

Mohegan Pequot Model Railroad

<http://www.mprr.org>



The News for: October 2003

The Club Show

Here is the list of 15 vendors, and numbers of tables, who have signed up as of date of writing (September 17).

Vendor	# of tables
B & G Toys and Trains	3
Connecticut Discount Trains	1
Cookies Die Cast. LLC	4
Custom New Haven by George	2
Federal Hobbies	4
Hobby Gallery	6
Johnson's Trains	2
Loco & Bobs	1
Model Rail Supply	2
P and W Action Videos	1
Sokol's Structures	5
Summit Hobby Supply	6
The Patch King	3
Tom's Trains of CT	3
Train One, Inc	3
TOTAL	46

Annual Club Picnic

The Club wishes to thank Erica and Jonathon Harger for hosting the Club picnic this year. A great time was had by all who were able to attend. The weather cooperated too!

Passenger Modules Status

As usual, work continues on the passenger station modules, most Wednesday evenings 7 PM at Henry's.

It is a fact of life that it is difficult to anticipate all the facets of designing and building a complex piece of equipment. This is why simulations and mockups are often employed. The control panel is complex, and the large number of components to be wired up, and the large number of wires to be squeezed into limited space, only really hit us when we start to actually do it.

We are investigating the use of printed circuit boards (PCB) to mount on each switch cluster. This has a number of advantages compared with connecting each part with point-to-point wiring:

- Much time is saved.
- Mistakes are greatly reduced.
- Reliability should be higher.
- Appearance looks far more professional.
- Trouble shooting is easier.

The rough cost is of the order of \$500, or \$600 if prototype PCBs are obtained. Apart from the cost, the potential down side is that the PCBs must be correct — a good reason for trying prototypes.

Club Meetings

October meetings will be held at the Bill Library in Ledyard on October 12 and 26 at 7:30 PM.

September Club Meeting Notes

The September 13 meeting was held at the the Hargers, after the Club picnic.

The secretary's report of the August 10 meeting was received by acclamation.

No Treasurer's report.

The Storekeeper had wheels, couplers, and track cleaners.

Club Show

The N scale layouts will be in the cafeteria, probably accompanied by a On3 layout. The cafeteria is to be cleared by 5 pm.

We should plan on a Club table.

How many tables does St. Bernard's have?
Bill P to check.

The caterer is still unknown, but should be chosen within one week.

Ed Bradbury is to be asked to do advertising (John contact). Maybe an article is appropriate?

Stu will do a preliminary table layout, using John's current information. Last-minute changes are to be expected. The passenger modules may be included.

Passenger Modules

Stu gave an update on the status, asserting things are going well.

A discussion followed on the future work needed for the passenger module, and expenditure in connection with PCBs was approved, as noted under passenger module section.

Holiday Layout

Avery Point is unlikely to be available. Club members are urged to consider whether we should shoot for some other affordable

venue, mid December to late January would be ideal. Many enquiries are received about this. Area needed 3000 sq. ft. minimum, as we want to include all scales.

Other Matters

No further progress has been made with new skirting and plexiglass.

Jim DeLany reported we are set for Springfield; same area as before.

Field Trips

Dan is doing a very long trip story.

Member News

Dave Bidwell reports that his lack of attendance of late is due to his wife's illness. He hopes to be back soon. George will send Dave a get-well card for his wife, on behalf of the Club.

John Waller's Column

My wife, Rae, and I caught the Special Excursion train from Steamtown to Delaware Water Gap (near East Stroudsburg, PA) on August 30. All 650 seats on the train had been sold, we were told, so we got there early.

The steam engine pulling the train was Canadian Pacific "Pacific" number 2317. Since there were some 15 passenger cars, 2317 needed some help, which was provided by two Alco diesel engines. The trainman in our car explained that 1920 era passenger cars were weighted down with concrete, to improve the ride, and 2317 by itself would have crawled up the grades.

The Excursion was the first such train to link the two National Parks, riding on the Pocono mainline, formerly the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western mainline. This line is still in use for freight, although nothing like in the past.

The former use of the line is indicated by the remains of the three-track road, with only one track now in use. Just outside Scranton, the road passes through tunnels, a double tunnel, and a single tunnel. I was surprised that there were no portals, but I think they have simply not been maintained. The inside of the tunnel was very rough too; I suppose it is pointless making it any fancier than it need be.

There were several places where other railroads crossed the mainline on elevated bridges, no longer serviceable. A further sign of the times is the larger number of road bridges which cross the mainline, symbolic of the failure of the former railroad to make ends meet in the face of road competition.

Curiously, the train stopped several times so that 2317 could take on water. I would have thought, with diesel locomotives helping, 2317 could have lasted the whole distance, a round trip of 128 miles. I think Rae was starting to wonder about the usefulness of steam locomotives, with all this stopping and starting¹. Admittedly, the infrastructure for rapid watering of locomotives no longer exists, and maybe it would have taken too much time filling from fire hoses. Rae was amazed when I explained how locomotives could pick up water from long troughs at high speed. Later, back at the Museum, I saw pictures of this operation. But by this time, Rae had had enough of trains, and had gone shopping at the Steamtown Mall.

The train stopped at Point of Gap, where an enormous marquee had been set up with lunch for the train passengers, and paid for as part of the ticket. The food quickly ran out, as no precautions were taken against gate crashers. We thought that, at least, the train tickets would have to be shown to get lunch, but it was not so. We got lunch, but many missed out.

¹ Well, steam trains sure beat the heck out of horse and buggy, to say nothing of covered wagons.

Then the rain started, and kept up through lunch, and all the speeches by local politicians. Then, just as we boarded the train, the rain stopped. Actually, we were lucky, as roads were flooded in adjacent counties.

No passengers were allowed off the train at any of the intermediate stops, except for lunch, as already explained. Maybe the National Park Service was leery about losing passengers. As it was, two passengers did go missing, although we never learnt the full story.

The return trip was delayed just outside Scranton, and we could hear the dispatcher talking to the train crew by radio. All signals were “blacked out”, and control was by radio. Apparently, a freight train had caught fire, and not from 2317 either. We eventually passed the smoking train; a load of timber was on fire.

The Labor Day weekend attracted a number of activities beyond train rides, and accommodation was heavily booked. We eventually found a motel at Wilkes-Barre, which is fine for access to Steamtown. But it seems to be a rough place. Next door to the motel was an adult book and video store. We had breakfast on the first morning across the road at Denny’s and witnessed a young girl being arrested and handcuffed by the police. We breakfasted elsewhere thereafter.

After Lackawanna County we moved on to Lancaster. On the way we called in at Hershey, but I don’t remember why. The Railroad Museum at Strasburg has certainly expanded its inventory. I was a little disappointed at the very small number of units open for boarding. Last time I went, the GG1 was open for internal inspection; not any more.

The Instruction Room (I think it was called) had some very good displays, including a large HO layout under construction, all to be operated from DCC; hmmm!

We finished our trip with a visit to Gettysburg. The tour of the battlegrounds is very well organized, and very informative, but sad, so sad. We did see the rooms where Abraham Lincoln put finishing touches to the Gettysburg Address, so that was a more positive note.

John

The President's Corner

At least there seems little danger of being painted into one?.

Vice President's Niche

I am travelling to Australia Wednesday September 17, and back October 3, which is why this Newsletter is going out early. I always fly QANTAS across the Pacific. Recently my wife found some amusing interchanges between QANTAS pilots and their maintenance engineers, about defects (D) and their fixing (F). A sample:

- D. Number three engine missing.
- F. Number three engine found under right wing after brief search.

- D. Dead bugs in windshield.
- F. Live bugs on back order.

- D. This aircraft performs well, except for automatic landing system.
- F. This aircraft is not fitted for automatic landing.

- D. Mouse in cockpit.
- F. Cat installed in cockpit.

- D. Aircraft plunges 200 feet when autopilot engaged.
- F. Unable to reproduce problem on the ground.

Perhaps it is comforting to know that such a serious task is approached with some humour. The list of defects and fixing is prefaced by the statement that QANTAS is the World's safest major airline, and has

never had a flying fatality. It is also one of the oldest, in continuous operation since 1920. The name is an acronym, standing for Queensland and Northern Territory Air Service.

The Market Place

Club Member Ads

Advertise (free) here to reach more than seventy 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 advertisement.

The Club Store

The Storekeeper's Report

None

M&PMRR Officers & Functionaries

The President	Dan DeLany	860	643-9303
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	John Waller		564-3114
Club Web Page	Jim Spavins		

The Technical Section

Contributions are welcome. You can write about anything from prototype to model railroads. Scenery, electrical, bench work, model building and more are all of interest to the club members.

Model Railroad Calendar

This Month

Work sessions will generally be held each Wednesday at Henry's and Larry's each Thursday. To check on a particular date, call Henry or Larry respectively. Both sessions

start at 7 PM. Don't assume a session is being held; check first.

Submitting Newsletter Items

Electronic versions are preferred so retyping is not necessary. E-mail enclosures can now be opened. Microsoft Word and other compatible word processing programs should be used. Send items to be published by E-mailing them to me at home at: john.waller@snet.net, or snail-mail to 94 Glebas Road, Plainfield, CT 06374-1429. If you do send something, it is a good idea to phone (860 564 3114) and say that you sent it. Say M&P newsletter article in the subject line. You can also put the items on a floppy disk in Microsoft Word and give it to me or mail it. The deadline for submissions is one week before the end of the month.

I have decided not to include any pictures until we sort out the best way to handle them so's everyone can get them. According to Dave Alley, the best way is to get the full Adobe Acrobat application. I will follow this up on return from Australia.