



GRAND CANYON MODEL RAILROADERS

MAIN LINE

APRIL, 2009

Volume 18

Number 4

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

by Bill East

At the March meeting, We had as a visitor, Bob Kocher from An Affair With Trains. He informed us as to what is going on in the model train business. Lionel is putting the pressure on wholesaler and retailers by cutting in half the profit margin. There are some speculations that another manufacture may wind up merging with or taking over Lionel.

We had a good turnout for the March meeting, displaying green cars for St. Pat's day. The "O" gaugers set up and ran their modules. Dallas Dixon brought in an oval of track and ran a 1936 American Flyer "O" gauge Hudson freight set. Sales of raffle tickets were brisk, and a great time was had by all at the meeting. Another great surprise was the appearance of Frank Konig at the meeting after his long stay in recovery from a fall earlier this year. Welcome back Frank!

At the meeting, donations were brought in and assembled to build the kids club layout. The tabletop is now down, next is the covering for the tabletop followed by track over the next few months. A big thank you goes to all that donated and helped the kids who did the work on the tabletop.

The Saturday before the meeting, the trailer and the "S" gauge modules represented the GCMR out at the Adobe Mountain Railroad Park swap meet. The people at the meet appreciated all our work and by those that ran the meet. Thanks again to all who helped set up, run and the take down on that Saturday.

At our upcoming April meeting, the theme will be your favorite operating accessory. Hope to see you all there!

Keep those trains on the tracks!!!

CALENDAR

GCMR meets are held at 9:00am in the Parish Hall of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church at 1212 E Glendale Avenue in Phoenix, located on the north side of Glendale, just east of the traffic light at 12th St. It is easily reached off the Glendale Exit of either I-17 or SR 51. Go east from I-17 or west from SR 51 to 12th Street.

April 25 - GCMR Meeting - Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

May 23 - GCMR Meeting - Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

June 27 - GCMR Meeting - Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

OTHER TRAIN EVENTS

April 18 - 19 EagleWings Garden Railroad Open houses. Phoenix. Info:

www.eaglewingsironcraft.com/upcoming_event_s.php



Starting to work on the Kids Layout

April 23 - 26 - Winslow Railroad Days, Winslow, AZ
Info:

home.comcast.net/~tucsonntrak/ASWMRR/ASWMRR_Info_Overflow.html

May 9 - Amtrak National Train Day:
www.nationaltrainday.com/2009/

June 18 - 20 O Scale National Convention. Baltimore, MD For information see: www.OscaleEast.com

June 28 - July 4 - TCA National Convention, Phoenix. Info: www.tcadd.org

August 15 - Beat the Heat Swap Meet, Prescott



Progress!

BOARD - MEETING NOTES

Bob Kocher of An Affair With Trains shared the following insights about being in the model train sales business these days:

- + Changes have been dramatic in the last few years
- + Most of the manufacturers are being run by accountants rather than modelers

- + Just-in-time seems to be the stocking philosophy for most of the manufacturers. Items are not in stock at the manufacturer's warehouses.
- + Preorders and internet sales seem to be the norm these days.
- + Walthers seems to be the exception and they sell by order to their resellers
- + When items sell quickly, there is a short supply and additional units may not be available
- + Quality and detail has improved dramatically
- + Delivery dates are problematic
- + Chinese manufacturers are less secure and are going out of business abruptly.
- + Lionel futures are vague and dealer markup has been halved, making profit problematic.
- + Many retailers are cutting stock.
- + At the user level, nothing much has changed.
- + MTH appears to be very strong, but suffers from delivery date problems.
- + Bachman /Williams seem strong
- + LGB is back and coming through Canada. Walthers is their American dealer.
- + The LGB line will be only European designs until later this year
- + Lionel deliveries are slow. Basic train sets are getting larger and increased in price.
- + New ZWs will be in for a large price increase and will be in the neighborhood of \$700
- + Marklin will be sold through Walthers but availability is vague.
- + Inventory is based on sales. Eighty percent is in HO, fifteen percent N, the rest all of the other items.
- + Bachman is a company that stands behind their products. They meet their deadlines and products are delivered on schedule.
- + The manufacturer Sanda Kan is gone. MTH purchased a lot of the leftover product from them
- + Toy train demand is high. Train sets are still popular especially at Christmas. The majority of sales

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seem to be grandparents buying for their grandchildren.

- + Production seems to be based on per-orders. What isn't pre-ordered is not produced. Cataloged items are often not produced because of a lack of pre-orders.
- + Prices are on the rise and markup is shrinking.
- + And finally, An Affair With Trains is still an ongoing business, and plans to stay that way! Rumors of the closing are unfounded.

Other notes from the March meeting:

- + Glen Saber discussed the Hamburg Germany layout in HO, the "world's largest".
- + Discussion of Roadside America in central Pennsylvania
- + Beth Stange thanked the club for the materials for their layout and for assistance in constructing the platform. At the next meeting, the kids will install the carpeting. Bill will get the carpet.
- + Olivia did a great job drilling and fastening
- + On April 25 there will be the Roads, Rails and Runways event at Falcon field
- + Members would like an event planning sign up sheet for upcoming events.
- + The October meets throughout the valley need to be coordinated.

Show and Tell: Glen showed the Blue Goose passenger set from Williams and gave its history. Williams has now produced a powder blue engine to go with "the train that never existed".



Glenn's Blue Goose

Bill Richardson brought in two American Flyer gondola cars in green livery. He refers to them as "a joke of American Flyer".

Bill East showed a green American Flyer boxcar. He also displayed a 1935 American Flyer consist that he had running on a track supplied by Dallas Dixon. The O gauge modules were up and running at the meeting. Modules were provided by Paul Boston, Jim Bergero, and John Draftz. Paul would like to find a new home for the four corner modules.

SWAP MEET FINANCIAL REPORT

Attendance:

Paid - 217

Total - 307

	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenses</u>
Admissions	\$1085.00	
Hall rental		\$377.30
Security		275.00
Advertising		56.62
Mailings/stamps		42.00
Table rental/sales		810.16
Raffle	553.00	
Table sales	1740.00	
<u>Food sales</u>	<u>\$176.76</u>	<u>226.08</u>
Total	\$3554.76	\$1787.16
Net profit	\$1767.60	



The goodie table:
raffle and Mystery Box prizes

SOME THINGS DO NOT CHANGE

(The following is an editorial I found in reading an older copy of the Model Railroader magazine. Read it through and be sure to read the last line - Ed)

WHAT IS SCALE, WHAT IS TINPLATE?

by John Page

Many thoughtful model railroaders are becoming increasingly puzzled at where to draw the line between scale and tinplate. More and more "scale model" equipment is appearing in modified form, which is another way of saying it isn't to scale. Scale is also approaching tinplate in that more and more scale equipment is available in ready-to-run, or nearly ready-to-run condition.

On the other hand, "tinplate" once implied under detailed, badly proportioned equipment. But tinplate manufacturers have so improved their product that some of it is acceptable even to discriminating scale model people.

With these two branches of our hobby thus gravitating toward each other is there any longer any definite boundary between toy and scale model railroading? We think so, for we feel that the important difference between toy and scale railroading is not so much in the equipment, but rather in how it is operated. The ideal we all seek is to operate strictly scale equipment in prototype fashion. But when one or the other is sacrificed, what then?

Here's a case in point. There are two men. One has a lot of scale model equipment which he simply runs in circles with no attempt to model prototype activities. The other uses toy train equipment but operates it in true prototype spirit, making up and breaking up trains, picking up and setting out cars on sidings, and so on.

Now let's ask ourselves the \$64 question: If the chief objective of model railroading is to put our miniatures through prototype activities, is the chap with the toy train equipment more a model railroader than the other?

Let us know what you think.

(Editorial Page: Model Railroader Magazine, February 1953)

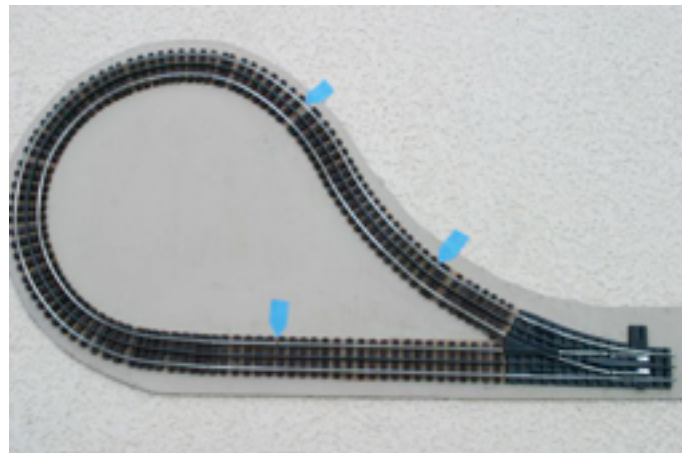
3 RAIL MAGIC

by Paul Boston

Using three rails for model trains was an excellent idea! The center rail would be the power and *both* of the outer rails would be the common. This solved the problem with having an engine go both directions on the same track without electrical change, and made the construction of an out and back track with a loop on the end an easy task.

A fringe benefit is that if a portion of one of the outer rails could be electrically isolated, the wheels of the passing train would pass the power from one outer rail to the other. The outer rails could be used as a switch to turn on anything that already had the power wire attached and just needed a common. A track section with one of the outer rails electrically insulated from the other has existed for many years and has been used by generations of 3-railers for a myriad of switching tasks. The elegance is that electronic devices are not needed as long as what needs to be done could be done with a switch.

Running a group of trains, stopping one and releasing another is just such a task. To stop a train we need only disconnect, or switch off, one of the wires. Usually our choice is the power wire running to the center rail. But let's think out-of-the-box and feed power to the center all the time and disconnect the outer rails.



Here is a loop of track with that idea implemented. Gargraves track uses wooden or plastic ties that electrically isolate the outer rails from each other. Further, the turnout used in the loop isolates the inner rail of the loop from the entire layout since the plastic frogs don't conduct. The outer rail of the loop is a continuous electrical part of the layout since there are no insulators along its length.

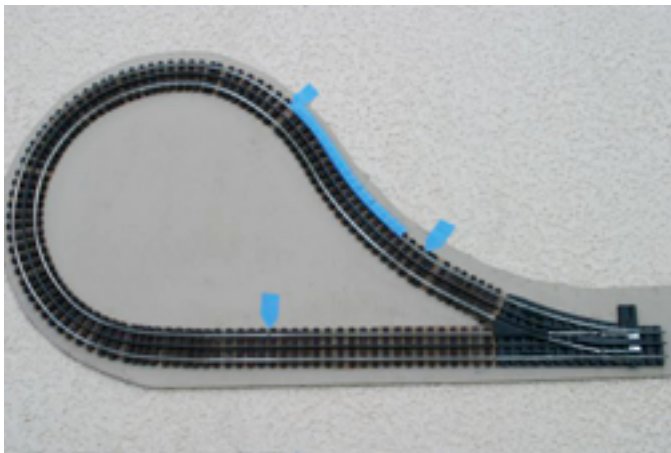
The blue tape arrows (call them A, B and C clockwise from the top) indicate where track cuts have been made for the purposes of electrical isolation.

Track power is applied to a section of track joined to the right portion of the turnout. The center rail is power, and both outer rails are common, a typical arrangement. An engine (#1) between A and B will see the power of the center rail, but because of the cuts in the outer rail and the natural insulation of the turnout frogs, there will be no connection of its wheels to the electrical common and it will not move. If a car or engine (#2) enters the loop clockwise from the right

as soon as the first set of its wheels enter the loop the stopped engine (#1) will see the common and (assuming all engines are set to start forward) #1 will begin to move forward, and proceed out of the loop in the opposite direction of the train (#2) that just entered. When all the wheels of train #2 enter the A-B section it will stop and await another train entering from the right side of the turnout.

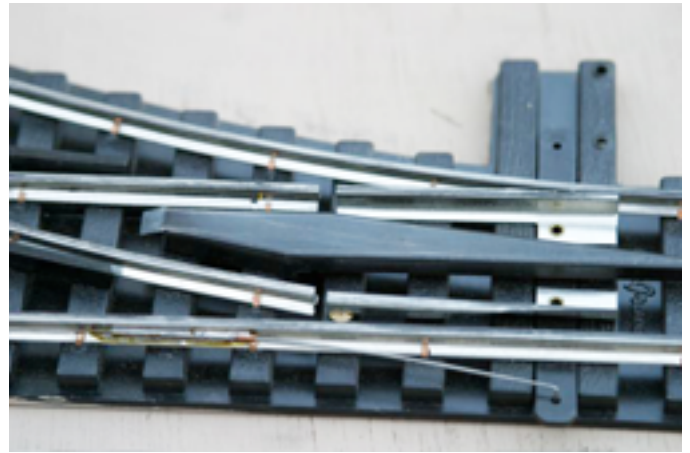
We have constructed a loop with a built in stop but it will only work with really short trains since the stopped engine will begin to move as soon as the entering engines front wheels clear the switch. Depending on the spacing this can be really exciting!

That's where C comes in. If the *inner* rail is cut at C the stopped engine will not see common until the front wheels of the entering train cross the cut, giving some breathing room for the incoming train to clear the turnout.



This photo shows a masking tape strip used as an insulator for the stopped train as a test to see where the cuts need to be made to contain the length of consist desired. Remember, it must contain the *entire* consist since the rearmost wheels of the consist are conductors and will supply the common until all wheels are in the insulated zone. Similarly tape may be used on the inside rail from the turnout entrance to the proposed cut at C to provide adequate breathing room.

To keep the trains from running head on into each other the turnouts must always return to the straight position after releasing a consist. In the spirit of keeping it simple a mechanical solution seems best. Jim Barret in O-Gauge Railroading presented a method using a small straight spring to push in the desired direction.



In my version a brass tube is soldered to the side of the track and the spring is inserted loosely into the tube. The force exerted on the movable points is determined by the thickness of the spring (piano wire), and the length of the spring from the throw bar to the point at which it enters the brass tube. I made the spring wire extra long, inserted it into the brass tube before soldering the tube to the track, and slid the tube back and forth until the points just closed, then tested it by running a car in a direction to force the points open and allow even a light car to pass through the turnout. The tube was then soldered in position.

Want to run three consists going both ways on the entrance track? Just build two of the above loops. You still only need one power connection on the track between the loops.

WINNERS!

Lionel Frisco tank car	Glen Saber
Lionel Ashland tank car	Bill Freeman
Lionel Ralston Purina reefer	Ken Barnes
Lionel Erie Lackawanna box car	Paul Saeugling
Lionel #476 prewar gondola	Bill Freeman
City Cruiser set of three	Beth Stange
\$25 Gift certificate	Ken Barnes
He auctioned it off. Club gets \$10, Ken gets \$10	
HO gauge village set of 6 houses	Frank Birney
Mystery Raffle	Glen Saber
\$50 Drawing	Wayne Ross



Can you guess who this is, circa 1950?

AT THE PICNIC !



Brad Martin - do all cooks look this dapper?



Carol Mosser and Pat Boston



Getting hungry



Pres. Bill East takes a break



Janice and Earl Rasmussen

BEAT THE HEAT BUS TOUR 2009

It's that time of year again; time to plan for the 2009 Beat the Heat bus tour. There are a few changes for this year, most notably there is now a kids charge of \$15 per kid. That is, two kids can come for the cost of a full paying adult. Kids are aged 14 and younger.

We will still do the layout tours after the meet. Sack lunches including a soda are available if you want it for \$6 to be picked up at the meet. When does all this happen? The "Beat the Heat Meet" is on Saturday August 15th. So fill out this form, and give it to Bob at the GCMR meet or mail it to:

Bob Prehara
5221 N. 41st Ave
Phoenix AZ 85019

Checks will need to be sent with the form. If the bus is canceled (Which has never happened yet!) your checks will be returned. Pick the best place for you to be picked up and note the time. During the early part of August, the person who is in charge of your pickup location will call you with the location of where to meet the bus. The bus will return to Phoenix around 5:00 PM or so. Hope to see you all there!

Name(s) _____

Phone Number _____

Pickup/drop-off Location - please check one.

Arizona Mills @ 6:30 am < >

Paradise Valley Mall @ 7:00 am < >

Metro Center @ 7:30 am < >

Carefree Highway @ 7:45 am < >

Please check one.

GCMR < > TCA < > P&P < > All Saints < > Other < >

Number of adults: _____ at \$30 each \$ _____

Number of kid : _____ at \$15 each \$ _____

Number of lunches: _____ at \$6 each \$ _____ (optional)

Total enclosed \$ _____

(Please make your check to GCMR)

THE MAIN LINE
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Looks like David Wildman had a really good time at the train clubs annual picnic at Scottsdale Railroad Park