

North Atlanta O-Gauge Railroad Club



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

Issue #3- March 2009

Hobby Town Update

Follow the progress of the NAOGRRC layout at Hobby Town USA in Kennesaw, GA.

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Train Dr. Ted

Dr. Ted answers questions about sick trains.

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Layout of the Month

Each month we highlight a layout from one of the members of NAOGRRC with tips and ideas for all

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Les and his Time Machine



Train stories from the old days when toy trains were every child's dream.

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Meeting Minutes

Just in case you missed the meeting, all of the minutes from the meeting are here.

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Calendar

Keep up to date on what the NAOGRRC is doing in the next few weeks.

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Spring Layout Tour Day 1 a Success

written by Cookie H.

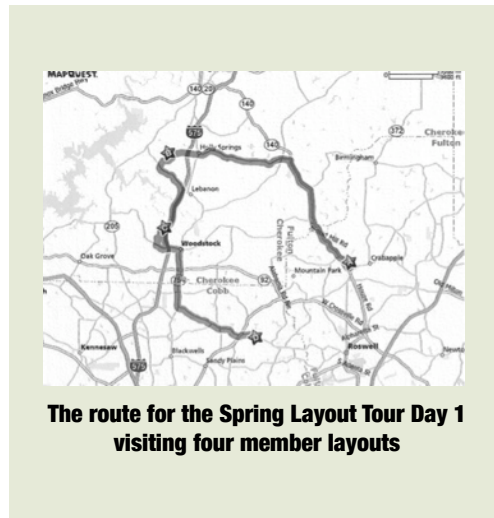
What a great turnout at each home!

Our first Layout Tour of 2009 was a great success with four members opening their homes to showcase their layouts for around 25 members and their families.

Thanks to our hosts: Paul and Linda M., Curt, Julie and Max W., Eric and Danielle S., and Rick K. and Cookie H.

Every layout was different. Each layout had many ideas for us to take home to our own layouts.

We began the day at the house of Paul M. Paul's wife, Linda, had coffee and donuts for the members to enjoy while viewing



The route for the Spring Layout Tour Day 1 visiting four member layouts

Paul's Fast Track layout in his basement. Paul is in the process of building a foam mountain on one side of the layout, so members could discuss this construction.

Curt and Max W. had both of their layouts in the basement of their home.

Side by side, father and son each gave their layouts their own personal touch. Their O-27 layouts included a lot of scenery and many moving Lionel accessories. Special kudos to Max and his skill in constructing a very realistic lake with people fishing; especially since he made the dock with one hand and the other hand in a full cast! Curt and his wife Julie served sandwiches and snacks for lunch.

Eric's railroad literally took over his basement. The track meandered through 5 rooms by going through cutouts in the walls. In one area he had a metal truss spanning across the room supported by counter-weights. Although just track right now, Eric has a concept of the scenery he will add to his super large layout.

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Hobby Town Layout Update

Rock Molds are Next

written by Ron S.

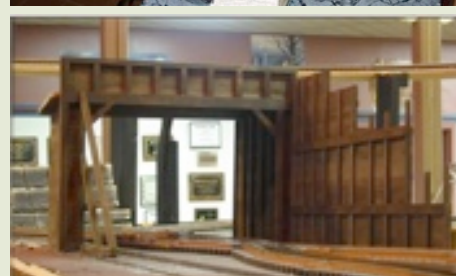
Work has been continuing on the Hobby Town Layout. Most recently the team has been creating rock molds to be used on the inside of tunnel liners on the layout. The tunnel liners have already been built using Geodesic foam (polyurethane). After the rock molds are applied to the inside of the tunnel liners and painted, you will be able to see rock detail found inside train tunnels. Rock molds will also be used on the more vertical sides on the mountain structures on the layout as depicted in the diorama. If you would like to learn more about this process please come to Hobby Town. We will also be continuing this work in the weeks to come.

We are also looking for someone to help with track cleaning using Bill's track cleaning car. We will also need to clean wheels on the cars. It is a fairly easy process using Bill's car as you may have witnessed at our last club meeting. If you would like to help us with track cleaning, please email Ron.

We will additionally be permanently securing the 10 foot stone masonry wall we've built along the Roundhouse.

Work on the layout will continue on Saturdays after the layout tours and on Tuesday and Thursday nights. Please refer to the calendar on the last page of this newsletter.

We hope to start applying track ballast in the next week or so, if the shipment comes in.



Featured Columns

Wisdom, advice, ideas and history in monthly columns.

Train Dr. Ted



WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SMOKE?

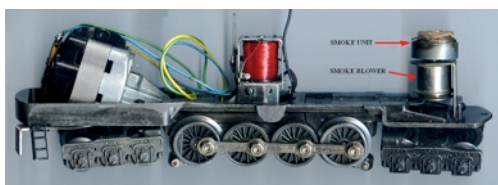
The engine output of smoke was great when the engine was new. Then, after a while, the smoke output became less and less.

Usual operator solutions are:

Put the conventional engine into neutral and turn-up the transformer power all the way to heat up the smoke unit and then run the engine and get a good output for a minute or two. Or, on the TMCC control, keep hitting the #9 key, which increases the heater temperature in the smoke unit and gives more smoke.

Both of these methods do increase the smoke output at that instance. Both of these methods will shorten the life of the smoke systems. To understand how to get the most smoke out of your smoke unit is to understand the workings of the toy train smoke units.

Photo #1 shows a smoke unit in an engine.



Almost all smoke units produced by Lionel, MTH, Weaver, and Atlas for the last 50 years work with the same kind of heater system. Some engines blow the air through the smoke unit by mechanical pumps and some blow the air through using a small 'can' motor with some of the can motors electrically turning on and off simulating a puffing action.

Okay, so why does my engine output less and less smoke?

The answer is that the wicking material becomes burnt and less efficient to draw up the liquid to contact the heater coil. To keep the pad from burning, make sure that you always have fluid in the smoke unit. Do not use excess heat to warm-up the fluid.



Fluid Lining Pad

Burned Pad

Turn off the smoke unit in digital engines when you shut-down the engine at the end of a running session. That way, when you turn on the engine for the next

running session, and the engine smoke is weak, you will realize the smoke fluid is low.

By not always shutting down your smoke system at the end of a running session, you may run your engine at the next session without realizing that your smoke unit is on, there is no smoke coming out and you are burning the pad in the unit.



Easy fix for smoke units

Open the top of the smoke unit. Take the lining and turn it up-side-down. Now you have a new clean lining top to touch the heater.

That's it. Fill with smoke fluid. You won't believe the amount of smoke that will now come out of the engine. Now, keep that smoke unit filled with fluid.

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Train Dr. Ted

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With the new digital engines you can turn the smoke heater unit on or off. For the post-war users you have to keep fluid or pills to keep the wick wet. Club member Paul M. and I installed an on/off switch in one of Paul's post-war engines. Now Paul can run his post-war 2025 engine, if he chooses, with the smoke unit shut down.

TMCC USERS: Many engines equipped with Lionel's TMCC digital systems including original K-Line, Weaver, Williams, ... etc.. may have a smoke unit problem.

75% of TMCC engines that I have serviced have the can motor blower fan running in the wrong direction. This causes a reduced amount of smoke that makes it up through the stack. When the fan motor direction is reversed the smoke output is much greater. Only in the past year has Lionel corrected this problem in their new productions. The problem was the fan blades in the smoke unit were 'cupped' in the incorrect direction. The 'cups' were scooping the air in the correct direction to fill the 'cups,' but the air flow was pushing in the wrong direction to expel the air efficiently out of the stack. A service person can correct this problem.

MTH does not have any problems with fan direction. The double heater coils produce plenty of smoke. You need to keep that wicking pad wet.

Les and His Time Machine



Having it All in NYC

Growing up in Brooklyn New York during the 50's was probably the most exciting time of my life.

My friend Karl's stepfather was a train salesman at F.A.O. Schwartz toy store in NYC. On one Saturday in 1953 near Christmas he said to me "I am going to mix business with pleasure today." We first went to THE LIONEL SHOWROOM LAYOUT at 15 E 26th Street. We walked in to another world. The trains, the oil derricks, the diesel horns and steam whistles were amazing to a 9 year old boy. We met some people who were just as starry eyed as we must have looked to them. The room was huge in my eyes. We must have stayed about an hour, but to me it wasn't long enough.

Next we went to the American Flyer showroom at The Gilbert Hall of Science. It was one block over to E 25th Street and 4 blocks up to Broadway. The layout was nothing like Lionel's

because it only had 2 rails. However, the accessories, the train sounds and the smell of the steam engine smoke were much more impressive. Karl's stepfather said that they pushed their Erector sets and science kits much more than American Flyer trains.

The last stop on this mission was to go to Madison Hardware at 105 E 23rd Street just off Park Avenue South. We walked in to a mob scene. There were people all over the store. The people leaving the store would have trains wrapped in plain paper with string tied around them. Lou or Carl (the owners) would give you a handle to carry it on the subway. The handle was made of wood with metal hooks that wrapped around the string. Finally, after waiting awhile, Karl got a 456 coal ramp and the Hopper car that dumps the coal for \$13.50. I got a 6520 searchlight car for \$7.95 plus tax. As always, the prices were written on a Madison Hardware sticker and placed on the bag.

On the way back to Brooklyn on the subway, I stared as in a dream at the East River thinking about the new addition to my 2343 SF freight set. Yes, I felt glad to be so close to these places in that time of my life. I did not realize how good I had it until I was much older. I will always treasure The Toys of Yesteryear.

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Wisdom, advice, ideas and history in monthly columns.

Layout of the Month

Max W. describes his Penn RR

My layout is 8 feet long by 6 feet wide, with a 5 foot long addition. The layout has 2 loops that are connected, this means that a train can go from the inside loop to the outside loop 2 different ways. I am using O36 Lionel Fast Track that I weathered myself. I painted the rails with brown latex paints and used a black wash on the ballast. We started building the layout in July of 2005 and "finished" it about 1-2 months later. The addition piece we built in December of 2007. Since then I have been adding accessories and others things to it. There are 2 sheets of pink foam on top of the layout, this helps when creating scenery. I have a tunnel that my dad and I made by stacking cut sheets of pink foam on top of each other then carving it to look more like a mountain. Because we have the 2 layers of foam we were able to carve out a small pond. The layout is kind of set in the 1950s in Pennsylvania, but not everything is based on that exact time period. The engines I run on my layout are from different eras, I have some semi-old steam engines and some modern-era diesels such as my Norfolk Southern GP-38. I decided on this layout because my other 4 by 4 layout wasn't even near big enough for me, and I really wanted to be able to run 2 trains at once. On my old layout it had an outer loop and an inner loop which were connected with switches. We removed the switches so that I could run 2 trains, but it wasn't enough, so I got the idea of a new layout and started looking at track plans. I changed my mind a lot with plans, one day I would have one, the next day it would be different; then, I finally found one that I liked. The layout is operated by 2 Lionel CW-80 transformers that are located at the end of the layout. I have recently added a video to YouTube showing some of the details on the layout.



Spring Layout Tour Day 1- continued

The last layout of the day was at Rick and Cookie's. In addition to viewing the 13 x 18 Lionel O Hi Rail layout, Rick's many animals and fish tanks were enjoyed by all. Their layout was begun in September 2008 and has progressed quite rapidly. Rick scratch builds all the buildings and Cookie and her parents Bill and Sue do all of the scenery. The largest group of the day congregated around the TV monitor to see the layout from the train's eye, a wireless camera. The cameras, control panel and other electronics were made possible by James and Kelly, two more family members of the Raccoon Creek Scenic Railroad Team.

Thanks to our hosts and to the members who were available to participate in today's event. The second day of the Spring Tours will be on March 28th at the home of Rick B. from 10am to 1pm.



Paul's Layout



Curt's Layout



Eric's Layout



Rick and Cookie's Layout

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
3/19/09 7:00 PM

Guests- Scott and Montinique E., Richard B. (joined as member at meeting)

Ted announced good and bad news- that he will not be doing demonstrations.....

Curt- income statement report

Tour of layouts- starting at 10 this Saturday

Ted announced that through contractual agreement with HT, as of March 1, 2009, the club now owns 50% of the layout at HT.

Train Show- April 4 and 5 in Norcross. Children's layout will be there. Need some commitments from people to help.

ZWs- If you buy a brand new one from Lionel it may have bad circuit boards. Lionel is very late in getting the new circuit boards out- maybe even up to a year.

Swap Meet- We are planning to have a swap meet in front of HT. Only members can sell- anyone can buy. You can sell or swap things with members. You can sell to the general public, but not anything that is brand new because we do not want to compete with HT. Be honest about what is wrong with the item you are selling. Please make sure it is working. Mark your own items. Date is TBA. Stay tuned..

Vote taken- unanimous yes for the \$250 cleaning car that Bill demonstrated. Scott asked why we couldn't use a battery operated engine or wind up engine to pull the cleaning car?

Lionel Demonstration on March 23rd at the Cineplex- Meet at a restaurant before going to the demonstration of the new Lionel Vision Line of trains.

Newsletter update- request for articles. Please email to Cookie.

Yahoo site- we are going to un-affiliate ourselves as a club. Ted is asking members not to use this site to communicate between Club members. If you want to contact all of the club members in one Email, please use members@ogauge.org until our new forum is active on our website.

Eric explained about the plans for the new forum and website features.

Next meeting on 4/16/09 with ' Business Meeting' at 7:00 pm- don't forget.

Lionel Presentation

written by Ted B.

What a great evening from Lionel on Monday, March 23rd. The seminar was organized by Brian Sheffield, owner of Legacy Station.

Lionel presented their 'Visions' line to a group of their customers and vendors. Lionel presenters were: Tom Nuzzo, Remy Convery, and Don Reese.

Lionel's National Sales Manager started out his part of the presentation by saying, "I am glad to be here in Atlanta and see my special buddy Lester L. who came to Atlanta to get

out of traffic." What can I tell you, Les knows everyone and everyone know Les.

Lionel played a 25 minute DVD, shown on a full size theater screen, premiering the new "Visions" line from Lionel. After showing the DVD, each of the three speakers from Lionel talked about different aspects of the 'Visions' line.

Then, everyone moved to the lobby area where Lionel had a simple track layout to demonstrate one of the prototype "Visions" engines. While supplies lasted we received a Lionel plastic bag with a copy of the "Visions" line DVD, a second DVD on 'How to use the Legacy System,' and the new Lionel "Visions Signature Edition" catalog.

C A L E N D A R

MARCH 2009						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
22 CANCELLED Trestle building @ Bill D's X	23 Lionel Vision Presentation 6-8:00 PM Cinevision Corp. 3300 N.E. Expresswy, Bldg. 2A Atlanta, GA 30341	24 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	25	26 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	27	28 No Work at Hobby Town 10:00 AM to 1 PM NAOGRRC Layout Tour - R.Bigliardi
29  2-5 PM Trestle building @ Bill D's	30	31 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 				
APRIL 2009						
			Apr 1  April Fools!	Apr 2 6-9 PM Work @ @ at Hobby Town 	Apr 3	Apr 4 NO work at Hobby Town Great  Train Expo
5 Palm Sunday NO Trestle Work  Great Train	6	7 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	8	9 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	10 Good Friday	11 NO work at Hobby Town
12 Easter NO Trestle Work 	13	14 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	15	16 NAOGRRC Meeting Tonight! 	17	18 9:30 to 2 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 
19  2-5 PM Trestle & Bridge building @ Bill D's	20	21 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	22	23 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	24	25 9:30 to 2 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 
26  2-5 PM Trestle & Bridge building @ Bill D's	27	28 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	29	30 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 		