

Mohegan Pequot Model Railroad



The News for: May 2004

The Willimantic Show Debrief

The Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum Spring Train Show was held on Sunday, April 18, 2004 at the Windham High School in Willimantic, Connecticut. We loaded the HO modules at the Woodworkers Warehouse store in Norwich on Wednesday and set up at the high school on Friday night, April 16, and were ready to operate that evening. The HON3 crew shook their modules on Sunday morning and an operating layout magically sprang into shape. The show was relatively quiet and relaxed (read not very well attended) since Sunday was a very nice day.

At the show we learned that Frank Johnson, a long-time dealer at Willimantic and other shows that we attend, died of cancer about two weeks before the show. Frank hand-made very nice brass HO signals. He built them with various target shapes and numbers of lights.

Meeting Dates and Work Sessions

Club meetings and work sessions will continue (until we are asked to leave) to be held at the Woodworkers Warehouse in Norwich. Meetings will still be at 7:30 PM on the second and fourth Sunday of the month. Work sessions will be held on Wednesday evenings starting at 7:00 PM. Meetings this month will be held on Sundays, May 9 and 23.

From I-395 take Exit 80 (which is CT route 82) going into Norwich. The shopping center with the Staples sign is on the left side of the road about one half a mile from I-395.



The Club Secretary

Unfortunately there has been another casualty on the M&P battlefield of model railroading. After three years as Club Secretary, George Harran is resigning. George has done a wonderful job during his tenure as the Club Secretary but now is the time for another member to step up to the plate. George's letter of resignation follows

Dan, John

I regret to inform you that due to new personal commitments I can no longer give the proper attention to the job of secretary for the M&P club. Please accept my apologies but I think it is best for both the club and myself that I resign the secretary position as of June 1st, 2004. I think that the club roster, dues and other secretary duties are all up to date and I am willing to work with any new secretary on the process. I also have all the past secretary reports and have used Excel to keep the club roster and associated info. I will continue to support all club functions as time permits and look forward to working with you all on the various club projects.

*Yours Truly,
George Harran*

But, things are looking up. We have at least one person interested in becoming the new Club Secretary. Please come to the first meeting in May so we have a quorum and can elect the new M&P Club Secretary.



The Mohegan and Pequot Field Trip Season is Here. Get Onboard!

April Fun Meeting Debrief

Thanks to Bill Evans, we had an excellent presentation at the second Club meeting on April 25. Tim Maslyn, who owns Integrated Signal Systems in Henrietta, NY, showed 25 very interested Mohegan & Pequot Club Members how DCC, Signal Systems and block detection can add an immeasurable amount of realism to model railroading. Tim builds great stuff and he really knows the DCC world and how prototype signal systems operate. Tim worked all over the world for the Harris Corporation for 25 years in military electronics before he decided that staying at home and designing and making signals and selling DCC systems was much more fulfilling. Tim's signals are magnificent (as the pictures in the next column show) in their attention to detail and replicating the prototype. He can custom build them for any railroad but they will not be cheap (in either sense of the word). They come in three levels of assembly, from kits to completely finished.

Tim works closely with NCE (formerly North Coast Engineering) and handles all of their DCC products. He used their controller in the DCC demo. He showed us how several engines could be "MUed" as one consist and hence as one locomotive under DCC. He pointed out that there are some pitfalls in using DCC in places like Springfield when several clubs might be running wireless DCC. Commands from one controller may be picked up by others in the building so in those cases he recommends running tethered, i.e. plugging the controller into the layout.

Many of the Club members operated the DCC engines on the new passenger modules. It was clear that DCC will not solve the problem of not paying attention since on more than one occasion there was an opportunity for a head-on collision.



Some Integrated Signal Systems HO Signals

Tim has a large catalog on his website at www.integratedsignalsystems.com. He also can be reached by phone at 585-334-3614 or email at ISS@NETACC.NET. We all thank Tim for his wonderful demonstration and Bill Evans for convincing him to make a 700+ mile round trip!

Extracts from Meeting Notes in April

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

(All of the items of interest covered during the April meetings are included in newsletter articles)

Found at Springfield

So far nobody has claimed the green Burlington Northern boxcar (BN #316 228) that was found after the Springfield show. It is made by Roundhouse and has Kadees and metal wheels. If it is yours contact Jack Howie at 464-6807.

M&P Club Field Trips

Jim Delany is our field trip coordinator so if you have any ideas or suggestions for places to go, bring them to him so he can get them on the list. We usually leave for day trips from the commuter lot in Norwich, located on the west side of I-395 at the Yantic/Norwichtown exit, EXIT 82. At the end of the exit ramp coming from the south, turn left and go under I-395. The lot is on the right just after the overpass. If you are coming from the north you can see the lot as you exit.

Field Trip Debriefs

None to report from last month.

Scheduled Trips

None as of this date.

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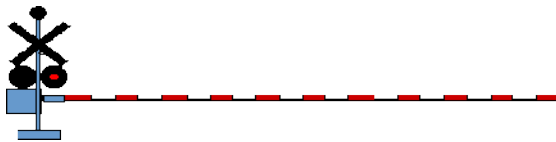
Possible/Probable Trips

The Providence Club layout on a Saturday morning. Northlandz in New Jersey. Troy, NY to see the RPI layout with a visit to the new Amtrak station and the yard at Selkirk. George Sellios's world-class layout, the Franklin and South Manchester, in Peabody, MA. in early June.

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. We will try to schedule this so as many members can go as possible, i.e. avoiding conflicts. We have talked about visiting Altoona again, as well as going farther west to a train hotspot in Ohio that Bob MacGregor found in RailPace but we could go to Baltimore instead to check out the B & O Museum and the Amtrak mainline (the Northeast corridor). It is also possible that we can make side trips such as visiting Northlandz as we go west or return. This can be discussed further at Club meetings over the next few months.



Member News

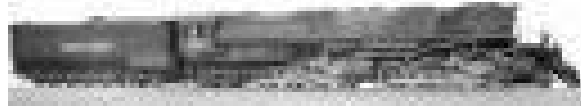
Here is where we actually try to communicate with our fellow Club members and those who might want to join us. Do you need some help with a model railroading problem, have expertise to share or just want to get out in the world more? Then let it be known in the Club newsletter.

New Members

We have two more new members in the Club. They are father and son, Marc and Ian Campbell from East Lyme, CT. Welcome aboard gentlemen!

Danbury Train Show Ride

Clark Pritchett is going to the Danbury Railway Museum Train Show and RailFair on Sunday May 2 to sell his wonderful railroad stocks bonds and pocket watches. He will be there for the day and is willing to take a passenger. If you are interested in getting into the show for free (and maybe helping Clark), call him at 860-444-1884.



John Waller's Column

Although not as formidable a barrier as the combination of the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, the European Alps have been a barrier to trade since civilization began. Witness the recent discovery of the 5000 year old remains of a trader, dubbed the Ice Man, who was trying to cross the Alps. I have visions of archeologists digging up the remains of Norwich in 5000 years time and discovering the skeleton of an elderly male with his hands caught inside what appears to be some ancient form of electrical apparatus. He might be called: New Passenger Module Control Panel Man.

Switzerland, of course, sits astride the Alps, and has sometimes been called the biggest model train set in the World. From the late 19th century, tunnels and passes have been in use for both rail and road traffic. Now the congestion is out of control, and the Swiss authorities are taking drastic measures, according to Armin Schmutz writing in Trains magazine of May 2004. The article is called *Inside the World's Longest Tunnel*, and appears at page 40. Transport authorities in North America should take note¹.

According to Armin, the Mount Cenis tunnel, also called the Fréjus Tunnel, at 8.3 miles, was the first long tunnel in the world. It took 14 years to build, with much loss of life, being completed in 1871. This makes it contemporary with building the first trans-

¹ Armin writes that the average Swiss citizen takes 47 train journeys each year, travelling an average distance of 26 miles. The population is 7.5 million.

continental railroad in the USA, which I wrote about a few months ago².

Next followed the Gotthard Tunnel, 9.3 miles long, with the apex at just over 3500 feet, not much more than half the elevation of the Summit Tunnel in the Sierra Nevada. Even then, the approaches to the Gotthard Tunnel are a conglomerate of spiral tunnels, horseshoe curves, and even switchbacks, to reduce the maximum grade to 2.8%. It is not surprising that there is so much congestion, and that transit times, rail and road, both through the tunnel, and the road pass above it, are now unacceptable.

Armin writes that the Swiss have passed a law³ which requires the number of truck trips to be cut from the present 1.3 million per year to 0.65 million by 2009. The estimated expenditure is \$24 billion. Who will pay for it? There is a heavy-vehicle tax which will pay for 55%. Think about that! Trucks will contain special equipment to record the necessary data.

Naturally, the project is largely focused on rail. There are two new main tunnels, the Gotthard Base Tunnel, which at 35.3 miles will be the longest in the World, and the Lötschberg Base Tunnel. The term “base” means that the tunnels follow existing routes, but at a much lower elevation⁴. The result is gradients on rail lines almost disappear.

Safety in tunnels is, of course, of paramount concern. Apart from the dangers during construction, fires in tunnels can be devastating. I had a near miss with the fire at Paddington Station in London in 1986. The recent fire in a tunnel underneath Baltimore is another example. Armin cites some examples in the tunnels under the Alps, but they are all road related, and exacerbated by congestion.

The tunnel under the English Channel (the “Chunnel”) sets an example in this regard.

There is no road traffic; all vehicles are loaded onto flat cars. The Swiss authorities are already doing this with some vehicles, and it will certainly apply to the new tunnels. There is a side benefit in that drivers will be allowed to snooze while riding the train.

The data must be known for Connecticut; how many tractor-trailer journeys originate and terminate out of state? Would it not make sense to have a dedicated rail link through Connecticut⁵ which carries most of this through-state traffic? In one fell swoop the need to upgrade I-95 at hideous expense could be averted. As Joseph Vranich is fond of pointing out, the footprint of a twin-track rail link is much less than a super highway.

The whole notion of quickly loading and unloading road vehicles onto rail flat cars is intriguing. It must have been solved for the Chunnel. The trick, obviously, is to avoid changing the train consist, or to have the equivalent of gantries which lift containers onto a flat car. These are what take time.

Actually, circuses have been doing this for some time, probably for over a century. The train consists of a series of flat cars, and the vehicles simply drive onto the train from one end and traverse the flat cars until coming to their allotted car (so they must start in the right order!). Military authorities in the first half of the 20th Century took a great interest in these operations as mechanized units replaced horses.

Perhaps, during loading of road vehicles, there could be a ramp which is lowered from above the flat car plane as each rail car comes into position. The vehicle drives onto the train, the ramp is raised slightly, the train moves forward to bring the next flat car under the ramp, and so on. Unloading is similar but in reverse.

Does anyone know how it is actually done?

² In both these ventures rock blasting required the use of black powder, as (safer?) dynamite had not yet been developed.

³ Did not the U.S. Congress pass a law requiring that Federal income and expenditure be balanced?

⁴ To do this in North America, the tunnel would need to start near Sacramento and end up at North Platte!



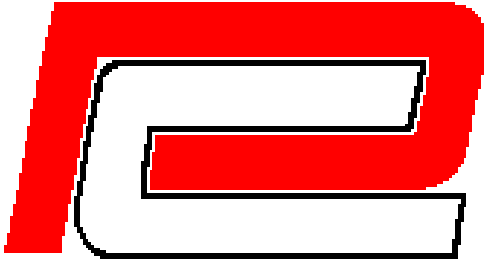
John

⁵ Dare I say it would follow the old Air Line route?

The President's Corner

(The Prez discussing where his column is

Dan



Vice President's Niche

Here is the VP's take on the demonstration on April 25 on signals and DCC. Clearly he paid more attention than the editor.

The seminar organized by Bill Evans on April 25 was well attended. The speaker/demonstrator was Tim Maslyn of Integrated Signals from the "north coast" of New York State. Tim's address is PO box 577, Henrietta, NY 14467. Orders may be placed toll free at 877 531 5275 and his email and website address are email digistardcc@netacc.net, and www.integratedsignals.com.

The passenger modules were set up and the main tracks connected to Tim's combined DCC encoder and booster. He demonstrated sound systems, noting that HO scale can only accommodate very small speakers, and a dummy locomotive is useful to gain more volume. Transport boxes are available for permanently-coupled locomotives, Tim's preferred arrangement. Tim demonstrated radio throttles, which can also be used as "tethered" throttles (that is, with wires between the throttle and the cab bus, instead of a radio link⁶). He warns that radio throttles have been a source of trouble at train shows, such as controlling a train on someone else's layout! Cell-phone repeaters in large halls might be a problem too. There is also a delay with a radio throttle compared with a tethered throttle. The throttles are smart and can restrict selections on a large layout.

Tim demonstrated making up and taking apart a consist. Club members operated Tim's

⁶ There are also tethered-only throttles.

and their own locomotives. Some judged that sound systems which are too loud can rapidly become distracting. On the other hand, the background noise at some train shows will be very high, and sounds need to be loud. Anyway, real trains are noisy.

But perhaps the highlight of the demonstration was of a wide range of HO scale signals, made from brass parts soldered together. The detail and quality is outstanding. Tim deals exclusively in colored-light signals, having a tacit agreement with Tomar Industries who specialize in semaphore signals (Editor: not to infringe on each other's territory). Signals are available fully assembled, or as a kit. Some signal heads require many wires; Tim uses magnet wire, where the only insulation is the enamel coating on the wire, and claims shorts between wires have not been a problem. Signal types included masts, dwarfs, gantries, and bridges (none of the last demonstrated). Because of the demand for these products, the backlog on orders is 6 to 8 weeks.

The lights, of course, are all LEDs. HO scale uses mainly 3 mm LEDs, but one dwarf signal demonstrated uses 1 mm LEDs, a size I have never seen before, but good for N scale. Tim spent some time finding the right red/green LEDs which can be mixed to form a decent yellow color, and jealously guards which LEDs were chosen, and how the mixing is done! As I have found, one cannot take any old red/green LED and expect to get a decent yellow.

Also demonstrated was a short length of HO track with several breaks to represent blocks. Tim uses a block occupancy detector based on the Coolidge method, which I mentioned some time ago. Signals beside this track respond appropriately to a car being pushed up and down.

Incidentally, a wheel on one of the frogs on the main line placed a short circuit on Tim's booster. Tim's cure for this problem is a spot of nail polish!

John

It is some years since I have had any feedback on my columns, other than from yourself (editor). I wonder whether, if a Newsletter appeared without them, anyone but you would notice??

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.)

Bob Applegate has the following HO and N scale Rolling Stock and Power for sale. You can call him at 860 464-2118 or email Bob at rapplegate@snet.net

HO Scale Stuff

- 1) NHRHTA Limited run kit - C&BT Shops; Pullman Standard Boxcar with improved Dreadnaught ends (Block Herald -NH), boxcar red, car # 33216; \$4.00
- 2) NHRHTA Limited run kit - C&BT Shops; Pullman Standard Boxcar with improved Dreadnaught ends (Block Herald -NH), boxcar red, car # 33450; \$4.00
- 3) Atlas Classic Locomotive (made in China) 8778 ALCO RS-11 New York Central #8014, Black-lightening stripe; NIB; \$60.00
- 4) Proto 1K LIF23934 - 100-Ton Hopper B&O #82967; Black, white lettering; blt 4-79; \$5.00
- 5) Atlas 1677-1 - ACF 60' DD Auto Parts Car, Union Pacific #960566, yellow sides, silver top, ends, Shield logo; \$13.00
- 6) Pacific Western Rail Systems, Limited Edition Special Run; 3 car set (in shrink wrap) H1074A,B,C; by Intermountain; ACF 2 Bay Covered Hopper, BN435600, BN435637, BN437006; Green, white lettering; BN logo. \$60.00 for the set

N Scale Stuff

- 1) Kato 186-0308 - 2 window Cupola Caboose; PRR # 478124; Red, black roof; white lettering, PRR keystone logo, "local service Pittsburgh built 2-52 NB"; \$14.00

The Club Store

The Storekeeper has metal wheels, both 33" and 36", and couplers and the usual model railroad stuff too. The new shirts are in too so if you ordered one or want one see the Storekeeper, Larry Southwick. Oh yeah, Larry has some other model railroad supplies too.

The Commercial Corner

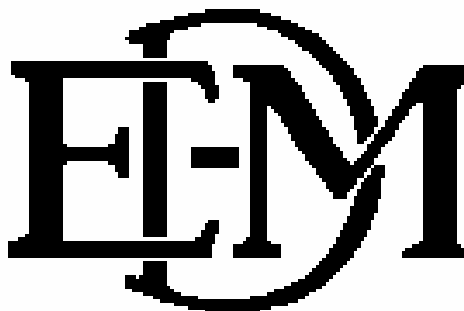
Broadway Limited Imports (BLI) products, in addition to other retail items, may now be purchased from TACDAB, LLC, owned by Barbara Schubler. BLI requires from its dealers a minimum order of 2 units per series. The items don't have to be the same, for example: diesel switcher item 632 may be ordered by someone and another individual could order 633 or if they want, they can order the same. TACDAB will place the order when it has a minimum order of 2 units per series. Barbara would like to know if anyone else is interested in ordering an item from the same series.

Barbara currently has an order for one Paragon series Flat-Faced Cab Forward, AC-4, 4-8-8-2 #4100; one PRR J1; one set from the EMD E7A/B series and one of the USRA Light Mikado engines.

Individuals who are interested in purchasing any of the BLI products may reach Barbara for further information regarding product and pricing by phone: 860-447-9023; email: schubb@myeastern.com or in person at meetings, workshops and shows.

M&PMRR Officers & Functionaries

The President	Dan DeLany	860 643-9303
Vice President	John Waller	564-3114
Treasurer	Don Counsellor	739-6381
Secretary	George Harran	443-0707
Storekeeper	Larry Southwick	535-2996
Newsletter Mailing, Meeting Speakers and Bulk Purchases	Bill Evans	267-9482
New Pa\$\$enger Modules, Name Tags and Show Layouts	Stu Dom	536-7637
Field Trips	Jim DeLany	889-4029
Newsletter Editor	Clark Pritchett	444-1884
Club WebPage	Jim Spavins	spavij@rpi.edu



Letters to the Editor

Vent your opinions here!
The Club is waiting to hear from you.

Rant by the Editor

We need some more contributors and contributions to the Newsletter: Websites of interest, pictures to publish of model and prototype railroads, opinions on what the Club should be doing, technical articles, model railroading, museum and railfan experiences, neat new products that you have seen or used, or anything else that you might like to see in the Newsletter would all be of interest to Club Members.

Without some feedback about what you want to see in the Newsletter and some help with articles and pictures things are going to slow down. There is a lot more that could be said but you get the picture.

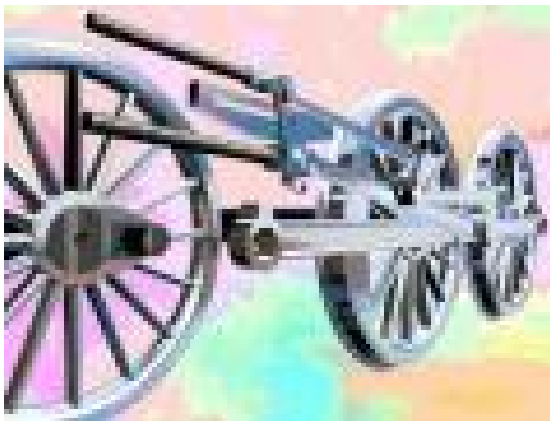
Clark

Pictures of the Month

Club Members' pictures will be published in this new section of the Newsletter. Send your digital pictures of prototype trains, museum trips, model railroads, modules or anything else of interest as email attachments and they can be put right into the 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.



World Wide Web

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

Let's see, the number of websites sent in by Club Members so far is, mmmmm **ZERO!**

Model Railroad Calendar

This Month in 2004

May 1, 2004, Danbury, CT: Metro North RailRodeo & RailFair 2004. Danbury Railway Museum, 120 White Street.

May 2, 2004, Danbury, CT: Danbury Railway Museum Train Show and RailFair in Downtown Danbury at the Bill Williams Gym, (part of Western Connecticut Univ) a few blocks from the museum. Call Sue Thomas at the Museum evenings at 203-778-8337

May 15, 2004, East Haven, CT: Model Train and Trolley Meet, The Shore Line Trolley Museum, 17 River Street.

Next Month and Beyond

June 4-5, 2004, Collinsville, CT: Prototype Modelers Meet, Canton Community Center, 40 Dyer Ave.

June 4-5, 2004, Thomaston, CT -: The Battle for the Tracks, Railroad Museum of New England, Thomaston Train Station. 10:00 AM. – 6:00 PM. Saturday, 10:00 a. m. –4:00 p. m. Sunday.

August 22, 2004, New Haven, CT: All Gauge Train Show, New Haven City-Wide Field House, 480 Sherman Parkway. 9:00 or 10 AM. To 3.00 PM.

October 19, 2004, Orange, CT: Model Train Show. High Plains Community Center, 525 Orange Center Road (Route 152) For more information call (203) 932-0185/795-9466.

December 11-12, 2004, Marlborough, MA: NMRA Hub Division Fall Train Show at the Royal Plaza Hotel from 10 AM to 4 PM. Call: (781) 862- 0388 or (508) 528-8587 or you can email them at info@hubdiv.org.

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

The Mohegan and Pequot Field Trip Season is Here. Get Onboard!

Next Month's Newsletter

The newsletter next month may not come out until the early days of June. The editor will be on the road and is not scheduled to return to Connecticut until the end of May.

The Lighter Side

Top Ten Railroad Word Definitions

Thanks to T. Harrison

http://www.wiringfordcc.com/model_rr_jokes.htm

Model Railroad definitions of prototype words.

10. Helper - The person you'd least want touching your trains and working on your layout but who is the only one who shows up regularly for work nights.
 9. Helix - A cat that enjoys sitting in tunnels waiting for trains to come in so he can attack.
 8. Glad hands - Those little cherubic hands that want to reach up and touch everything. Also known as why you should have built your bench work at 58".
 7. Flying switch - The Shinohara that has given you trouble for so long that you finally send it sailing across the room. : *Certainly this honor does not belong to Shinohara alone!*
 6. Hack - That fellow with all the (alleged) electronics experience who completely rewires your club layout without wire diagrams, schematics, or written notations of any sort who quits just before it's discovered it ain't a workin' (usually one week before the open house...).
 5. Flimsie - The way you built the roadbed that just dropped your best friend's brand new \$2000+ brass Big Boy on the floor!
 4. Form 19 - The paper work a psychiatrist is required to fill out when you foolishly admit you are a model railroader.
 3. Spring switch - Your first hand laid turnout with the points that simply refuse to line up with either stock rail!
 2. Protecting the rear - a) What the guy is supposed to do to the back of the van to keep all the club's modules from falling out all over the freeway at 70mph. b) What the guy actually does when the van doors open and the club's modules are distributed on the Interstate at 70mph.
- And the #1 definition, Retarder - See Helper above.



Submitting Newsletter Items

Electronic versions are preferred so retyping 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: modlrrnews@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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