



The Rock River Valley Division, RRVD, is a local division of the Midwest Region of the National Model Railroad Association, NMRA. The RRVD serves the NMRA members in areas of Green and Rock Counties of Wisconsin and Boone, Jo Davies, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside, and Winnebago counties in Illinois. The RRVD holds monthly meets typically the first Sunday afternoon of each month, September through May, in Rockford at the Midway Museum Center. The RRVD also hosts an annual Model Train Show & Sale usually the last weekend in March.

Visit our website at: rrvd-nmra.com

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From the Superintendent **Jay Kabitzke**

As this issue of the Flimzie is coming out before the holidays, I want to wish you a Happy Thanksgiving with your families, a Happy Hanukah, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

As the year winds down, we have had a busy schedule the past few months. At a Wings and Wheel show at Poplar Grove, we had many visitors on Sunday, thanks to an EAA breakfast. It is planned to repeat this next year, and hopefully with more publicity for our train show in March, we can raise attendance to this event. We need to make more people aware of this hobby as a family hobby. Boys as well as girls can find something interesting by participating in this hobby, and it is surprising to me how many wives support their husbands as well.

November was Model Railroad Month and we had displays in the North Suburban Libraries by Ken Reinert. Later in December we will have another library event at Cherry Valley. The library is open for us to have displays and programs from December 28th to the 31st. If

anyone can spare the time to spend some hours during those days please sign up for times at our next meeting Dec. 4th.

The next meeting by the way is also our swap meet. I want to remind everyone that the church has the facility till 12:30. Therefore, it is requested that if you have something to sell, you wait till 12:45 to enter and begin set up. We can't put up tables till 12:30, so allow us time to make the room ready. The sale will start at 1 PM, and non-members will pay to enter.

Another event we had, was the annual bus trip to Trainfest in Milwaukee. This year we had 36 take the trip, with 15 taking advantage of the stop at Menards in Beloit. There were many hobby suppliers, vendors, and train layouts of all scales. We plan to run the bus again, and now is the time to plan if you want to take the trip with us. We had about half NMRA and half non-members take the ride. There was a trivia challenge created by Ray Dyreson. I believe there was one person who got 12 out of 20 right. If we were to mark on a curve we'd throw 8 questions out and go from there.

We have a Christmas dinner set for Lino's, Sunday December 20th at 7:00 PM, cocktails at 6:00 PM. Again at the Dec. 4th meeting we would like to have you let us know if you are going to attend and what you'd like to have. We are mailing out invitations to all members with pricing and menu choice of entrée.

We are also looking to 2017, when we will sponsor the Regional Convention and are looking for ideas on having a convention car as it will be our 50th anniversary. Venues need to be found, if anyone would like to help us put the convention together, we'd like to hear from you. The NMRA is your organization and we are here to provide the services you want.

Upcoming Contest Schedule

December: Annual Garage sale no contest except for those who want to sell the most items and make the most money. They will be the winners.

January: Engine contest (push pull or drag it in.)

February: On line structure. Industrial to team track

March: Off line structure. House, gas station, stores, slums.

April: Silk Purse from a sow's ear. Taking a non-detailed model and reworking it to

create a detail and refined model. Can be cars, freight or passenger, engines, or structures.

May: No local contest. We will be meeting with the Madison group in Wisconsin.

Prizes are Ten Dollar Gift Certificates to a regional hobby shop.

Upcoming Clinics

by Jim McQueeney

January 2016: Presentation will be Dakota Rails by Randy Garnhart. It will cover the railroad operations in South Dakota including Dakota Southern, Dakota Minnesota & Eastern and others.

February: Presentations will be by Ingrid Drozdak (the tree lady) and her husband John.

March and April: Presentations will be by Jerry Pyfer, Ken Mosny and Jim McQueeney MMR. If Jerry does his presentation in March then Ken and Jim's will be in April. Ken has offered to do a presentation on "freight car detailing" and Jim's presentation will be "structure building and painting tips."

We are always looking for volunteers to give clinics, so if you have any methods of doing something better you'd like to share for making scenery, kit construction etc., have an operating waybill system or special tricks in wiring layouts and locomotives for DCC, we'd like you to share it with us. If you would like a clinic on something of general interest please contact Jim McQueeney (815-399-3280) or jmcqiv@sbcglobal.net

2015 Fall Contest Winners

The October contest on freight cars and equipment was won by Bruce Giersch for his O-Gauge model of a small steam crane.



The November contest was for small dioramas to be exhibited at local libraries during November for National Model Railroad Month. The winner was Gary Loiselle for his

model of a steel fabricating facility based on photos of the prototype. Shown below.



Pictures of more entries below.



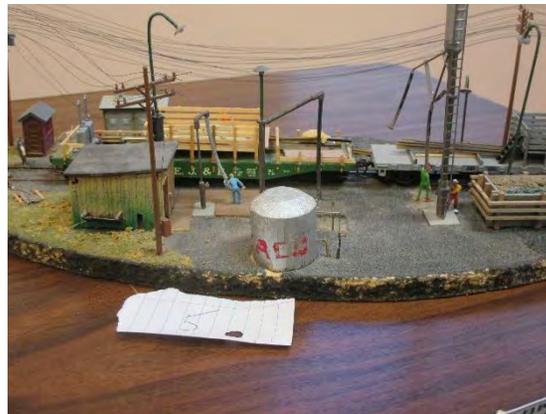
Caboose Cottage-Ken Reinert



Christmas Scene-Charlie Wickhorst



Suburban Train Station-Ken Reinert



Service Facility-Clarence Welte

Trainfest Trip

This year, as in the past, RRVD made our annual bus trip to "Trainfest" held in Milwaukee Wisconsin. The bus picked up riders at the Clock Tower in Rockford and at the Menards store in Beloit. For the first time, the Beloit group was almost as big as the Rockford Group. Ray Dyreson had us pass the time on the way there by taking his infamous "Trainfest Terrible Trivia Test." We wonder if it is the trivia that is terrible or the test itself. Of the twenty questions the highest score was twelve correct by Ken Reinert. Scores were as low as four.



Group on Bus Receiving Test Prizes

We arrived at the fest with the intention of parking our bus at the usual spot by the back door only to be told by security to back up and head somewhere else but nobody knew where. After passing at least four more security check stations we landed up at the

place we started and parked the bus. It was the first time we ever circled "Trainfest" from the outside. We took it all in stride.

This year everyone was given a wrist strap and who knew that our superintendent, Jay Kabitzke, had the ability to put one on in seconds and landed up helping a large group of us who were all thumbs. It is amazing that we can even build models.

The show was as impressive as always. Many members mentioned that they never saw so many people, families with children as well as seasoned model railroad veterans. There was even a large scale railroad to ride on with magnificent F-units equipped with sound, fans that worked, and Mars headlights. It is amazing the volume a "Soundtrax" one inch speaker puts out or was it something larger?



Bruce Giersch Viewing a Modular Layout



Clarence Welte & Mike Schaefer of RMC



Happy Model Railroaders from RRVD



Mary & Bob Grigsby Checking out a purchase.

When 3:00 PM arrived, we loaded on the bus, took roll and found one person was missing. After a period of time Ray went out searching for the missing passenger. He came back with none. It was suggested that we check if he might be on the bus and call his name again. Lo and behold, he magically was onboard. There were just too many Petersons and Pedersons on board and one slipped through the cracks.

The highlight on the ride home was a DVD shown on the bus TV system by Ray. The group chanting "press the button Ray" to remind him to start the DVD every time a new selection was required or the machine stopped was an additional highlight. It must have happened over 25 times.

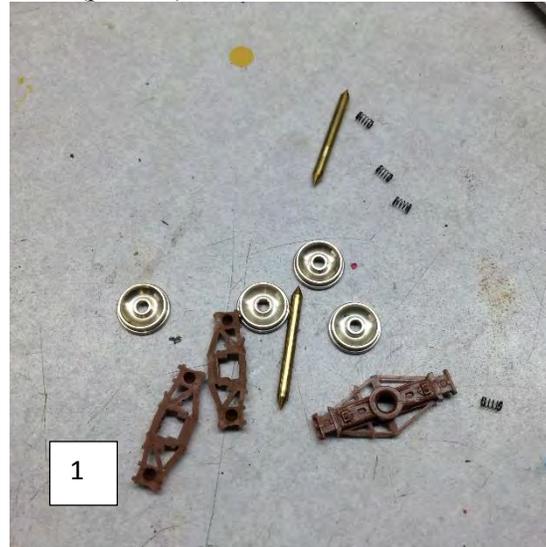
A good time was had by all.

Making All Wheel Pickup Trucks By Ken Mosny

Sometimes, it is desirable to pick up rail power from both rails on a single truck. Powering a FRED, car lighting and tender trucks come to mind. For example, the typical older model steam locomotive with a metal frame uses one rail pick up from the tender and the opposite rail from the drivers. Unless properly equalized, only two or three of the drivers at best are in contact with the rail. With the possibility of only the one driver in contact on the side being dirty, the loco stalls. The locomotive will have much improved performance if all the tender wheels are used for electrical pickup. Equalized trucks will improve this even more. This results in all eight wheels on the tender in contact with the rails. In addition, we can easily replace the typical brass or worn off nickel plated tender wheels in older locomotives with low cost (about \$1.00 each) solid nickel silver wheels for even better reliability. As for the drivers, nickel silver driver tires would have to be custom made if correct replacement drivers with nickel silver tires cannot be found. The driver tires can be nickel plated, or re-plated, but the plating will eventually wear off and need to be renewed. Even with these driver improvements, the fact is that all the drivers will never be in contact with the rails if they are not sprung or equalized. Using the tender trucks with nickel silver wheels as the main source of electrical pickup is a marked performance improvement for an older locomotive.

In addition to describing how to make these trucks, I will describe a simple low cost

electrical plug, how to punch thin materials instead of drilling and soldering using an alcohol flame. Here are the parts to make the truck (photo 1).



These are sprung Delrin trucks. Un-sprung Delrin trucks can also be used but will not equalize as well. Metal trucks present additional insulation procedures so only plastic trucks are described here.

The first step is to make the wheel sets. You will need non-insulated wheels attached to metal half axles with an insulated sleeve to join them. The easiest way get these is to buy the non-insulated wheels and axles from NSWL and assemble them yourself. NSWL has a wide variety of materials, diameters, profiles and axle styles in most scales. The cost of cataloged HO wheels and axles is about \$1.00 per wheel or axle. I have not personally tried them, but if you are willing to go with nickel plated brass wheels, Intermountain might be a good low cost

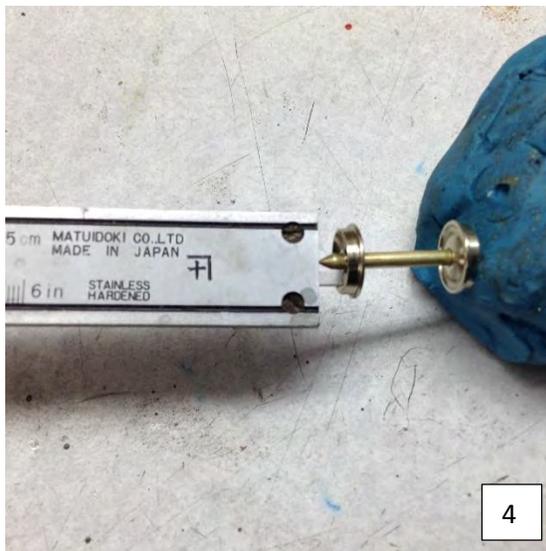
choice to try. Saw them in half using the non-insulated half from two sets, and use the insulated half for something else. These wheel sets would be cheap and easy to make.

I have been using code 88, 33" solid nickel silver from Exact Rail because I got some on the internet at a good price. I use the wheels, discard the axles, and re-bore the wheels to slip fit brass axles salvaged from plastic wheel sets.

Using rail nippers, *lightly* score both ends of the polished axle so the wheel will not move when finger pushed into place (photo 2).



Push the wheels onto the axle making sure they are in gauge and equal distance from the ends (photos 3 & 4).



Place a small bit of solder at the joint. You can shave off a bit from larger diameter solder if you don't have fine 0.015" diameter shown here (photo 5).



Flux the joint (photo 6) and solder over a flame of an alcohol lamp (photo 7).



Clean the water soluble flux with Windex, hot water and a toothbrush. The result should have a small, clean fillet of solder (photo 8).



Here the wheel set is cradled in a vice to saw the axle most of the way through (photo 9).



It is then broken in two and the rough end dressed with a file (photo 10).

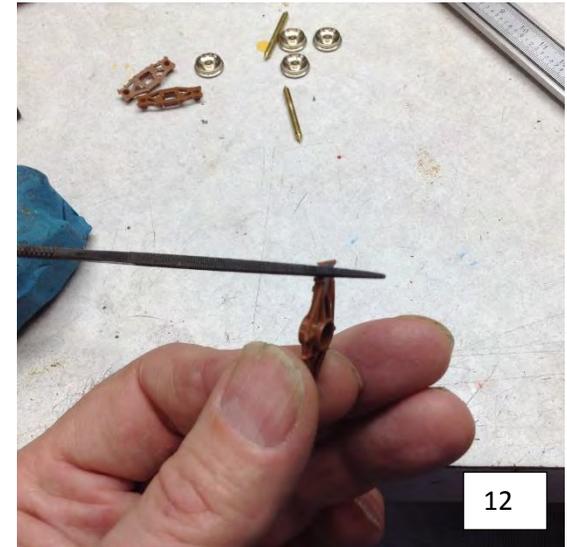


Join the axle halves with a piece of plastic tube and ACC. I use undersized ID tube drilled for a tight fit on the axle (photo 11)

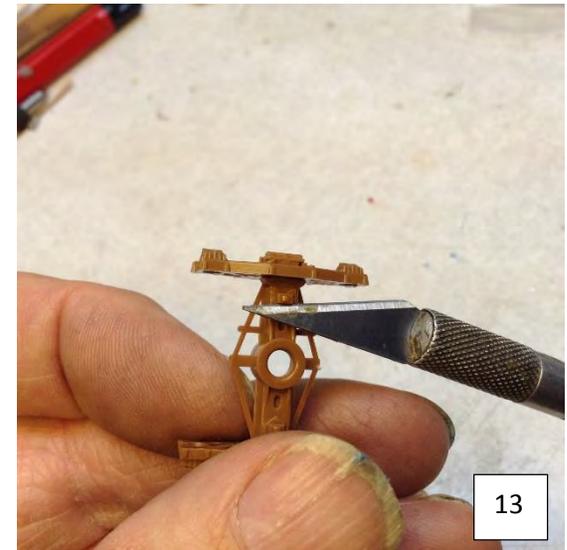


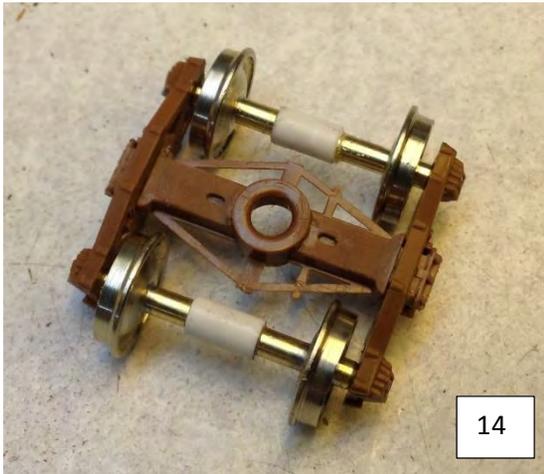
Quickly gauge the wheels before the ACC sets. You could use 5 minute epoxy for more working time to gauge the set.

Next, prepare the truck frame. If the trucks are sprung, carefully dress the sliding surfaces so the parts do not bind but do not wobble (photo 12).



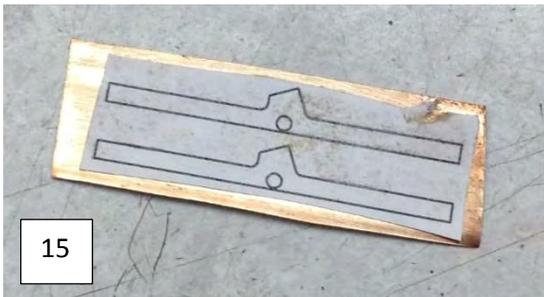
Some trucks have molded rib and side bearing details on the top of the frame. Trim and file these off (photos 13 & 14). Make sure the wheels rotate freely. Use a "truck tuner" as required.



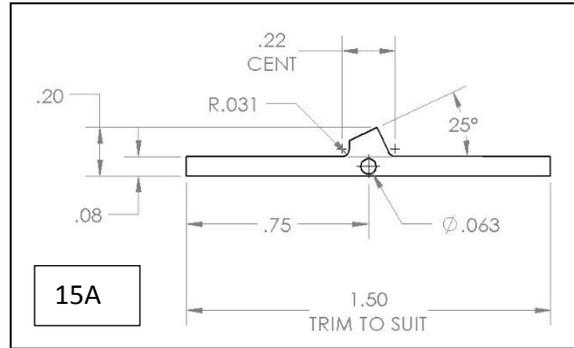


14

Now, make the wipers. I use 0.005" thick phosphor bronze sheet. This is easily obtained from scraps of door and window weatherstripping. I have a template for the shape of the wiper which I attach to the metal sheet with double-sided Scotch tape (photo 15 & 15A).



15



Thin materials are easier to punch than drill. Make a die by drilling a hole, in this case 1/16" diameter, in a strip of mild steel and file any burrs on the steel flat but do not chamfer the hole. Grind the blank end of the drill flat with a bench grinder to sharpen it. Insert the fluted end of the drill in a drill press chuck with the flat ground end down. Clamp the die strip to the drill press table lining the die hole up with the drill punch (photo 16).



16

Punch the holes in the wiper material (photo 17).



17

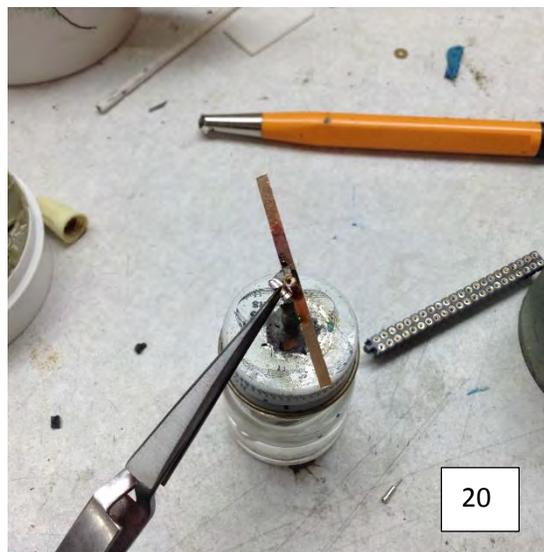
Cut the wiper out with small snips, dress rough edges with files, flatten with a jeweler's burnishing tool (or a drill bit) and polish with a fiberglass brush (photo 18).



To make the trucks easy to remove for service, solder miniature sockets onto the wiper strips. The sockets are cut from strips of electrical sockets called "machine tooled strip sockets" available from Jameco (#212936) and others. They come in various sizes. The strip of sockets shown costs about \$1.00 or \$0.02 per socket. There are also the NMRA 8 pin DCC plug, NCE #05240211. Using nippers, carefully clip the metal sockets out of the plastic strip and cut off the tail (photo 19).



I use a pair of stainless cross action tweezers to clip the socket to the wiper strip. Again flux with a bit a solder and melt over the alcohol flame (photo 20).

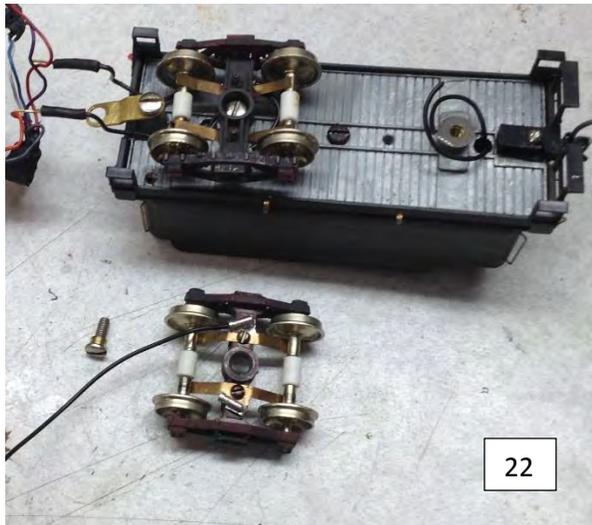


Drill holes in the truck bolster. Clean the wipers with Windex and hot water. Mount the wipers with a #0x1/8 sheet metal screws, Kadee #400 (photo 21).



The sockets will accept a solid wire or pins up to 0.020" diameter. Tinning the end of a 28ga 7x36 stranded wire, Jameco #814, will produce a solid wire end about 0.015" diameter to plug into the socket.

This flexible wire works well to connect the trucks to the tender as well as general HO locomotive wiring (photo 22).



Making an Alcohol Soldering Lamp

I find the small butane or propane torches often sold to modelers are much too hot for most delicate soldering jobs. This small alcohol lamp for soldering made from an empty paint jar works well because it has a cool flame, which is easier to control so as not to burn the flux and solder on small parts (photos 23 & 24).



The jar shown is a ½ oz. 25 mm glass model paint jar. Remove the inner seal from the cap and sand any finish off the top and inside top to bare steel to prepare for soldering. Drill a hole in the cap to fit the brass tube. Solder a

1/8" diameter x 7/8" long brass tube into the cap. Soldering a sleeve to enlarge the end of the tube makes the cap easier to put on. Make the wick from cotton string. Do not use synthetic string, which will melt instead of charring. The longer the exposed wick, the larger the flame. I found a rubber washer in my household plumbing repair parts to form a new cap seal. The cap, to help prevent the alcohol from evaporating when not in use, is a wire nut drilled to fit. Fill the jar ½ full with ethanol alcohol available in paint stores. Do not fill the jar up to the level of the brass tube inside. The heat generated will create enough pressure in the jar to force liquid alcohol up the tube, out the top and run down the sides of the jar. The flame will ignite the spilled alcohol on your bench top. During the ensuing panic, you may knock that model you are working to the floor. Don't ask me how I discovered this.

AROUND THE ROUNDHOUSE CORNER

by Ken Reinert

I am continuing to travel the Division to interview another member of the Division and view their railroad. This time I am back in Rockford to visit the Chicago Milwaukee and Gary railroad and its president Charles (CHARLIE) Wickhorst. Many of you may know him from our meets as the unofficial greeter. When I first attended the NMRA meeting, it was Charlie who greeted me and introduced me to the group. I am sure many others have been welcomed by Charlie.

This issue of the Roundhouse Corner will consist of two parts, the first an introduction to Charlie and his railroad and second, a special Christmas project he is working on and offer it as a fun project for others to follow.

Charlie like many of us started out with an American Flyer trainset but then decided in the late 1940s to switch to HO because he liked the detail and kits available for cars and buildings. We also talked about his love of trains and his remembrance of the 1949 Chicago Railroad Fair. Charlie even still had two serialized clip badge buttons showing that he visited the Milwaukee Road exhibit. I, like him, remembered the “Wheels a Rolling Pageant” at the fair. We are old, are we not? He and his friends who lived in Oak Park would take the Burlington to Chicago and then the IC Suburban Trains to visit the Museum of Science and Industry’s Santa Fe train layout. As many of us have experienced, life gets in the way and between college, the military, starting a family and jobs the model railroad hobby took a backseat. Charlie worked as industrial engineer and plant manager in various companies throughout the region before retiring.

He reentered the hobby when his parents came to visit his wife and family in Rockford in the early 1970s and brought all his model railroad stuff that he left at their house years earlier. Well it was uphill or maybe downhill from there.

Charlie’s railroad has been finished for a number of years. That does not mean that it is stagnant. He told me that his greatest enjoyment is building cars (open loads) buildings and scenery. To this end he has taken on the tasks of detailing the layout to what he calls mini-scenes. Charlie has help with this effort from Tom Maladecki, Rich Woock, and John Swanson. His dog Pennsy joins the group but mostly begs for treats by gently tapping your leg with her paw. She did the same thing to me all during the interview.

Shown below is a photo of a police officer giving a ticket to a truck driver concerning his wide load. Since Charlie is a fan of open loads, he decided to replicate the scene on his railroad.



The next picture is the scene on his railroad.



Another example of a detailed mini-scene is how he took a house and turned it into home which looked lived in by a family.

The picture shown below is how the house first looked un-lived and plain.



The next picture shows how it appears with added detail so that it looks lived in. People sitting on the porch, hanging flower basket, trees, and flowers planted around the porch.



The next picture shows a beach scene with people having fun. This is how Charlie believes bringing a layout to life makes your layout interesting to non-model railroaders.



The last picture presents a detailed scene of a factory interior making dump truck bodies. He dedicated it to fellow model railroader John Swanson who also models trucks. It is equipped with the sound of factory noises.



Just in case you do not know Charlie. I have included a picture of Charlie in front of his layout.



Part Two a Christmas Layout

As mentioned in the beginning of the article Charlie has started on a special project for an under the Christmas tree layout. His goal is to provide a winter setting to be placed under the Christmas tree. He got the idea from a Walthers advertisement which is shown below with a picture of a Christmas scene at the top of the page (somewhat hidden by the light reflection).



He has started by using foam insulation board cut in two halves so that the layout can be easily transported. The board is given a basic coat of flat white paint to represent snow. His intention is to have an oval of track to go around the winter scene not mounted to the board but to go around it on the floor.

See the picture below of one half the layout.



Charlie said that we all have extra buildings, train cars, engines etc. we built years ago and no longer use. He states that this is not a layout for rivet counters but just a fun project. In the above picture he already has the roadways in place and some buildings in position. All buildings are simply set on the layout so they can be removed easily for storage and transport. Each position is marked for where each building is to be placed.

Charlie was not kidding when he said he uses old buildings. The ones he used on a previous Christmas layout were cardboard kits he built in the late 1940s. I was impressed how well they looked and felt they could easily be used as background buildings on a modern layout. The following picture shows Charlie holding one before he gives it the full snow treatment.



I have included some detail pictures and scenes from his original Christmas layout. Notice the use of artificial snow, figures dressed in winter clothes and trees made by clipping branches from artificial evergreen garland.



Going to church (see above).

Ski slope (see below).



Local businesses with movie theatre before strip malls

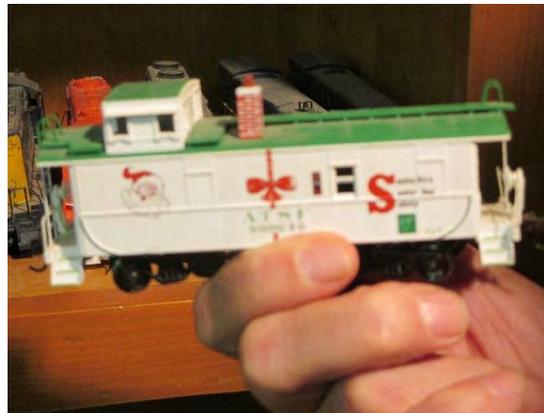


For those of you wanting to do a simple fun project for Christmas time and evoke nostalgic Christmas memories of a simpler time, Charlies under the Christmas tree train layout may fit the bill.

Until the next installment of the “Round House Corner” have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.- Ken Reinert



Charlie also showed me a caboose made by Athearn based on a prototype used by the Santa Fe for their Santa Train. Check it out in the following picture plus a picture of flatcar loaded with Christmas trees to be used on the layout. He intends to make repairs to the stakes supporting the trees.



Show & Sale November 2015

by Doug Loy

An update on the test track that was proposed in the previous two “Flimzies” for use at the Show and Sale. **Nothing has been done**, not one donation towards this project was received. Not even one rail joiner! I have been reading in the NMRA ORG magazine and the “Midwest Region Waybill” on the state of the NMRA that members just want to get from the NMRA and not give anything in return. I think this is now very true. I had hoped that members of the RRVD would donate some used track and power supplies to construct a test track for our Show & Sale, but I really was surprised that **NOTHING** was donated. I am sure that members whose layouts that have been built and changed would have a small amount of track to donate to the Show & Sale test track which would be gladly accepted. This really is pathetic for the Rock River Valley Division. Remember the donations may be tax deductible.

The December garage sale would be the perfect time to donate your extra track and power supplies. All that is needed is 5 feet of track for each scale and power packs.

Mark your 2016 calendars for the show and sale being held at Jefferson High School on March 18, 19, & 20th. (Friday the 18th night is setup.) Signup sheets for help will be at the January meet.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New year!!!

The views presented are not necessarily the views of the Board of Directors, but the views ought to be.