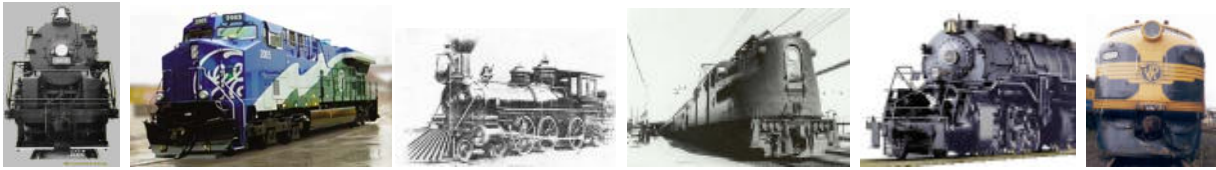


# Mohegan Pequot Model Railroad



## The News for: February, 2008

### Springfield 2008 Washup

By John Waller

It was a magnificent effort on everyone's part. A spectator said to me: "If your HO layout gets any bigger, it will require the entire building!" My response was: "that's what I'm afraid of!"

I want to write about the HO layout. I know not everyone will want to read all this stuff, but it is for the record.

By Friday evening I was exhausted, having spent a large part of the day crawling under modules chasing bugs in the main harness (main traction bus). The harness comprises four wires, red, gray, green, and yellow, for the outside and inside main tracks, respectively.

#### *The connector*

Connectors are required to carry the bus from module to module. The original connectors were two-pin Cinch-Jones power plugs and sockets. This required colour coding to differentiate between inside and outside tracks and, sometimes this caused confusion.

Over time the failure rate amongst the connectors increased, and the similar four-pin version was introduced, logically enough, with new components and no possibility of incorrect insertion.

And there is the rub. The connectors we purchased were certainly not used (not new), but might not have been of recent manufacture.

It is a very old connector type. I first encountered them as a boy on WW II equipment. **As far as I can tell**, they are not made anymore. They are listed as "obsolete" in the catalogues. What we buy now could have been sitting in a warehouse for 30 years. The male pins have a corroded look, and the female pins of course can't be inspected easily. (They never can. Editor)

"Brand new" connectors gave us problems, big time, on Friday. Everyone tests during construction, but problems appear when mating with a different connector on the layout. Much cleaning will be required.

Why not switch again to a different connector type?

- Firstly, it is expensive because of the large numbers involved.
- Secondly, the problems only seem to show up *en masse*, and not during testing in our basements.
- Thirdly, we don't know whether a better type even exists. Remember, we have a low-voltage high-current requirement, which needs heavy wires, and frequent connection and disconnection.

#### *Monitoring the bus*

It has been amply demonstrated that simple monitors connected to the bus are very useful during operations. I now want to upgrade "very useful" to "mandatory", as the fitting of these monitors is moving too slowly. A monitor is simple and cheap, comprised of two bi-colour LEDs and two resistors.

Therefore, I propose the following: **Main traction harness bus monitors should be fitted at all points where the bus is tapped for traction voltage take off. This should be done whether or not a particular module has local control or not.**

Mostly the monitor will be on a control panel, but does not have to be, as long as it is in plain sight.

If any member is reluctant to fit monitors, I will be happy to do it for them.

In addition to their usefulness during operations, they will be invaluable during setting up. We can

Unloading "Big Blue" at Larry's on Wednesday, February 6

hook everything up, and just walk around the layout looking at monitors. If everything looks OK, then we disconnect at a point in the layout. If any monitors are then not lit, we do not have a complete loop on the bus. Remember, a closed loop has one quarter of the worst-case resistance compared to open loop.

#### *Passing messages*

The universal fitting of bus monitors will be a big step in the right direction. The next step I want to see is not as straight forward.

The use of radio "comms" is good, but not the complete answer. Some form of transmitting orders and status electronically, other than by radio, is required. One way is to transmit the data via the AC power bus.

There are various systems available for the remote control of lights, say, in a home. Radio Shack did carry this equipment, but dropped the line some years back. We still have some in our home.

A fixed voltage, in this case 115 V 60 Hz, is present on the AC power which is fitted in your home. The Radio Shack devices connect to this power with transmitters and receivers. The transmitter impresses a digital code onto the AC power which the receiver can decode, given it is set to the right address.

It is exactly analogous to DCC, and uses what is known as the X10 protocol.

The messages to be passed will be concerned with main traction: "stop the inside", "bring the outside to slow", and so on, initiated at the press of a button. There will be transmitter stations around the layout, and a receiving station where the main traction control is situated. Messages will be displayed as coloured lights, maybe with an audible alarm for "stop" messages.

The radios would still be used, of course, to amplify messages passed over the bus.

Naturally, what I have just written, would need to be examined much more closely, costs obtained, and so on. Conflicts would need to be resolved such as, if one station sends "go" and another "stop", priority would need to be given to the latter. There could be an "emergency stop" message which would automatically shut down the track concerned.

If onlookers look down their noses because the main tracks just use DC, we could say: "It's DC plus X10!"

### **Extracts: January Meeting Notes**

John Waller's January January 13  
at Bill Library, 7:30 PM.

There were 16 members present.

Dan handed out a HO layout, building layout, and schedule for Springfield. There was much discussion about Springfield.

We might consider setting up the HO layout at the February break at the Friendship School in Waterford February 18-22.

### **The Dos and Don'ts of Club Dues**

Dues are now overdue. Pay \$40 (\$50 for families) to the secretary, Bob Applegate [c/o M-P Model RR Club 23 Hyde Park Drive Gales Ferry, CT 06335-1941]. Don't pay the treasurer, Don Counsellor. Only the Secretary, Robert Applegate, is authorized to collect the money and record your membership for 2008.

### **Meetings, Schedule & Work Sessions**

The main business meeting this month will be held on Sunday February 24 at 7:30PM at the Bill Library in Ledyard, Unloading the trailer from Springfield will be on Wednesday, February 6 at Larry Southwick's house in North Stonington. Work sessions will be at Larry's house on Wednesday evenings, February 13, 20 and 27.



### **John Waller's Column**

Stu has introduced a new term into our HO model railroading: "power routing". In the most general terms this can be described as minimizing the effects of undesired track open and short circuits and their effect upon train operations at turnouts and cross-overs.

The most common open circuit fault is in the electrical contact between a turnout blade and the fixed rail. Many turnout blade throws are fitted with a wiper which makes contact with the underside of the fixed rail. This is difficult to clean.

The blade itself should also make contact with the fixed rail, but sometimes doesn't. Painting the rails often makes electrical contact worse.

**Unloading "Big Blue" at Larry's on Wednesday, February 6**

Stu is experimenting with using the normally-open and normally-closed contacts on the tortoise machine to route power on the turnout track rails to obviate the above open circuit conditions.

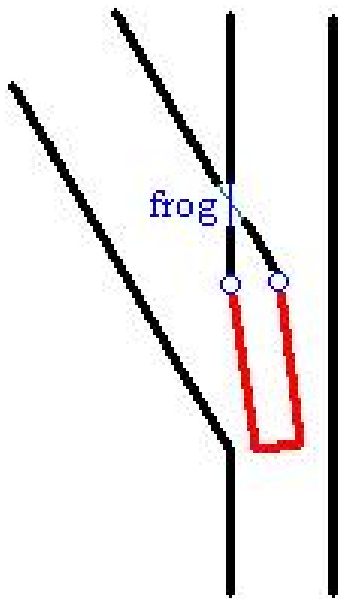
#### Anatomy of a turnout

The picture shows a turnout very diagrammatically:

- The black lines represent the fixed running rails or track.
- The red lines are the blades joined by the throw bar (itself an insulator). As shown, the throw bar is half way across.
- The frog insulates the fixed rail pieces from each other.
- The blades pivot around the fixed rail at the circles shown.

There are several places where electrical contact can be poor:

- The fixed rail pieces on either side of the frog are connected across the gap by copper strips (insulated from each other), as shown by the thin blue and green lines. The strips are under the rails and not usually soldered to them.
- The pivots between the fixed rail pieces and the blades.
- As already mentioned, where the blades contact the fixed rails.



By now you are probably wondering whether a turnout can ever work electrically! I have joined forces with Stu to investigate and test methods of

improving performance. Part of the trick is to remove open circuits without introducing short circuits.

The issue with cross-overs is that there is very little clearance at the frog between the converging metal tracks, and metal wheels easily bridge the gap; a potential short circuit. This too is being addressed.

### The President's Corner

*Dan*

#### The Vice President's Niche

All that fuss about lead-free solder for electrical work has now back fired. It turns out that the tin used in the solder encourages dendritic growth. Dendritic means "tree like" from the Greek. The growth is in the form of tiny whiskers, 0.008 mm in diameter, which are very robust and conduct electricity. NASA has experienced big problems with these whiskers.

The older transistors, which first appeared in the 1950s, have been thought all along to be almost unlimited in life. Now it is turning out the germanium has been growing whiskers all these years and the transistors are now failing. And it is no good replacing them with the same types, because the spares have been growing whiskers too!

*John*

#### Operating Sessions

Jonathan Harger is still holding operating sessions at his home layout in East Lyme on the second and fourth Mondays of the month at 7:00 PM. Check with Jonathan for directions and to see if there are any changes. Call (860) 739-4224 or [hejeharger@ct.metrocast.net](mailto:hejeharger@ct.metrocast.net)

## Letters to the Editor

#### Thrown Out

We had a new experience at Springfield this year when we broke down the HO modules to go home. The trailers were not completely loaded until 9:00 PM. The Big E public address system was threatening expulsion, one way or another.

There are a number of reasons that it took so long, not all of them our doing. We don't need to solve this problem now but in the near future we

Unloading "Big Blue" at Larry's on Wednesday, February 6

need to rethink our logistics for loading to go home. Staging the trailers and covers could help a lot. If we don't solve this problem we may be spending the night at the Big E next year.

Clark Pritchett

## 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.)

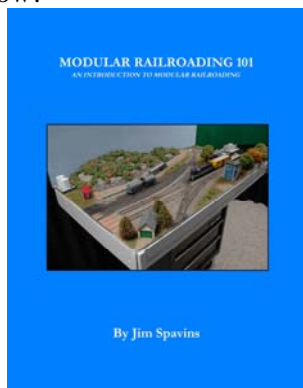
### Wanted Items

Looking for junk plastic steam engine bodies for kitbashing, the Athearn clips to hold in the couplers if anyone had replaced them with something else and firewood or potential firewood (prototype). Contact Jonathan Harger at 860-739-4224 or [hejeharger@ct.metrocast.net](mailto:hejeharger@ct.metrocast.net)

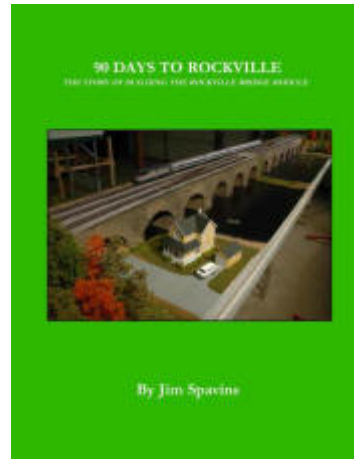
## Signature Series Railroad

*Ring in the New Year with the newest book for the Modular Model Railroader!*

Modular Railroading 101 - Have you ever wondered what it takes to put together a modular railroad display? This book will guide you through the basics of modules from design to construction to transportation to set up. Learn about what goes into a well functioning display and how you can build a module for yourself. Plenty of photos and diagrams to inspire your journey into the world of modular railroading! Available now!



*Also Available:* Module Design Templates, 90 Days to Rockville Slideshow, 90 Days to Rockville Book, The Prairie Peddler



*Titles Coming Soon:* Module Design Ideas I  
Purchase your own copy at the website:  
<http://www.signatureseriesrailroad.com>!

### The Club Store

Inventory is complete. Please buy from the Club store if you need "stuff". A list of "stuff" will be published in the Newsletter year 2008 (2009?)

### Commercial Corner

Nothing here

## The Life Section

From Stu Dom

While at the Springfield Show, I was advised that one of our club members had passed away this month. While many of you did not know Bob, as he was not seen very often at club functions, he had been a member of the club for quite some time, and often appeared at our train shows/displays. I am not aware if his membership had been current, but I thought that some of you who had known Bob would appreciate the information that I found in his obituary.

**Waterford** — Capt. Robert B. Gustafson USN, Retired, 87, passed away Saturday, Jan. 12, 2008, at Fountainview Health Care Center.

He was born in Hartford, on May 28, 1920, the son of Edward and Elsie B. Gustafson. He graduated from Hall High School, West Hartford, in 1938, and after attending Cochran Bryant Academy, he entered the U.S. Naval Academy in the class of 1944. Because of World War II, the class had to accelerate, and he graduated in 1943. He volunteered for the U.S. Submarine

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Service and was sent immediately to submarine school. Upon completing sub school, he reported to the Pacific Fleet and made six war patrols on the USS Nautilus (SS-168). After the war he served on the USS Sirago, USS Sennet, and USS Corporal. He was the commanding officer of the USS Grouper (SS-214) for two years followed by a tour of duty at the Naval Underwater Ordnance Station in Newport, R.I. He next served as the staff ordnance officer on the Submarine Pacific Command and then as commander, Submarine Division 12. He graduated from the National War College in Washington, D.C. followed by a tour in the Submarine Warfare Div. of OPNAV. He then became commanding officer of the USS Fulton (AS-11) and then commanding officer of the Submarine Safety Center. He retired from the Navy in 1968.

Capt. Gustafson earned a master of science degree in management and industrial engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y., in 1955.

He received many medals and citations during his naval career, and, in 2005, he received a Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation Badge and ribbon issued by the chief of staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines in appreciation for the dangerous mission of aiding the guerrilla forces during World War II.

Following his retirement from the Navy, he became corporate security director for United Nuclear Corp. He retired from UNC in 1984.

He and his beloved wife of 62 years, Barbara "Bobby", built a home on Hamburg Cove, Lyme, and he became active in community affairs. He was on the Lyme Zoning Board of Appeals for many years. He was one of the authors of the book "Hamburg Cove" published by the Florence Griswold Museum. He also had articles published in "Cruising World." He enjoyed his hobbies, sailing his sailboat, building his model railroad layout, and carving beautiful half-hull model sailboats.

Capt. Gustafson was a life member of the Submarine Veterans of World War II, the Military Officer's Association of America, the Hamburg Cove Yacht Club, the Old Lyme Country Club, Old Black Point Beach Assn., [Mohegan-Pequot Railroad Club](#), Lyme Congregational Church, and a former member of the New York Yacht Club.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by two sons, Andy and his fiancé, Dorie, of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and David and his wife, Christine, of Simsbury; and five grandchildren, Eric, Emily, Matthew, Megan, and Andrew.

A memorial service will be held in May at his beloved home on Hamburg Cove.

Fulton-Theroux Funeral Home, Old Lyme, is handling the arrangements.

Contributions in his memory may be made to the Lyme Congregation Church, 1 Sterling City Road, Lyme CT 06371 or to the Salvation Army, 11 Governor Winthrop Blvd., New London CT 06220

## The Technical Section

Good stuff from John Armstrong next time.

## World-Wide-Web

(from Bob Applegate)

Old British Railroad Stations

<http://www.subbrit.org.uk/sb-sites/stations/>

## The Life Section

### **Cell Phone Telemarketing Calls**

All cell phone numbers are being released to telemarketing companies and you will start to receive sales calls.

.....YOU WILL BE CHARGED FOR THESE CALLS

To prevent this, call the following number from your cell phone: 888-382-1222

It is the National DO NOT CALL list. It will only take a minute of your time. It blocks your number for five (5) years. You must call from the cell phone number you want to block. You cannot call from a different phone number. Or go to: [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov).



**NATIONAL  
DO NOT CALL  
REGISTRY**

The National Do Not Call Registry gives you a choice about whether to receive telemarketing calls at home. [Most telemarketers](#) should not call your number once it has been on the registry for

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31 days. If they do, you can file a complaint at this Website. You can register your home or mobile phone for free.

## Railroad Calendar This Month in 2008

**February 6, North Stonington, CT** Unloading the "Big Blue" trailer at Larry Southwick's house.

**February 13, 20 & 27, North Stonington, CT** Work sessions at Larry Southwick's house at 200 Wyassup Rd., beginning around 7:00 PM.

**February 24 Ledyard, CT** M&P Club Meeting at the Bill Library at 7:30 PM.

## Next Month in 2008

### Train Shows from Ron's List

**February 10, Wallingford, CT** 9AM – 3PM, – Zandri's Stillwood Inn Classic Shows  
Contact: Lud Spinelli (203) 926-1327 or [www.ClassicShowsLLC.com](http://www.ClassicShowsLLC.com)

**February 24, Auburn, MA** 10 AM – 4 PM, – Auburn Elks Club, Worcester Model Railroad Club [www.wmrr.org](http://www.wmrr.org)

**March 2, Cheshire, CT** 10 AM – 3 PM. – Cheshire High School Cheshire Band Association  
Contact: Thomas J. Kotulaki, 54 Old Lane Rd, Wallingford, Ct. 06492 (203) 265-7527

**March 9, Fairfield, CT.** 10 AM-4 PM, Station Stop Train Show – Ludlowe Middle School Housatonic R/R Club, Station Stop Show  
Contact: (203) 255-3795 Friday 7-10 PM or [www.housatonicmr.org](http://www.housatonicmr.org)

**Little Rhody Show on March 16 Canceled**

**March 23, 2008 Hingham, MA** 10 AM-4 PM, – South Shore Country Club Train Show & Open House – Bare Cove Park, Building 51 South Shore Model Railroad Club

**March 29/30, Wilmington, MA** 10 AM – 4 PM, Greenberg Great Train Expo Shriners Auditorium, Greenburg Shows

**March, 30, Ansonia, CT.,** 10 AM-3 PM, – Warsaw Park Rt. 234 Pulaski Hwy Howard Hobbies Berry Howard (203) 732-7346

(Ron Pothier at [repth@snet.net](mailto:repth@snet.net) for latest information.)

### The Lighter/Heavier Side

#### Speeding Ticket

Two British traffic patrol officers from North Berwick were involved in an unusual incident,

while checking for speeding motorists on the A-1 Great North Road .

One of the officers (who are not named) used a hand-held radar device to check the speed of a vehicle approaching over the crest of a hill, and was surprised when the speed was recorded at over 300mph. The machine then stopped working and the officers were not able to reset it.

The radar had in fact latched on to a NATO Tornado fighter jet over the North Sea, which was engaged in a low-flying exercise over the Border district.

Back at police headquarters the chief constable fired off a stiff complaint to the RAF Liaison office.

Back came the reply in true laconic RAF style...

"Thank you for your message, which allows us to complete the file on this incident. You may be interested to know that the tactical computer in the Tornado had automatically locked on to your 'hostile radar equipment' and sent a jamming signal back to it. Furthermore, the Sidewinder Air-to-ground missiles aboard the fully-armed aircraft had also locked on to the target. Fortunately the Dutch pilot flying the Tornado responded to the missile status alert intelligently and was able to override the automatic protection system before the missile was launched".

### New Chemical Element

(From Stu Dom)

The recent hurricanes and gasoline issues are proof of the existence of a new chemical element. A major research institution has recently announced the discovery of the heaviest element yet known to science. The new element has been named Governmentium (Gv)- it has one neutron, 25 assistant neutrons, 88 deputy neutrons, and 198 assistant deputy neutrons, giving it an atomic mass of 312.

These 312 particles are held together by forces called morons, which are surrounded by vast quantities of lepton-like particles called peons. Since Governmentium has no electrons, it is inert; however, it can be detected, because it impedes every action with which it comes into contact. A minute amount of Governmentium can cause an action that would normally take less than a second to take over four days to complete.

Governmentium has a normal half-life of 4 years. It does not decay, but instead undergoes a

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reorganization in which a portion of the assistant neutrons and deputy neutrons exchange places. In fact, Governmentium's mass will actually increase over time, since each re-organization will cause more morons to become neutrons, forming isodopes.

This characteristic of moron promotion leads some scientists to believe that Governmentium is formed whenever morons reach a critical concentration. This hypothetical quantity is referred to as critical morass. When catalyzed with money, Governmentium becomes Administratium - an element that radiates just as much energy as Governmentium since it has half as many peons but twice as many morons.

### Club Scale Contacts

G - Bob MacGregor, O - Jim Weitlauf, On3 - Sandy Alonzo, S - Dave Alley, HO - Dan Delany, TT - Future, Z - TBD, N - Sandy Alonzo, Live Steam - Jim Weitlauf. These "Go-To" guys will mentor new members who want to learn more about particular model railroad scales.

### **Rearrange the Letters**

DORMITORY:	DIRTY ROOM
PRESBYTERIAN:	BEST IN PRAYER
ASTRONOMER:	MOON STARER
DESPERATION:	A ROPE ENDS IT
THE EYES:	THEY SEE
GEORGE BUSH:	HE BUGS GORE
THE MORSE CODE:	HERE COME DOTS
SLOT MACHINES:	CASH LOST IN ME
ANIMOSITY:	IS NO AMITY
ELECTION RESULTS:	LIES - LET'S RECOUNT
SNOOZE ALARMS:	ALAS! NO MORE Z 'S
A DECIMAL POINT:	I'M A DOT IN PLACE
THE EARTHQUAKES:	THAT QUEER SHAKE
ELEVEN PLUS TWO:	TWELVE PLUS ONE
MOTHER-IN-LAW:	WOMAN HITLER

<http://www.subbrit.org.uk/sb-sites/stations/>

### **Club Administration**

#### M&PMRR Officers & Functionaries

<b>The President</b>	<b>Dan DeLany</b>	860 748-7581
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>John Waller</b>	564-3114
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Don Counsellor</b>	739-6381
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Robert Applegate</b>	464-2118
Storekeeper	<b>Larry Southwick</b>	535-2996
Field Trips	<b>Jim DeLany</b>	889-4029
Newsletter	<b>Clark Pritchett</b>	444-1884
Newsletter Mailing and Meeting Speakers	<b>Bill Evans</b>	267-9482
New Passenger Modules, Name Tags and Show Layouts	<b>Stu Dom</b>	536-7637
Webmaster	<b>Jim Spavins</b>	

[jimspav@alum.rpi.edu](mailto:jimspav@alum.rpi.edu)

Prototype Questions

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

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