

March 2010

The Monthly Newsletter of the North Atlanta O-Gauge Railroad Club



Eric's Lionel Vision Line GE Evolution Series 2009 Vol. 1 and vol. 2 catalogs

Upcoming Spring Layout Tour

We are all set for the Spring Tour of Member's Layouts. The date is May 15th. We will start at Dean's house from 10AM till 11:30AM followed by Bill from 11:45AM till 1:15PM and then Rick B. from 1:30PM till 3PM.

The layout tour is a great way to see member's layouts that are in all stages of completion. There will be plenty of time to ask questions and gather tips and advice. Feel free to bring the family and friends to see what this hobby is all



about. The three layouts on this tour are all different and offer different ways of highlighting trains and scenery.

More information and maps or directions will be emailed out to the membership.

Our online forum is a great way for Club members to communicate with each other and share advice and ideas for train collecting and layout building. Go to <http://www.ogauge.org> and click on Forum.

New ideas for Club activities from Club Members are always welcome.

Please email the Secretary at newsletter@ogauge.org

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The North Atlanta O-Gauge Railroad Club (NAOGRRC) seeks to share the joy of our experiences with 3-rail O-Gauge toy trains. Club activities include: running O-Gauge trains; building train layouts; workshops; field trips; tips, advice and having fun.

The website for the Club is <http://www.ogauge.org/>

**North Atlanta
O-Gauge
Railroad Club**



Hobby Town Layout Update

The Mold Makers

By Max W.

There are a lot of important jobs being done on the layout. One of those is the "Mold-Makers." Their job is to produce many different molds and have them ready to put on the layout when it is time. Carl K. is the main "Mold-Maker" and he has made most of the molds being used on the layout.

Basically, what he does is produce realistic rocks using a two-part foam construction. He has to prepare the molds by spraying them with white lacquer outside to keep fumes out of the store. Then, he mixes a two-part Cast Satin (A and B). The Satin is the first thing that goes on the mold (besides the lacquer). Before it gets too dry, he spreads it around using either a little piece of rope or a small piece of cardboard.

Once the Cast Satin is dry, it is time to mix the foam (Part A and Part B) together. You do the same thing here as you would when doing the

Satin. You use rope or cardboard to spread it over the mold, wiping off any excess there may be. The amount of time it takes to set depends on the size of the mold and the temperature inside HobbyTown.

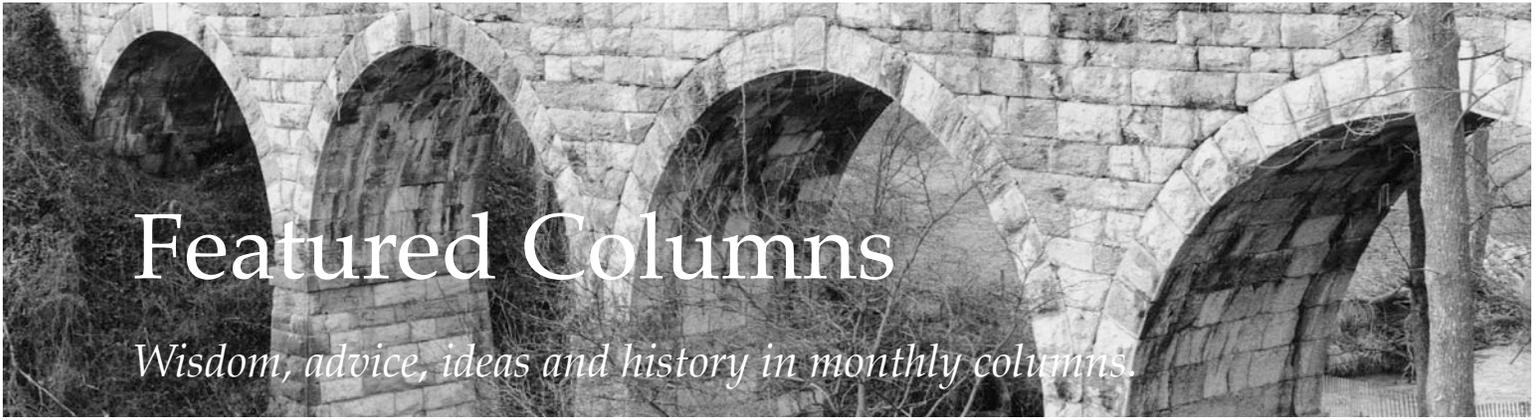
After the mold is dry, it is ready to be peeled off and applied to the layout.

When on the layout, it gets painted and has scenery added to and around

it. There is more than just one mold in the Club's collection, so we can have a good variety on the layout. It is also possible to turn or flip the same molds to get a different rock effect. There are many other jobs being done on the layout and I will continue to talk about them in the next few newsletters.



Materials needed to make rock molds



Train Dr. Ted



THE HIGHWAY OF TRACK –Your Train’s Roadway

Planning your track layout, whether with a pencil or computer, is only the first step to a successful roadway. Just like the highway for your car to go to and from your destination, the rails for your trains should be assembled with great care. The subject of this article is only about attaching one track to the adjoining track. Yes, this is easy to do, yet is rarely accomplished correctly.

There are **2 major points to remember when installing your track on a layout:**

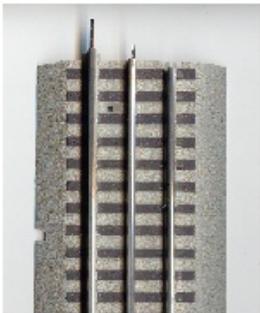
1. **Make sure that all of the connecting pins are tight in its own rail and connecting rail.**
2. **Take.....your.....time!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Do it once, do it right!**

Let’s talk about point #2 first. I have witnessed this time after time of individuals assembling track letting speed override quality. “Take your time.” Track continuity has to be right as the track will be used for a long time. If you scenic your layout you will not be happy if you have to take up a track to repair a connection. **DO IT ONCE, DO IT RIGHT!**

Make sure that all of the connecting pins are tight in its rail and connecting rail. If you could lay a continuous rail on your entire layout you would never have a connection problem –but one continuous rail is not a reality. You are working with sectional track to be attached to each other to carry the train wheels smoothly around your layout. The most important part of the rails is the electrical connections for the trains to get their power. A bad connection today could become a problem in the future. Bad connections can cause a fire or skin burns and create pesky sections of track where your train slows down and then speeds-up again.

The culprit of track assembly is the **track pins** that tie one track to the next.

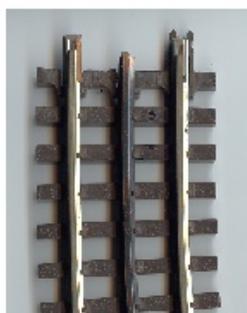
Fastrack



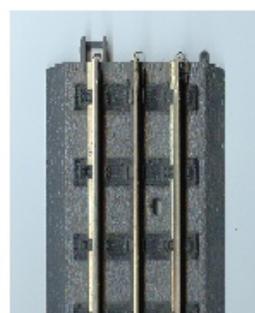
Lionel O



Atlas



MTH



This is the Achilles heel of the track system. There are other track systems than the 4 shown above but these can be used to illustrate most track system problems. I have personally witnessed problems with each one of the track systems pictured above with our own Club member’s personal layouts.

Featured Columns

Wisdom, advice, ideas and history in monthly columns.

Train Dr. Ted



THE HIGHWAY OF TRACK –Your Train’s Roadway-continued

FASTRACK: I have always found the connecting pins to be set extremely tight into the rails. As new track they seem to be perfect and certainly easy to connect securely. When the FASTRACK is repeatedly connected and disconnected the pins become loose. The clips on the FASTRACK will seem like the track is tight but the electrical connection may be weak or not existent. **CHECK ALL THE PINS FOR TIGHTNESS IN THE TRACK AND THE CONNECTION TO THE ADJOINING TRACK.**

Lionel O/O27, K-line, Marx and other track systems that use pins to connect one section to the next need to

be inspected. New Lionel track needs to have all of the pins of EVERY section inspected. Test the tightness of all 3 pins in the section of track to make sure that they are tight in the track. If you can spin the pin in the track rail then it is not a secure electrical connection. Almost every new Lionel track I have purchased has MOSTLY loose pins. These need to be tightened-up before assembling the track to the next section for a good electrical bond. **CHECK THE PINS FOR TIGHTNESS IN THE TRACK AND THE CONNECTION TO THE ADJOINING TRACK.**

Atlas track is a heavy duty solid rail track system. This system of track can become a poor conductor of the electrical system when the track clips become loose. The clips are an external system easy to see and feel if they are securely gripping the rails. The outside rails on Atlas track are not electrically tied together. You will need to make sure that the outside rails are wired so both are common.

MTH track is similar in looks to the Lionel Fastrack system but very different on the track to track connections. Care needs to be taken on each piece of track that the copper fingers are positioned correctly, especially on used track, and that the copper connections actually do meet together properly. It is a good idea to look at the bottom connections to make sure they are touching properly. **CHECK THE COPPER TABS FOR TIGHTNESS AGAINST THE ADJOINING TRACK.**

Q. How do I test to make sure that my track is all together perfect after it is down and secure on the table?

A. Do not complete a track loop. Pull the track apart, anywhere on the loop so that it is not continuous. With no power wires connected to the track, take an ohm meter and make a reading where the track is disconnected to get an ohms reading on the length of the loop. Do this for both the outside and the middle rails. If you get more than 0.5 ohms resistance around your loop, you have a connection problem somewhere. Keep moving the leads of the ohm meter along the track sections until you find the problem(s).

Q. How can I insure that I have 100% electrical continuity?

A. If you are not planning to take this track apart ever again, solder each track section to the adjoining track section. Then, check your solder connection. A ‘cold’ solder joint is hard to find. Learn proper soldering methods.

Q. How many connections do I need to have a good power supply electrical continuity in a loop?

A. As a general rule, 4 connections is all that is needed, about every quarter of the way around. Make sure that you can disconnect these connections from the power supply if you show need to track down a problem.

I want to thank those of you who have helped me write this article. You know who you are when you read the section that applies to you. My personal layout has track that has been down for longer than 20 years and all of it shows a perfect 10 on the MTH quality scale. My track is 90% **not** secured to the table. The track works because time is always taken to make the best (Lionel tubular) pin connections. Over the 20 years I have had 3 to 4 problems. I consider that great for loose track. For those of you wondering why my track is mostly not secured to the table – This allows me at any time of day or late night, and I do mean late night, to change or add sections to my layout. If I had a ‘scenic’ layout my table would look like an eternal construction area.

Good practices for assembling track on your layout will help you get started on the right ‘track’ and also allow you to trouble shoot. Take the time to make your layout’s roadway electrically efficient.

Upcoming Shows

April 3rd- TCA at Southern Poly Tech

May 22- Dixie division, TCA- Due West Methodist Church in Acworth

Aug 7-Norcross Railroadiana

Oct 9- TCA-Cobb County Civic Center

Nov 20,21-GTE-Norcross

Dec 4- TCA-Southern Poly



March meeting at Rick B's

Photos by Wyatt W.

In our continuing effort to change our meeting place, we met at Rick B's house for the March Business meeting. Members enjoyed socializing before the meeting and discussing everything from turnout problems to the restoration of tin plate cars. Rick had trains running showcasing his helix and ceiling suspension bridge. After the business meeting, members were able to operate both new and post war trains either by conventional or command modes. It seems that when we meet in member homes, new ideas and concepts are uncovered for each member. There is more to initiate a conversation because the member's layout is readily available. This is truly a benefit of the home meetings. The meeting was well attended and it was a great evening for running trains.

by Rick K.



APRIL 2010						
				1 - 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	2	3 TCA Model Train Show  At Southern Poly
4 Easter Sunday 	5	6 - 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	7	8 - 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	9	10 - Hands Across Tracks w/Eric Seigel 
11	12	13 - 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	14	15 NAOGRR Meeting  @ Rick & Cookie's	16	17 - 10AM-2 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 
18	19	20 - 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	21	22 - 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	23	24 - 10AM-2 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 

Minutes of the Meeting

3/18/2010 at 7pm.

Guests- Bob and Kent

members attending- 25

Treasurers report from Curt

Children's Layout tours- next time will need an early and late crew for each day of the show.

Rick- layout update- Latest addition is the rock shed on the layout. Still need to put corrugated roofing on the building. Now working on the upper levels and adding structural supports. Also, putting on the rock molds. The 'swamp' is looking very eerie. The old railroad spur now goes across the swamp and a car has fallen into the swamp. The water will be added next.

We are now wondering how can we enhance the vision of the layout from one side of the layout to the other. Suggestions have been mirrors or cameras. We are looking into the ideas. Also have to check with the HT owners. Rick B used door mirrors and it didn't work out. Also looking at 4 cameras with a monitor to switch between them.

Helping Hands- Have not able to get this going due to weather and scheduling. A few members have given their expertise on

wiring and did come to Rick Bs house. The discussion went from wiring to track problems. Ted's article is about track.

Track cleaning car has been ordered for the layout. The track is very dirty. And many areas can not be reached by hands now. Really need this car to go around and clean. At the time of the Club meeting there were only 2 loops operational -At the time of the printing of this news letter all 4 loops are again operational. The HT trains are the starter sets because that is what HT sells. The engines are not lasting very long, maybe 6 months, because of continuous running by the children visiting HT. In the last 4 months the Hogwarts has had 3 motors and the Polar Express the same problem. The wheels are wearing down and the bearings are failing. Also the brushes in the can motors wear out.

Eric suggested that at other clubs they modified the engines to have the upgraded wheels and engines and then keep the shells.

Next parts order- April 15th is the deadline- ask Les

Scott- skirting on the layout has been decided. The task force found some clips that will work well.

Next meeting at Rick and Cookie's



Plan to Attend

Fall Picnic- Sept 11th at Navy lakeside at Lake Alatoona.