

# North Atlanta O-Gauge Railroad Club



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

Issue #7- July 2009

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## From Ted:

I would like to say my many thanks to all of the members of the North Atlanta O-Gauge RR Club for the honor that was given to me at the last Club meeting on July 16, 2009. I was totally surprised by the event. The train bell that I was given is absolutely beautiful and now resides on my fireplace mantle as a daily reminder of our great Club. Also, the 'weathered' boxcar with its flames and pillars of smoke is the first weathered item on my non-scenic layout.

The first meeting that I attended over 5 years ago was at my home. Four years later we outgrew my basement as the Club membership grew from 25 members to over 65 members forcing us to look for a new location and now meeting at



**As a token of our appreciation to Ted for his leadership as President for the past three years, we presented him with a train bell. This special bell is engraved with his name and the years of his service as our president.**

HobbyTown USA in Kennesaw. Our Club layout went from non-scenic 12 X 8 to our current scenic project at HobbyTown 26 X 12. We have been on many outing adventures and have had many great Holiday Parties. We have

had great support by hobby train stores including HobbyTown, Legacy Station, Memory Station, and Atlanta Trains.

I know the new current Club Officers – Les L., Rick K., Curt W., and Cookie H. will continue to lead the Club into new horizons. We had come a long way in a short time. This was accomplished by an endless amount of hard work by a lot of Club members.

I want to thank Treasurers Bob J. and Curt W.; Vice President Les L.; and Secretary Cookie H. for serving as officers with me.

I also want to thank Club member, Casey J., who, throughout my Presidency, was always there to give me advice, support, and friendship.

And, thanks to my wife Pat for her support and putting up with all of this.



# Hobby Town Layout Update

## Lots of Progress !

The hard shell and rock molds are going up now. Trestles and bridges are being built.

The arched bridge in the ticket booth is taking a while to construct. The covered bridge is finished. We are starting to work in the gorge now. Since the gorge will also have a creek, there will be a lot of new things to learn how to do.

We just ordered a second set of building kits. We will need people to build the kits. If you would like to build one, email Ron or Bill. Larry K. built the barn shown here- excellent job!

There was some concern about the transition tunnel and the large articulated engines. This is fixed now. Those big engines will be able to pass through the tunnel. This is all part of the process.

Most of the work now is in the access holes on the inside- so a little more difficult- but please continue to show your support by coming to help on the layout.

Ron will write a handout about the rock molds and how to make them. We will also publish the instructions in the newsletter soon.

Mention the membership when you talk to the visitors at the layout.



**Barn Kit finished by Larry K**

Work sessions are on Tuesday and Thursday nights and not Saturday in the summer.

# Featured Columns

*Wisdom, advice, ideas and history in monthly columns.*

## Train Dr. Ted



### “I am new to O-gauge. I want the new digital equipment. What should I buy?”

I get this question quite often. At the last Club meeting this question came up again so I thought I would give a brief summary on a subject that volumes could be written about. So, let's try to keep it really simple.

**FOR ENGINES:** There are 2 'major' systems for sale – Lionel's **TMCC/Legacy** and MTH's **Proto 2 DCS**. It does not matter which system you purchase for the engines. What is important is that you do not purchase both to

start with. Purchase an engine and the digital equipment to run that brand of engines.

**BEWARE:** There is an earlier version of **MTH** call **Proto 1**. There are many sellers dumping Proto 1 engines to uninformed buyers. Proto 1 is **NOT** command control digital engines. They are simply conventional engines with sounds!

**FOR ROLLING STOCK:** It makes no difference which brand you purchase, Lionel, MTH, Atlas, Weaver, or Williams, etc. All of the brands use the same knuckle coupler and will couple to each other.

**FOR TRACK:** All digital equipment will operate on any of the O-Gauge track. I recommend 2 track systems. If you think you will go scenic in the future I suggest that you use Atlas track and turnouts. Atlas is good looking and works great. If you are not highly scenic then Lionel's FasTrack will give you everything you need and is also highly reliable.

## Max's Layout in the O-Gauge Railroad Magazine

Look for Max's Juniata Valley Railroad in the December Issue of the O-Gauge Railroad Magazine. This is a great opportunity for other teen railroad enthusiasts to see what can be accomplished with a lot of hard work and creativity.



**Max's Trains**



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## Layout of the Month - Dean B.

Historically, my parents had purchased two trains systems for me for Christmases during the mid-fifties. The only times they came out was at Christmas time. They were placed in storage for about fifteen years. I built my first train table in the mid-seventies, but it was not much to speak about. During this time, I befriended a person who bought, traded and sold trains. He helped me add to my existing rolling stock.

I have built several layouts for my boys, but they were nothing to write home about either. The trains, etc., were in storage until three or four years ago. After finishing some of the basement, my wife suggested that I take the trains out of mothballs and build a layout for my grandson. The original layout was 8'x 16' with track and some of the accessories set-up. That was the beginning of the current layout.

The current layout has been built in four stages. Each addition evolved through the development of a 'new idea.' Of course, this evolution occurred during the time Carol took extended trips.

The scenery is based upon settings found in western Pennsylvania, Canadian and Colorado Rocky Mountains, and Georgia. I have never appreciated the intricacies and nuances of landscapes and scenery, colorations, etc, until I started to put together the layout's plan. When I see something I like, I like the challenge of trying to incorporate this into the layout.

Many of the things you see were built from scrap lumber collected from old and remodeled homes. The layout is 280 square feet. There is an industrial area at each end of the table. There is a Plasticville Village with a valley setting. There is a ski area, with a farm in close proximity, a coal mine with tipples, and a 12 foot elevated bridge. Industrial offices, town business area, and a residential area is in the planning stages.

The track is O27 with both O27 and O gauge switches. I started using O27 switches, but I converted to O22 switches when I realized O22 provided more flexibility and were easier to work on. At last count, there are about twenty-five switches and eighteen remote control tracks. I don't see expanding the layout further unless I cut through a wall. My wife is not planning any extended trips in the near future. I have three sets of passenger cars and six diesel and steam locomotives. There are numerous freight cars.

The trains are operated using a ZW transformer and the accessories are operated using Trainmaster Type V 150 watts transformer. I am only interested in trains from the fifties and sixties era.



# Featured Columns

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## Les and His Time Machine

This past week an item on CNN brought back memories to me. The news item was quite shocking to a lot of people. On July 2 2009 a LIRR train was allegedly being operated by a passenger who was a friend of the Engineer. He was operating the train, which was a Diesel-Electric, at speeds of 80 MPH or more. The express was the 6:45am from Hicksville to Hunters Point in Queens NY. It was carrying 408 rush hour commuters to the subway connection to Manhattan. The train arrived both on time and safely. As the passengers departed the train a witness saw the extra person get off the engine in a business suit and heard him tell another passenger that he drove the train all the way to about 100 yards from the station. The real Engineer then pulled the train into the station. The witness called 911 which brought NYPD, LIRR police and numerous other agencies including FDNY trucks and ambulances. One can just see the confusion that went on. The police interviewed the witness who said the passenger who said he operated the train disappeared into the crowd entering the subway. The train was back on its way to LI empty to pick up more city bound passengers at the origination point. The Engineer was found and relieved of his duties. He is currently suspended without pay.

The Nassau county DA is looking into filing federal charges against the Engineer and the passenger. However, the name and whereabouts of the alleged operator is still unknown. The DA asked for him to come forward. Now as I was brought up in Brooklyn NY and I can tell you there ain't no way he will do that if he faces federal charges. As for the Engineer, since there is no videotape or eye witness to having someone other than him operating the train, it will be very difficult to prove in court. Unless he admits to the claims, I don't think their charges can hold water.

I did say that this story brings back memories. Many years ago my Grandfather was an Engineer for the LIRR. My father at the age of 9 rode in the cab with him on the run from Patchogue to Montauk. He told my brother and I what a thrill that was for him being with his Dad on the 60 mile run to the

end of Long Island. I can just imagine riding in the cab of the K5 steam locomotive. He also said grandpa had him rattle off all the stops on the return trip.

As a Cub Scout, I was lucky enough to go on an outing to the backshop at Morris Park Yard in Richmond Hill Queens about 2 years before the steam era ended and they left Long Island forever. In 1955 the diesels were the "Kings of the Road".

The electric MU trains were around for years. starting in Brooklyn and going to Far Rockaway and then to Hempstead. In 1925 the Babylon line was electrified. The last electrification came 62 years later as the Ronkonkoma line was finally finished. In the interim, the Pennsylvania RR had the LIRR run into NYC to Penn Station. The LIRR is the largest Commuter funded RR in the World.

A number of years ago I received a manual on how to operate M-I and other electric commuter trains of the LIRR. I read that over and over. It was the same one given to Engineer trainees.

I was asked to go with my daughter quite a few years ago to ABC studios in Manhattan. She was trying out for "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire" hosted by Regis Philbin. She did not make the final cut but we did meet Regis. He invited us to sit in the audience which we did. After the show we took the subway back to Penn station for our return to Babylon.

At Penn Station I met a friend who was an Engineer and he asked "Where are you going?" I said "to Babylon." He said "I am running the 6:36. Would you like to ride up in the cab with me?" I responded "Sure, but my daughter is with me." He said "no problem. I am retiring next week." We went in the cab with him. As we left Penn Station and into the tunnel under the East River he said "Do you want to take the train to Woodside Queens?" You don't even have to think what my answer was. It was some feeling.

Unfortunately he passed on about 3 months after retiring.

So you can see I can relate to this event. As much fun as it was for me and my daughter, this latest event opened my eyes as to the danger to all on board. that day.

My brother called me yesterday and asked "Were you in NY on July 2?" I said "No Jim, I don't have a Business Suit."

MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
7/16/09 7:00 PM

Guests: . Nam and Dylan

New members- none

# members attending- 24

Cookie- newsletter and request for articles.

Ron- HT layout news. See Page 2

Upcoming Shows:

- Aug 8th in Norcross- Railroadiana- need 8-10 people to help with the Children's layout.
- Sept 5th- Saturday- TCA- Southern Poly
- Nov 21-22- Norcross- GTE Expo
- Dec 5th- TCA- Southern Poly

Mark your Calendar- Dec 12th is the Holiday Party-more Pizzas and BBQ, less eggplant. Will need donations for the raffle.

Field Trips- Curt

If any member has any ideas, email Curt. We are working on a field trip to see the live steamers in North Georgia. Probably in September.

Anyone want to go to Cass W. Va to see the Shays? Highlight is a 90 mile trip on the Shay.

New Business-

Meetings in Members homes- starting in the Fall. Will need to carpool since there may be a parking problem. Proposed to occur the middle month in each quarter. Looking for volunteers to host a meeting.

Ted suggested that one solution is to sit over at the Mexican Restaurant next door after the meeting at HT.

Cookie will send out a reminder about the Forum every week with a link and directions on how to change your profile to get an email when someone posts.

New Member Packet- in progress

Hospital Layout- Ted will re contact the MD

Presentations to Ted B.

**Next meeting on 8/20/09 with ' Business Meeting' at 7:00 pm- don't forget.**

## An MTH story...

In April of 2007 I found myself searching for anyone who made a Pan Am Railways box car in O-scale. Being a fan of modern railroads, I had seen photos of these box cars and desperately wanted one or more for my layout. Unfortunately, my search came up empty and I was unable to find any of these beautiful 50' box cars in O-scale. I thought to myself, "Hell with it, I'll write MTH and ask them if they could please make some Pan Am box cars. It's a shot in the dark, but it's better than nothing." Anyway, a few days after I sent the email to MTH, I got a nice reply from Andy Edleman at MTH thanking for me for my suggestion. I thought, "That was nice, but I'm sure he says that to everyone and my email is probably on it's way to the trash bin on his computer." Can you tell I'm a skeptic?

I forgot all about the email until late 2008 when MTH's 2009 Volume 1 catalog came out. To my shock and amazement, there were not 1, but 2 Pan Am Railways 50' box cars included in MTH's premier line offerings! I couldn't believe it! Was MTH truly listening to their customers? Not wanting to make them regret adding the cars to their catalog, I immediately ordered 2 road numbers of each car!

Those cars arrived at my doorstep today and they are beautiful. With these new cars now sitting on my layout ready for their first run, I had to stop for a moment of reflection. While I'm sure that my letter to them was not the sole reason they decided to make these Pam-Am cars (who knows, maybe it was just a coincidence), I can't help but feel that maybe I had small hand in their being made.

Listening to your customers is such a simple no-brainer and yet so many companies out there don't seem to get it. It would seem that MTH does get it and that makes them rank pretty high in my book.

So the next time you think of something you'd like to see in our hobby, don't be afraid to put it in writing and send it in! This story certainly goes to show that you never know who might be listening at the other end!

Eric



## C A L E N D A R

26	27	28 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	29	30 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	31	August 1 NO work at Hobby Town
<b>AUGUST 2009</b>						
2	3	4 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	5	6 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	7	8 37th Atlanta Model Train & Railrodiana Show 
9	10	11 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	12	13 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	14	15 NO work at Hobby Town
16	17	18 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	19	20 NAOGRRC Meeting Tonight! 	21	22 NO work at Hobby Town
23	24	25 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	26	27 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	28	29 NO work at Hobby Town
30	31					