

FEB 2010

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



Jim R 's
Lionel 258 from 1930
also in TCA book Lionel Trains
Standard of the World 1900-1943,
Second Edition, page 13

New Activities for the Club

2010 will be a busy year for NAOGRRC. Not only are we working on the Hobbytown layout, we are now helping Club members on their respective layouts in their homes. This is an amazing opportunity to help each other and learn tips and strategies for successful layouts. This also brings back some of the original atmosphere of the Club where members helped members and ran trains until late....many of you may remember those days.



We will again host the Spring Layout Tour in April and participate in several Train Shows during the year.

We would also like to extend the Club fellowship to our families and are planning a Fall picnic in September at Lake Allatoona. A few months later, we will celebrate the Holiday Season together on December 11th.

Our online forum is another great way for Club members to communicate with each other and share advice and ideas for train collecting and layout building.

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

What will we work on next?

The layout is really progressing. We are starting to construct the inserts of the mountain. We will see elevation soon and the layout will develop quickly.

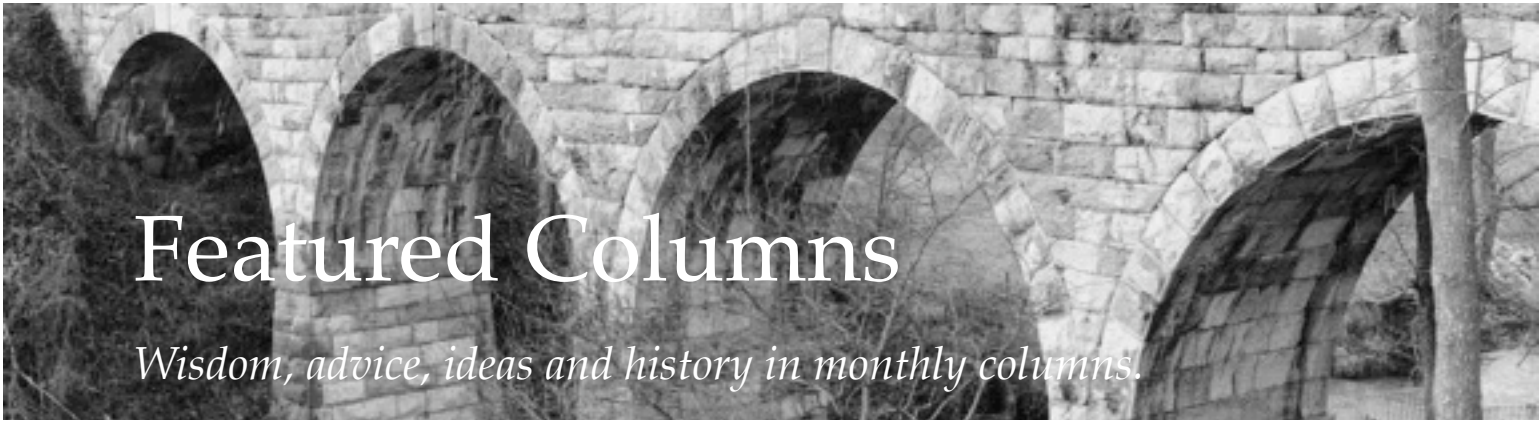
There are little projects going on all over the layout. Some club members are working on scenery on the outside rim, some on the swamp behind the engine house, and others on the mountains in the middle. Other club members are building structures and scenes at home and will place them on the layout soon.

Lots of new people have come to work and learn. Carl is now a certified hard shell and rock mold expert. He is looking to get someone else certified soon! Although we are participating in the Hands Across the Tracks program, hands are still needed at Hobbytown on the Club layout.

See the last page of this newsletter for a work calendar.



Wyatt and Jim hard at work



Featured Columns

Wisdom, advice, ideas and history in monthly columns.

Train Dr. Ted



Symptom: My Lionel engine ran rough for a while. Then I saw smoke and the smoke was not from the smoke stack. Now, my engine does not run at all. Does this sound familiar, Curt, Max, John L., John C., Bill D, and Ted?

Prognosis: The 'TRIACS' in the circuit board are defective.

The what???

TRIACS –The 'Triac' is not a Winter Olympic sport. If you have a Lionel modern engine, conventional or digital, from a simple dockside or basic NY Central to a highly expensive digital scale engine, you have 'TRIACS' in your engine's electronics. If you only have MTH engines you are safe and can pass on this article as they do not use 'TRIACS' in their electronics.

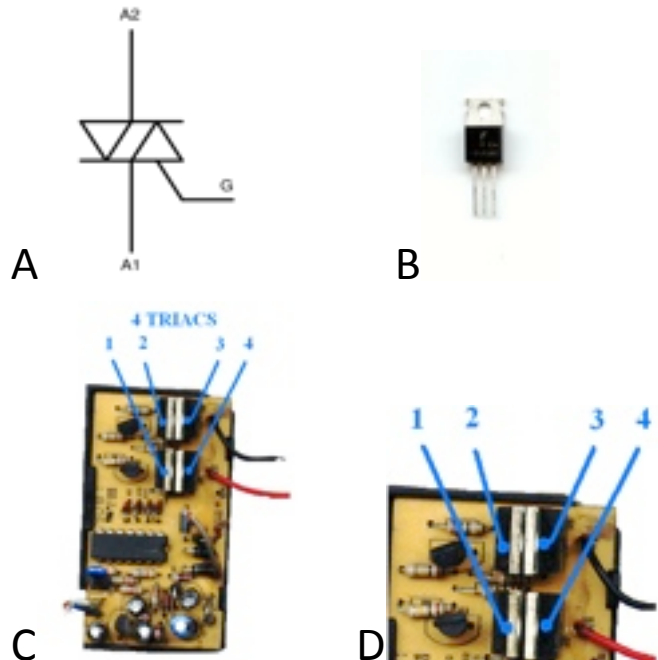
Wikipedia definition of a TRIAC:

A TRIAC, or Triode for Alternating Current is an electronic component approximately equivalent to two silicon-controlled rectifiers (SCRs/ thyristors) joined in inverse parallel (paralleled but with the polarity reversed) and with their gates connected together. The formal name for a TRIAC is bidirectional triode thyristor. This results in a bidirectional electronic switch which can conduct current in either direction when it is triggered (turned on) and thus doesn't have any polarity.

Now that you have read the technical definition of a 'TRIAC' (or skipped reading the hard stuff), let me give a simple explanation that will suit us fine for our trains:

The TRIAC is made up of 2 diodes in parallel in opposite directions with their gates tied together to control the current into your

electronics. See the electrical drawing of a triac in Photo A. Photo B is an actual Triac. Photo C shows 4 TRIACS on a Lionel circuit board. Photo D is a closer look at the triacs on the circuit board.



Usually, a triac will burn out when your train wheels derail and there is a short across the ground to hot of your engine or tender. The triacs can take the shorted situation for a 'short' time before it fails. Today's modern transformers guard the circuit board against a long term short as the circuit breaker activates very fast to save the electronics.

Once the circuit board is blown there are three options to consider.

1. Junk the engine – This happens a lot when it is an inexpensive engine and the train shop charges you for a new circuit board and labor which may be more than the engine originally cost.
2. Pay to replace the circuit board.
3. 90% chance it is only the triacs that need replacing and repair. Triacs cost range from \$0.75 to \$3.00 each. Normally there are 4 triacs on the circuit board. 1, 2, 3, or all 4 can blow out. I have seen just 1 fail and I have seen all 4 fail at once. My experience is that 2 usually go bad at a time.

-----continued on page 4----->

Upcoming Shows

March 6,7- GTE-Norcross

April 3rd- TCA at Southern Poly Tech

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

Aug 7-Norcross

Oct 9- TCA-Cobb County Civic Center

Nov 20,21-GTE-Norcross

Dec 4- TCA-Southern Poly



Lifetime Membership

On February 6, members of the club went to Waleska, GA to present Roger J. with a lifetime membership in the club. The club brought refreshments and Ted volunteered to help Roger fix one of his engines. On the way home, Ted said that Roger would be a good candidate for Hands Across the Tracks Program and we volunteered to go back to Roger's with Ted and help solve some track problems Roger is experiencing. Others are welcome to volunteer. Roger and Judy were very pleased with the membership recognition and fellowship from our club members. Roger said he really enjoys the web site and emails.

by Scott F.

Train Dr. Ted (Continued)

A normal running triac is at about 100 degrees or less. A defective triac will be extremely hot to the touch, around 140 degrees. These hot Triacs can make the inside of the engine hot and will deform plastic on diesel engines if the plastic is close to the triacs.

So why does Lionel use these triacs that are so vulnerable? The triacs are a great item for controlling the current going to the electronics on the circuit board and when used with the proper modern transformers provide a great control circuit. The triacs also have a problem when Lionel's Odyssey is turned 'ON' when operating in a lash-up. Again, the triacs will heat up as the electronics are trying to regulate current within one engine while the other engine is trying to run at its own pace. In lash-ups, turn-off the Odyssey and save the triacs. Older transformers were made for the trains of their times and do not use the high speed circuit breakers of today. If you insist on using an older transformer on today's modern trains then you need to have an extra fast acting breaker between the old transformer and the tracks. This goes for all brands of model trains.



Hands Across the Tracks



Project “Hands Across the Tracks” is ready to begin. So far, there are five club members who have responded to the club’s first request for information from members who would like some help.

Here is a brief synopsis of three of the projects and the proposed dates for the members to help.

• **Kerry S. –TBA**

Kerry is building two layouts (one for his grandsons to play with and one for himself). He is in the design and idea brainstorming phase so your thoughts and ideas would be welcomed. He is almost finished with the room preparation.

• **Eric S. – Saturday, April 10th, 10 AM to 2 PM**

Eric’s layout is well underway. He presented his layout during this year’s Piedmont Pilgrimage. Eric’s project is looking for assistance in a number of different directions.

1. Help building a steel trestle bridge
2. Scenic hard-shell for mountains
3. Tunnel work
4. Mountain scenery work such as painting and trees
5. Ballasting track

Eric is also preparing to build a small layout for his son and is looking for ideas in regard to track design and other components for this layout.

• **Richard B. – March 20th**

Richard currently has an empty room and some basic ideas for a track plan that he is going to first evaluate with RR-Track software. Once he has a more concrete direction for his layout plan, Richard may likely be coming to the club members for some specific assistance.

So you can see that most of the requested help is in the form of brainstorming ideas for room and table design along with a track plan. Coupled to this is a basic scenery plan.

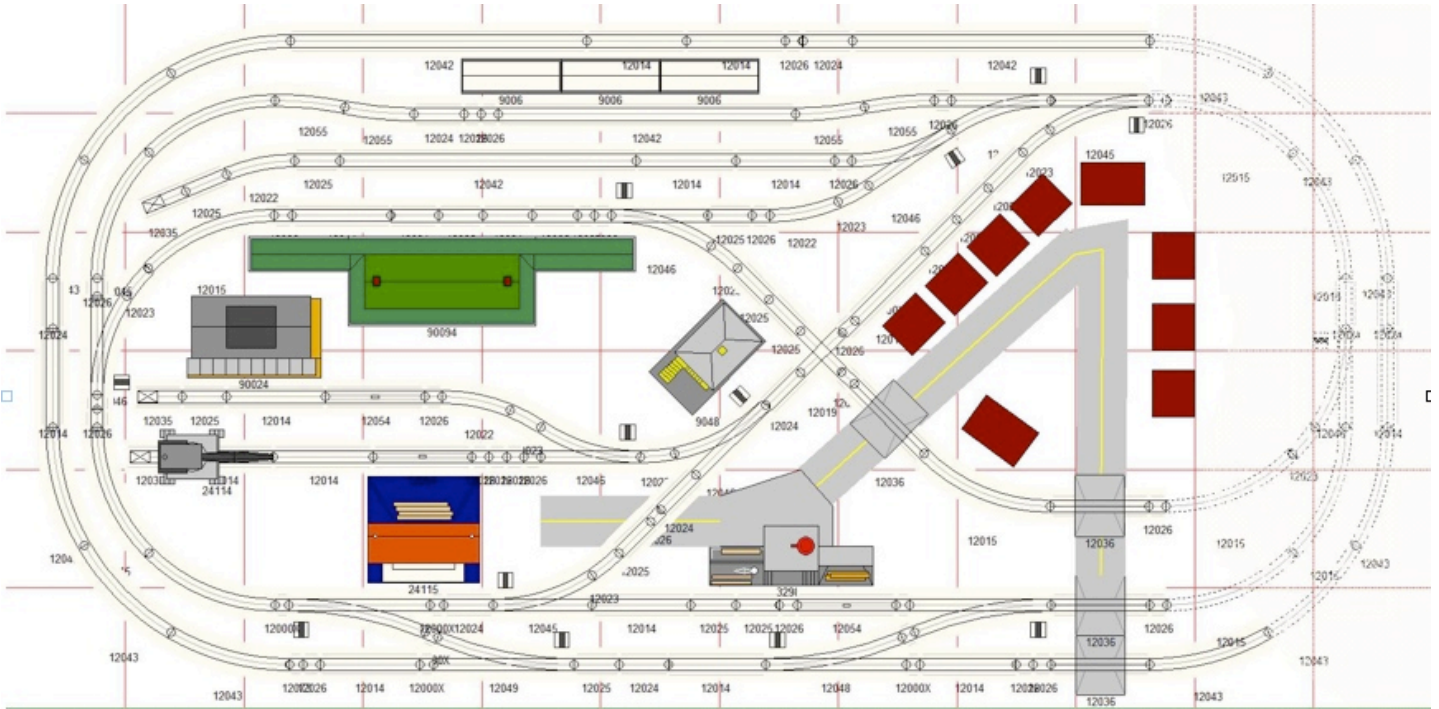
Any club member that would like to help with any of these projects or has ideas, or who would just like to witness the process in action and learn, is welcome to attend any or all of these projects. Even if you do not have a need for a brainstorming session yourself, your contributing ideas can be just as important to the success to any one of these individual club members’ layouts.

by Ron S.

Evolution of a Family Layout- Part 2

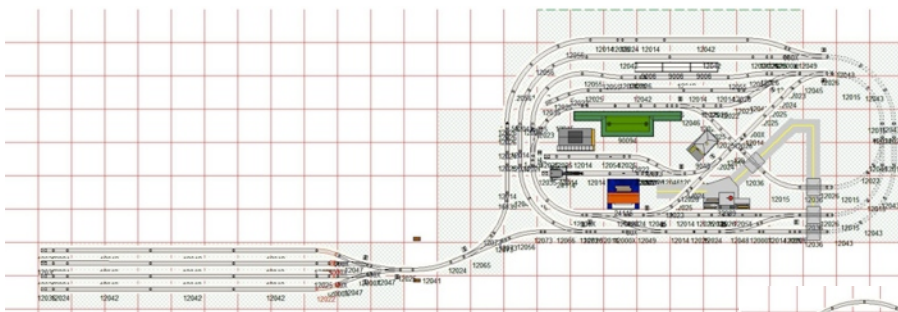
By Paul M.

Here is the present 6X12 layout as it appears today. It has 2 main lines, sidings to store locomotives, sidings to store rolling stock, and a modified figure 8 which is the most efficient way to reverse trains in a limited space (it's the most expensive cost wise since it requires 4 turnouts compared to two reverse loops which require only two turnouts).



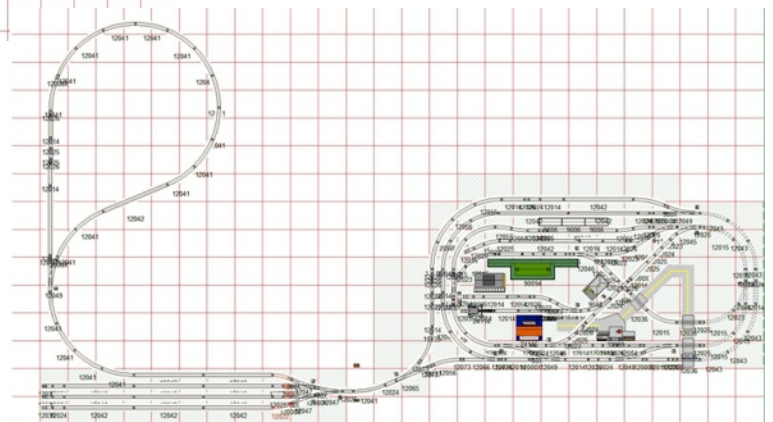
The main line crossover was done with O72 turnouts to minimize the S curve effect while the rest of the turnouts are all O36. The outer main line uses O48 curves while the rest are all O36. We are currently in the process of building a large tunnel on the right side of the layout. This layout has lasted over 18 months with only minor revisions along the way and provides a lot of family fun.

Already there are expansion plans for the above layout. One idea is to add another 3X6 table to stretch it out. We also have a classification / staging area planned for a later phase which will let us park whole trains off the main layout.



Another phase expands on this with another reverse loop for the outside main.

There are also new plans on the drawing board that we may try which will completely abandon the 6X12 platform that has lasted this long. Ones that are multilevel and / or go around the room...The possibilities are endless and that's what makes this hobby so much fun. Great layouts don't have to be born that way, they can evolve over time which helps keep the costs down as you learn and grow with your railroad.



March 2010						
28	1	2 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	3	4 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	5	6 GTE Model Train Show At Norcross 
6 GTE Model Train Show At Norcross 	8	9 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	10	11 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	12	13 Model Train Show At Cobb Galleria 
14 10AM-2 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	15	16 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	17 	18 NAOGRRC Meeting @ Ric Bigliardi's 	19	20 Hands Across the Tracks with Richard Blume 
21	22	23 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	24	25 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	26	27 10AM-2 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 
28	29	30 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	31	April 1 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	April 2	April 3 - TCA Model Train Show At Southern Poly 

Minutes of the Meeting

2/18/2010 at 7pm. at HobbyTown

Guests- Carl P.

members attending- 28

New members- Wyatt and Chris

Treasurers report from Rick K.

HobbyTown Layout Update- Page 2

Helping Hands- 1st one snowed out at Kerry's. We will reschedule. The next one is March 29th at Richard B. and April at Eric's. If you are interested in helping or learning, just let Ron S or Bill D know. Extending this to people's layouts at home allows us to get more club involvement. This is another benefit of being in this club. This is really to help you on your layout or plans for a layout.

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

Picnic- Navy lakeside at Lake Allatoona. We need a date to reserve it. We agreed on September at the last meeting. Not Labor Day weekend. Members agreed on Sept 11th.

Scott- demonstration of curtains for the HT layout. Scott used PVC pipe and broadcloth and hooks. Ideas were to make in 4 foot sections. The broadcloth could move aside like a curtain. The PVC pipe is very bendable. Scott

worked out a deal with Hancock fabrics at 40% off and so the entire project would be \$59.00 for supplies. 1/2 PVC tubing might sag, so perhaps 1 inch tubing would be stronger. Schedule 40 pipe is cheaper, Schedule 80 pipe is thicker. Or switch to metal thin wall instead of PVC. Many suggestions for the task team. The team will figure it out. The club decided black for the color.

Dick G- proposal for the club. Alternate meeting place that has room for all of us since HT is getting a little small. Place is Johnson Ferry and Lower Roswell Road and is an antique mall. Officers may try it to see in the future and make a decision.

Rick made a pitch for the Club online forum as a place to contact members and let people know that you have something to swap. As always "buyer beware".

Cookie discussed the new format of the newsletter and requested an engine submission for each month.

Dave- new shirts for the Club. Collared shirt with monogram on front for \$13 and a better material one for \$26. Long sleeve, short sleeve and sweatshirts. Old club T-shirts still available also.

March meeting is at Rick B's, April at Rick and Cookie's



Great News

The next 2 Club meetings will be at Club Member's homes. This is a great opportunity to see layouts and run trains. March meeting is at Rick B's, April at Rick and Cookie's