

North Atlanta O-Gauge Railroad Club



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

Issue #9- September 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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Les and his Time Machine



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

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Member articles

Find out what other members have learned about their train layouts.

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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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Great Field Trip

We had a great time during our visit to the Canton, St. Paul & Pacific Railway in Canton on Saturday, September 19, 2009. Mother Nature must be a rail fan as the rain diminished so that all who wished rode the 25 minute route through the Georgia countryside. The club members of the C,SP&P were very gracious in answering our questions and providing a great experience.

One eye opening fact about the live steam hobby is that many of the engines are home made, no Lionel, MTH, or Williams by Bachmann. It was very interesting to see the detail and skill needed to build one of these live steamers. Maintaining the steamers is an important part of the



The Canton, St. Paul & Pacific live steam railroad

hobby and we were able to see how the club members clean and repair their engines.

One of the live steam members told us that it took 10 years to prepare the land and lay the track for the route in Canton. The route included several tunnels, at least two trestles and a 2 track railroad crossing for real automobiles. Also, there were water towers, trackside buildings, a depot and a very ingenious engine house and turntable.

The problem about getting into this hobby is that the engines are not as easy to take to Ted's house for repair.

Curt, thanks for setting this up and we look forward to a return trip.



Hobby Town Layout Update

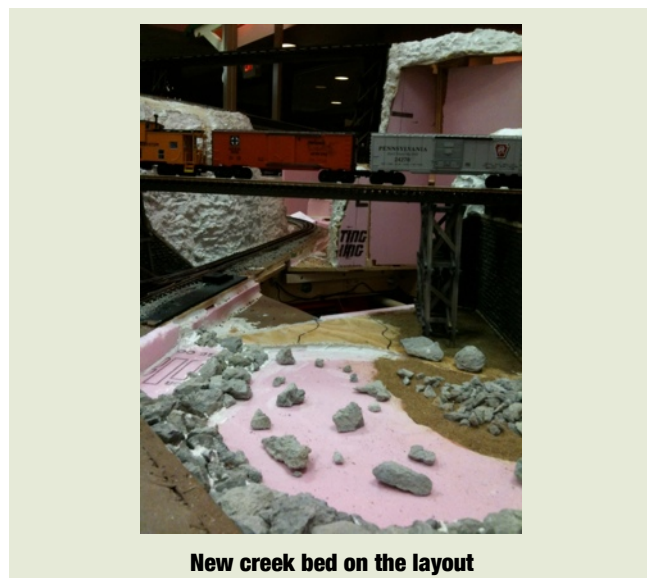
Modeling a creek bed

We are moving right along with scenery. If you haven't been by the layout lately, you should come and see what is going on. We are getting close to painting more rock molds and other scenery projects. Within a few weeks we will have more trestles. The arch trestle will be amazing!!!! Also the covered bridge will be a beautiful piece of work. The electrical committee has made many modifications that help out the layout also. Recent changes include the HT trains stopping in front of the buttons. Also, all the wheels and rollers of the engines and cars have been cleaned.

We will also begin working on the creek that meanders through the layout.

Eric had some tips on less expensive geodesic foam alternatives to the one we are using on the HT layout. The Alumilite Geodesic Foam is sold as "610 Foam" and the white plastic resin is sold as "Alumilite White" on the following website at <http://www.alumilite.com>

See the last page of this newsletter for a work calendar. No club workdays on Piedmont Pilgrimage tour days or Train Show days.



New creek bed on the layout

Featured Columns

Wisdom, advice, ideas and history in monthly columns.

Train Dr. Ted



HOW TO RUN TRAINS ON THE CLUB'S LAYOUT - PART 2 - ADVANCED

In last months newsletter I went over the **BASIC** use of the Club's layout at HobbyTown. In that article I went over how to run your trains by using just one loop at a time and not using any turnouts or accessories. In this **ADVANCED** article I will go over the use of **turnouts**, how to return the turnouts back to the HobbyTown mode and the use of the turntable.

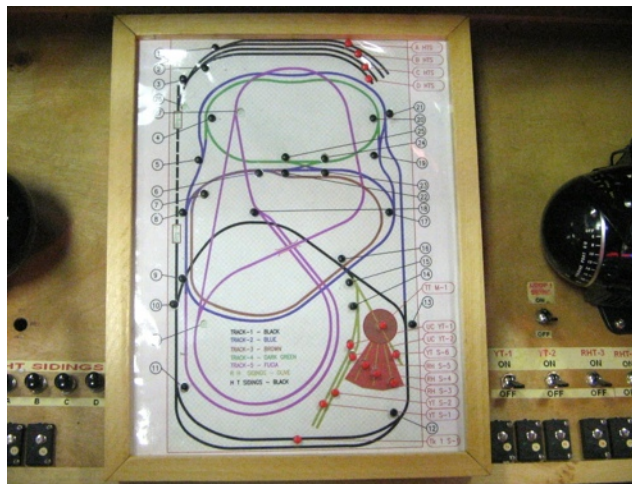
The most important part of using the layout is that the HobbyTown trains must be left in their 'Ready to Run' configuration.



First you will want to remove any of the HT trains on the loops and connecting loops that you are planning to use. Your trains need to start running in the same direction that the HT trains were set in. Turn on the power to the turnouts. The activation switch toggle handle will light up RED when the power to the turnouts are ON.



Now any of the turnouts can be thrown. By using push buttons on the track layout diagram (pictured below) you can see which turnout you are throwing and by looking at the 'Individual Turnout Indicator Controllers' you can see if the turnout is set in the direction that you wish to move your train.



Loops 1,2,3 & 4 are colorized on the MAP panel. The "BLACK" buttons, when pushed, will throw the turnout. The button only has to be pushed to start the turnout moving and then the turnout will complete the swing-over by itself. **Like all major Club tables, using multi loops and turnouts requires at least one other member to act as a 'SPOTTER' to help you guide your trains through the layout.**

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Train Dr. Ted continued

In the photo below the ‘Toggle Switches’ allow you to turn ‘ON’ the power to the sidings that are around the Round House. These are used to get trains in and out of sidings and in and out of the Round House. The **RED** buttons on the MAP also activate power to sidings but only when the button is being pushed. The toggle switches when turned ‘ON’ will over ride the **RED** momentary switched on the MAP. Turning the Round House TABLE clockwise or counter-clockwise is accomplished by using the **TURNABLE** toggle switch. Once you begin to move the table in a direction, the table will continue to move to the next rail and stop automatically. If you wish to continue and pass that next siding then just continue to hold onto the toggle and it will pass to the next siding. At the time of the writing of this article, **ONLY** the electrical team has operated the turntable and it’s sidings. We wanted to make sure it all works and it does work great. When you decide that you want to try the action with this great accessory make sure that you have a few good spotters and someone knowledgeable to help you with this item.

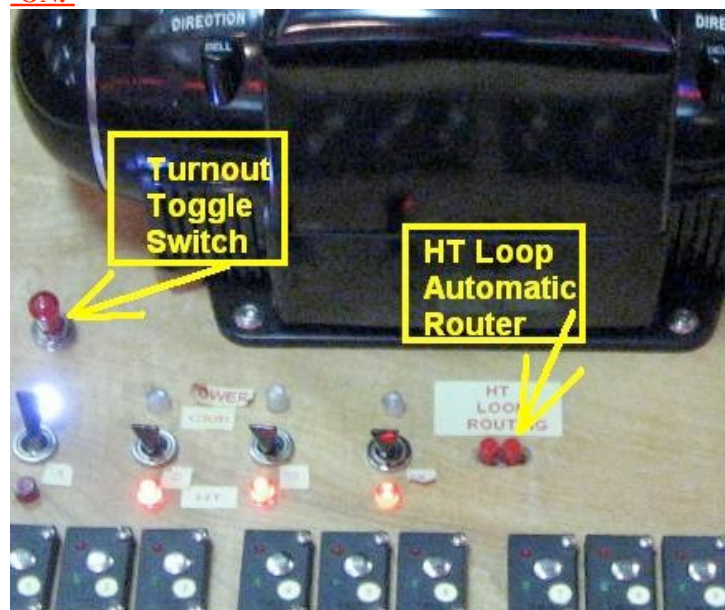


The 2 **RED** momentary push buttons on the MAP and the ‘Command Center’ board marked UC-1 and UC-2 activate the uncouplers on those sidings. Push them to uncouple cars. Only press for a couple of seconds as the uncoupler electromagnets will heat up quickly.

For training see Jack C., David H, or myself. We will be glad to get you started. Training is not available on scenic workshop nights.

When you have finished your session:

Remove all of your trains and set all of the HobbyTown trains back on the rail in their counter-clockwise direction and on the same loops as you found them. **Leave the toggle turnout power switch ‘ON.’**



Press the ‘HT Loop Automatic Router’ double button switch. This switch automatically resets all of the turnouts throughout the layout to close all of the loops back into circles. Then throw all of the ‘Track Loop’ toggles into the **HT** position. This will disconnect the power from the Club’s ZW’s and reconnect the power to the HT power supplies. Push the Customer **START-UP** buttons on the pillars one at a time. Check to make sure that the HT trains run at least one time around each loop. By doing this procedure the remaining turnouts will throw to the correct position for the HT trains and it insures that the HT trains are totally set for the Customer’s use. Now turn the ‘Turnout Toggle Switch’ to the off position. This keeps the turnouts from moving.

Sound complicated? -----Yes!
Hard to learn? -----No, not at all.

Our layout is for HT’s customers to use and enjoy in a simple way but with great detail. Yet, this layout serves to allow our Club to run on a great extensive track plan with all of the newest digital equipment, within a highly detailed scenic surrounding. The Electrical Committee has made the operating systems as automatic as possible allowing for many automatic features, yet also incorporating features for the wide variety of layouts users.

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Les and His Time Machine

On July 4th 1991 it was a humid day on Long Island. The train club was running a meet in a few weeks and some of us were cleaning track at the club layout and some of us were stamping post cards for the swap meet.

My crew was doing the postcards at my house. All of a sudden I heard a thud outside and jumped up and went to my front door. The guys at the table said it was a firecracker. I said "No! I know the difference between an explosion and an implosion." I opened the door and saw what looked like smoke coming from my friend's front windshield of his car. I told Bob, who was working on the cards, to come out with me. A large piece of ice had fallen onto his window and broke through to the inside of the car.

I told him "I think it is Blue Ice." He said "Are you nuts? What the heck is Blue Ice?" I said "Well it is the disinfectant that is used by the airlines on the toilets." "How do you know that?" he said. I explained "Just last week I was watching the news and there was a story of an Arizona couple who went away for the weekend and returned home to a hole in the roof and a blue stain on their bed and a unpleasant stink in the room. With no other evidence it was only thought to be something that fell from the sky. They called it Blue Ice."

I called my Fire Chief and the Suffolk County Police Department to come to make out a report. After they left I had an idea so I called the FAA, this was about 3pm. All the guys had gone home except the owner of the car. We were eating hot dogs when there was a knock on the door. It was a FAA Supervisor who said "You think a piece of Blue Ice broke your car window? I guess you don't have any proof right?"

I called my daughter from the dinner table and said "Go get the ice from the downstairs freezer and

show this man." We had put it in Aunt Helen's large soup bowl (sorry Aunt Helen, your dishes finally got used). "Yes, this is Blue Ice" said the man. The people across the street were eating when some ice fell onto their picnic table, amazingly missing the people sitting there.

I got a call from a radio station from Mississippi (Memphis) to go live on the phone for an interview. It was to air at 3am, however I would be at work by then. The next day I got home at 5pm to find 3 TV crews in front of my house. They waited there from 12 noon to talk to me. My daughter got the chunk of ice out of the freezer. I told them the story and they were amazed. That night the FAA called and wanted a statement on the incident. After about a week they narrowed it down to an overseas flight that passed over the house at the time this happened. There were 3 planes coming over my house any of which could have a faulty valve. As the plane lowered, the ice broke off and fell on the car.

I said "Thank the Lord it was a car it hit and not someone's head!!!!"

The car was taken to a repair shop where it was declared a total loss. It broke where the roof and window meet. It was a 1989 Ford Escort and cheaper to total than fix.

After all this, it happened again in Connecticut about a month later. This time the ice crashed through a wooden deck. Of course I thought "What if my friend was in the car?"

I think the FAA or the airlines finally found the problem and corrected it. I have not heard of anymore incidents with Blue Ice in quite some time.

Can you imagine all this just to run a swap meet ?

There is, however, a good side to this. The swap meet was a huge success and the club made \$741!!!!

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Do you have an older transformer that doesn't have a whistle and bell button?

From Jack C. - Electrical Committee

This is one way to add a button and switch to the wire from the transformer to the center rail of the track and make any transformer whistle and bell capable.

Materials

- 1- 3 watt diode (2 for \$0.99) RS# 276-144
- 1- Normally closed (NC) Push Button (1 for \$2.00) RS#275-1548
- 1- Rocker switch (DPDT) (1 for \$4.00) RS#275-691
- Wire (16-gauge suggested)

Optional

- 1- Small Project Enclosure Box (3x2x1)(1 for 2.75) RS#910-5043

Tools

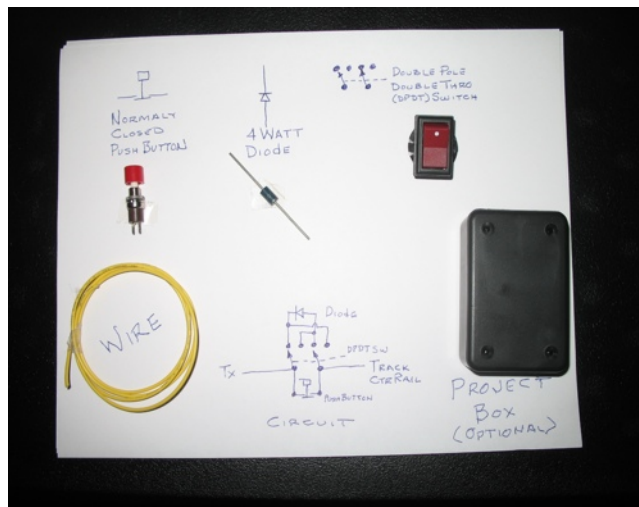
Electric drill, Drill bits, Soldering iron, Solder.

A large variety of push buttons and switches are available. I bought my materials at Radio Shack. For my project I elected to mount the push button and switch in a project box.

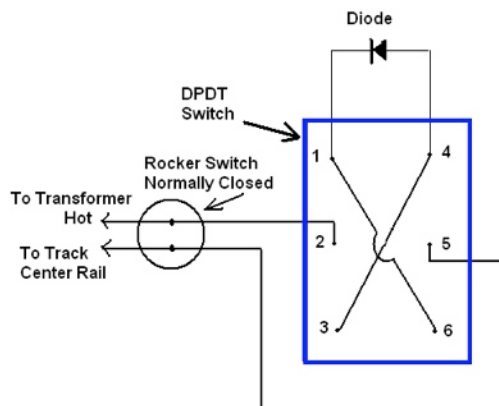


The switch and button could be mounted on your control panel next to the transformer without a project box. This of course is only two of many choices.

Locate where you want you mount the push button and switch. Select the appropriate drills for making the mounting holes. The hole size should be 1/16" larger than the shaft of the switch or push button that you are using. Drill the holes and mount the switch and push button. In my case a 3/4" hole for the switch and a 5/16" hole for the push button were required.



Now for the wiring, a wire long enough to reach from the transformer to one pole of the push button and a wire from the other pole of the push button to the track are soldered to the push button. Solder a wire from one pole of the push button to pole 2 on the switch. Solder a wire from the other pole of the push button to pole 5 of the switch. Solder the diode between poles 1 & 2 on the switch. Solder a wire from pole 1 to pole 6 on the switch, and another wire from pole 3 to pole 4 on the switch. You are done!



With the switch in one position the whistle will sound when the Button is pushed and in the other position the bell will sound.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING 9/17/09
7:00 PM

Guests: none
New member- Kerry S.
Members attending-24

Treasurers report from Curt

Upcoming Shows:

- ◆ Nov 21-22- Norcross- GTE Expo-David will need people. Ask Dave if you need a T shirt.
- ◆ Dec 5th- TCA- Southern Poly
- ◆ Dec 12th is the Holiday Party at Mt View CC- \$15 a person, no charge for children under 18. 11am-3pm. Will have a raffle.

HT layout report-see page 2

Jack demonstrated his \$10 electrical project for old transformers that don't have a bell or whistle button. This allows the transformer to have both available. The instructions on how to make this are on page 6.

Piedmont Pilgrimage- We will be on the tour on Nov. 27. We will need to coordinate the trains that will run on the layout during the tour. Email Bill with the type of train and the time you would like to run your train. Bill will coordinate the event. Bring the train over in plenty of time ahead before the tour to make sure that it is programmed in and working well. Need to bring your remote running the latest version of DCS 4.10. Does not matter with TMCC- our remote will run yours, but you can also bring your remote. We will have a test track to set up the trains in a week. Electrical team is at HT every Tuesday from 3pm until 9pm.

Scott shared info on an 80,000 sq feet Garden Scale operation in Cincinnati, OH. He donated a CD of 250 pictures to the library. You can check out the CD in the media closet.

Email Les if you need any Lionel parts

Eric would like to do a workshop in airbrush weathering. If you are interested, email Eric or post on the forum.

Next meeting on 10/15/09 with Business Meeting' at 7:00 pm. The meeting will be at Curt's house- check your email or the members website for the directions.

\$75 MTH Turbine by Max W.

When my family and I were up in Pennsylvania for my cousin's wedding, my dad and I were watching trains and taking a ride on the East Broad Top. Well, my dad had known about a local trains shop, but we did not have good directions. My grandparents told him one place and that did not work. Eventually my uncle told us the actual directions to the shop. When we got there, by the looks of the place I thought there would not be much of a variety, if anything. We walked inside and I was sadly mistaken. He had tons of trains, buildings and scenery materials. Not just in O Scale, but also in HO. He had an O Gauge layout in the back of the room where he would test and run trains for people. He had one MTH Norfolk Southern engine (I am not sure of the name) running that caught my eye. I asked him how much for it and he said he would sell it for \$90. That sounded like a good deal; so I said, "well I am going to keep looking, and then decide". After about five minutes, another engine caught my eye; this time it was a Pennsy GG-1. He said it was not for sale, but that he had a Williams GG-1 that was for-sale. I looked at it and I said the same thing as before, "I will keep looking for now". Then one engine really attracted me, an MTH Pennsylvania Turbine with sounds. I asked him to run it for me and he did. Everything looked perfect, but I still wanted to see if there was anything else, I might like. I ended up buying the Turbine for \$75! Once we got back home, I ran downstairs, put it on the track and turned the power up. All it did was slowly creep forward and continue blowing the whistle. Well, we ended up having to get an MTH Z-1000 because my little CW-80 wasn't powerful enough.



C A L E N D A R

October 2009						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sep 27	Sep 28	Sep 29 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	Sep 30	1 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	2	3 10 AM-2 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 
4	5	6 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	7	8 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	9	10 Swap Meet at Hobby Town 
11	12	13 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	14	15 NAOGRRC Meeting Tonight! 	16	17 10 AM-2 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 
18	19	20 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	21	22 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	23	24 10 AM-2 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 
25	26	27 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	28	29 6-9 PM Work @ at Hobby Town 	30	31 Piedmont Pilgrimage  Eric Siegel 1PM - 5 PM 