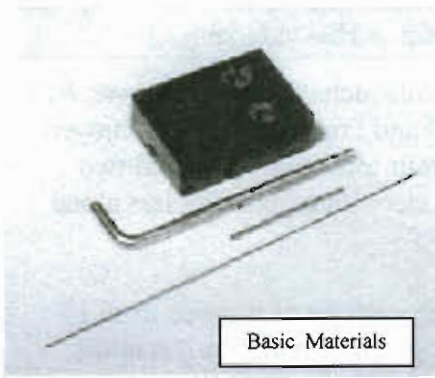
Homebuilt Switch Throws by Jim Atkinson

On one section of my Baltimore & Western, I have a number of turnouts close to the edge of the the layout. I could not use surface mounted throws such as Red Caboose switch throws because of overhead wires in that area that I didn't want to chance catching while realigning a turnout.

I had a clearance problem underneath as well, negating the use of my usual Tortoise switch machines. They require about 3 1/4" clearance and I had about 1" to work with. Copying the cam action of the Red Caboose throw, I designed a simple but effective switch throw using a small block of pine, some brass rod, and some brass wire creating a unit yielding about 1/4" of travel. They have proven to be reliable and are inexpensive.

To build them, you will need normal hand tools plus a table saw, and a drill press. It is possible to complete them without the table saw and drill press, but it will be a bit more difficult with a hand saw and drill motor held in a vise.



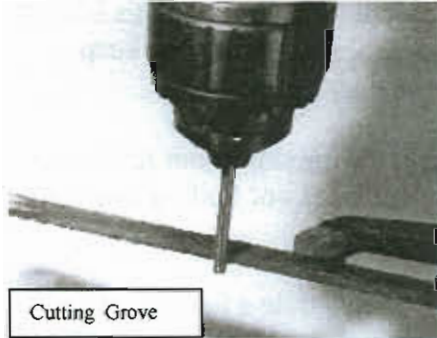


Basic Materials

As per the drawing cut a pine block $3/4'' \times 1\ 1/8'' \times 1\ 1/2''$. You can use different dimensions if you desire. These work for me. Drill a $.166''$ (#19 drill) hole thru the end (clearance for the $5/32''$ rod). Then cut a saw slot (using a standard blade) $3/8''$ deep at a 30 degree angle as per the drawing. This serves as the basic cam guide to give the throw it's movement.

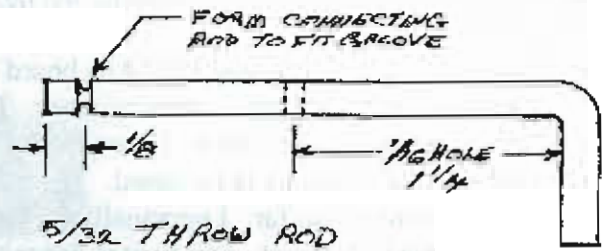
Cut the $5/32''$ brass rod about $3\ 1/4''$ long and deburr the ends. Your fingers will contact one of these

ends a lot so you want it smooth.. Insert the brass rod in the chuck of your drill press as you would a drill. With it spinning, hold a hack



Cutting Groove

saw blade about $1/8''$ from the end and saw a slot about $.050''$ deep. This creates the groove for the connecting rod. Now put the rod in your bench vise with the uncut end protruding about $5/8''$ above the jaws and bend it, using a hammer, to a 90 degree angle. This creates the throw handle. Next carefully drill a $1/16''$ hole in the rod about $1\ 1/4''$ from the handle end in line with the handle. This is the cam



5/32 THROW ROD



Making Clearance Cut

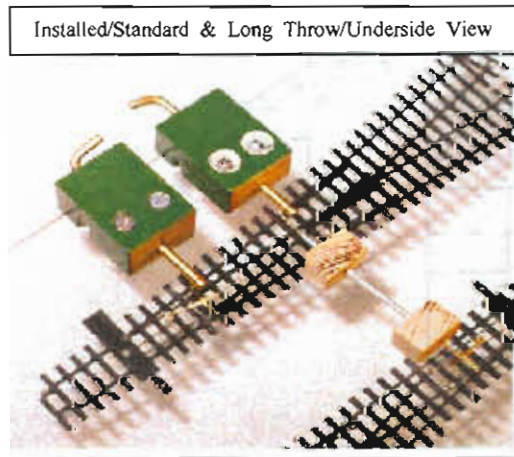
pin hole. As a machinist, I have a neat little centering device to align the $1/16''$ drill, but it can be done by hand if you take your time.



Tapping in Cam

Back to the block, using a razor saw, cut the clearance cut at 20 degrees to enlarge the slot and remove the "vees" of excess wood afterwards. Install the rod in the front end of the block (opposite from the mounting holes). Cut a piece of $1/16''$ brass rod about $1''$ long and deburr one end to facility it's starting in the $1/16''$ hole in the throw rod. With the block on your work bench, slot up and the brass throw with handle straight up put the $1/16''$ brass cam pin in the $1/16''$ hole. Hopefully it is a tap fit. If it's loose, super glue it. With the pin securely in place, cut it off flush with the block. At this time the throw rod will probably not rotate freely.

Carefully carve the necessary clearance with a sharp modeling knife. You want to end up with a free but not sloppy rotation yielding about $1/4''$ of throw rod movement. Forcibly rotating the rod itself along with the carving will help get the desired movement.



Installed/Standard & Long Throw/Underside View



Top View

Now take the $1/32''$ (.031") brass wire and form a tight loop to fit in the throw rod groove. Here we want a snug but free movement with a minimum of free play. Free play is lost action. We come from the track turnout to under the table with a standard bell crank movement made of $1/32''$ brass wire. Mount the throw block in an appropriate location at the layout edge securely with screws.

Now connect the throw connecting wire to the bell crank with a loop and pin configuration. Some common sense is necessary here to determine the proper length for the two wires to maintain the necessary travel. On the pin and loop, again keep the free play to a minimum. Using 1/32" brass wire allows you to make adjustments now or later quite easily. There is not a lot of expense or material used here. so if you mess up just try it again.

For turnouts further from the layout edge, it is necessary to have the connecting wire channeled thru a tube. I used a small ID aluminum tube held in place with small wood blocks.

My throws have been in service for over a year and operate trouble free. As I said, if an adjustment is necessary, the brass wire is easy to bend. A few advantages of my throws are low cost, fairly easy to build and install with easily obtained materials, they don't take up much space, and the handles can protrude thru the fascia bordering your layout with a nice appearance. The brass wire used provides ample springing for dependable full turnout movement.

Bill of materials: (for 1 throw)

Pine Board	@ 3/4" x 1 1/8" x 1 1/2"	1/32" Brass Wire	@6" or more
5/32" Brass Rod	@3 1/4" long	1/16" ID Aluminum Tubing	@as necessary
1/16" Brass Rod	@1" long		

Report Of GM Subsidiary Sale

The National Post reports that 'Facing concerns about hefty pension obligations, General Motors Corp. is trying to sell its London, Ont.-based military and locomotive businesses. GM Defense, which makes armed forces vehicles such as the U.S. Army's new Stryker light armoured vehicle as well as military trucks, could be sold to defense and aerospace giant General Dynamics Corp.

GM Locomotive is proving a tougher sell, said Buzz Hargrove, president of the Canadian Autoworkers union. "They notified us about that two or three months ago," said Mr. Hargrove, whose union is now in the midst of negotiations to forge new contracts with the Big Three automakers on behalf of 44,000 unionized workers. "I mentioned at the [General Motors auto talks] press conference that we want to renew our [contract] language that there is no sale and closure," said Mr. Hargrove. "This will be an issue with us in bargaining with General Motors." The two London operations employ about 2,700 hourly and salaried workers. Mr. Hargrove said the CAW has been kept apprised of General Motors' attempts to sell its London businesses, which he was told are profitable if not strategic for GM. "They have kept us up to date, the discussions with General Dynamics were going reasonably well and they were quite comfortable they were going to do a deal at some point," the CAW chief said. "[GM Locomotive] is on the block but they are not having quite as much luck with the sale, they have had a lot of interest from different companies but no sale." A General Motors Canada spokesman declined to comment.

The Detroit Free Press, citing financial analysts, said GM Defense, with annual sales of about US\$700-million, could fetch anywhere from US\$600-million to US\$1.25-billion. GM Locomotive, which manufactures locomotives and diesel engines, is estimated to have sales of US\$500-million. GM does not break out revenue or profit figures for the division. Money from the sales could help GM cover pension obligations, which were under funded by US\$9.1-billion at the beginning of 2002, despite improved sales and earnings. Since early May, pension concerns have contributed to a 36% drop in GM stock. "I think investors should look at this as a positive move because GM is looking at assets that aren't core and doing something with them to address pension or health care costs," said Scott Hill, who studies the auto industry for investors at Sanford C. Bernstein LLC in New York.'