

Mohegan Pequot Model Railroad

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Lake/9467/index.html>



The News for: January 2003

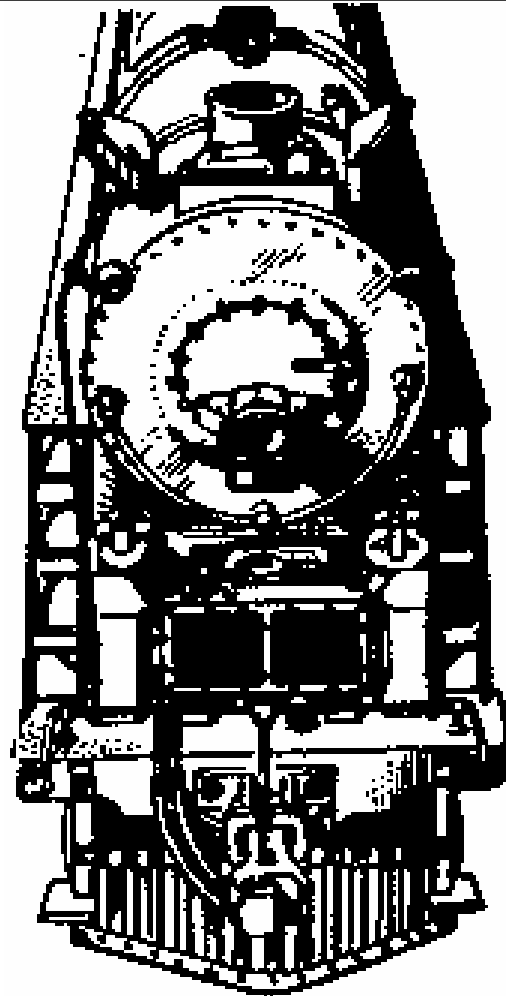
Oh My God, It's Dues Time Again!

Happy New Year; now pay your dues! OK, Club dues for the year 2003 are now due and payable to "Mohegan Pequot Model Railroad Club". Dues are \$25 for Regular Members, \$12.50 for Juniors and Seniors (you know who you are) and \$30 for Families. In keeping with our new policy of "not screwing it up", please see the Club Secretary to make a payment or send the money to him. George Harran's address is:

17 Robin Hill Rd. Waterford, Ct. 06385.
It still costs more than a dollar to copy and mail the newsletter so regular membership is encouraged if possible. Generous donations are always graciously accepted too.

Avery Point Falls Through This Year

Bill Paradis and Jim Delany got the bad news from UCONN so it's official. We were all (Club members and the public alike) disappointed that we could not set up the layouts at the University of Connecticut at Avery point this year. Such is the life of a not-for-profit train club. For the condition of the roof and lack of maintenance of the building as a whole the management at UCONN and the M&P representatives agreed that we should not go into the perpetually empty cafeteria. It doesn't look like things will get any better in the future since the food part of the cafeteria has been condemned (and should have been years ago) and all of the WW-II buildings are scheduled to come down eventually.



Amherst Club Show at Springfield

The details of loading for the show are up in the air at this writing. Vic Clark will be getting a trailer but we don't know when and where we will load it. Come to the two meetings in January for all of the details. Oh yeah, **please help.**

Club Business

Meeting results and other day-to-day activities and future workings of the Club will be reported in this section.

Scraps from M&P Club Meetings

(VP notes)

The demise of Avery Point is, indeed, a big blow to our yearly calendar. All members are urged to look around for some other venue we can use, not that we aren't doing this anyway. We were lucky with Avery Point in having an organization which was prepared to let unused buildings stand for so long. We weren't the only users, of course. There are so many empty buildings in Plainfield, just as an example, although I realize this is a long way from where most members live.

But now we must get ready for Springfield, and prepare the new passenger modules in non-console mode, among other things.

Happy New Year to all.

John Waller

(President's Notes)

Meetings: Jan 12, 7PM bill library Jan 26 5PM Bill Library (early because of the super bowl). Work Sessions: Thurs Jan 2, 6PM Larry's House Back to Wednesday nights at Larry's house 6PM Vic will be getting the trailer and pulling us to Springfield once again. Loading will most likely take place in North Stonington on the Wednesday before Springfield, (Jan 29). These plans will be finalized at the two January meetings, so please attend.

Dan

Meetings and Work Sessions

Since we are not at Avery Point, the two meetings in January will be held at the Bill Library in Ledyard on Sunday the 12th at 7:00 PM and **at 5:00 PM on Super Bowl Sunday the 26th**. These are the big Springfield show planning meetings when we find out when and where we are going to load the vehicles. As usual, we need all the help blah blah blah.

Work sessions on the new passenger modules will move back to Larry Southwick's house in North Stonington, CT. There will be one on Thursday January 2 at 6:00 PM and then on Wednesday evenings, January 8, 15 and 22 at the same time.

The President's Own Damn Corner

(and I'll do with it as I please, thank you!)

Happy New Year gentlemen! I've decided to really make Clark's day and write two President's Corner articles in a row. This month's article will be quick since I have been very busy both at work and at home. I am currently in the process of moving from my apartment in Colchester to a house in Manchester. As a result, there won't be too many new Conrail diesels ready for Springfield, but with an entire room in the new house dedicated to being a workshop, I should have plenty of new goodies constructed in the following months.

On a more solemn note, it seems that the Avery Point Era may be coming to an end. The cafeteria building is rapidly deteriorating to the point where it may be condemned in the near future. After close inspection of the facility by our team of experts (Jim DeLany and Bill Paradis), we decided not to set up this year. With no plans to even maintain the building in the future, it looks like the problems will only get worse, and it looks like we should start looking for a new spot for a holiday display.

Springfield is rapidly approaching once again, and Vic Clark has once again graciously volunteered his time and his semi to haul us up to the Big E. Thanks Vic! Loading plans will be discussed and finalized at the next meeting, so be there if you can. Also, for all you football fans out there, the meeting on Super Bowl Sunday has been moved to 5:00 PM, to allow ample time to make it home for kickoff.

Like I said, a quick article this time. Next months article will be a little more interesting, especially once I unpack my laptop and I don't have to write the article at work.

The Prez, Dan Delany

M&PMRR Officers & Functionaries

The President	Dan Delany	537-3610
Vice President	John Waller	564-3114
Treasurer	Gary Domer	848-0690
Secretary	George Harran	443-0707
Storekeeper	Larry Southwick	535-2996
Bulk Purchases	Bill Evans	267-9482
Meeting Speakers	Bill Evans	267-9482
Layouts/Name Tags	Stu Dom	536-7637
New Passenger Module	Stu Dom	536-7637
Field Trips	Jim Delany	889-4029
Newsletter Editor	Clark Pritchett	444-1884
Newsletter Mailing	Bill Evans	267-9482
Club Web Page	Ross McLean	669-9841
Train Shows	Ron Pothier	repth@snet.net



Member News

New members, old members, wannabee members or shouldbee members. Let's hear from you and your friends. (Maybe you all don't have any friends because nobody is contributing anything here.)

John Waller's Column

Wiring up the new passenger modules is taking up time, but not unexpectedly. Again we must express our thanks to Grace and Henry Curtis for allowing us to work in their basement. The complexity of the wiring in the "F" module leaves many shaking their heads. As I write, the module is sitting on its inner side waiting to be "belled through" or "rung out". These are two colloquial terms for continuity checks. In the "old days" continuity was tested by using a battery and a DC bell. The circuit being tested was used to allow current to flow from the battery to

the bell, which then rang if continuity was complete. If testing for inter-wiring short circuits, or grounds, the bell rings if there is a fault.

Of course, we all know that the "F" module wiring (and the even more complex "C" module wiring, on which we have barely started) would be greatly reduced if DCC were to be used. But, as with block and signal control over all modules, conversion to DCC is a daunting task.

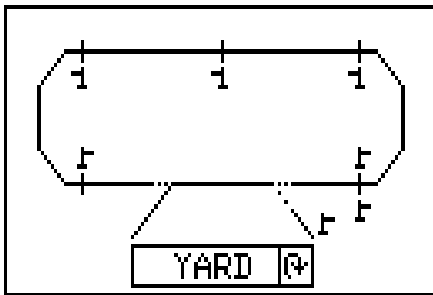
Again as a demonstration, I have decided to redo the existing analog block and signal control with a DCC version. I have one working DCC model (not portable) at home, but will require some new capabilities to extend it to the portable demo. These I have been working on for some time. DCC implies central control, and for this I am busy writing software for a graphics liquid-crystal display (LCD). This LCD has 128 by 64 pixels, is black-and-white only, and not very large. These devices are rather expensive but probably will, as seems to be the way of electronic things, increase in capability and decrease in cost over time.

The graphics LCD will show a mimic diagram of the track. As before, the inner track will represent a main track, on which block control is exercised, and the outer track will represent a yard or siding. Two turnouts allow for entering and exiting the yard, respectively, with appropriate safety measures. The basis behind block and signal control will be the same as for the analog version. I have been very pleased with how well it operates, after some adjustments to the software. Anything that goes wrong is invariably my fault, in that I get distracted by something happening on the Club main tracks, or sweet young things asking questions. (Eternally young at heart. Ed.)

Of course, the constraint remains that each train must be fitted with a magnet front and back. But, having resolved to do that, the logic flows so smoothly from it, that I still contend it is the best way to go. I would also point out that fitting special equipment to trains for block control safety is absolutely prototypical. An example of this is a trip mechanism fitted to the front of

commuter trains, operated by a track-side lever, which automatically applies the train brakes if the signal is red.

Block 2 Train 7
Cn sp 5 St sp 9



The graphics LCD display will look something like the figure, which prints out approximately full size. I should point out that the figure is simulated in MS Paint. The only way to get a picture of the actual screen is by photographing it; I have tried this, but it is tricky. The figure shows the main track as a mimic, but the yard is just represented by the rectangle shown. Remember, any yard is not subject to automatic control, and visual safety rules apply at all times.

The five blocks in the main track are delineated by bars across the track. The signals are shown as semaphores, since the LCD won't do colors. The semaphore arm will move in the upper quadrant to indicate red, yellow, and green, respectively. The two turnouts are shown just above the yard rectangle. The left turnout is set for entering the yard, as the main-line part is shown dashed. The right turnout is in a state of transition, as both straight and branch sections are shown dashed.

A mouse will be used to scan the display. On the main track, the front and rear of the train will be shown within the block or blocks that these two parts of the train occupy. Passing the mouse cursor over an occupied block will show train details on a separate 16 x 2 character LCD, such as shown in the next figure. This is the nearest that can be done to generating "balloons", where the mouse cursor over a button on a computer screen causes explanatory messages to pop up showing what that button does.

The lower line on the character LCD shows constrained speed and user set speed, which will be a hexadecimal number from 0 to F. This matches closely the 14-step speed option in the DCC protocol. Having brought up the "balloon" on the character LCD, the user can decrease or increase set speed by left and right button clicks on the mouse. The constrained speed is set by the block and signal control rules, and is the actual speed sent to the DCC Command Station for that particular train. The constrained speed never exceeds the set speed, but can be less if so determined by the automatic rules, including zero. The user can also set zero speed.

There is, for me, an unresolved issue as to whether negative speed (reversing) should ever be allowed on the main track. I have not read anything about prototype practice in this regard. I have observed it happening (very slowly) on the Sydney commuter system, where it is almost a case of a man preceding the backing train waving a red flag. Clearly, it must be allowed for within the yard.

Within the yard itself, placing the mouse cursor over the yard rectangle will bring up a list of trains within the yard, one at a time. The little arrow block to the right of the yard rectangle is for scrolling through the list of trains in the yard. Placing the mouse cursor over this block allows the user to scroll with button clicks. Having selected a train of interest, the user returns the mouse cursor to the yard rectangle and controls speed (unconstrained below some maximum magnitude) with the mouse buttons. This is based on the reasonable premise that, in such a small yard, trains will spend most of their time stopped.

I am calling the device I am building a "Smart Throttle", since it has the potential of controlling as many trains from a single station as the Command Station has in sending signals to the track. This latter number is a time constraint, and is of the

order of 30. I know someone will immediately say: "But there are 9999 addresses available in the NMRA protocol!" If the Command Station really let you put 9999 trains in the queue, it would mean a given train could only get a message about once every 30 minutes! Phase 1 of the Smart Throttle is already up and running, and can be demonstrated at my home. What I am describing herein is Phase 2A.

John Waller

The Market Place

Club Member Ads

Advertise (free) here to reach many model railroaders eagerly waiting to buy your wonderful stuff. Editor's Note: Let me know when your item sells or when you want to stop running the ad.

Lionel Trains for Sale *Mike Guarraia has some very nice Lionel trains if anyone is interested. (from Jack Howie)*

I have the following Lionel trains and accessories for sale at more than fair prices. (Last posting of this ad)

621 Jersey Central NW-2 \$150; 681 Turbine \$150; 624 Santa Fe NW-2 \$100; 2046 Hudson \$175; 2350 N.H. EP-5 \$250; 282 Gantry Crane \$150; 364 Conveyor Lumber Loader \$100; 352 Ice Depot \$150; 362 Barrel Loader \$80; 455 Oil Derrick \$110; 464 Lumber Mill \$125. Contact: Darlene Guarraia

Office: +1-860-441-3302 or

Home Phone: 860-535-8548 or
darlene_a_guarraia@groton.pfizer.com

Club Store and Storekeeper's Report

We now have for sale to Club Members and the public, M&P decorated boxcars in five different colors!



The Technical Section

Contributions are always welcome. You can write about anything from prototype to model railroads. Scenery, electrical, model building, benchwork and more are all of interest to the club members. We always need technical articles.

A Railroad Website of Interest

The www.trainorders.com website is regularly frequented (and recommended) by one of our members, Richard Peiffer. For the club, there is a model railroad discussion page as well as discussion groups on western, [eastern](#) and international railroads, [Amtrak](#), [Steam](#), [Railfan Trip Reports](#), [Rail Games](#) and a chat room Any member of trainorders can post events or other issues.

Model Railroad Calendar

This Month in 2003

January 1-31 Anywhere There are no known train shows this month.

January 12, Ledyard, CT Club meeting will be held at the Bill Library starting at 7:30 PM. Initial Springfield planning.

January 26, Ledyard, CT Club meeting will be held at the Bill Library starting at 5:00 PM. Final Springfield planning.

January 29, North Stonington, CT The loading for Springfield will probably take place at the North Stonington town hall but find out the details at the January 26 meeting.

January 2, 8, 15 & 22; North Stonington, CT Work sessions on the new passenger modules will shift back to Larry Southwick's house at 6:00 PM. The 2nd is a Thursday. The other dates are Wednesdays.

Next Month and Beyond

February 1 & 2; Springfield, MA: The Amherst Railway Society's Annual "Big Railroad Hobby Show" in the Better Living Center, Young Building and Stroh Building, Eastern States Exposition, West Springfield, MA. 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM both days. M&P will set up on Friday January 31.

E-mail Ron Pothier (repth@snet.net) for the list of train shows he has so far for 2003.

The Lighter Side

Playwright Jim Sherman wrote this after Hu Jintao was named chief of the Communist Party in China.

With credits to Abbott and Costello.

HU'S ON FIRST By James Sherman:

(We take you now to the Oval Office.)

George: Condi! Nice to see you. What's happening?

Condi: Sir, I have the report here about the new leader of China.

George: Great. Lay it on me.

Condi: Hu is the new leader of China.

George: That's what I want to know.

Condi: That's what I'm telling you.

George: That's what I'm asking you. Who is the new leader of China?

Condi: Yes.

George: I mean the fellow's name.

Condi: Hu.

George: The guy in China.

Condi: Hu.

George: The new leader of China.

Condi: Hu.

George: The Chinaman!

Condi: Hu is leading China.

George: Now whaddya' asking me for?

Condi: I'm telling you Hu is leading China.

George: Well, I'm asking you. Who is leading China?

Condi: That's the man's name.

George: That's who's name?

Condi: Yes.

George: Will you or will you not tell me the name of the new leader of China?

Condi: Yes, sir.

George: Yassir? Yassir Arafat is in China? I thought he was in the Middle East.

Condi: That's correct.

George: Then who is in China?

Condi: Yes, sir.

George: Yassir is in China?

Condi: No, sir.

George: Then who is?

Condi: Yes, sir.

George: Yassir?

Condi: No, sir.

George: Look, Condi. I need to know the name of the new leader of China. Get me the Secretary General of the U.N. on the phone.

Condi: Kofi?

George: No, thanks.

Condi: You want Kofi?

George: No.

Condi: You don't want Kofi.

George: No. But now that you mention it, I could use a glass of milk. And then get me the U.N.

Condi: Yes, sir.

George: Not Yassir! The guy at the U.N.

Condi: Kofi?

George: Milk! Will you please make the call?

Condi: And call who?

George: Who is the guy at the U.N.?

Condi: Hu is the guy in China.

George: Will you stay out of China?!

Condi: Yes, sir.

George: And stay out of the Middle East! Just get me the guy at the U.N.

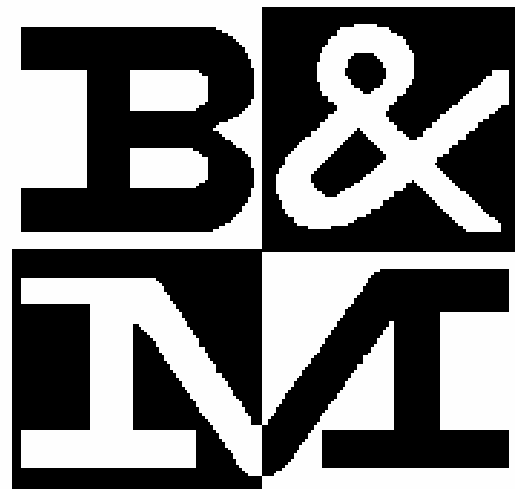
Condi: Kofi.

George: All right! With cream and two sugars. Now get on the phone.

(Condi picks up the phone.)

Condi: Rice, here.

George: Rice? Good idea. And a couple of egg rolls, too. Maybe we should send some to the guy in China. And the Middle East. Can you get Chinese food in the Middle East?



From John Waller

Faith Middleton from National Public Radio says she likes to receive emails, and read an entire email from a listener on air December 18. The gist of it follows.

A family living in Springfield, Massachusetts, drove to Grandma's home in Pennsylvania every Christmas. On one occasion, they ran into the mother of a snow storm near the New York/Pennsylvania line. Traffic came to a near stop. The car overheated and eventually a radiator hose ruptured, spilling most of the anti-freeze fluid. With the help of other stranded motorists, and an obliging truckie, the hose problem was fixed.

But what to do about cooling fluid? As much water as could be collected was poured in. One motorist contributed the contents of a two-gallon container of cider. It was not quite enough, so members of the family contributed what they could, au naturel, mixed it with snow to form a pourable slush, and it did the trick, sufficient to get the car to the nearest place of accommodation and repair. They never did make it to Grandma's that year.

"On a More Serious Note".

A woman reported that she totaled her Lincoln Town Car on a wet and slick road. The highway patrolman noted she had been using cruise control, and strongly advised against doing so in future on anything but a dry road. That makes sense when you think about it. Directional stability control momentarily cuts the engine when driving wheel slip is detected. Cruise control will do just the opposite if the car speed sensor is on a non-driven wheel. The control will sense the car has slowed down, and will open the throttle, or even shift down a gear, to try and retain the set speed. The car will be out of control.



Newsletter Items

The Club has a post office box that can be used for newsletter mailings and other Club purposes. The mailing address is; P. O. Box 55 Quaker Hill, CT 06375-0055 E-mail enclosures can now be opened and electronic versions are preferred to handwritten copies so retyping is not necessary. Microsoft Word and other compatible word processing programs should be used. You can also send items by E-mailing them to modlrrnews@aol.com if you do send something, it is a good idea to phone and say that you sent it since unwanted e-mail is constantly filling the system and I dump it before reading. Say M&P newsletter article in the subject line. The deadline for submissions is one week before the end of the month.

Clark Pritchett, Editor



A Wooden Trestle

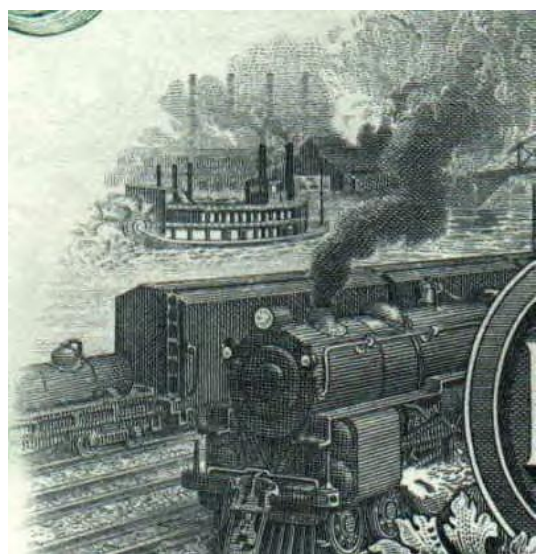
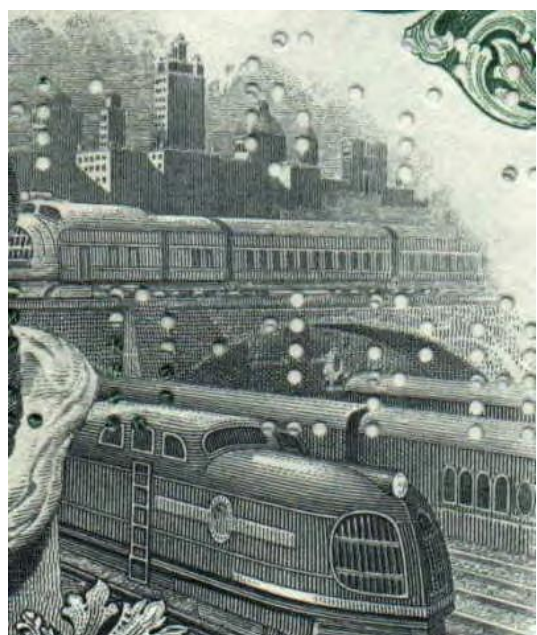




Diamonds area Railroader's Best Friend!



A Slice of Track from Infinity



Railroad Stock and Bond Vignettes



Hodgdon Model of Monson Station, Maine

