



# The Relay

A publication of the Chesapeake Division of the Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA

Volume 6 Issue 1

## View From The Cupola

Winter 2016



*By Greg Kidwell*

### HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Hello, Fellow Modellers,

As you read this, the presents have been opened and the various feasts have been consumed. Hopefully, 'Santa' was good to each and every one of you and your families. Also, you were able to enjoy some of the area's model train layouts. Or maybe, you were able to steal some time to work on your own layout. If so, please consider writing an article for the next issue of The Relay.

Let me take this opportunity to introduce myself to each of you. My name is Greg Kidwell and I model in HO. I grew up in Chattanooga, Tennessee and, like most of us, had a Lionel train set as a child. I can remember the frustration as a child with my train set trying to keep the train on the track. You see the track was a figure 8 and the locomotive would keep falling off the track as it came down the overpass. I did change that to an oval, but it was not very large given the track I had on hand at the time. So, I lost interest, for a short time. I can remember the destruction of the local train station and train shed before the local historical society could stop it. Fortunately, the station was re-built as the Chattanooga Choo-Choo hotel and shop complex. And the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum preserves some of the memories of the area. I was always interested in the old photos of the area. And as some of you may be aware, the National Headquarters was located next to the TVRR Museum and I did have one occasion to visit there years ago.

Fast forward several years, I now live in Maryland and looking for a hobby. I decide to construct a model railroad in HO scale. I decided to use what I knew and that was the Chattanooga area, East Tennessee area and the Southern Railroad as my inspiration. I had gone so far as to acquire copies of the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for the downtown Chattanooga area and attached those sheets to poster board. Using the scale on the insurance maps, I became aware of the modelers' theory of selective compression. Due to the size of the trains station and the track configuration, I would need to dig a tunnel away from the house to build the track to properly represent the area. That layout did make it to early scenery stage and did have trains running. It was DC and constructed of Atlas

#### In This Issue.....

<b>View From The Cupola</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>Little Joe The Dockside Switcher</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Two By Sea &amp; Three By Land</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Crane Buckets</b>	<b>Page 12</b>
<b>Director's Corner</b>	<b>Page 14</b>
<b>Chesapeake Division Builder's Meet</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>Builder's Meet Photos</b>	<b>Page 18</b>
<b>Book Review</b>	<b>Page 19</b>
<b>Annual Paymaster's Report</b>	<b>Page 21</b>

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

electronics. As fate would have it, I had to take the layout down and store it for several years.

After several years, I am working on another layout. Again, I am using Chattanooga and East Tennessee as my inspiration, with the Southern Railroad as the main railroad. But this time I am incorporating the Norfolk and Western, NC&STL, and several other small regional railroads into the mix. I am modelling the 1950's and also take some modeller's license and run more steam locomotives than the SRR was running at that time. Thanks goodness, the N&W was still running steam in the 1950's. :) I have made the switch to DCC and still finding ways to solder my feeder wires to my track. With model railroading, you are exposed to many different disciplines and by meeting and talking with other modellers, you can decide how intricate to make your layout. Also, you can learn what pratfalls these modellers experienced so that you are not 'reinventing the wheel.'

I also find inspiration and pleasure in seeing what others are doing, as well. And that is where the NMRA and its local chapters come in. This allows all of us to hang around other people with similar interests and it is something that really has no age barrier. To me, it is fascinating to see the ideas that others have, sometimes finding the cheapest (can you say free) way to accomplish what needs to be done.

Which brings me to 2016 and our Division and The Relay. While I am hoping that these pages and future editions will inspire each and everyone of you. I am hoping that each of you will take a more active role in your organization. Because without each and every one of you, we cannot make this Division the best it can be. I am hoping that we all can work together and make this year the best year for the Chesapeake Division of the Mid-Eastern Region. There are some activities planned for the year, but we would like to hear from you on what you would like to see in the coming year. I encourage your thoughts, both good and critical, as well as suggestions on how to broaden our membership base and bring new modellers into our Division.

Happy Reading!

Greg

## WHAT SCALE IS THIS?



## Membership, Subscriptions and Article Submissions

To become a member of the Chesapeake Division of the NMRA, please contact any Board Member, fill out the form for a free Railpass (page 20) or join us at our next Divisional meeting on Sunday,

To receive electronic versions of The Relay, send an e-mail message to Russell Forte at [Web.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com](mailto:Web.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com)

If you would prefer to receive printed copies, please send a check for \$6 (payable to the Chesapeake Division, MER, NMRA)

Dave Arday  
P.O. Box 428  
Fulton, MD. 20759-0428

To submit an article for future publication in The Relay, please send it to the Newsletter editor, John Darlington, at

[jjdjr3@verizon.net](mailto:jjdjr3@verizon.net)  
no later than

**Monday, March 21, 2016**



# Little Joe The Dockside Switcher in On30

*by Martin K. "Ken" Van Horn*

**L**ike many scale modelers of the 1940's and 1950's in HO, my first loco kit in 1952 at age 13 was Varney's B&O Class C-16 0-4-0T Dockside Switcher, nicknamed "Little Joe." Ladies thought it was "cute," but Lil' Joe was NOT little. As the late narrow gauge pioneer Dick Andrews pointed out, the C-16 was not a loco for backwoods short lines with light rail. At 96 tons, it had an axle loading of 96,000 pounds, the same as a Union Pacific "Big Boy"! Look at photos of the prototype hauling boxcars down Pratt Street: it



**B&O C-16 0-4-0 switching  
Baltimore News Post Building—1940s**



**KC RR Dockside 11/15**

stood as high as the cars, unlike most steam and internal combustion "critters" which are 1/2 to 3/4 of car height.



**KC RR Dockside 11/15**

Using a Dockside kit in a smaller scale as a narrow gauge loco, HOn30 modelers adapted the Lindsay "Tiny Tim" in TT gauge. So then my friend, Alan Carroll, moderator of On30 Kitbashing on Facebook came to the Mid-Hudson On30 Meet with an On30 model made from a Rex S gauge Dockside superstructure on a Bachmann On30 outside-frame Forney mechanism. This was several years ago, and it took me quite a while to win a Rex Dockside on eBay at a decent price, I already had a Bachmann Forney mechanism. S scale standard gauge has the same approximate mass as On30, or as master builder Les Davis says "S scale is our friend!" At 3/4 the size of O scale, the On30 Dockside represents a 72-tonner. I back dated the loco with acetylene headlights by Selley, such as the B&O prototypes were equipped at delivery. O scale Selley

*(Continued on page 4)*





**KC RR Dockside 11/15**

bell and whistle were also installed, as well as an O scale crew in the cab. Cab windows were left unglazed so there would be an air flow over the motor. This completely enclosed loco could cause the motor to overheat otherwise. Kadee #803 On3 couplers were installed at HO height for On30. These couplers will mate with Kadee HO #5's as mounted on Bachmann freight cars. I have been slowly converting my rolling stock to these 3/4



**KC RR Dockside 11/15**

sized narrow gauge couplers, or as Chris Lane, editor of the "On30 Annual" has said, "O scale couplers for O scale!" Alan Carroll in Massachusetts also uses KD On3 or S scale couplers (exactly the same).

A final word about the prototype B&O Dockside: there were 4 numbered 96-99 built in 1912 by Baldwin. In 1926, it was found that 4 were not needed in Baltimore, so two were stripped of their saddle tanks, equipped with an open-rear cab and coal-burning grates, had tenders built and attached and were sent to Philadelphia as class C-16a. These were nos. 96 and 99, and they were scrapped in 1944. So when Varney produced its HO model in 1942 (just in time for production to be curtailed for the duration of World War II) only 2 prototype Dockside tankers, 97 and 98, were running in original form. But Varney produced models in the tens of thousands, just about every HO layout back then had one. It was the greatest mistake ever made by the B&O, when it let both go to scrap in 1950 instead of preserving one of these most famous locos in the B&O Museum!

*Ken*



## **HEY! WHY WON'T YOU HELP OUT?**

### **WE NEED YOU TO BE MORE ACTIVE!**

The Chesapeake Division is made up of over 150 members, but yet we rarely hear from many of you during the year. Why is that? In my 33 years as a model railroader, I have never experienced a time when modelers failed to have an opinion, comment or advice on something going on in our hobby. Additionally, most of you have modeling techniques, fan trips, vacations or other adventures involving railroading that you could share with your fellow Division members either by live presentations, or by articles that can be printed in this newsletter. Yet, only a small fraction of the membership chooses to participate in these endeavors or involve themselves in Division activities. It's time to share your experiences with the rest of us.

**CONTRIBUTE AN ARTICLE, PARTICIPATE IN DIVISION ACTIVITIES!  
WE NEED YOU!**

*John Darlington, Editor*

# Two by Sea and Three by Land

*By Rick Uskert*



**B**ack in June I had an extended business trip, split between Detroit, MI, and Lichfield, UK. Doug Gurin, LDSIG.org, and Kathy Millatt, Atlantic Director, were kind enough to get me set up with a few people to visit and layouts to see. It was a great experience to visit, have dinner with a number of them, and chat about NMRA and non-NMRA interactions, layout design, construction and operation, which has added to my own ideas and perspective.

While out on a trip, take some time to reach out to other members for places to visit and people to meet. Here's a small snippet of what I saw:

Bill Neale (MI)

Bill Neale was in the search for a Time Table & Train Order section of his favorite line, the Pennsylvania RR, to model, leading him to the North-South branch of the PRR in proximity to Steubenville, OH. Unfortunately research on that line floundered, as very little info could be found on the desired branch. Every search pointed to the nearby East-West line, driving him to model the bisecting railway, the PRR Panhandle Division. From that decision, information from the areas, towns and served industries started flowing. Ever wonder why the PRR caboose cupolas were slanted inward? It's because of the 800 ft tunnel on this line, built in the 1800's. The cupolas were canted inward to avoid scraping the sides of the tunnel. Bill's layout is set in the 1930's, with those slant cupola vans, powered solely by steam. The around the room dual deck design replicates the



varying two track to three track to four track and back main line.

The around the room spiral provides provisions for constant

operation (such as for the open house he was hosting that coming weekend) and point-to-point operation by ignoring the wye permitting the continuous run, with trains originating/terminating in yards, on or off the layout. Industries are scattered about the layout: steel mills; coal; commodity warehouses expecting cars to ship and deliver their wares.

Operations are conducted via a car card system. Four staging yards which provide substantial storage for incoming



*(Continued on page 6)*



(Continued from page 5)

and outgoing trains are accessible. They are out of the way, placed on the overhead deck or behind the main deck of the layout. Interesting layout elements include the distance locomotives had to run from the yard to the nearest servicing facility, which the prototype had to do.

If you might be interested in more information on Bill's layout design, pickup a back issue of the Layout Design Journal, No. 37, from the Layout Design Special Interest Group. For those East Broad Top fans, Bill has quite a collection of waybills pertaining to the line.

### ***Dave Kuntz (MI)***

Similar to Bill Neale, Dave is modeling the Pennsylvania RR, in a big way. The layout spans the second floor of his car maintenance and storage garage, measuring in at 72' x 40'. Using 2-rail O Scale, with a little On30 mixed in, Dave has captured the 4-track main feel of the Pennsy, and his population of mostly brass locos and cars completes that vision.



His track work is a mixture of commercial and hand-laid, with super elevation in the curves and track drainage realistically modeled throughout the system. Although there was not discussion on how many feet of mainline track may be installed and yet to be completed, Dave did comment that during an open house with the opportunity for guest to operate equipment, those running the narrow gauge line were exceptionally surprised that it took the train 1.5 hours (not a typo) to make a loop of the line, without stops. Dave learned what he did and didn't like

and what not to do through membership and active participation in various RR clubs. The structure's framework is very sturdy and rugged, with 3/4" sub-roadbed and full 3/4" plywood floor to sub-roadbed fascia. There are no duckunders, however there are several access holes located around the layout should access be needed to the inside/underneath of the layout be required. Grab irons, rails and hand holds are installed near step ups and the under layout access holes.

This layout has some of the nicest under layout wiring I've seen! All of the wiring was color coded and run in a bus manner, secured horizontally and individually spaced vertically, with the whole arrangement jogging around openings or dips in the surface structure. Feeders were pulled from these and run to whatever might need power above. All of the lighting power in the room was run "Chicago style," with all of the wires run through conduit. Details like these really point to his experience as a designer for the automobile industry.



If there was one thing I took away from Dave's layout is his mastery in building plaster buildings. A fan of Thomas Yorke plaster/Hydrocal buildings, Dave collected as many as he could, and some similar, high quality Downtown Deco models, with a few made by Crummy. Having built several of them, Dave started creating many of his

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

own buildings and structures from scratch. Model masters were fabricated from styrene, from which silicone molds were pulled, which allowed him to pour as many buildings, tunnel portals and tunnel walls and ceilings, or parts thereof, as needed. With the components in hand, they were cropped, rearranged and assembled to suit the site in need. Dave didn't stop there, and finished the models with complete interiors and lighting, each telling its own story.



### ***Ron King (MI)***

MMR Ron King models the Erie Railroad, and it is interesting in how that selection came about. As he told the story, he decided he should model something, having spent his time building buildings and cars without a layout. So, one day he walked into the hobby shop, picked up a bunch of decal sheets and headed over the counter. He placed them all upside down and asked the owner to shuffle them up and spread them out. He chose one and upon turning it over discovered it was the Erie. He went home and painted his first Erie diesel locomotive from a single B&W magazine photo, which



said the colors were black and yellow. Of course we all make assumptions when working with limited material and eventually, when he saw the motive power in person, realized the roof of the loco wasn't yellow, as he had painted it. Back to the paint shop it went.

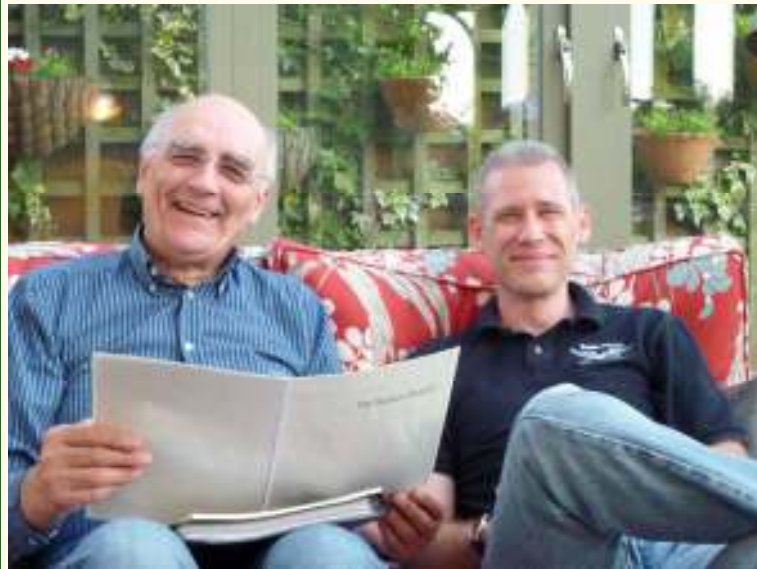
Ron's layout is a continuous run setup with a large yard in the middle and various passenger stations and industries spread about. He has modeled and included several favorite stations, compressing them as needed to allow them to fit the

(Continued on page 8)



*(Continued from page 7)*

space available. Numerous buildings have moved from location to location on the layout as the design progressed. He and his local crew always looked for ways to add features to the layout, including deciding to lower an entire raised area of the layout—fully scened and operational—three inches to allow what was going to be an independent branch line to tie into the main. Other sections were cut out to make room for bridges because it might be nice to have them there. This is the great thing about the creative (and the totally unconstrained freelance) side of the hobby—if you don't like it, change it, and don't be afraid.



### *Leigh Clark (UK)*

After visiting sizable layouts in the US, it was relaxing to see a straight-forward UK layout: short, concise and to the point. Leigh is modeling a German tourist railway, including engine facilities and tourist station. Prior to dinner we discussed his earlier modeling adventures and the differences between US and UK hobby activities.

Aside from the usual smaller than US layouts (I believe we are moving closer to their habits due to more narrow shelf layouts being build here), I found it interesting that many Railway modeling shows are invitation-only to display. Each exhibiter is interested in bringing in the best of the day. While I appreciate this, I also wonder if it is a means of enticing everyone to strive for more, or walk away concerned they cannot achieve the same level of quality. This perspective is shared among many in the UK regarding the



*Continued on page 9)*



*(Continued from page 8)*

NMRA MMR program. The common feeling is that they enjoy modeling for the sake of modeling, not the need to obtain an award or plaque.

Back to the layout, Leigh comes from a family of furniture makers, and in this regard I found it fascinating that his layout was simply a 1-1/2" thick table top with adjustable legs, free from attachment to the wall. This has been his preferred construction method for years and is suited for travel to and from shows without track misalignment, warping or other malady.

Use of static grass on the layout is superb! In an area around a dried creek, the grass was packed so densely it appeared to be green velvet. Trees and other organic features were generally made from natural materials locally har-



vested. We had a great discussion regarding differences in trees themselves, the changing appearance throughout the seasons and differences in modeling approaches as they pertained to the choice of scale.



The last item of modeling noteworthiness is a closed box diorama Leigh built for display. Approximately 12" x 18", the internally lighted models force the viewer into a given perspective of an engine house. The subject, details and lighting were all executed amazingly.

*(Continued on page 10)*

### *Nigel Bowyer (UK)*

My afternoon with Nigel started off with a meeting at the Severn Valley Railway (<http://www.svr.co.uk/>) for a ride out to the Engine House Visitor Centre & Museum at Highley. Sure, equipment on both sides of the pond rides on rails, but it wasn't until Nigel and I got into a discussion that we both understood physics behind how trains stay together on our respective equipment. The UK equipment,



when brought together and the buffers contact, the link and screw mechanism between is attached between the two and screwed taut. During forward movement, the link mechanism carries the tension load whereas the buffers carry the compressive loads during backwards or shunting travel. With this frame of reference, Nigel always wondered how cars moved about without contacting each other, and a lack of buffers. Once explaining our sprung coupler system, everything made sense to him and I have a better handle on how coupling is handled in the UK.

Another notable practice on the Railway was the passing of “keys” (looked like badminton rackets to me) between the ground crew and locomotive engineer. This action signals the authority of the train’s ability to enter the next

block on the line. It is a fascinating manual practice in comparison to our modern signaling system, whose glowing light bulb lets us know if it’s OK to advance or not.

Nigel is a well published contributor to the UK hobby. Interestingly, he is currently modeling a generalized 1950’s/60’s Midwest US railroad as a S scale switching layout. Larger than Leigh’s, the layout wraps around three



sides of a 10 x 12 room—not dissimilar to our own bedroom size layouts. The nearly completely scened railroad includes a three track storage/staging area at one end, though Nigel has recently extended this area along the wall and is in the process of adding one final industry to the new spur. An operational system (car card or other) has not been put in place, as research into the varied systems has yet to strike a favored chord with Nigel yet.





(Continued from page 10)



I exchanged a couple of additional emails with Nigel in late July before he and Kathy made a trip over to Kansas for a bit of railfanning and a regional show. Both were looking forward the visit, likely Nigel's last to the US.

All in all, my hobby-related travels between the two continents were great and I look forward to seeing all of them again on a future visit.

*Rick*



## The Relay

*The official publication of the Chesapeake Division of the Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA, a tax-exempt organization*

*The Relay is published quarterly. The opinions expressed within do not necessarily reflect those of the Chesapeake Division, MER or NMRA officials. Commercial suppliers, supplies and materials addressed in **The Relay***

*In no way constitute an endorsement by the MER or NMRA. Copyrighted material that appears in **The Relay** is used for educational and historical benefit only and does not constitute infringement of the copyright holder.*

**Superintendent: Greg Kidwell**  
super.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com

**Assistant Superintendent: Bill Ataras**  
asstsuper.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com

**Director-At-Large: Rick Uskert**  
directoratlg.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com

**Paymaster: Dave Arday**  
davidarday@aol.com

**Clerk: Jeroen Gerritsen**  
clerk.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com

**Achievement Program: Kurt Thompson**  
ap.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com

**Past Superintendent: Tom Casey**  
pastsuper.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com

**Division Newsletter: John Darlington**  
jjdjr3@verizon.net

**Webmaster: Russell Forte**  
web.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com

<http://www.chesapeake-nmra.org/index.php>



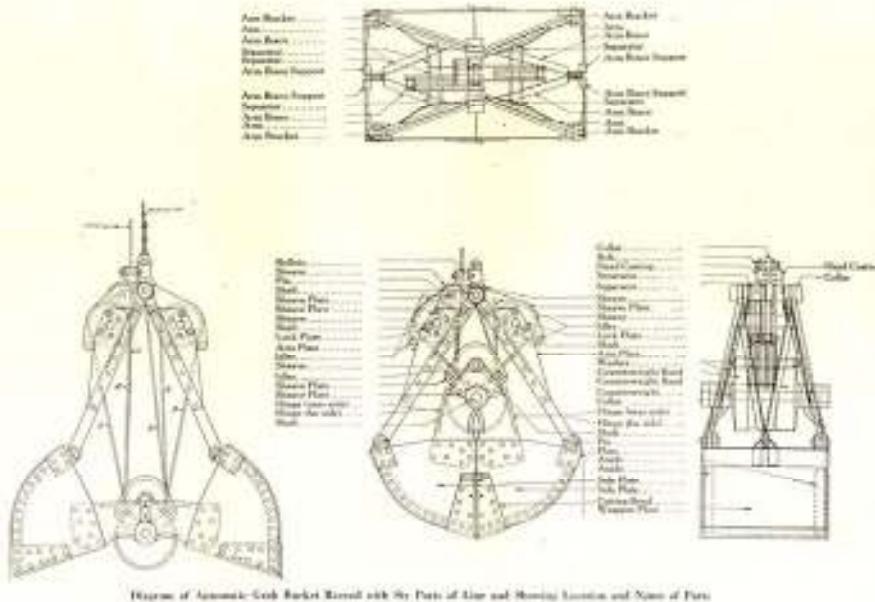
# Crane Buckets

By John Teichmoeller

Crane buckets (typically referred to by modelers as “clamshells”) are a common element of industrial scenery and are used in handling a variety of materials. In many cases, cranes have multiple uses and may be rigged with hooks or other load handling hardware instead of buckets. When not in use, the buckets are typically stored off to the side in a fashion that they can be easily re-rigged to the crane.

A number of model buckets have been produced over the years in various scales, and I have some that I intended to

place in ground storage on my layout when I get to that point in the landscaping process. But it wasn't until 2014 that I started being observant about how this ground storage actually works. Mind you, I am simply passing along my anecdotal observations, so more knowledgeable readers should feel free to add their insights as well as corrections to nomenclature.



Historic of Automatic-Cook Bucket Riggered with the Parts of Line and Showing Location and Name of Parts

Technical drawing of crane bucket, courtesy Stan Knotts

The typical basic clamshell bucket is attached to the crane by a load line or hauling line which raises and lowers the bucket. The load line is attached to what I will call a “head casting.” The head casting may have one or more pulleys (“rollers”) in it and has straps connecting to the outer edges of the bucket leaves. The inner two sides of the bucket are connected with a shaft which again typically has one or more pulleys/rollers on it. The opening and closing of the bucket is arranged with another line which I have seen labeled as a “closing line,” but there may be other, more proper nomenclature. The closing line is rigged around the upper and lower pulleys. When the closing line is shortened or lengthened, the bucket closes or opens respectively. The pulleys provide some mechanical advantage. (I realize there are some more complicated patented designs for operating linkage, but I am describing what I term the “basic” one. A detailed article about all these nuances and the various designs would be fascinating, and is for someone else.) The two examples of stored buckets I observed recently had the closing line rigged in the bucket in such a way that when the bucket needed to be used, it was ready to go once the hauling line was attached to the top and the closing line was deployed and attached to its operating winch. **Figure 1**, courtesy Stan Knotts, shows the general arrangement and nomenclature of a bucket. The accompanying photos show examples of rigged buckets in ground storage.

Now if you've ever tried to model cranes, you will know that the choice of line can be problematical. Good old black thread is a standby but there is always the question of fuzz from the thread. Waxing it can partly solve this problem, which typically satisfies the sailing ship modelers. Depending on the size of the line, I know some people who have been happy with carpet thread. And a trip to the jewelry craft section of Michaels, JoAnn or Hobby Lobby will reveal numerous pegs filled with appropriate looking cord designed for bracelets. This material lacks the fuzz of

(Continued on page 13)



thread. Unfortunately, this and other types of line exhibit a springiness that will defeat any appearance of realism in your “at rest but rigged” bucket. A couple years ago, my friend Tom Griffiths came across what I think is a solution to this when he was building a model of a stick lighter: namely, Clover House sells soft, multi-strand copper wire cable that not only “takes a lay” but also looks like steel crane cable. They sell several 3 different diameter and 2 different strand sizes, with HO scale size between scale 1 ¼” to 2 ¼”. The cable comes in 20 foot long coils and sells for a modest price (<http://cloverhouse.com/Store/index.php?cPath=39-40>).



*Figures 1 and 2 show a bucket on the Nevada Northern in Ely, Nevada, June 2014*

Finally, what about buckets?

Here is a list of some I am aware of:

Crow River Products, A-442 is a soft metal casting kit. This bucket is not designed to operate and you will have to drill out the pulley areas to rig it, best done before assembly. A nice part. It is very close to the bucket in Fig. 1.

Custom Finishing, 247-7282 May be hard to find. I have not seen this one personally, just saw its listing in the Walthers catalog.

Stewart 201. This venerable standby is based on an article in the December 1957 *Model Railroader*. You could scratch build it yourself from that article. Well, maybe you

could, but I couldn't. I have several of the Stewart units! Add some rivet overlays (per the photos here). The Stewart line has been taken over by Tomar, but they are not currently listing this part at least the last time I checked. Nevertheless I see it for sale from time to time in the secondary market.



*Photo 3 shows a pair of buckets in ground storage at the Western Maryland Scenic Railway's shops in Ridgely, West Virginia, September 2014.*

Rio Grande Models No 3532. Soft metal casting. I don't have this one either but from the company's website it looks rather small. I can't tell whether it is possible to drill out openings in the pulleys to make it “riggable.”

Final Caveat: Model Tech Studios sells a clamshell bucket No. D0254, but it does not have the pulley assemblies. They market it and illustrate it as a flatcar load. I do not have this model but am guessing, It might be kitbashable into a “riggable” bucket.

I believe there are other clamshell buckets included with some models of European cranes but, again, I have no first-hand knowledge of them.

*John*

## The Director's Corner



Thank you for nominating and electing me to the Director at Large position within our group. I look forward to the coming year and executing the position to the best of my abilities. There was mention, at the annual meeting, that there was an unwritten requirement to have a beard or such, so, check in the box.

As a means of introduction, I will relate my modeling experiences started like most others in the form of a Lionel set. The railroading interest was encouraged by my grandfather and great uncle, which had and added to their collections of HO and N scale equipment, respectively, whenever we visited. I took greater interest in N scale, and created the typical 4x8 layout packed with so much trackage that one was challenged to reach the yard in the center of the board and the "cliffs" surrounding the elevated perimeter were so steep they defied any sense of civil engineering or physics.

Tastes and interests have changed over the years since and my focus now is the research and design of an operations-oriented layout based upon one of the Maine two foot railroads, which my family worked on generations ago. Unlike the first, this layout will be more firmly grounded in the reality of grades and easements. As each of the layouts before, this one will allow me to expand on my skill sets in design, electronics and model building. It will be a long endeavor, but that is the nature of our hobby and what facilitates improvement in technique and proficiency.

Within the next few months, I hope to establish a couple of projects to foster the social aspect of model railroading and the creative nature of younger model railroaders. I would like to elicit your assistance in the latter project. If you have any old freight car trucks due to upgrades to your equipment, hook-style couplers or whatnot, and/or sectional track collecting dust, please let me know if you would be willing to donate these items to the cause. All scales are welcome.

Regards,

*Rick Uskert*

## Editors Note:

*During our Annual General Membership Meeting in November of this year, a number of leadership positions changed. These changes are listed on Page 11 of this newsletter. Since we are a widely dispersed Division, I thought that it would be useful for everyone if photographs of the individuals holding these positions were provided so that you can put a face with the name:*



**Greg Kidwell**  
Superintendent



**Bill Ataras**  
Asst. Superintendent



**Rick Uskert**  
Director at Large



**Tom Casey**  
Past Superintendent



**Dave Arday**  
Paymaster



**Jeroen Gerritsen**  
Clerk



**Kurt Thompson**  
Achievement  
Program Chairman



**Russ Forte**  
Webmaster



# The Chesapeake Division's Builders Meet

By: Bill Ataras

On September 26, the Chesapeake Division's "Builders Meeting" took place in the Finksburg Public Library. Eleven members gathered to conduct a group model building event. We had models in HO and O scale, and a combination of structures and rolling stock. Some really great modeling skills were displayed, so we had a chance to do and learn.

This is how we arranged ourselves for our group model building session. There was still room for quite a few additional modelers that went unused. Here, Colleen Ataras, our "reporter at large," is gathering information from Alan Del Gaudio.

Let's take a walk around the room and see what's happening.



Kurt Thompson is showing us how to use 21<sup>st</sup> century modeling materials and techniques to scratch build a 19<sup>th</sup> century railroad office building. He's using plans from the July, 1962 Model Railroader to construct the building out of styrene. When the article was published, builders normally used wood or Strathmore board for structures.



Alan Del Gaudio is tagging a couple of bases with his modeling. Just above his left hand is his N-Scale church model. He put it aside to let the glue dry while he switched to HO-Scale.

The parts for his HO brownstone apartment building are spread out on the table while he constructs a sub-assembly. Somewhere in there are parts for the HO station.



(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15)

It's not all work at these gatherings. Dave Pugh takes a break from building his HO scale Reading hopper and Jersey Central box car to swap stories with Jeroen and Kurt.



Greg Kidwell, our new Superintendent, had an assembly line going, producing a group of five Accurail cars. He assured me that it's more efficient to build this way.



Greg displays a technique that seems to be rare among modelers: he's actually looking at the instructions! And I always thought that was against the rules.



Jeroen Gerritsen is building two B & O cars: a hopper and express baggage car.

Don Marvel is building his "Downtown Deco" kit. He's making sure that the roof is accurately detailed. That makes sense, after all, because the roof

of a model is something that we almost always get to see.



Here's another of Don's great DTD models, ready for installation on his layout. 'Fantastic' is the word that comes to mind. He's given a lot of attention to detail.



Jack Keene likes to model in a big way – the O-Scale way. Here he's working on his "Rags to Riches" structure.

(Continued on page 17)



(Continued from page 16)

Like many of us, David Arday has assorted 1960's vintage Roundhouse car kits. They're a lot of fun to build, and it's not too hard to replace some of the cast-on details with more prototypical looking parts. David brought several to work on at the builder's meet.



Jeff Hedge (above) had several HO cars that needed to be weighted to match NMRA Recommended Practice RP 20.1. He is using a good, but not expensive, scale and should have his cars within a fraction an ounce of the desired weight. Notice how nicely an HO Scale hopper fits on the scale



Here is our Past Division Superintendent, Tom Casey, hiding behind his optivisor while he builds an HO Scale single door box car and gondola. The gon is on his "operating table" right now while he studies the instructions

(Continued on page 18)

(Continued from page 17)

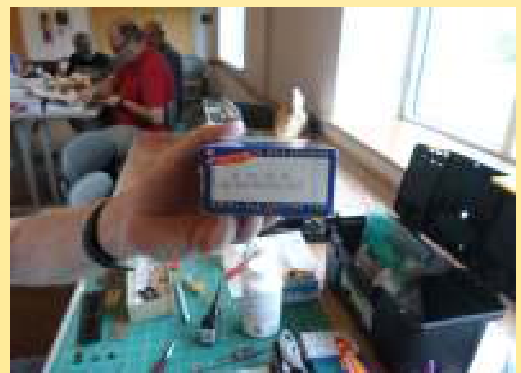
Bill Ataras, that's me behind the camera, brought a working HO-Scale track scale. It's not smart enough by itself to measure the length of a car, or whether the car is empty or loaded by itself. But it can measure the actual weight and use the length and empty-full information provided by the operator to display an appropriate weight. It's displaying 167,111 pounds for a loaded 50 foot hopper car. An HO-scale hopper fits on the scale.

Enjoy the Photos!

Bill



### More Photos of the Division's Builder's Meet







# BOOK REVIEWS

BY FRED SCHEER

**Lance Mindheim:** *8 Realistic Track Plans for a Spare Room; 8 Realistic Track Plans for Small Switching Layouts; How to Design a Small Switching Layout; How to Build a Small Switching Layout; and, How to Operate a Small Switching Layout.*

**Jim Spavins:** *Minimalist Model Railroading -- Capturing the Essence of Railroading; and Minimalist Model Railroading -- 15 More Track Planning Case Studies.*

All seven of these books are self-published and available on Amazon, where their prices range from \$18 to \$23. Several of Lance Mindheim's books are available at some hobby shops, including Mainline Hobby Supply and M. B. Klein's.

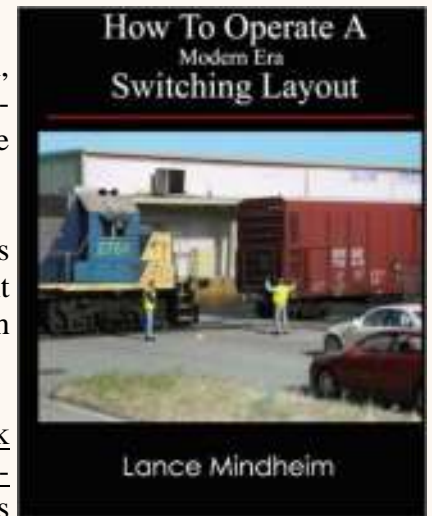
In recent years, I've noticed layout plans characterized by an economy of resources and a design efficiency expected of prototype railroad design engineers. For want of a better term, I'll call it "spare design." At their best, you'll find layouts with practically no unnecessary track, yet complete, missing nothing essential.

Lance Mindheim shows spare design in his two track plan books, "8 Realistic Track Plans for a Spare Room" and "8 Realistic Track Plans for Small Switching Layouts." Lance favors the walk-around shelf layout, an efficient design for serious operations, on which he employs prototype track configurations. His design economy extends beyond track to include an artist's sense of layout composition. He contrasts busy focal points with the relief of green space, river crossings, undeveloped land, and abandoned track and industries. Knowing what to leave out, track plans improve and the eye is allowed to focus on one or several important scenes. Building a layout in this way makes it much more interesting to view and run. Then, by capturing more of the prototype's procedures, layouts presented in these two books are in effect expanded as the pace of operation slows.

Lance's format is straightforward. Up front, he presents standardized layout specifications and discusses his approach to building infrastructure. Lance favors fairly light-duty benchwork, a tactic to get layouts up and running and keep builders' interest on fire. Each layout is introduced with a pithy description and a materiel schedule.

The universal premise is an 11' x 12' spare bedroom available for trains. Layouts in the "small switching layout" book claim their territory on shelf-style benchwork around the room's perimeter, whereas layouts in what we'll call the "other" book, not limited to switching layouts, add a center peninsula. Although Lance describes the 11' x 12' switching layouts as "small," spare design is hardly an affectation only for smaller layouts.

Three more of Lance's books build on and explain ideas shown in his plan books. In "How to Design a Small Switching Layout," although the text is primarily aimed at switching layouts, most of this book is applicable to layouts with operating schemes beyond the switching district. It's a clean, fresh take on a layout design guide. One of my favorite sections is "Space Efficient Industries." Lance introduces the concept and gives examples of industries that provide more- and more varied "car spots" per square foot of industrial structure. He develops the idea of car spots as a key measure, rather than the number of sidings, industries, or industry size.



**How to Build a Small Switching Layout** is a special jewel. You get two books in one, which together take your layout from start to finish. The first 44 pages cover infrastructure and the remaining 60 pages are a guide to convincing scenery, structures, and details. Lance does it with no wasted words, nothing left out, and nothing that leaves you wondering what he meant. It's now my number-one "go-to" scenery reference.

In **How to Operate a Small Switching Layout**, Lance gives us a complete guide to operating one of his model railroads. Included are basics, such as diagrams on how to switch trailing point and facing point turnouts. But also, we find chapters on strategy and tactics for moving cars and approaching the job, and Lance's take on staging for an operating session. His interest is in prototype operation rather than having play value for its own sake. Hence, we have explanations of why runaround moves ought to be limited, plus time studies on prototype tasks, accompanied by a table listing tasks and the appropriate amount of time to allow for them. A final section discusses how to improve the experience for yourself and your guests, and includes a section on preparing for guest operators.

\* \* \*

Jim Spavins dubbed his particular approach to spare design, "minimalist model railroading." As a discipline, it institutionalizes economy of design into a process. It's an executive approach to model railroading, where the purpose is to focus on one or a very few key features of your prototype (the ones of particular interest to you), distill them into design goals, and make affirmative choices to "take the essence of that focus and relentlessly remove (or minimize) any features [that] would be non-essential to fulfilling [the] goals."

Jim seems to recognize that opportunity costs -- time, money, and space, for example -- are among inherent limitations for most of us. Jim explains, "The suggestion with a minimalist design approach is to not start with a list of wants. Instead, begin by stating what the focus of the layout will be -- or the essence of railroading you want to create." In so doing, then "what to include" and "what not to include" in your plan will become much clearer by measuring these things against your goal[s], as opposed to assembling a collection of railroad features into a track plan. Compromises may be inevitable, but they won't be at the expense of the core reason for your layout's existence.

Jim's two volumes show 22 railroads. For each one, he walks you through a fully developed design process to reach a final track plan. To illustrate the process, he starts with a pair of railroads, one freelanced and one prototype. With each, he first sets forth several goals and applies his process to develop a track plan. Then, going through several iterations, he progressively reduces the number of goals. For each iteration, he shows how his process supports adjustments to the layout plans. In his final distillation, goals are reduced to one, so more and more features become nonessential and are removed. As a result, the final layout becomes sufficiently spare to permit modeling in O gauge instead of HO without changing the layout's size.

Speaking of size, minimalist model railroading isn't a strategy limited to "small" layouts. For his books, Jim developed layout plans to fit one of three standardized spaces: a 10' x 11' spare room, a 12' x 18' train room, and a 29' x 44' basement.

\* \* \*

Both authors embrace a spare school of design, a welcome addition to model railroad planning. They're in the same school but follow different curricula. Jim is primarily about providing a breakthrough strategy and process, and illustrating how it works. You may employ it to write specs for a commercial designer or to design or modify your own layout. Whichever way, your focus and goals are likely to result in a satisfying product. Lance provides two volumes of superb turnkey plans. Clear goals are predefined, a more traditional presentation. In designing a layout, one could consider using Jim's strategic approach together with Lance's design and plan books. The two authors' works complement each other nicely.

These books are fresh and different. Both authors write interesting material in pithy styles punctuated with plenty of sharp, clear graphics. Their resulting products make for easy reading. In my estimation, they're good value.

Fred



# Annual Paymaster Report November 2014 - October 2015

As of the end of the fiscal year, on 31 October, Chesapeake Division had current assets of \$3,221.24, and no known liabilities.

The only source of income for the Division, this year, was our annual NMRA membership dues allocation, totaling \$143.00 (\$1 per active member, paid in two 50-cent increments).

The only recorded expenses were the rental of the Owings Mills branch public library room for the annual meeting (\$30) and postage (49¢).

*David Arday*

David Arday  
Paymaster  
Chesapeake Division, MER, NMRA

## Balance Sheet as of 10/31/15

Current Assets	
Severna Savings Bank	\$3196.01
Petty Cash	25.23
Subtotal	3,221.24
Current Liabilities	0.00
Net Worth	\$3,221.24

## Income and Expenses

Date	Description	Debit	Credit	Total
11/01/14	Balance forward			3108.73
12/8/14	Deposit MER dues allocation		72.00	3180.73
5/20/15	Deposit MER dues allocation		71.00	3251.73
8/28/15	Balto Co Pub Libr - mtg rm	30.00		3221.73
8/29/15	Postage	0.49		3221.24
10/31/15	Annual Totals	30.49	143.00	

sign me up for a

## The Relay

# National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Mid-Eastern Region Application for Free "Railpass" Trial Membership

**YES**, please sign me up for a free six-month Railpass Trial Membership in the NMRA, which includes membership in the Mid-Eastern Region and my local Division. During the six-month period, I understand that I may attend conventions, meets, and participate in contests. I will receive the NMRA Magazine, the monthly national publication, and The Local, the bi-monthly regional newsletter. I will not be eligible to vote, hold office or receive a New Member Pack.

I also understand that the \$9.95 cost of this six-month Railpass Trial Membership is being paid by the Mid-Eastern Region. (Note: Regardless of who pays, the six-month \$9.95 memberships are available only once to each person) At the end of the six month period, I may join the NMRA by paying the regular active member dues.

During the past thirty months, I have not been a member of the NMRA.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Scale (s): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of "Recruiter:" \_\_\_\_\_

*(a Regional Officer or Board Member)*

When this form is completed,

mail to:

Bob Price  
MER Business Manager  
801 South Newton Lake Drive  
Collingswood NJ, 08108

Please do not mail this form  
Directly to the NMRA Headquarters  
In Chattanooga, TN.

free six-month Railpass Trial Membership in the NMRA, which includes membership in the Mid-Eastern Region and my local Division. During the six-month period, I understand that I may attend conventions, meets, and participate in