

# Mohegan Pequot Model Railroad



## The News for: March 2005

### Springfield Show

The Big E's initial announcement of 16,800 attendees for the two-day show was inaccurate. It was later "corrected" to 18,600, which is comparable to previous years. Some sages pointed out that parking fees, instead of dyslexia, may have been a cause of the initially reported lower number.

The consensus was that the use of several Club and private trailers and personal vehicles was no real impediment to getting all of the modules to the Big E, but we did pare back the size of the layout somewhat to match our overall carrying capacity.

The weather affected both the loading and unloading of the trailers this year. We beat the blizzard by loading early but we still have not unloaded because Larry's driveway is too treacherous. Cars from the Amherst Railway Club were distributed to Members at the last meeting.

### Mystic Middle School

This is our first show after Springfield. Ed Bradbury said we can start setting up on Friday March 11 at 3:30 PM, or when buses are clear of the school. We must be out of the school by 9:30 PM that night. Stu Dom will do layout plans in the next few days. The full passenger module<sup>1</sup> suite will be included, as this is now our "signature". The show is on Saturday from 10 AM to 3 PM.

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<sup>1</sup> The "old" passenger modules are now history, so the "old" and "new" designations are no longer necessary.

### Willimantic

We will have an HO layout at the Windham High School for the Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum Train Show. Setup will be on Friday evening March 18, starting at 6:00 PM. The show is on Sunday March 20, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

### RPI Open House

I would like to cordially invite the Mohegan and Pequot Model Railroad Club up to the frozen tundra of Troy, NY, for a private open house of the Rensselaer Model Railroad Society on Saturday April 30, 2005. This may be one of the last opportunities to see one of the country's premier model railroads as open houses will be limited in the future. The layout is in the basement of Davidson Hall and features prototype scenes from New York and Vermont from the early 1950s. The time and admission are still to be determined. I hope to see you all there.

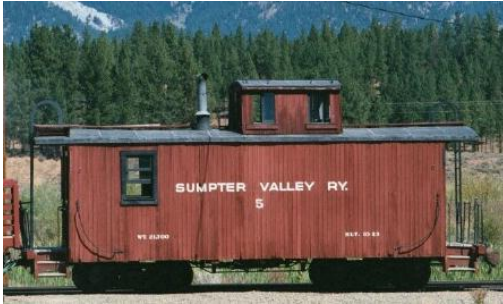
Jim Spavins, President  
Rensselaer Model Railroad Society

### CLUB Due\$\$\$\$\$\$

It's really late now but you can still pay the Club Secretary, Bob Applegate, (**not** any other officer) at a Club Meeting or send a check to him at the following address:

The Secretary  
c/o M-P Model RR Club  
23 Hyde Park Drive  
Gales Ferry, CT 06335-1941.

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### **Meetings and Work Sessions**

Things are changing at the old M&P. We are introducing new meeting and work<sup>2</sup> session policies to make us more efficient and to have more fun. The weekly work session is on Wednesday evening, beginning around 7:00 PM. There will also be one work session each month on a Sunday. Starting times on the Sunday work session are flexible and will change to fit project needs and deadlines. Sunday work sessions have already started with a vengeance by cleaning up Larry Southwick's basement and throwing out a lot of old useless stuff. The walls have all been painted and new shelves for modules and boxes have been built and are now in place. There is still more that needs to be done to complete this long overdue cleaning and reorganization.

There is also a change to the meeting schedule. We still meet on the second and fourth Sundays of the month as usual but the first meeting will now be at Larry Southwick's house after the Sunday work session. The second meeting will still be at the Bill Library in Ledyard. The times are still 7:30 but the meeting time at Larry's house may change to accommodate the dinner hour. The aim is still to have clinics once per month, either at Larry's or at Ledyard. The schedule is still a work in progress but the changes are long overdue to make our Club more dynamic and effective.

And what about this month? Well, we only have one meeting on March 13 and it is at Larry Southwick's house at 200 Wyassup Rd in North Stonington. For directions to Larry's house call Stu Dom or any Club Officer. The work session on March 13 will start at 1:00 in the afternoon with the

meeting at 7:30 PM. We are not meeting a second time in March because the date falls on Easter Sunday. Call Larry if you have some free time, and see if it is convenient to come over and work in his basement.



### **Club Projects, Reorganization, etc.**

What we are trying to do is to invigorate the Club to complete more projects and become more efficient in our normal activity of going to shows. Modules that are not connected to the layout in Larry's basement will now be stored on shelves. Everything will be put in standard size boxes that will be labeled. Stuff that goes to shows will be in one area of the basement. The standard boxes are easily carried and will stack in a minivan, the trunk or seat of a car or in one of the trailers. We will haul less air and more train stuff this way.

Immediate plans for projects include more shelves and painting and of course completion of all aspects of the passenger modules. The transition module needs to be modified to improve access to nearby modules and to increase the radius of curvatures of the approaches to the yards. New four-foot modules need to be built so we can replace the one foot wide modules that show up in too great a number when we go to shows.

In order to be able to always have efficient work sessions we need ready access to tools. Members are requested to bring any excess tools they might have and donate them to the Club. They will be kept permanently in Larry's basement so people don't have to bring their own tools. If you don't want to let the children go then maybe a long-term loan to the Club of a major tool like a belt sander would be more to your liking.

### **Extracts: February Meeting Notes**

[Only includes information relevant this month or not incorporated in other newsletter articles.]  
(Ref. John Waller's February 13 & 27 notes.)

On the thirteenth we were bumped from the Bill Library and Dr. Tom Lewis was

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<sup>2</sup> Perhaps we should call them "Fun Sessions".

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kind enough to let us use his office (two blocks away) to hold the meeting. (He has trains running around the ceiling of the waiting room! It was great!)

Some junk (or great stuff) from Larry's basement was taken to the North Stonington dump, where you can help yourself if you feel so inclined.

The aim is to have an operating layout (needed to get the bugs out of the new passenger station if nothing else) plus room to work on other things. We would hope to have the NPS "substantially complete" by Springfield 2006.

Dan wants a list of things to work on. We need more 4 feet "fill in" modules, but no other new Club modules, at least for now. Decisions about retiring older modules are needed. The Jim & Dan and Gianelli modules are thus slated.

It is time to bring the Bylaws up to date.

#### Broadway Limited DC Sound Module

A motion was carried by acclamation to purchase one such at \$45 plus tax.

Relationships with "Other Railroads"

#### Union Station, New London

Enthusiasm for doing something for local schools seems to have cooled. There was a consensus we could well bite off more than we can chew. The Club is for hobbyists; we don't want to start running a business. Nevertheless, we still want the Club to be favorably regarded by the station people. Clark Pritchett plans to be there one Saturday per month to promote his RR stocks, bonds and pocket watches. Other Club presence was discussed, with the consensus being that it is not worthwhile unless there is some special event occurring.

#### Essex

Dan continues to have a dialog with Essex management. They hold 5 - 6 events per year. We might be able to revive our Annual Show in conjunction with a suitable event.

#### National Model Railroad Association

This is now a very big international association, but the Club has never been closely involved with it. Dan intends to change that. The requirements for

conducting an annual convention are very demanding indeed. As a big club in Connecticut, we should be thinking about the upcoming convention in Hartford.



### 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.

#### From Gary Domer

I'm living at 263 Nature Trail in Little River, SC in a development called 'The Preserve' off of SC Route 9N. Little River is the last town before you hit the North Carolina border when traveling north on US Hwy 17. We are about 20 miles north of Myrtle Beach proper but still in the middle of the "touristy stuff" and golf courses. If you're in the area PLEASE GIVE US A CALL @ 843-399-7510. Do be sure to stop in and say "Hi" if you are in the area.

There's a model RR club in Myrtle Beach. They have a **permanent layout** in a climate controlled space above a hobby shop (believe it or not that hobby shop doesn't sell any railroad items, nearest RR shop is in Conway, 20 miles away). I met and spoke to the club prez last fall when they had a small layout set-up in one of the malls. As soon as I get caught up on the move down here and more unpacked I'll be looking into membership. The president of our Home Owners Ass'n. is also a modeler, a member of the Myrtle Beach club and only lives around the corner from me. One of these days I'll get some trains unpacked and start on another layout - the weather down here makes one think about Garden Railroads also.

(Up here we think about modeling the Donner Pass with garden railways. Editor)

### New Members

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Newel Sage and Jim Lenart are two recent Members of the Club that have not yet been acknowledged in the Newsletter. We are still trying to improve our business practices but we have you now. Welcome aboard!!



Letters to the Editor  
Vent your opinions here!

### Field Trips

It's time to think beyond the snow and cold of Winter to the coming Spring and Summer. Here is what Jim Delany has to say about our field trips.

The following club trips have been scheduled.

RPI layout tour on Saturday April 30, 2005. (see Jim Spavins' invitation. Also, age restrictions might apply to visitors to the layout.). Tentatively plan to leave @ 7 AM as it takes 3 hours to drive to the RPI campus in Troy, NY. This will give us time to stop at Selkirk Yard before visiting the RPI layout. I would also suggest going back to Selkirk in the afternoon for a few hours before departing for home. [The Rensselaer Station will not be part of the trip because security is tighter at the station these days and we cannot gain access to the platforms.]

Annual Club Trip -- scheduled for the week of July 18th to July 24th, 05. We do plan to return to Fostoria, Ohio, as this was and is a very busy area, with about 160 trains per day. We can discuss other destinations in the next few months.

Other trips tentatively planned in May and June are a visit to Northlandz in New Jersey and a local tourist railroad there. Visit New Haven station and take MetroNorth to Grand Central Terminal in New York City. Also visit to the Providence Northern club and AA Hobbies, and a trip to the Palmer, MA area where CSX and New England Central cross (formerly Boston and Albany and

Central Vermont). Tucker's Hobbies is only a 15 min. drive from Palmer.

Various Connecticut railroad museums were also mentioned for one-day trips.

### John Waller's Column

Some time ago I wrote about the first transcontinental railroad, drawing on a book by Stephen Ambrose. This year I was given another book<sup>3</sup> on the railroad, and felt motivated to say more about that gigantic and epic undertaking.

Recall the circumstances in which work on the railroad started:

- It was difficult to raise money because shorter-term investments were so profitable.
- The most brutal civil war in history had just broken out.
- The Federal Government, after some delay, passed a bill supporting the railroad, but with such stringent conditions that critics said it hindered more than it helped.
- All materials for the California end of the line had to be delivered by ship, sailing around Cape Horn<sup>4</sup>.

The western terminus was at Sacramento, where, with much ceremony the first sods were turned, and the graders started east. But imagine how daunting the task must have seemed. The first 20 miles or so is along the river flats, the easy part. Anyone glancing east would see the looming Sierra Nevada Range, as the most formidable barrier on the whole line, rising abruptly more than 7000 feet.

Just a few years earlier, in the winter of 1846/47, most of the immigrant Donner party had perished in the region now known as Donner Pass and Donner Lake.

I wrote before about the brilliant young engineer Theodore (Ted) Judah<sup>5</sup> and his

<sup>3</sup> *Empire Express* by David Howard Bain, Viking Penguin 1999, ISBN 0-670-80889-X.

<sup>4</sup> People had the option of crossing the Panama Isthmus, with all its hazards of yellow fever and other nasty things.

<sup>5</sup> Sadly, Ted never saw a rail laid. On one of his many trips to Washington and New York he

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beautiful wife Anna. Ted surveyed the route from Sacramento to the Nevada line, while Anna made sketches of the region, which later adorned Central Pacific timetables and other literature.

Ted went to extraordinary lengths to present the results of his survey. He supervised the drawing of five 20 ft. maps for the 140 miles of the line from Sacramento to the Truckee River (nearly to the Nevada line). The distance as the crow flies is about 70 miles, and there are no switchbacks included.

There were 18 tunnels to gouge through the granite mountains, twelve of them in excess of 1000 ft, the longest being the summit tunnel at 1658 ft. Critics maintained it would take years to build this part of the line, and Federal assistance program requirements would never be met.

Indeed, after work started, progress through the summit tunnel was about one foot per day on each of the four faces, one at each end, and two in the middle. That works out at over 400 days, lending ammunition to the critics.

The above progress was being made with hand drills, picks, and shovels, and black powder, an explosive with which the Chinese workers were very familiar. At this stage, nitroglycerine was available and was reportedly eight times more powerful than black powder.

But dynamite, which is nitroglycerin absorbed in clay, had still to be invented, so the dangers were extreme. Bain quotes two instances in transporting nitroglycerin to California where terrible accidents occurred.

The SS European was loading at Panama City, when a small wooden crate containing nitroglycerin was mishandled. The ship blew into two parts, the waterfront was extensively damaged, and about 50 people were killed.

A few weeks later, on a San Francisco wharf, a crate was seen to be leaking. As agents were investigated, as Bain puts it, they were all "blown to atoms", as was an

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contracted yellow fever at Panama and died in New York.

adjacent diner and freight office. People not at the site thought the Civil War had come to San Francisco. Bodies were so dismembered it was difficult to estimate the number dead.

In the light of these disasters, understandably, the use of nitroglycerin on the railroad was approached with caution. One solution adopted was to mix the nitric acid and glycerin on site. Indeed, progress with tunneling into granite then improved by a factor of two, mainly because smaller holes in the rock sufficed for the same effect, and the smoke cleared more quickly.

The factor of two is far short of the factor of eight claimed earlier, but seems to have been sufficient to save the day.

As an aside, Bain mentions the use of Norwegian snow shoes, which we would now call skis; these were a great improvement on the flat boards used at the time.

One of the ways in which Ted Judah had to satisfy sponsors was what happens in the High Sierras during a severe winter: would the line have to be closed? Ted estimated that, looking at trees, average snow depth during winter was about 13 feet, and not all this would occur at once. Therefore it could be cleared.

Ted's contention was that much of the line would be built on shelves dug into the sides of granite mountains. Thus the snow could just be pushed over the edge<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless, some snow sheds (tunnels) were constructed, with whole tree trunks used as columns to hold the weight of the snow above.

One of the feats claimed by the Central Pacific Railroad was the maximum length of track laid in one day as 10 miles. This is nearly 400 feet of HO scale track, or twice around a 40' by 60' layout. Do you think our Club members would be able to lay that much track in one day?

The above thought aside, I commend Bain's book to anyone interested in reading, in great detail, about this remarkable

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<sup>6</sup> These same shelves made the early passengers very nervous, as the drop could be as much as 2000 feet.

undertaking. Many pictures and maps are included.

*John*

## The President's Corner

But, but he *PROMMMMMISED!*

*Dan*

## Vice President's Niche

Dan (*The Prez.*) and I discussed the merit of archiving Club information, storing it in a steel cabinet in Larry's basement. I have many photographs from past shows and displays which could be included.

Perhaps first and foremost we should regard the Newsletter as the primary document series to be archived. I am not sure of the best way of ensuring durable storage, probably multiple methods should be used.

Document archiving is not necessarily straight forward, as a recent segment on public television attests. The Declaration of

Independence was re-stored about 50 years ago, using state of the art technology, and was deemed to be safe for hundreds of years. But 50 years on, deterioration has been detected, and the whole thing is being done again.

I want to suggest that we think about Newsletter contributions. Often the Newsletter gives notice on what we are about to do, such as date and time to load the trailers for Springfield. It should (and often does) also include what we have done, even if this is stale news by the time the Newsletter hits the streets.

Perhaps we need a Club member to volunteer to be the archivist?

*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, Larry Southwick, has stuff. That includes model railroading supplies such as track, wheels and couplers, and now new Club shirts. Shirt prices for Club Members are:

Tee Shirts \$12

Polo Shirts (Collars) \$16

Sweatshirts \$15

## 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.

Picture(s) of the Month

~~Keep~~ Start 'em coming.

## World Wide Web

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

Glen Siter sends this link to the Central New England Railway:

<http://www.angelfire.com/ct/tdowd/arizona/cnizr/index.html> .

### M&PMRR Officers & Functionaries

**The President Dan DeLany** 860 748-7581

**Vice President John Waller** 564-3114

**Treasurer Don Counsellor** 739-6381

**Secretary Robert Applegate** 464-2118

Webmaster **Jim Spavins** [spavij@rpi.edu](mailto:spavij@rpi.edu)

Storekeeper **Larry Southwick** 535-2996

Field Trips **Jim DeLany** 889-4029

Newsletter Editor **Clark Pritchett** 444-1884

Newsletter Mailing, Meeting Speakers and

Bulk Purchases **Bill Evans** 267-9482

New Passenger Modules, Name Tags and

Show Layouts **Stu Dom** 536-7637

Real Prototype Railroading Information

**Richard Peiffer** [rpeiffer@charter.net](mailto:rpeiffer@charter.net)

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Milwaukee Road's Little Joe at Rest.

## Model Railroad Calendar

### This Month in 2005

**March 6, 2005: Cheshire, CT.** Cheshire High School 10 AM - 3 PM, Cheshire Band Association. Contact: Thomas J. Kotulski, (203) 265-7527 54 Old Lane Rd, Wallingford, CT. 06492

**March 12, 2005: Mystic, CTM&P** Layout Display for the Mystic Middle School. Ed Bradbury is point of contact. Set up from 3:30 on Friday. M&P arrives at 8:00 AM Display open from 10 to 3.

**March 12, 2005: North Stonington, CT** Work session at 1:00 PM and meeting at 7:30 PM at Larry Southwick's house. Only meeting of the month.

**March 20, 2005: Willimantic, CT.** Windham High School Contact Joe Sokol 1170 Hartford TPK #E-51 Vernon, CT 06066-4537 or joseph\_sokol@msn.com

### Next Month and Beyond

**Please send in some stuff!!!**

**Ron Pothier's** 2005 list of train shows is available from him at [repth@snet.net](mailto:repth@snet.net).

### The Lighter Side Math

\_\_Last week I purchased a burger for \$1.58. The counter girl took my \$2 and I was digging for my change when I pulled 8 cents from my pocket and gave it to her. She stood there, holding the nickel and 3 pennies,

while looking at the screen on her register. I sensed her discomfort and tried to tell her to just give me two quarters, but she hailed the manager for help. While he tried to explain the transaction to her, she stood there and cried.

Why do I tell you this? Please read more about the "history of teaching math":

**Teaching Math In 1950:** A logger sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is  $\frac{4}{5}$  of the price. What is his profit?

**Teaching Math In 1960:** A logger sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is  $\frac{4}{5}$  of the price, or \$80. What is his profit?

**Teaching Math In 1970:** A logger sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is \$80. Did he make a profit?

**Teaching Math In 1980:** A logger sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is \$80 and his profit is \$20. Your assignment: Underline the number 20.

**Teaching Math In 1990:** By cutting down beautiful forest trees, the logger makes \$20. What do you think of this way of making a living? Topic for class participation after answering the question: How did the forest birds and squirrels feel as the logger cut down the trees. (There are no wrong answers.)

**Teaching Math In 2005:** El hachero vende un camion carga por \$100. La cuesta de production es.....

and we wonder why jobs requiring intelligence are being outsourced??

## Club Administration

In this new standard section we will **eventually** have the things that we all need to know so the Club functions more smoothly.

### Membership, New and Renewals

Membership applications, how much, how to submit them, etc. (to be developed by the Club Secretary).

### Location for Permanent Layout

What members should do/can say to the owner etc. if they find a location that may be

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<http://www.mpr.org>

used for a permanent layout for the Club. (to be developed by the Club President)

**Club Website**

What members should do if they have something for the Club Website. (to be developed by the Club Webmaster)

**Submitting Newsletter Items**

Send items to be published by E-mailing them to Clark at: [modlrrnews@aol.com](mailto:modlrrnews@aol.com), or snail-mail them to 23 Beacon Hill Dr. Waterford, CT 06385.



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