

Mohegan Pequot Model Railroad



The News for: February 2004

DUES ARE OVERDUE!

Club dues for 2004 were due by January 11. Naughty, Naughty! Payments should be mailed to the Club Secretary George Harran at: 17 Robin Hill Road, Waterford, CT 06385. Please make checks payable to the "M-P Model Railroad Club". All family members must be listed for family memberships.

S P R I N G F I E L D ! ! ! !

The annual Amherst Railway Society (<http://www.amherstrail.org/>) show will be held on Saturday and Sunday, February 7 and 8, at the Eastern States Exposition (The Big E) at West Springfield, Massachusetts. If you didn't pay your dues by January 11, your name was not on the official list of members that Jim Delany sent to the Amherst Club for passes. Sorry, but this means that you will have to pay the admission at the gate.

Vic Clark will provide a trailer again this year (All Hail to Vic!). The G scale material will be loaded at the Clark's house on Wednesday February 4 at 3:00 in the afternoon. Then, beginning at 6:00 PM on Wednesday, the HO modules will be loaded at the New London Mall. Unloading in the Young Building at Springfield will commence on Friday morning February 6 starting around 8:00-8:30 AM. Modules and other stuff at Larry Southwick's house will be loaded into the red trailer (pulled by Jonathon Harger) on Monday evening February 2. None of this will happen without Club Member participation at each of these three locations so blah, blah, blah.

Remember, there will be no free parking passes for the Springfield show this year.

New London Mall Debrief

We operated the HO layout in the store next to Strawberry's on Sundays in January. Work sessions on the passenger modules were increased in number in anticipation of the Springfield show. John Waller did a lot of work on the control panel. (We need to get him a helper or an apprentice.) Stu Dom led the troops in making some real progress on the control panel when John went on vacation. Letting the kids operate the trains seems to have paid off very well. We got two new junior members as a result. Two regular members also signed up while we were there.

Meeting Dates and Work Sessions

On the scheduled date of the first meeting of the month, Sunday the 8th of February, we will be in Springfield. On Sunday the 22nd of February we will be back at the Bill Library in Ledyard for the second meeting. It will start at 7:30 PM, the usual time. Operating sessions will convene again at Larry Southwick's house sometime after the display at the Mystic Middle School in March.

Work sessions will continue at the New London Mall on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM until further notice. Dan is working on staying in the store after we return from Springfield so call him or any other Club officer to get the latest story.



We Need Everybody's Help for the Springfield Show!

Extracts from Meeting Notes in January

[Only includes information relevant this month or not incorporated in other articles in the newsletter.]

January 11

(Provided by John Waller)

Two new members were welcomed, Owen Travis and Jeff Turner. Work sessions were held at the New London Mall on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 7 PM. To purchase polo shirts and patches, call Jim Delaney by January 25. The O_{n30} layout was at the Ambulance Barn on Route 1 in Westbrook all day on Saturday January 17.

January 25

The meeting was exclusively about planning for the Springfield. See the article about the show on the front page.

Club Still Needs A New Treasurer

The call is still out for a new treasurer for the Club. Gary Domer is standing by to help you make a smooth transition into this prestigious Club position. Call Dan or Gary (See M&P Officer List) to become a real Mohegan and Pequot Hero and sit at the front table during meetings with the other great Club Luminaries.

Canadian Pacific

Future Field Trips

Jim Delany needs your suggestions for field trips for the Club in 2004. So far the following one-day trips are on the list. We will visit the Providence Club layout in late February on a Saturday morning. A trip to Northlandz in New Jersey in late March, then a trip to Troy, NY to see the RPI layout with a visit to the new Amtrak station and the yard at Selkirk. In May a visit to the George Sellios Franklin and South Manchester world-class layout in Peabody, MA.

In late June we could visit New Haven station on a Saturday and take Metro North to Grand Central Terminal, to see this renovated gem of a station. Excursions to the railroad museums in Willimantic and Danbury and the Essex Steam Train are also potential one-day trips that we might take this year.

The annual club 4/5 day trip, will be made in the July-August time frame with the date and place to be determined by the club members. Altoona, PA was suggested again but we could go to Baltimore instead to check out the B & O Museum and the Amtrak mainline (the Northeast corridor).

Tuning the Newsletter

As you can see, the form of the newsletter is continuing to evolve. This month's changes are putting the Club web page address in the header and an important "Message of the Month" in the footer. Any suggestions that you might have to improve the content or structure of the newsletter are welcome. John Waller continues to be the Club's single biggest contributor. With all the knowledge experience and opinions of the members, he shouldn't be the only one providing articles.

Forty one Club Members now receive the newsletter by e-mail but thirty of you do not. The advantages to Club Members who receive the newsletter electronically are that the newsletter arrives days before it is delivered by the U.S. Mail and the graphics are in color. And in case your eyes are a little weak that day you can magnify the newsletter by looking at it at 150% or more. [The e-mail list can also be used to get the word out about last minute changes to meeting places and schedules for field trips and Club displays and shows.] The advantage of emailing the newsletter to the Club is that saves the cost of printing and mailing, which many times can exceed a dollar an issue. The graphics in the printed copies are in black and white because it would more than triple the cost of printing if they were to be reproduced in color.

Now you have a really good reason to get that \$1K computer. It is possible that your name was dropped from the e-mail list or you may have changed e-mail providers. If so, let's get you back on. If you can receive the newsletter electronically it would be to everybody's advantage to do so. Just send a message to the editor at modlrrnews@aol.com to be added to the mailing list. Put M&P somewhere in the subject line if you would please. [Due to Clark's schedule, John Waller will publish the March newsletter.]

We Need Everybody's Help for the Springfield Show!

Member News

Here is where we actually try to communicate with our fellow Club members and those who might want to join us. Do you need some help with a model railroading problem, have expertise to share or just want to get out in the world more? Then let it be known in the Club newsletter.

More New Members!

We have two more new members in the Club, Robert A. Dizigan of Waterford, CT and Owen Travis from Groton, CT. Let's all welcome them aboard Gentlemen, have fun model railroading!



John Waller's Column

This month I am contributing to the ongoing discussion about how the Club should handle DCC. It is partly in response to our worthy, but not so kind and gentle¹, editor's comments in the January Newsletter.

As some will have seen, I set up my DCC block and signal control demo at the second weekend of "Thomas" last year, and intend to bring it to Springfield. Although it is a bit rough around the edges, especially in the area of message passing and error recovery, it does function. I am working to improve matters.

The demo is just that and, like the DC demo, does not pretend to be a model railroad layout in the usual sense. All the parts of the system are exposed for all to see, and this is deliberate. There is no scenery. The trains are a non-prototypical mixture of locomotives and cars which would never have graced a real railroad.

But I have intentions, which are just a little bit more than a gleam in the eye, for building a real model railroad layout, using the same control technology as in the DCC demo.

I believe what I am now intending to do is akin to what Clark proposed in the letter part

of his comments. There will be two 8' modules which are joined for setting up to form a 16' layout. There will be a DC main line through the layout, but with no branches, although control will be available. The layout can be stand-alone if required.

In terms of a prototype theme I am leaning towards logging with Shay, and perhaps Climax and Hystler locomotives, with cars as appropriate, but there are other options with small steam locomotives. There will be steep grades, and I have already built a helix which will fit within the layout.

In terms of transportability I plan that the two modules will fit in my trailer, each occupying a height yet to be determined. A protective lid over each is mandatory. The modules will not be light, but I am considering carefully how I will handle them by myself, with some sort of mechanical assistance; I ain't gettin' any younger, folks.

The steep grades give ample opportunity for scenery, fully protected during transport. This will include mountains, gullies, tunnels, bridges, viaducts, and whatever. It could include one or more rail lines under construction, as I alluded to last month.

While I would proceed with my intentions using my own resources, I would be the first to admit that my skills are concentrated on things to do with wiring, microcontroller algorithms and programming, and the like. I come up a bit short in track laying² and scenery, to name two things.

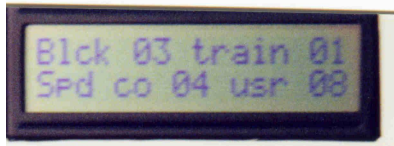
Therefore, I would be more than happy to make this a Club project, as Clark suggests. It is certainly "hi tech" and could be attractive to prospective younger members. Almost all the control is exercised with a mouse. There is a graphics LCD containing the mouse cursor. Placing the cursor over different parts of the screen brings up a different message on a text LCD.



² Part of the track in the demo gives me constant trouble.

¹ By his own admission!

This message appears for a train in the yard. It is for train #1 which has DCC address 5. Right mouse clicks increase speed, and left mouse clicks reduce speed. For the example shown, left clicks reduce speed through zero to negative, or reverse. Simultaneous right and left clicks sets speed to zero. Speed in the yard is limited for each train by a value in the configuration file.



This message appears when a block on the main line is strobed by the mouse, in this case block #3. Train #1 happens to be in the block. The user has set a speed of 8, but the control system is limiting that speed to 4, because the train is approaching a red signal, or is passing a red/green signal, indicating "caution" or "approach". Again, right and left clicks change the user-set speed, but reversing on the main line cannot be selected.

Stu Dom has made a good point. Instead of showing train number and address, the text LCD could show more descriptive messages, such as "Shay 5", etc. I am thinking upon this suggestion.

John

The President's Corner

(The Prez discussing At Large Memberships, meetings, clinics, operating & work sessions)
[Excerpts from his e-mails]

I checked my notes as to whether or not an "at large membership" exists within our club. As far as I know, it doesn't and if anything, we might have made an exception for someone in the past. I checked with George, and both Dave Alley and Tom Lawson (while he was still a card carrying member) paid the full \$25 for club membership. Since we have already mentioned it to a few people, we should let it go for this year, but all unpaid members are required to pay the full membership rate. If this is a policy we want to adopt, I'd be happy to bring it up at the next meeting. Also, if we do adopt a member at large policy, we need to

be very careful with defining a "member at large". I don't want it to become a "member who just uses club membership to get into Springfield for free". Also, we would need to clearly define the way members at large would fit into the mix as far as voting on club issues, and quorum, etc. Just some thoughts.

Hope you guys enjoyed the shindig on weathering. I will be bringing my box of weathering goodies to New London over the next few weeks for anyone who wishes to use my stuff to practice weathering.

I would like to restart operating sessions after the Mystic Middle school display, since I don't feel we should set up the layout in Larry's basement for one month, then take it down again for that show. Also, I plan on restructuring the work sessions after Springfield to alternate weekly between the passenger station and the rest of the club modules to get some long overdue maintenance done on those modules. I would also like to spend time adding/redoing scenery and other details on the club modules, much like Jon Harger and I did on those two corner modules. It makes a huge difference in the aesthetics of the layout, and the operating smoothness too. I have made a list of work to be done, as well as budgets for the maintenance of all the club modules that need work. This will be presented after Springfield.

Dan

Club Members are Very Satisfied this month.



Vice President's Niche

I want to thank the Club for agreeing to fund printed circuit boards to help in the wiring of the passenger modules control panel. The simpler of the two board types is working out very well. The more complex board's design is not yet complete at the time of writing. The boards have plated-through holes and, fortunately, the surface tension of molten solder is such it fills the hole even if only a fraction of the hole is filled with a wire or solder lug. The holes are larger than strictly needed to allow for tolerance.

I never promised Stu a completion date for the panel; as you can read elsewhere I have other projects too. Hopefully, more people can work on the panel. At any one time a team of two is probably optimum, because one person tends to shuttle back and forth between the back and front of the unit. It is tedious painstaking work, so be warned!

The panel, and the work thereon, certainly attracts attention at our New London display, so that must be a plus for the Club. Whether the panel will be taken to Springfield is another matter.

John

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 has metal wheels and couplers and the usual model railroad stuff too. To find out what else is in the Club Store see Larry Southwick. There are a few Club red hats with the Club patch and Club red polo shirts with pocket. The available shirt sizes are medium, large, x-large, 3x, and 5x. If you want to order Club apparel, call Jim Delany at 889-4029. There may be some left even though we pushed to have all of the purchases completed by January 25.

M&PMRR Officers & Functionaries

The President	Dan DeLany	860 643-9303
Vice President	John Waller	564-3114
Treasurer	Gary Domer	446-2113
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	Clark Pritchett	444-1884
Club WebPage	Jim Spavins	spavij@rpi.edu

Letters to the Editor

Vent your opinions here!

On Dan Delany's Weathering Clinic

Dan,

Great job in going through your weathering approaches. I believe there could also be a more hands on session in the future, where each person would bring in his/her favorite model and weather it on the spot – oil based paints excepted.

Stu Dom

Dan's notes on his weathering clinic will appear in next month's newsletter.

The Technical Section

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

Changing Times on the Railroad

According to a December 9, 2003 CNN report, the number of railroad workers in the United States has declined from 154,000 in 1983 to only 111,000 today! One reason is the advances in locomotive technology. Today fewer of the more powerful locomotives are required to pull the same amount of tonnage. They are more reliable so they require less maintenance too. Changing union rules must have played a part in reducing the numbers as well. At the Union Pacific yard in Fort Worth recently, an engineer stopped his train at a switch and got out and threw the switch himself. Then he got back in the lead locomotive, and took off alone in the cab to New Orleans. Centralized train control, computer advances and automatically controlled yard engines also are contributors to the job loss. Another unnerving thing to see in Fort Worth is switchers in the yard that are remotely controlled. No engineer is in the lead engine when they move thirty and forty car cuts back and forth.

The goal of every "great" manager is to reduce the cost of labor in his company and railroad executives are no different. Perhaps if they can make road engines become remotely controlled, thus completely eliminating the engineers, and contract out maintenance,

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111,000 workers will be considered a lot in the future. [I vaguely recall reading somewhere that the number of railroad workers in the 1920s peaked around 2,400,000. CWP]



Railroad Bridge in Loudon, Tennessee.

Who Are These Railroad People?

Match the names, descriptions and pictures of these great, famous and infamous railroad financiers, builders and managers of the past.

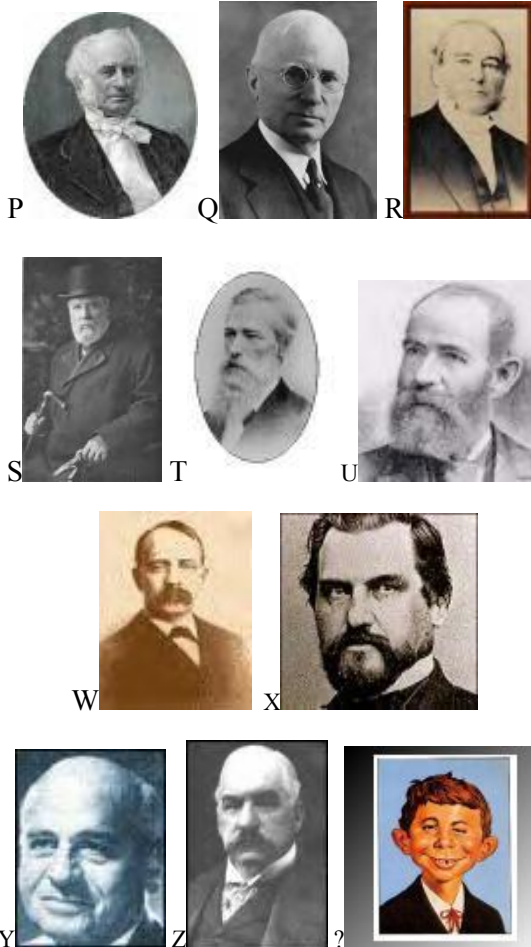
Great Railroad Movers and Shakers

- 1 James J. Hill, 2 Cornelius Vanderbilt,
- 3 Jay Gould, 4 John Pierpont Morgan,
- 5 Leland Stanford, 6 Daniel Willard,
- 7 Edward Henry Harriman, 8 Mark Hopkins
- 9 John Edgar Thompson
- 10 Joshua Lionel Cowen (Originally Cohen)

What They Did/Who They were

- A Regarded as the most notorious railroad robber baron and manipulator of railroad stock in the United States.
- B. Wall Street's biggest railroad financier. Also an investor in the New Haven RR.
- C The New York Central System's Founder.
- D Pennsylvania Railroad's great president and father of modern management.
- E President of the Central Pacific Railroad and governor of California.
- F An inventor who brought out the kid in us.
- G One of the Big Four California railroad magnates with a hotel named after him.
- H. Easterner who owned the Union Pacific, Illinois Central and several other railroads in his lifetime (1848-1909)
- I This "Empire Builder" opened up the Pacific Northwest with the Great Northern.
- J President of the B&O from 1910 to 1940.

Their Pictures



Answers in March Newsletter.

World Wide Web

Send in your favorite railroad related websites and they will be published here so everybody can access them.

<http://www.toytrunkrailroad.com/main.asp>

A railroad cartoon site.

<http://www.rhistrical.com/>

Railroad history and other good stuff

<http://www.slamtrak.com/>

Lots of Northeast corridor pictures here



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Model Railroad Calendar

This Month in 2004

February 6, 7 & 8, West Springfield, MA

The Amherst Railway Society Show will be held on Saturday and Sunday at the Big E. Setup is on Friday, the 6th, beginning at 8:00 AM. G-Scale loading at the Clark's begins at 3:00 PM on Wednesday the 4th followed by loading of the HO modules at the New London Mall at 6:00 PM. The Club meeting (Clinic) on Sunday will consist of members showing each other how to breakdown the modules and load the trailers.

February 22, Ledyard, CT The Club business meeting will be held at the Bill Library starting at 7:30 PM.

Next Month and Beyond

March 6 or 13 (TBD) Mystic, CT M&P displays an HO layout at Mystic Middle School. Ed Bradbury is the point of contact.

Ron Pothier's list of train shows for the year is available from him at repth@snet.net.



Model of an RS-3(maybe RS-2 or RS-1?)

The Lighter Side

Why is the railroad angry?

Because people are always crossing it!

Why can't the engineer be electrocuted?

Because he's not a conductor!

What is a lawyer's favorite railroad?

The SOO Line.

Why is the track gauge 4' 8 1/2" ?

Because its the mean distance between the neck and ankles of damsels in distress.

Why can't a steam locomotive sit down?

Because it has a tender behind (or because it's caboose is red).

Response to passenger complaint about increased sleeping car fares:

"The berth rate has gone up since your last trip."

Why don't elephants like to ride on trains?

They hate leaving their trunks in the baggage car.

How many conductors does it take to change a light bulb?

Only one, but to no avail. He first punches a hole in the new bulb.

How many foamers does it take to change a lightbulb?

No, NO!!! Not until I get a picture of the old one!!!

How many 600-volt DC subway workers does it take to change a lightbulb?

Five.

Guy running to catch a train: "Can I take this train to Altoona?"

Guy standing under placard that reads 'Train to Altoona': "You can't _take_ this train anywhere--it belongs to the railroad." (or "Why would you want to--it's going there anyway.")

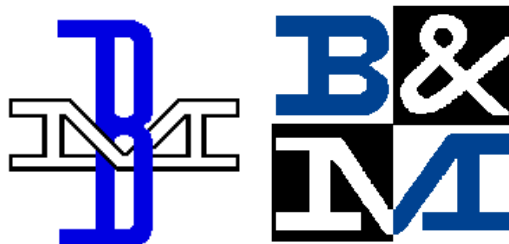
What is the difference between a school teacher and a steam locomotive?

The school teacher tells you to spit out your gum, while the locomotive says "Choo Choo Choo!"

http://www.spikesys.com/Trains/rr_jokes.html

Submitting Newsletter Items

Electronic versions are preferred so typing is not necessary. E-mail enclosures in Microsoft Word and other compatible word processing programs can usually be opened. Send items to be published by E-mailing them to Clark at: modlrnews@aol.com, or snail-mail them to 23 Beacon Hill Dr. Waterford, CT 06385. If you do e-mail something, it is a good idea to phone (860 444-1884) and say that you sent it so it doesn't mistakenly get deleted as spam. Put 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.



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