



The DERAIL

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Old Layout Enters Twenty-First Century

Don Bozman

Old Layout Enters Twenty-First Century

(Thanks to Good Friends)

It all started during my open house last November. By the end of the second day, very few trains would run, and those that did would not respond correctly to commands. The next few days were spent trying to pinpoint the problem on my 28 year old Dynatrol analog command control system. It turned out the command signals were just not strong enough and normal adjustments could not fix the problem. Calling around the country revealed Dynatrol was no longer in the repair business, and other than Gil Freitag, I could find no one else still using Dynatrol. By the second week the future of the GGN looked pretty hopeless.

Then one by one friends began to urge me to convert to DCC. But at 76, I didn't think I was up to the task. The first huge hurdle was trying to replace the 48 blocks of detection essential to running a railroad this size. In my mind it would take extensive rewiring and replacements would be very costly and time consuming. It took Ed Rains and Bruce

Chubb to talk me into changing from Chubb's old "Optimized Detectors" which was on my old layout to his newer version of "Optimized Detectors for DCC". Ed showed me how simple it would be to rewire the system. Then thanks to the generosity of Harry Daniels and also Gilbert Freitag a ready built supply of the new detectors became available from the remains of Harry's old HO layout. That would solve my first two problems, but I still wasn't sure about changing.

Next, along came Randall Wilson and Robert Ashcraft taking considerable time to explain the advantages of DCC. Randall on NCE in particular. He also explained how easy the conversion would be. About then I started watching some great videos about DCC by Art Houston which led to a few personal extended phone calls. By then I knew I wanted DCC but I also knew my failing eyesight would not allow me to see well enough to solder in decoders to my existing stable of older locomotives (made before plug and play) so I still sat on the fence.

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Then in my mind, an extraordinarily amazing thing happened. The kind of thing that could only occur because of the strong fellowship shared within our model railroad community. Six good friends named Robert Ashcraft, Dave Shafer, Steve Sandifer, Tom Bailey, Jim Thompson, and Bob Barnett each came to me not only prodding me towards switching to DCC, but also volunteering to install my decoders for me. How could I resist any longer?

The new system is powered by 10 amps with the railroad split into 4 power districts using 4 independent circuit breakers. I opted to use all wireless throttles so no more tripping over tethered throttles or stopping and moving to another plug in.

Thus, because of these fine folks, we had our first DCC operating session four months after the old system failed. All went very well, and the Great Great Northern Railway is now part of the 21st century. Thanks again guys!



2/28/14 Photo by Diann Wilson. Eight of the guys that made converting to DCC on the GGN possible met for the first operating session using DCC. L to R from back to front are Dave Shafer, a very happy me, Steve Sandifer, Ed Rains, Randall Wilson, Jim Thompson, Robert Ashcraft, Bob Barnett, and Tom Bailey.

WHO'D A THUNK IT ?
DCC on the GGN
GOOD FRIENDS MADE IT HAPPEN
THANKS !

Pieces of "Appreciation" cake were served over these computer generated placemats before the session got underway.

Contest Feb 15, 2014

Report from the contest room.

There were 11 category enter, 17 model entered and 12 photo's. In the models category there were;

Models

6 Freight Cars entered (Cliff Cheeseman 3, Steve Smith 2, Niel Gorman 1)

1 Passenger Car (Mark Fisher)

2 Diesel and Other Engines (Mark Fisher 1, Niel Gorman 1)

3 Steam Engines (Barry Bogs 1, Jason Smith 2)

1 On-line Structures (Charles Lee)

2 Off-line Structures (Mark Fisher 1, Steve Smith 1)

1 Bridges & Trestles (Loren Nuefeld)

1 Displays (Cliff Cheeseman)

Photos

7 Color Models (Cliff Cheeseman 7)

4 Proto Type Color (Gordan Bliss 2, Blake Bogs 2)

1 Proto Type Black and White (Blake Bogs)

Merited Models for the contest total of 7 seven (4 above 100 points and 3 below 100)

Freight Cars:

Cliff Cheeseman Scored 90 on Coil Car P&LE #42956

Steam Engines:

Barry Bogs Scored 104 on D&RG K-24 GN3

Jason Smith Scored 90 on UP 4-12-2 N-scale

Jason Smith Scored 89 on T&NO 4-8-4 GS-1

On-line Structures:

Charles Lee Scored 100 on Octagon Roof water tank

Bridges & Trestles:

Loren Neufeld Scored 109 on Wood Trestle

Display:

Cliff Cheesman Scored 100 on Lamberton MFG

Photos of Models Entered

Barry Bogs D&RG K-27



Jason Smith UP 4-12-2



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Jason Smith T&NO 4-8-4



Mark Fisher Observation Car



Mark Fisher Gas Electric (The Rhonda)



Cliff Cheeseman P&LE 42956



Niell Gorman HB&T #42



B&O Box Car



B&O Box Car



Niell Gorman Rail Box Car



Steve Smith 3 Dome Tank Car



Charles Lee Water Tank



MKT Gondola



Mark Fisher CPR & First Aid



Cliff Cheeseman Lamberton MFG



Steve Smith Domino Pizza



Thanks to all who entered this year's contest. Hope to see you enter again and more next year.

And a special thank you to the judges:

Don Foremanek, Ray Byer, Steve Sandifer, Loren NueFeld, Bill Reed, Rick White, Irene and Jeff Mills, Scott Delayne

Photos can be found at; <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ssandifer>

Report by Ray Byer 3-2-14

Ohringen Bahnhof

Dick Setterlund

I have a three level layout in a 10.5 foot by 13.5 foot upstairs bedroom with the levels joined by a helix in a closet described in an earlier article. The layout is point to point and loosely based on the Deutsche Bundesbahn in the 1960's when both steam and diesel powered trains shared the rails. This article is about the top deck, which at elevation of 66 inches, which is just below my eye level.

The key portion of the upper deck is a 20 inch wide by 9.6 foot long straight section that connects the top

of the helix to the East track loops. It had always been my intention that this straight section would contain a major passenger terminal; however, after many years of construction and several years of operation the only structures on the top deck were two covered platforms.

I did not care for the initial platforms and felt they were both too high and poorly constructed. The first step was to replace the platforms with ones with LED lighting and to do a better job of constructing them.

The construction of the Walthers platforms was not an easy task due to the complex wiring requirements but the end result made the work worthwhile. I built a jig to solder the LEDs as suggested for the kit but had problems stripping the very fine wire without breaking it. I used heavier wire which solved the problem but this change made it difficult to fit the wire on top of the roof.



The second step was to add a station. It needed to be narrow in order to fit and tall to be seen. The Ohringen bahnhof kit met the size requirements and when I received the kit from Germany, I was pleased to discover that it was both very realistic and easy to assemble. I had been using the name Lukenbach for this station but changed it to Ohringen and adjacent the East staging yard became Lukenbach.

Even though the bahnhof and platforms represent structures from Germany and California, they look

good together in my opinion as seen in Figure 1. The LED platform lighting is quite effective at eye level as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2 shows the figures on the platform standing straight and tall. This is largely due to the use of Detail Tack from Micro-Mark to position them. This was my first use of Detail Tack and I wish I had known about it years ago. It produces an invisible sticky surface that can be used over and over. It is also good for vehicles by holding them in place yet allowing them to be moved when desired.

There is more to be done on this scene, however, when completed it is expected to be a focal point of my layout. I have installed a traffic control tower at the East end of the station and am starting to work on land forms on either side of the main line where it enters the helix. There is always much to do.

Announcements

Richard Bartlett's Links to Lighting Follow-up:

High resolution images from around the world: <http://www.xrez.com/galleries/>

For SMD LEDs go to eBay and search all categories for **Roll SMD LED**

For EL Wire go to eBay and search all categories for **EL Wire**

We are trying to schedule another roundtable discussion for the July meeting. The topic will be advanced Control. We are looking for actual applications on existing layouts. Specifics could include programs (JMRI, CMRI), Signaling, computer integration, remote operation, use of RFID or bar codes. We will generate a list of possible discussion topics well before July for you to think about. Panel members need only to bring their experience and ideas. Please contact Dick Louvet (rlouvet@att.net).

Meeting minutes March 4, 2014

President Dick Louvet called the meeting to order at 7:00PM and welcomed all current members and guests. We had a representative, John Pena, from a new hobby shop in town, Hobby Town. He welcomed us to their new store and future plans for 5 in the Houston area within 5 years. They stock R/C cars/boats/planes, trains, paints, etc. The first store is now open near Westheimer & Hwy 6. Open 10-8 M-F, 10-6 Sat, & 12-5 Sundays.

Vice president Rex Ritz introduced this month's program by Richard Bartlett on "Modern Lighting for Model Railroads".

Richard opened with an autobiography of his interesting career. He models in N scale, steam & diesel, Yosemite Valley scenery. He doesn't focus on being 100% prototypical, he models for his enjoyment. The great backdrops seen on his layout came from images available on xrez.com

Richard talked about several types of lighting for the hobby.

Incandescent:

-traditional bulbs with a fair amount of heat output and limited lifespan.

Fluorescent:

-longer life, but typically blue tint
-contain mercury, which is bad for the environment

Halogen:

-very bright
-have warm & cool color ranges

LED:

-low power consumption
-can be used with a bridge rectifier for use in track powered car lighting

-surface mount leds can be bought in 300ft rolls that can be cut to length for use in building lighting

-can be used to represent recessed lighting in scale structures

Electroluminescent:

-is like a linear LED
-available in multiple colors and diameters

Fiber Optic:

-fibers carry light from a source and produce a point of light at their ends

-originally only in glass fibers but now mostly mono filament

-can be used for animation effects

Richard concluded with a display of several types of lighting uses which we came up and observed in person.

Next month's meeting will be by Dave Schafer with some steam videos.

The minutes from last month were approved as published in the Derail.

Treasurer's report, Gilbert Freitag:

Expenses:

\$539.53 train show printing and misc expenses
\$750.00 paid to modular layouts at the train show

Income:

\$9041.00 Train show deposit for the day
\$11,734.04 Ending balance

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New Business:

Vice President Rex Ritz called for ideas for new program ideas for future meetings.

The Houston N'Crowd invited our club to a crawfish boil and a trip to climb aboard the F unit at the Galveston Museum. More details and sign-up sheets next month.

May 4th & 5th are railfan days at the Texas State RR. There will be special photo run bys.

Upcoming trains shows that we may want to have a SanJac info table at:

Sept 6th & 7th – Big Texas Train Show

Oct 4th & 5th in Galveston

There will be a Plastic Modelers Show April 26th at the Stafford Center. A lot of good models can be seen here from various hobby groups.

The Battleship Texas will be turning 100 next Saturday and will be having a fund raiser to help restore her.

Bob Barnett in looking into the idea of purchasing a projector for the club so we don't have to always borrow a member's personal or company's equipment.

Website:

no report

LSR:

The annual convention in in Round Rock is two months away.

Division 8:

Chili Cook off coming in April.

Derail: Bob Sabol

Bob asked for more articles. Remember the deadline is the 15th of the month.

Yahoo Group:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/SJMRRC>

There can be postings of people wanting to sell/give away RR related items.

NMRA:

no report

Greater Houston Train Show, 2014:

Bob Barnett reported about 1525 attendance stickers used which implies about 1750 in attendance, very good year.

Early numbers predict about \$3500 in profit.

Thanks to all who helped make the show possible.

Ray Byers reported that there were 17 models and 17 photos in the contest.

7 models achieved merit status and 4 of those were above 100 point.

Thanks to those who helped judge.

Next year's show will be on 2/21/15

Refreshments were thanks to Chris Tolley and Virginia Freitag.

Tom Bailey volunteered to bring them next month.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM

General comments:

-Respectfully submitted,

Gilbert Freitag,

Secretary / Treasurer



San Jac RR Club Meetings take place
the first Tuesday of each month
at 7pm

Bayland Community Center
6400 Bissonnet St. Houston, Tx

[Click here for directions](#)
Visitors are always welcome!



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Next Meeting

TUESDAY, APRIL 1

Heritage Steam Railways of Great Brittan by David Shafer

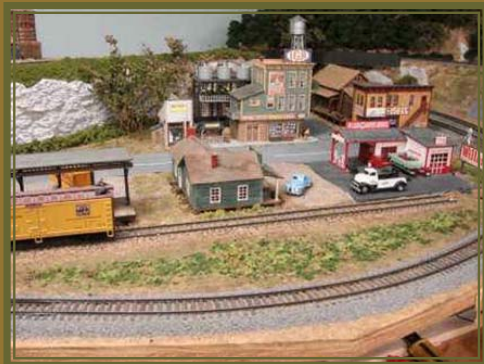
Refreshments: Tom Bailey and Virginia Freitag

Video Corner

Funny Crowded Train In Japan

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UUg0_qIjBE

Guess the Layout!



Answer to March's Guess the Layout: Great N.E.W.S. Train Club