

North Atlanta O-Gauge Railroad Club



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

Issue #5- May 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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The 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.

Page 6

Calendar

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

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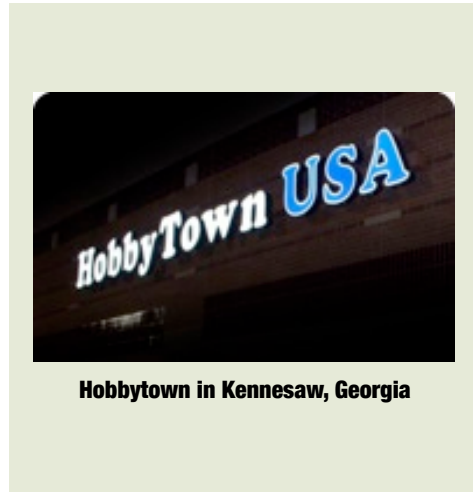


Swap Meet on June 6th

NAOGRRC will have its first swap meet on Saturday June 6th from 10am to 6pm at HobbyTown in Kennesaw Georgia.

This is a time for members to sell their items to other members and the public. We will set up tables in front of HobbyTown along with other HT clubs selling their hobby items. The items for sale must be in good working order.

In this newsletter, we are including an advance peek at items that will be sold in order to allow the members first pick before the actual swap meet. Contact the seller if you are interested.



Hobbytown in Kennesaw, Georgia

For the public and prospective new members, we will have newsletters and flyers available at the swap meet.

Come and support your club and bring any railroad items you would like to sell.

Here is an advance list:

Bill D.

- 2 Atlas 045 R/H turnouts \$35 each
- 11 Atlas 045 L/H turnouts \$35 each
- K line tree house \$20
- 9 Atlas uncouplers \$20 each
- TMCC command base and remote and cable for TMCC and DCS to operate together-\$110

Ted B.

- Marx # 1 passenger car from the 1960's General set.....\$20.00
- Good condition

- Lionel #6-19856 Mermaid Transport Car 1998 with original, box.....\$40.00
- Like new condition

- Lionel #6464-1 Boxcar.....\$45.00
- Nice condition

- 2 Lionel #022 turnouts includes controllers, lantern, & power plug...\$15.00 each
- Clean.



Hobby Town Layout Update

Help Needed

This month we will be doing many different tasks depending on who and how many come to the work session at Hobby Town .

- Ballasting track (still about 60% to do yet)
- Working on tunnel liners (pink insulation type)
- Installing more cardboard framing strips for hills and mountains.
- Applying shrubs and bushes along the block wall.
- Applying ground cover to engine yard siding beside the round house.
- Possibly starting geodesic foam hard shell.

- Stream bed fillers close to the turntable.
- Sift rocks and plan fitting them between two tunnel portals on restroom side.
- Finish cardboard strips in same area as previous line location.
- Measure and fit for bridge on lower part of track #4 (trestles also)

As you can see, there are many tasks to be worked on. The biggest challenge is that some of these tasks are in the same location and we want to spread the workers out as much as possible. Some of the tasks might need two working together.

Two other incidental tasks that need to be done are (1) clean the track

and (2) clean and straighten the store room in the meeting area.



The engine house on the NAOGRRC layout.

See you on Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday if you have the time. Please check the schedule on Page 6.

Featured Columns

Wisdom, advice, ideas and history in monthly columns.

Train Dr. Ted

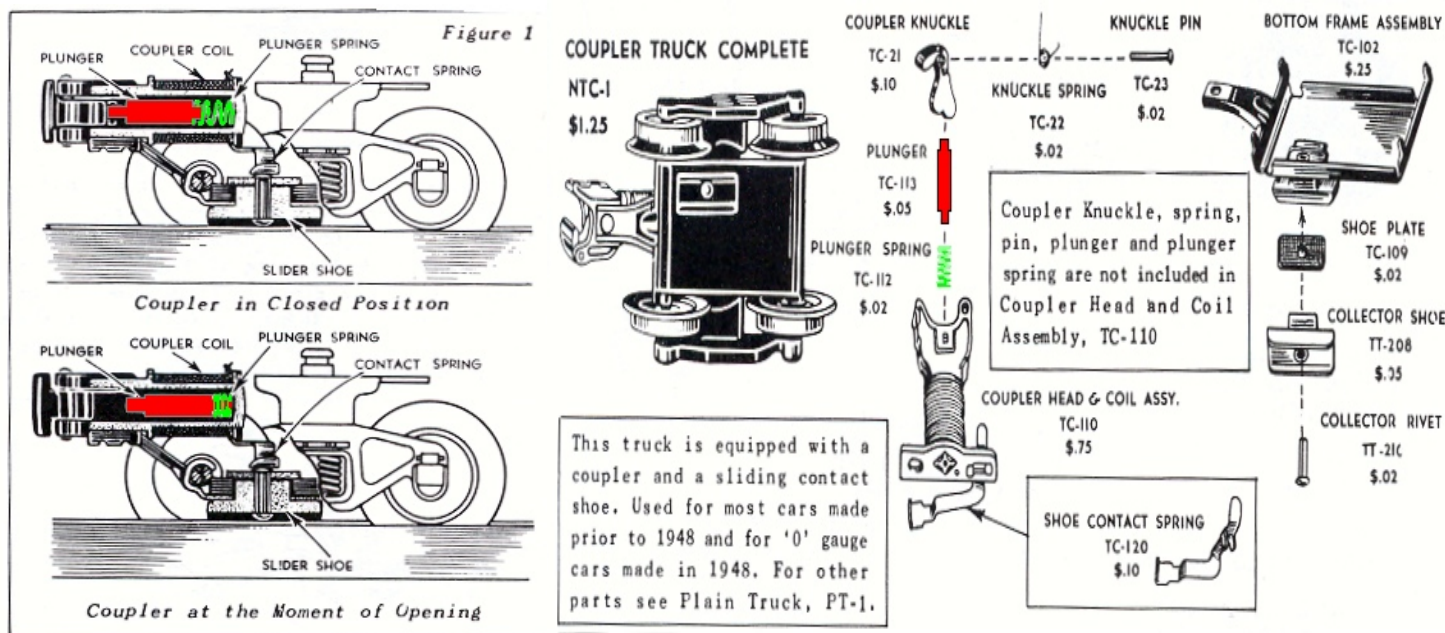


THE KNUCKLE COUPLER

“My train uncouples at random.” WHY?

This is one of the most asked questions I get. The solution has many answers to it depending where the uncoupling event usually takes place. To help answer this question it will be helpful to first look at a brief history of the knuckle coupler.

The knuckle coupler for toy trains is a post war invention that Lionel introduced to their line in 1945. At that time the coupler was an electromagnetic device. To activate the uncoupler, the car needed to be over a special track in which the car’s truck sliding shoe contacted with a special rail in order for the uncoupler to be activated by having a spring inside the coupler release the knuckle and then the knuckle spring would open the knuckle. Today’s knuckle couplers on all of the ‘digital’ cars are based on the original electromagnetic 1945 version with little change minus the sliding shoe. See FIG. 1.



Featured Columns

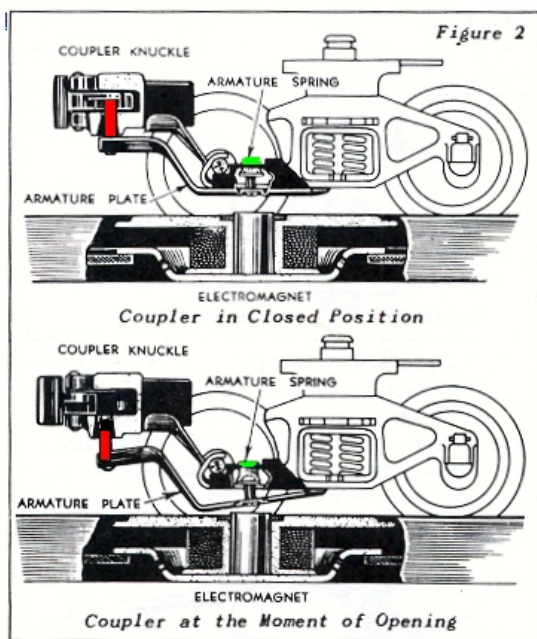
Wisdom, advice, ideas and history in monthly columns.

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Train Dr. Ted



The knuckler coupler's next generation beginning in 1948 was an electro magnet in the track to pull down a plate in the car's knuckle coupler to release the spring loaded knuckle. For the next 50 years all sorts of variations on this same system were made to the knuckle coupler system to operate cheaper. The more expensive 1950's version was the most reliable and used by most manufacturers in the 1990's through today. See Fig. 2.



Now that we have the history, we see that all knuckle couplers are based on the two couplers shown: the 'magnetic coil' and the 'plated version.' I have also highlighted, in **RED**, the 'PLUNGERS' or 'pins' and in **GREEN** the springs. 95% of the cause of a coupler's failure to stay close is because of the **RED** or **GREEN** parts.

All of the coupler problems can be resolved. You may want to confirm with someone before attempting many of these solutions.

Problem: My car/tender uncouples on crossovers, turnouts, when I run it fast, or when I have a lot of cars behind it.

Solution: The coupler springs are vibrating and tension is weak allowing the pin holding the coupler to open. The plunger spring/armature plate pin does not have enough tension. This includes those digital command cars. The springs need to have more tension. It is easier to do this on the plate style uncoupler. The coil coupler needs to be taken apart in order to stretch the spring. In the 1945-48 coil couplers, the spring has been compressed for over 50 years and may need stretching or it may have rusted or just failed. I have also seen brand new digital coil couplers that did not have the proper tension to begin with.

Problem: My car uncouples when I go over turnouts.

Solution: If you have a sliding shoe with a coil coupler, the rivet on the bottom of the sliding shoe is touching the middle rail of the turnout as it crosses over. Slightly filing the rivet down a bit will solve this problem. File a small amount and then run the car over the turnout. File some more and try again until the car's uncoupler does not activate over the turnout. **DO NOT FILE THE SHOE.**

Problem: When coupling two cars together one the couplers is at different height.

Solution: If the knuckle and the armature plate are metal the coupler can gently be pulled up or down to mate with the next car. Try to find a standard car that is aligned correctly and use that car to set the correct height alignment. This way all of your cars will be standardized for all of your consist and for any new cars you purchase in the future. Sometimes the coupler head is loose from the holding rivet and if you attempt to tug on the knuckle head, the head may come off. If the coupler is plastic look to see if the retaining plastic pin that holds the coupler arm to the frame is loose or broken- which is usually the case.

Problem: The knuckle on a car does not spring open without being pulled open.

Solution: A knuckle spring located at the opening of the knuckle (not pictured) has broken or has lost its tension. On some less expensive cars, the spring action was a plastic piece that was part of the knuckle. Sometimes these plastic springs lost their tension before the car was sold. Many of these cars can accept a regular substitute steel spring. These springs are very inexpensive, require a new rivet to install, and require instructions to install.

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The Time Machine



An Interesting History Lesson

The US standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way they built them in England, and English expatriates built the US railroads.

Why did the English build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

Why did 'they' use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, because that's the spacing of the wheel ruts.

So who built those old rutted roads? Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (and England) for their legions. The roads have been used ever since.

And the ruts in the roads? Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels. Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. Therefore, the United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot.

Layout of the Month- Ron S.

My current layout has been in development for about 25 years now. It is still in development in my mind and in several concept designs on my computer. I would guess that there are one or two other club members who can identify with that concept. And of course, I am now fully involved with the development of our club layout at Hobby Town. Soooo.... I guess my great plans will have to wait a while longer. The good news is that I am gaining a tremendous amount of experience and learning a lot for when I finally do get to put "my great design" into action.

However, the layout for this article is the one that I originally built for my son in 1984 and still use today. It is tucked away in our bonus room among stacks of other train boxes collected over the years and some additional miscellaneous items that my wife deemed to a proper place in there also. There still is some room to maneuver about though and my grandchildren always ask to see the trains when they come by.

Size of layout: 4x8 - custom design - Figure-8 folded in on itself (see diagram below), all O-27 track yearning to be cleaned.

Layout start date: 1984 in secrecy in my basement in Wilkes Barre, PA. It was set up Christmas Eve 1984 under the tree after our three children went to bed; A big surprise Christmas morning! We lived in a 1200 sq ft townhouse at the time and thus our layout size was suppressed for practical reasons. It still seems to be suppressed even as we have acquired larger living quarters but have additionally acquired more "stuff".

Theme: Traditional Lionel & Plasticville with significant items from our life

Engines: It all started with the New Haven 8754 Rectifier purchased from Frank Rash of Frank's Roundhouse on the Sans Souci Hwy in Wilkes Barre, PA. Since then there have been many more New Havens, steam, diesel and electric added over the years.

Layout Control: Many different transformers have been used including Lionel ZW with TMCC and DCS. I have even had two trains running simultaneously under TMCC!!

Why did you build a layout? I have always enjoyed trains since childhood. My brother retained possession of our American Flyer set when we became adults. Since then I was able to reacquire most of my childhood set from my brother although it had seen many better days. I have been able to acquire replacements over the years, too. I was influenced quite a bit in 1984 by a good friend and IBM customer who had a tremendous traditional Lionel layout. Additionally, Joe Grzybosky's Train store was about a block around the corner from my office in Scranton, PA. That made for some expensive "lunches" from time to time. The Wyoming Valley in PA is true Lionel train haven.



MINUTES OF THE MEETING

5 / 21 / 09 7:00 PM

Guests-0
 New members-0
 # members attending- 20

Treasurer's report

Cookie- newsletter and volunteer for layout of the month. Al C. volunteered-possibility for next month. Ron S. volunteered for this month

Elections- will appoint the nominees if no one else nominated.

Copies of the newsletter available at the HT layout?- lots of discussion about how to display the newsletter or make copies. Bill suggested using the easel for it. Display and update once a month. Seal pages in sheet protectors and display on easel. Jack might build a new easel.

Another suggestion-Place website on a long banner along the side of the layout..both sides.

Train Shows

- Aug 8- Norcross- one day show- our Children's Layout will attend.
- Sept 5th- TCA at Southern Poly- we will need people for the Children's layout
- Oct or Nov expo- 2 day show- TBA
- Dec 5th- again at Southern Poly-We will need people for the Children's Layout.

Discussion on which train shows we will participate in.

Swap meet- see Page 1

Parts order- Les- will be collecting a new list for June 10th.

Still waiting on our negotiating for a club car with Lionel and the Georgia Aquarium. We are working on a deal for 100 cars.

Jim R. talked about his experience at the closing of Atlanta Trains- amazing deal!

Ron and Bill talked about the HT layout- we need your help to get this accomplished. This is a club's table. We have at least another 1 year to get it acceptable. And then another year to finish all the detailing.

Work schedule during the summer months- one saturday a month and then tuesday and thursday night.

We took a hand count on the scenery help. Many things to do. Some discussion on committing your name to a list. Perhaps an email sent out by Ron on Sunday requesting sign up for the next week.

How about Kits? can we take them home to work on them? Yes. We already have 10 kits here now. Sign one out with Bill and he will also give artistic instructions in upcoming workshops. Any extra supplies, paints needed for the kits can be put on the HT account.

Can we allow people to come on different days if they have a trained task? Yes. Email Bill or Ron. But this still requires some attendance at the planned work sessions for direction.

Requesting members try to come and help 2 or 3 times a month. Maybe even an hour. You will also be able to talk to customers and have fun talking about trains and running the trains!

Once a month- all the track needs to be cleaned. So there is always that job. At least

until the track cleaning car comes. Ted still working out the details of purchase with HT.

Piedmont Pilgrimage- organizers have contacted Bill about this next year's tour. Our club HT layout now has a certificate of participation. Tentative date for our tour is friday after Thanksgiving again from 10-2.

Christmas party- do we want the same menu? mostly italian, BBQ, pizza

suggestions-need 12 pizzas and more BBQ, scratch the eggplant.

Same place-we reserved the Cobb Community Center at Mountain View.

Come anytime you want to run your trains- any day. Just wear your shirt.

New people- need to buy a T shirt ? - email Dave H.

C A L E N D A R

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
JUNE 2009						
May 31	June 1	2 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	3	4 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	5	6 Swap Meet at Hobby Town
7	8	9 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	10	11 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	12	13 NO work at Hobby Town
14	15	16 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	17	18 NAOGRRC Meeting Tonight! 	19	20 NO work at Hobby Town
20 Happy Fathers Day!	21	22 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	23	24 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	25	26 NO work at Hobby Town
27	28	29 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	30			
JULY 2009						
				July 1 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	2	3 NO work at Hobby Town
4 Independence Day! 	5	6 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	7	8 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	9	10 NO work at Hobby Town