

# North Atlanta O-Gauge Railroad Club



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

Issue #4- April 2009

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## NAOGRRC Online Forum

<http://forum.ogauge.org/>

We are announcing a new way for Club Members to ask questions and discuss train-related topics online. This online forum will become a place where we can meet virtually. Our new forum replaces the previous Yahoo group.

The benefits of the forum are numerous. Club members can begin a discussion and view the replies at any time online. No need to save emails or try to figure out who is answering what. The forum will list each post and the replies under the initial post. All the posts will be arranged in "threads". These posts and "threads"

**The new Club Forum is a way for members to share ideas and ask questions.**

will also be searchable. So if, in a few months, you want to read what was said about a subject, just type a keyword in the search field and the relevant posts will be listed.

Another benefit of the forum is the ability to post pictures and links for members to view.

We will have a public area where outside train enthusiasts can participate in discussions with Club Members. The private portion of the forum will be for Club Members only and will include information specific to club business.

There will be links to the forum on the main webpages of the Club website. Information on accessing the forum and the sign-on will be emailed to all members.

Join us in discussions about trains, layouts, scenery, electronics, collectibles and anything else pertaining to the NAOGRRC.



# Hobby Town Layout Update

## Best way to learn

Thanks to all who have helped.

Currently, we are working on the sub structure parts for trestles, bridges and tunnels. In the next 2 months, many of these will be finished and in place. Although the schedule is printed in this newsletter, please watch your email for changes on the schedule. We always need people to help.

There are many new features on the layout. Each week we complete a part of the scenery. There are many items that are being completed offsite. Just wait until you see the covered bridge that is currently about 99% complete and to be placed soon! Ron is working on an arch bridge and it will be added to the layout and Jim V. is working on two trestles; one to be added to the gorge area and the

other is the long curved trestle that will be a highlight in the ticket booth area.

In the next two weeks, we will be working on the hard shell, rock molds and ballasting. You will begin to see some new color that will be added to tunnel liners and rock molds already in place. Once many of the tunnel portals and liners are in place, we will commence constructing the cardboard sub-structures for the hard shell that will shape the gorge area.

Coming to HobbyTown to help is the best way to learn to build a layout and scenery. This is the work of the club and the fun of the club. Everyone is train-able !!!



**Two features on the layout- the engine house and a tunnel portal and lining.**

# Featured Columns

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

## Train Dr. Ted



## Pulling Longer Train Consists

It seems that we all like to pull long consists of train cars. Some engines can and some cannot. First, you need to keep all of your equipment in good order. Secondly, you need to know there are differences in 'pulling' and 'rolling' stock.

Let's start with the 'pulling' stock. In general, engines with 2 motors will do better than single motor engines – there is more drive traction and more weight with the added motor. Lionel's magne-traction grips the steel rails – if your rails have steel in them – some manufacturers do not make rails with steel. Rubber tires give a lot of grip. Double heading engines will give great motive power especially when they are equipped with magne-traction and/or rubber tires.

Caution; if you double head engines with 'Odyssey' make sure that the 'Odyssey' is turned OFF or you will burn out the 'triacs' (electronics). Make sure that your engines are in top running condition. See my article in the January "News Letter" on "Maintaining Your Motive Stock."

As for rolling stock, there is a big difference between the 'older' cars and the 'newer' cars. The old cars have a blunt axle and require oil to make them roll better. The newer cars have 'fast axles' and roll far easier than the old cars. For example, a standard 0-4-0 1950's engine can pull around 5 'old' cars. The same engine can pull around 10 'fast axle' cars with the same effort.

You can change out the old trucks for new ones. Lionel, K-Line, and MTH make them. Talk to your train dealer. They will let you know which trucks are substituted for the car that you have.

And what about those pesky illuminated cars where the lights flicker over turnouts, crossovers and sometimes they just plain flicker? Dirty tracks and wheels will cause poor contact between the rails and the lights. Clean the tracks, clean the center roller (never oil the center roller), and clean all of the wheels. If the axles are caked with dirt or are rusty, clean or replace them.

Cars with a single center roller will flicker when going through turnouts and crossovers. The solution here is to add a second center roller to the other wheel set. Available are clip-on center rollers to add to your current wheels or you can usually replace the center plate with one that has a center roller, or you can replace the entire wheel set. The first two methods will usually cost \$7.00 or less. I

can help you determine what is needed. With dual rollers, flicker is not a problem on clean track. In case you were wondering, yes, the extra roller will cause some drag.

## Interesting repairs completed this month for members

For Al C, all of his MTH engines would shut down when they would cross his O-27 non derailing turnouts. When the engine's wheel would touch the non derailer rail, the coil in the turnout activates. This coil, along with the spark that activates the coil, sends out a signal that matches the code for shutting down MTH engines. The solution was to install two .22uf capacitors, one to each of the left and right posts of a switch wire connectors and the other end of the capacitors attached to the ground post. This resolved the problem. I own a flag man accessory that also shuts down an MTH engine as the train wheels activate the man to wave the flag. By installing the .22uf capacitor across the activator unit the problem has also been resolved.

Rick B. has a Marx 1940's engine. The engine would run fine for a short time and then shutter and barely run. The fault was not the motor but was a dirty reversing unit. By cleaning up the reversing unit's contacts, the engine runs like new.

Rick K. has a Lionel 682 turbine engine. Between Les and I, we have added missing parts and repaired about every part that is in that engine. One thing that was not repaired was the magne-traction. Besides the magnet missing, someone had exchanged the stainless steel axles with steel axles. Magne-traction will not work with steel axles.

# Featured Columns

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## Train Dr. Ted

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David H. had an engine that ran very nicely backwards and very badly going forward. This condition is usually caused by uneven pressure by the brush springs. In Dave's case, the condition was caused by the enlarging of the hole that holds the armature. This condition can be

put off by making sure that the armature's brush holder is properly oiled. Again see my article in the January issue of the "News Letter."

This month's repairs have included cow and horse cars and corrals, milk cars, trolleys, transformers, conventional and TMCC engines. Most of the repairs that I run into have to do with bending back parts the owners thought would work better bent 'their' way versus the manufacturers. Most of this bending is trying to make something work and does not address the real cause, therefore usually causing a lack of performance. Second, is replacing missing parts. Third, is putting back the tension into springs and copper contacts that have lost their tension.

## Layout of the Month- Eric S.



majority of stuff is DCS. All switches and accessories on the layout are connected to the AIU and controlled via the DCS remote. The layout is divided into 4 power districts, with each district powered by a 180 Watt Lionel Powerhouse. Several smaller transformers power the switches and accessories. Right now I think my favorite feature of the layout is the freight yard, which has a functioning 14-engine turntable, a working classification yard and a diesel service facility. I've always wanted a working freight yard, so it's no surprise that this layout is centered around the yard. If you'd like to find out more about my layout, try the links below:

Eric's Train Website: <http://www.ericstrains.com>

Eric's Youtube Videos: <http://www.ericstrains.com/video>

Eric's Train Blog: <http://www.ericstrains.com/journal>

Ever since I was a child I have been fascinated by modern diesel freight trains. After buying my first house in late 2006, I finally have a basement large enough to create the diesel layout I'd always wanted. My layout, which does not have a name yet, is approximately 400 square feet in size. The layout is spread out between 4 rooms in my basement and all rooms are connected via tunnels that go through the walls. Construction of the layout began in January of 2007 and I expect the layout will be "complete" by about 2012. The layout is modern-themed, with all engines and rolling stock being no older than the early 1970's. Because the layout is going to be modeled after today's railroads, it's 100% diesel powered (though I may occasionally run a steamer just for fun). Three of the four rooms of the layout will be set in the Southeast US, while the fourth room will be set in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. The "Colorado Room" will feature a Coors brewery as well as a narrow gauge rail line in addition to the O-Scale line. The main level of track has been laid and is functional. A second level of track is now under construction and once it is completed I will them being working on scenery. All track and switches on the layout are Atlas O. The minimum curve on the layout is O-63, although the majority of the track is O-72 or higher. I run both DCS and Legacy / TMCC on the layout, but the vast

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## The Time Machine



### A Trunk Spans the Eras

by Rick K.

I recently sent some of our updated pictures of our layout to family and friends. My Mom has been enjoying them immensely and each update keeps bringing back great memories. The latest is about a trunk similar to the one sitting on the front left corner of our depot. Both my Mom and my aunt recall that trunk as it sat in attic of their homes in Wheeling, West Virginia and then in Cincinnati, Ohio. Then, it looked just as in our picture, the light and dark brown trunk as if it were housing some treasure. In those days it did.... my Grandfather's army uniform who served from the end of the Spanish American War until he was decommissioned just before World War I. As Mom tells it, she, my aunt, and ten other siblings would sneak into the trunk and march around in that uniform much to my Grandfather's chagrin. He felt they were dishonoring the uniform, but I know they thought that they were honoring him. As a tyke, Mom, Dad, and I lived with my

grandparents for awhile. We eventually moved out and it seems that the trunk followed us. That old trunk sans the uniform became a project for my Mom. The trunk had seen several major floods in Wheeling and had suffered the resulting musty damage. It took several good scrubblings of bleach and a couple of days exposure to the sun, but the trunk was good to go to take on its next task.... Rick's new toy trunk. Mom covered over the brown coloring with a sky blue paint and then strangely enough stenciled toy trains on the outside. I have no idea what happened to that old trunk, but can now get lost in its magic right there on my depot.



## Any Takers?

Curt, Max, Eric, Paul, Rick, Cookie and Families,

Have been meaning to write and thank you for opening up your houses and sharing your layouts with us. Although each one was very different and in different stages of completion, each one was equally enjoyable, educational, and fascinating. As far as completion, I believe Max's is **ready for the train magazines**. A nice detailed layout built by a teenager should be a shoe-in, especially if the article is written by the teen. Add in Dad's layout, and it could make a really nice article, Max (not to mention a couple of bucks to buy more trains).

The tour inspired another **idea for a magazine article**, for the more literary talented among us. I've seen lots of articles about club and individual layouts, but I do not remember seeing any edition highlighting the layouts of members of 1 particular club. Our club could easily provide about a dozen layouts in various stages.

Again, thank you and your families for a very fun day.

Rick B.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
4/16/09 7:00 PM

**Attendees:** 24 members and new members  
Larry K. and Bob P.  
**Guests:** John C.

**Magazines and DVDs-** still missing a few.  
Please check your home libraries.

**Atlanta Trains-** going out of business, most  
stock gone but some things left

Curt-treasurer's report  
Cookie- need articles for newsletter

**Children's Layout-**we had a good turnout last  
weekend. 12 members helped during the 2 day  
event. We are working on a faster set-up by  
incorporating the wire harnesses into the  
carpet. Take down was accomplished in 20  
minutes.

**Lionel parts order-** Les is in charge- email him  
so that we can save on shipping and make one  
large order

**Request** for Eric to make a link to the Lionel  
parts page on our website.

**Swap Meet-** proposed at the end of May on a  
saturday morning 10-1. Open to just members  
to sell. HT has a lot of people who come to this  
for the other hobbies, so now we will also  
participate and set up a table. Les in charge-  
email him what you have to sell. Only sell things  
that work. You are representing the club. Test  
loop on the big layout will be available.

**Elections-** in June. The committee is Eric and  
Cookie. Cookie and Curt will still run for sec and  
treasurer. President and VP- taking  
nominations. Ted's nomination is Les for  
President. He has been President before and  
started up 2 clubs. Rick K has accepted the  
nomination for VP. See email for details.

**New Business-** Traveling layout for hospital  
children. We now have a contact at Emory- Dr.  
Jack Kaufman. He asked us if we would do a  
layout at Emory. He said that he would get  
Home Depot or Lowes to fund the entire  
project. Jay C and Jack C, Scott, Paul, Dean B,  
Larry K and Jim V also volunteered. This project  
is near and dear to Ted. Maybe a layout that  
stays in Nov Dec at the children's ward. Then  
maybe also a second layout that travels.

**New members-** shirts available from Dave H.  
Send suggestions for a new member packet to  
Cookie.

**Next meeting on 5/21/09 with ' Business  
Meeting' at 7:00 pm- don't forget.**

## Upcoming Train Shows

- May 2nd- TCA with Lionel
- Aug 8th- Norcross Railroadiana
- Sept 12 - TCA at Southern Poly
- Dec 5th - TCA



## C A L E N D A R

APRIL 2009						
19	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	27	28 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	29	30 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 		
MAY 2009						
					May 1	May 2 9:30 to 2 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 
3	4	5 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	6	7 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	8	9 9:30 to 2 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 
10 Mothers Day	11	12 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	13	14 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	15	16 9:30 to 2 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 
17	18	19 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	20	21 NAOGRRRC Meeting Tonight! 	22	23 NO work at Hobby Town
24	25 Memorial Day Holiday	26 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	27	28 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	29	30 9:30 to 2 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 