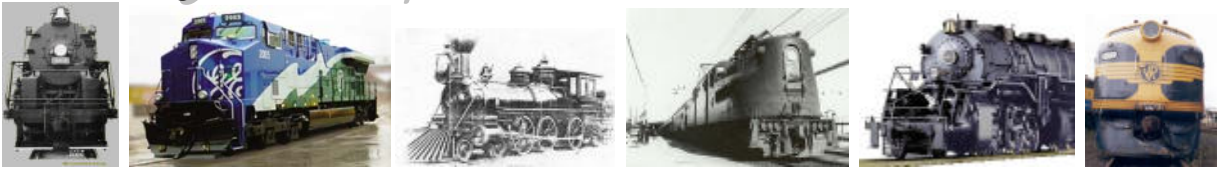


Mohegan Pequot Model Railroad



The News for: August, 2007

Report on Big Summer Field Trip

The annual M&P five-day field trip this year took place from July 11 to July 15. Twelve Members went to Roanoke, VA; Cumberland, MD; and were joined by a 13th at Altoona and Harrisburg, PA. Day one was the longest time in the vehicles, driving straight through to Roanoke. There we did some railfanning at Norfolk Southern yards, shops, crossings and various tracks around town. On Thursday it was the O. Winston Link Museum and the Virginia Museum of Transportation with the massive N&W A and J steam engines. That afternoon it was on to Cumberland, MD, arriving before the sun set. Friday morning was railfanning at the CSX sites in town. Half of the members rode the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad excursion to Frostburg while the rest chased the train up and back. The chasees were referred to as "Those Guys" as in "There are those guys again" by the other passengers on the train as it passed another crossing or other good train watching location.

Friday afternoon it was off to the Altoona area, home of the Pennsylvania Railroad and Horseshoe Curve, Gallitzin Tunnel and Cresson. There it was railfanning at the many sites but not the Curve. Power was out for several hours on Saturday morning and no trains were running. When it came back on the train backlog just came pouring through, almost Fostria-like. On Saturday afternoon it was on to Enola and the Rockville Bridge. On Sunday we took pictures of all of the participants (to be hung on the gallery wall at Larry Southwick's basement), did more railfanning and then drove back to Connecticut, arriving at Bob's house by dark.

For a much more detailed discussion of the trip and photographs from many of the Club

Members who went on the trip, go to the Club website at WWW.MPRR.ORG. You will also find links to most of the places that were visited. If you didn't go on the trip this year, perhaps this will whet your appetite to go next year.

Note: A highlight of the trip was the fine dining at such great places as Wendy's, Subway and Dairy Queen. Every meal was truly memorable.

Field Trip to Palmer, Mass.

On August 7, five M&P Members went to Palmer, Massachusetts to watch trains at the closest railfanning spot to Southeastern Connecticut. The report is that they had a hot and good time.

This was a "spontaneous" field trip that may not have received club-wide publicity beforehand but that is not easy to do quickly. The website is probably the best way we have right now to announce things such as this to the membership. Everybody that went got the word at Larry Southwick's house at the Wednesday night work and discussion session. Another good reason to come to Larry's house on Wednesday night.

Model Railroad Estate Sale

Larry and Susan Southwick have friend who wants to sell her late husband's model railroad things. They will lead a group of M&P Members to her house in Mystic, CT on Wednesday August 15 (scheduled work session) to her house. The caravan departs exactly at 7:00. P.M

Extracts: June Meeting Notes

(from Bob Applegate's notes)

July 22 at the Bill Library (BL)

Meetings, Schedule & Work Sessions

There will only be one meeting this month. Sunday August 26 at the Bill Library at 7:30 PM. Regular work sessions this month will be held at Larry Southwick's house on Wednesday nights, August 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29 beginning around 7:00 PM. The Sunday "all-day" working session at Larry's, has yet to be scheduled.

Operating Session

Jonathan Harger is holding operating sessions at his home layout in East Lyme on the second and fourth Mondays of the month at 7:00 PM. This month there will be only one, on August 12. Check with Jonathan for directions. Call (860) 739-4224 or hejeharger@ct.metrocast.net

Club Picnic in September

The Club picnic will be held on Saturday September 8 at Larry Southwick's house in North Stonington at 200 Wyassup Rd. The rain date is Sunday September 9. This is an "all scales" event. The Club provides the hotdogs, hamburgers, rolls, drinks and condiments. You bring a side dish like salad or dessert. Lobsters are always appreciated. Kids and grandkids are always welcome.

Movers and Shakers

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.

Robert C. Chalmers



Waterford - Robert C. Chalmers Sr., 64, of 20 Scotch Cap Road, Quaker Hill, passed away Saturday, June 30, 2007, at his home surrounded by his family and friends.

He was born on June 11, 1943, in Houlton, Maine, the son of Chester C. and Abbie (Kirkpatrick) Chalmers.

Bob was married to Mona Elaine Adkins on Aug. 13, 1966, in New London.

Mr. Chalmers served in the National Guard from 1963 to 1966. He was a self-employed master cabinetmaker, who for over 34 years owned and operated R & R Custom Woodworking in Quaker Hill.

Bob had many hobbies, which included the outdoor activities of tending to his yard, gardens, mountain biking, hiking, canoeing, and fly fishing. He also was an avid model railroader, who had quite an extensive collection of model trains. Bob also enjoyed computer flight simulations from his home.

Besides his wife, Mona, he is survived by a daughter, Elaine A. Perry; a son, Robert C. Chalmers Jr. and his wife, Bena; a brother, Gerald Chalmers and his wife, Susan Kaye, all of Waterford; a sister, Paula Lilly and her husband, Richard, of Pawcatuck; as well as three grandchildren, Haley, Alex, and Jackson.

A Celebration of Life will be held 11 a.m. Tuesday, July 3, at his home in Quaker Hill.

Byles Memorial Home, 99 Huntington St., New London, is assisting the family with arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be directed to the Hospice of SE CT, PO Box 902, Uncasville CT 06382.

Published in The Day on 7/1/2007.

The President's Corner

The Club Trip, The Club Trip, The Club Trip!!!
Dan

The VP's Niche

The Vice President is visiting his children and grandchildren in Australia and will return to model railroading later in August.

John Waller's Column

This topic has been explored before in this column, but it seems appropriate to revisit it.

The passenger station is a very complex beast, and still remains our most important example of a modular layout in HO scale. The new HO transition and staging module set follows closely.

I want to explore again the differences between having a fixed layout in a basement and the sort of modules our Club builds.

For want of a better definition, modules might form a **module set** where a set of modules are associated with each other as a group. The passenger station is such a set, where not all of the individual modules need be present to form a workable set.

Whereas, in other instances, a group of modules can only be assembled one way, the only way in which they can function. My own module is an example of this, and I tend to regard the four modules concerned as sub-modules, and their one and only configuration as **the module**.

Weight and Stability

The fixed layout in the basement need pay little attention to weight being attached to, usually, a reinforced concrete structure. The basement structure is unlikely to move and it is not hard to build a "stiff" layout, especially if humidity is controlled..

The modular layout, in contrast, is always a compromise between weight and stiffness. Of course, we all joke about the passenger station. Yes, it is heavy, but not to the extent that we cannot handle it.

The next generation of HO light-weight design has found its way into both Club and private modules. So far it has been successful, although Stu did report finding a small sheet of plywood which had distorted alarmingly.

Electrical

Obviously positioning modules in any order requires a consistency in how the interface connections, physical and electrical, are arranged. Mostly this works out, especially as the older 2-pin Jones connectors are being phased out. But, with large HO layouts, it is always a relief when the main harness (traction bus) is free of shorts and continuous in a closed loop around the layout.

A much greater difference between the fixed layout and the modular layout is the interconnections between modules in a module set. Connectors must be used with our modules, whereas fixed wiring may suffice in the fixed layout.

Again the passenger station is an example with 2000-odd connections. There was a time when we were in desperate straits. Connector shells and

pins of a type already in use in other modules, played up big time. Either contact was not made, a pin pulled out on disconnection, or pushed in on connection.

All the pins were soldered. I used carpenter's glue to hold pins in place, something I thought I would never have to do. The advantage of carpenter's glue is it does not bond completely, and pins can be extracted from the shell with a bit of persuasion.

The glue process enabled us to get by tolerably well. We always had sufficient wire available in case a temporary connection had to be made. Lubricating the pins prior to mating connectors also seems to help.

Now we have a proper crimping tool and no more problems have come up. Nevertheless, the reason(s) for so many problems has never fully come to light. This sort of thing is unlikely to occur on a fixed layout.

Apart from the problems just mentioned, the pins concerned are quite expensive, around 50¢ each, which certainly adds up. There are cheaper connectors available, but they are not good in situations where frequent connection and disconnection is required.

Track Joiners

Of course, the tracks, mostly the main inner and outer, need to be joined between modules and sub-modules. We try to standardise in HO on a commercial track of the right length. But it never seems to quite work out.

The flexible modular layout mostly means any module could be next to yours. Thus the electrical characteristics required of the track joiner vary. Insulated joints are often required, a pain at the best of times.

I avoid insulated joints in connecting up my module by providing breaks on both inner and outer near each end. I provide switches whereby the four end sections can float, connect to my local control, or connect to the main harness bus. There are four separate switches required to do this.

Last, but not least, is the matter of making the joiners look like they are not there. That is, they should look like part of the track to which they connect.

Fixed layouts don't need joiner tracks as we know them.

Alignment

Of course, setting up in a new location always requires alignment in three dimensions, a necessary pre-requisite to getting trains running. Of course, with a fixed layout, this is done once only or, perhaps, only a few times over the layout's lifetime.

John

Letters to the Editor

Enquiring minds want to know!

The Market Place

Club Member Ads

Advertise (free) here to reach more than fifty 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

Inventory of the Club Store is proceeding. The locker at Larry' Southwicks house has been done as well as the Club apparel and cars. Still remaining are track, electrical parts and various miscellaneous items that we have accumulated over the years. Once we know where we stand we will be in a position to make an intelligent decision about what to do with the various inventory items. Some items are needed to maintain and support Club Modules. We still may want to maintain a small inventory of certain items, or not, depending on the desire of the Membership.

The last purchase of shirts was paid for in advance but some of them remain unclaimed by the Members who bought them. It has been discussed that maybe we want to issue a shirt and/or hat to each new member. Anyway, we hope to be able to move forward with a new approach to the Club Store this fall.

Commercial Corner

Nothing here

The Technical Section

Real Railroads

Some interesting stuff from a John Armstrong book on railroads is coming in the next few months.

World Wide Web

The World Wide Web

(from Jim Spavins)

Here are some quick notes on the club's website. First, the story on the most recent club trip can be found online. Just visit the homepage at www.mpr.org. The second item is that, even though I will be returning to school in Wisconsin, I am still going to remain as webmaster for the club's website. If you would like to add anything to the site, just send it to me in an email to jimspav@alum.rpi.edu.

As some of you may have heard, I have launched a new website. The address is www.signatureseriesrailroad.com. This site is a look at the numerous model railroad projects that I have built over the years from modules to permanent home layouts. Also, I have included track plans, railfan photos, and how-to articles. While this may appear very familiar to another website near and dear to members of the club, there is one feature that I have been testing that may be useful to help the club raise some revenue.

My new site has a store. Since most people know I am headed back to school, I do not have time to keep track of inventory and ship merchandise. However, I have found two very useful sites that produce inventory on demand, take care of collecting money, and shipping the product. Assuming I sell any items, the only task left to me is the simple act of going to deposit a check, an activity I'll never be too busy for.

So the question is what kind of products these sites sell. I'll go through the two sites and explain the differences and how they might help the club raise money.

The first site is www.cafepress.com. I have set up a store for my Centennial Modules factory here: <http://www.cafepress.com/centennialmod>.

This site mostly features items such as mugs, apparel, prints, books, and other household items.

These can be customized with logos or pictures. The site doesn't cost any money to start and for every item that is sold, the site pays a royalty to the owner of the store. The club can use this site to sell merchandise with our logo on it. I attempted to purchase a book from the site and was fairly disappointed in the quality but their merchandise seems to be alright.

The second site is www.lulu.com. I have set up a store for my new website at: <http://stores.lulu.com/signaturerailroad>. This site specializes in making books, CDs, DVDs, and artwork. For my new website, I wanted to try and sell some books and slideshows on CD. (Shameless self promotion: Make sure you pick one up when you visit the store). The quality of these items through this site is excellent since they also sell to Barnes and Noble, Amazon.com, etc. However, there is no other merchandise to sell. Just like Cafepress.com, it is free to setup an online store and Lulu pays a royalty for every item that is purchased.

In the end, I think these options can help the club produce passive revenue. It would take one or two people to make the products and just keep a general eye on the site. It will be up to the club to determine if they would like to add this as a potential revenue stream.

Jim Spavins Leaving for School

Jim Spavins Jr., our webmaster and resident train junkie is leaving the area on August 14 to go to the University of Wisconsin in Madison for a master's degree in real estate. Jim will still be the webmaster from afar but will not be able to participate in the Club's day-to-day activities for some time. We all are going to miss Jim's tremendous contributions to the Club and wish him well at school. Go Badgers!

The Life Section

Post your correspondence with Pete Barrington here. Please forward any emails or other contact with Pete while he is in Iraq. He would certainly like to hear from Members of M&P. Pete's email is lordtracker@yahoo.com.

Railroad Calendar

There is going to be a change in the Calendar in the near future. The official M&P Calendar will be kept on the website (www.mpr.org) It will be expanded to include all of the known future M&P activities like train shows that will have M&P layouts, the Club Picnic and field trips. It will look forward as far as possible so we can plan our future activities better. The latest edition will be copied each month into the newsletter.

A second Calendar will include all other activities that Club Members might be interested in like train shows in the region, prototype railroads or museum activities. Here we will depend heavily upon Ron Pothier's train show list and members sending in information like rail-fan days and so forth.

This Slow Month in 2007

August 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29, North Stonington CT.

Work sessions Wednesday nights at Larry Southwick's house starting at 7:00 PM.

August 15, North Stonington CT. Larry and Susan Southwick will lead Members to Mystic to an estate sale of model railroad items. Leaves precisely at 7:00 PM.

August 26, Ledyard, CT M&P Club Meeting at the Bill Library at 7:30 PM. Discussion of Financial Committee report.

Next Month and Beyond

Getting slower and slower out there.

Ron Pothier's 2007/2008 list of train shows is being assembled now. Contact Ron at repth@snet.net for the latest information.

The Lighter/Heavier Side

Subject this month is Jobs

Clarification of vacant job listing

COMPETITIVE SALARY: We remain competitive by paying less than our competitors.

JOIN OUR FAST-PACED COMPANY: We have no time to train you and you'll have to introduce yourself to your co-workers.

SEEKING ENTHUSIASTIC, FUN, HARD WORKING, PEOPLE:..who still

live with their parents and won't mind our internship-level salaries.

CASUAL WORK ATMOSPHERE: We don't pay enough to expect that you'll dress up; well, a couple of the real daring guys wear ear rings.

JOIN OUR DYNAMIC TEAM: We all listen to nutty motivational tapes.

MUST BE DEADLINE ORIENTED: You'll be six months behind schedule on your first day.

SOME OVERTIME REQUIRED: Some time each night and some time each weekend.

DUTIES WILL VARY: Anyone in the office can boss you around.

MUST HAVE AN EYE FOR DETAIL: We have no quality control.

COLLEGE DEGREE PREFERRED: Unless you wasted those four years studying something useless like philosophy or English.

NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE: We've filled the job; our call for resumes is just a legal formality.

SEEKING CANDIDATES WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF EXPERIENCE: You'll need it to replace three people who just left.

PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS A MUST You're walking into a company in perpetual chaos.

REQUIRES TEAM LEADERSHIP SKILLS: You'll have the responsibilities of a manager, without the pay or respect.

GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS: Management communicates, you listen, figure out what they want, and then do it.

FBI Job Opening

For the final test, the FBI agents took one of the prospective male agents to a large metal door and handed him a gun.

"We must know that you will follow your instructions no matter what the circumstances. Inside the room you will find your wife sitting in a chair. Kill Her!!!"

The man said, "You can't be serious, I could never shoot my wife" The agent said, "Then you're not the right man for this job. Take your wife and go home."

A second man was given the same instructions. He took the gun and went into the room. All was quiet for about 5 minutes. The man came out with tears in his eyes, "I tried, but I can't kill my wife."

The agent said, "You don't have what it takes. Take your wife and go home."

Finally, it was the only woman's turn. She was given the same instructions, to kill her husband. She took the gun and went into the room. Shots were heard, one after another. They heard screaming, crashing, banging on the walls. After a few minutes, all was quiet. The door opened slowly and there stood the woman, She wiped the sweat from her brow.

"This gun is loaded with blanks" she said. "I had to beat him to death with the chair."

Club Administration

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
Storekeeper	Larry Southwick	535-2996
Field Trips	Jim DeLany	889-4029
Newsletter	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
Webmaster	Jim Spavins	

jimspav@alum.rpi.edu

Prototype Questions

Dave at <http://www.davesrailpage.com/>

<http://www.mpr.org>



Summer, The Dog Days of Model Railroading