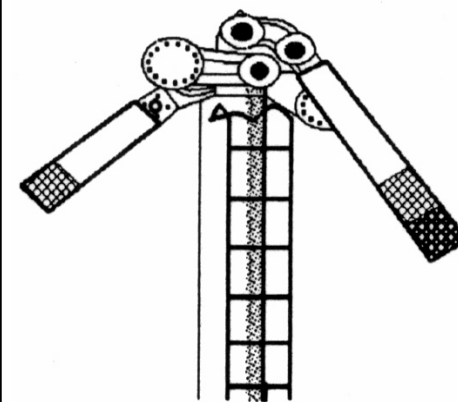


The **CLEARBOARD**
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The Clearboard

The official newsletter of The Model Railroad Club, Inc.

Issue No 500

August/September, 2010



Running late, train PH2 operating as extra 2115 East clears the yard limits at Portal Interlocking on its way to Hoboken. More trouble lies ahead as there are trains backed up at Jim Thorpe. Photo by Bob Nalbome



Nice Mug...

11oz. White ceramic coffee mug with Club logo printed in blue on both sides. Dishwasher and microwave safe.

MEMBER PRICE: \$5.00

(Price includes 7% NJ sales tax.)

Get Yours Today!

Clearboard Deadlines:

October 2010 Issue: Deadline for all submissions is October 2.

Publication on or about October 9.

November 2010 Issue: Deadline for all submissions is October 31.

Publication on or about November 7.

The CLEARBOARD

EDITOR: (only 4 issues left!) Roger Oliver
COPY EDITOR: Still vacant

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Bob Nalbone, Russ Fiero, Brian Cicero, Dick Kunig, and Don Kern

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION: Bill Jambor

Unless otherwise attributed, all photographs were taken by the staff photographer: Roger Oliver.

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SUBMITTING ARTICLES & EDITORIAL POLICY

The Editors of *The Clearboard* welcome articles and photographs submitted by members. Submitted articles will be given due consideration and may be edited for content as well as spelling and syntax. Articles edited for content will be reviewed with the author prior to being published. When submitting an article for publication in *The Clearboard*, we ask that you follow these procedures:

- The Board of Director's requires all articles to be bylined. Anonymous submissions will not be published.
- We prefer computer disk files to typewritten or handwritten pages. All typewritten and handwritten submissions must be double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides.
- If you submit an article by disk or thumb drive. We prefer MS Word 2000 or MS 2003 format, but we can use submissions saved as text files.
- A hard copy of the article should accompany your submission just incase we destroy your disk.
- You may email articles to:

TMRCi_Clearboard@TMRCi.org.

Scanning services for photographs are available. Submit your photographs to *The Clearboard* editor's mail box in the Club office.

- All editorials are the opinions of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Club or the Board of Directors

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CONTENTS

Clearboard Commentary 4

Club Notices 3

Club Information

Help wanted! 2

Calendar 3

Murphy's Law 4

Ops Photo by Gene Mikijanic 4

Raising the bar; part 1 5

Under the Spreading Maple 6

From the Backshop 7

Webmaster's Report 7

Write an article or take a picture and put it in the CLEARBOARD! This is your Club Newsletter, participate in it.

Help Wanted CLEARBOARD EDITOR

It is my intention to step down as CLEARBOARD editor as of January 2, 2011. The job requires a good sense of humor, the persistence to see the sunlight peaking out from behind the clouds, and the ability to always find the little something that others don't always notice that shows the best in all of us coming out when we least expect it. It is hard work and it requires a great deal of time and attention to detail but it is well worth the effort. You put the ideas and the work of the club into print for all the world to see and to encourage the members of our club regardless of their skill or level of participation. I'll continue editing the CLEARBOARD until then. I will help anyone who wants to learn the job and I will support whoever the new editor is with monthly articles pictures, and whatever other support I can muster. R. Oliver

From the Backshop

By Russ Fiero, Master Mechanic

For any of you that have been noticing a flurry of activity in the paint shop here's a progress report of what has been happening. Several of our older Athearn, Atlas and Lifelike engines have been showing their age. A program to add to and replace some of the aging engines has been in progress. The following are currently in different stages of being made ready for use on the railroad.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Two FA1s, Two E7as, One PA1; | Thank you Tom |
| Two GP7s; | Thank you Brian |
| Two RS3s, Two GP7s, One H-16-44; | Thank you Carlos |
| Two S4s; | Thank you Bill |
| Three RS1s; | Thank you Ed |
| One S2, One GP7, Two SD7s, One FP7; | Me |

When each of these engines reaches completion they will be let loose on the railroad. I know this may seem like a lot of power that may not be needed. For now this is true but I say they will be needed as new sections of the expansion come on line. We want to get a head start on what we need now so we don't have to do a mad dash to fill holes that will develop in the future.

Along with the engines will be a new string of passenger cars that will become our premier train; The Three Rivers. The cars, mostly Walthers, will be coming into service as soon as they are finished, (Very soon).

If anyone would like to help this project please talk to members of the master mechanics department or myself. We are looking for appropriate freight cars. It is recommended that we take care in the type and age of the cars since our industries will be very specific for what we need. An example is the steel mill that is planned. Coil cars which are very specific may be out of our time line.

So, to quote, "Choose wisely".

Webmaster's Report:

Thursday, August 19, 2010

-- Site Summary --

Visits

Total 38,385
 Average per Day19
 Average Visit Length 1:42
 This Week 131

Page Views

Total 133,953
 Average per Day 49
 Average per Visit 2.6
 This Week 340



The Gladstone platform features lights, but no protection to prevent passengers from falling off the close-by cliff and into Jim Thorpe. Some railing would be appropriate, even though the prototype did not have them in our time period. Perhaps some low bushes as well,

There is a model of a White Castle® restaurant in Gladstone that was formerly located in Jim Thorpe, next to the playhouse. It's OK where it is, but the scene would be better if it was again relocated and the area left open, as previously described. Perhaps it should be relocated back to Jim Thorpe and the theatre moved elsewhere. This way the employees at Stiefel Roofing and the Ford plant will have somewhere to eat.

So far the discussion has centered on structures but there are other scenic elements that cry out for attention that I want to get to, so I'll close out the discussion on structures by stating this rule: Every building should tell a story. Why is it there? What purpose does it serve? Was it researched properly before the model was built? Does it correctly depict its prototype counterpart (like the Dupuy Asphalt Plant in Murray Hill)? Does it fit in with our operating scheme?

1. There are many places on the layout we can apply the "Why is it there?" question to. Here are a couple of more examples: The stone loading facility in Catasauqua on the Trenton Northern. It has nothing to do with the operation of the cement plant and takes up part of the yard that's supposed to be used to store empty hoppers that bring the coal the cement plant needs. It should be removed.

2. The fuel dealer in Bernardsville, also on the Trenton Northern. The coal trestle is fine (it just needs some repairs), but a propane dealer? In the 1950s? Unlikely. And the facility has the wrong type of piping and appliances for unloading a car, to boot (it actually depicts equipment for loading a car!). A more appropriate installation is currently being researched.

3. There are other examples on the "completed" portion of the layout, as well as examples of the polar opposite of our kick-off question: Why *isn't* it there?" (like the car department shanty in Gladstone). The goal, again, is not to hurt anyone's feelings or be personally critical of anyone but, rather, to raise the quality bar of our collective modeling efforts – not to mention preventing repeat mistakes as the layout expansion takes shape (unfortunately some have already occurred).

In the next installment of this series, we'll continue our examination of the layout scenery by taking a critical look at the HD&O right-of-way.

Under the Spreading Maple Tree

by Roger Oliver

Fall is upon us and soon our attentions need to turn to this year's Annual Light and Sound Show. The Garden Railroad layouts indoors and outside have not changed much, at least not for the better. My attempts to stabilize the ballast under the tracks on the outside layout have produced mixed results. They have minimized the damage done to the track from pressure and deforming which was separating the rails from the tie sections. But the ballast continues to subside from underneath the track and it is left oddly propped up on wooden supports above the layer of gravel.

The indoors layout has had nothing done on it since . . . well, quite a while. There is a plan though, lots of plans in fact.

- The outdoors layout needs to be supported better than it is with the wood strips. Decking planks screwed with #4 screws (not dry wall screws) and gravel that has bite to it rather than rounded roofing gravel.
- The outdoors layout needs to be moved from under the maple tree into the area between the maple tree and the club building so that it is in the sun and we don't had tree root issues.
- The outdoors layout needs to be raised between 24" and 36" to allow better access to build and maintain it. This requires building and landscape blocks as well as a lot of fill.
- The outdoors layout needs to be redesigned with access and drainage needs addressed in the design. The design also needs to be able to "grow" with the expansion of the layout.
- The area under the maple tree needs to be cleaned up and regarded to allow it to be used as a "picnic" area.

With the outdoors area addressed we need to look at the indoors layout. This is probably the more critical in some aspects. Adults will not want to stand outdoors when the weather is not ideal to watch their children, who don't care what the weather is like, if they're fascinated by a train running around. The indoors layout has a common problem with the main HO layout. It is designed and situated for bird's eye viewing. The viewer is so high up and away from the layout that everything looks obscure and tiny. The current indoors Garden Railroad layout is little more than a large oval of track such as someone would run under a Christmas tree. People stand and watch trains run around and around and around and around from a vantage point where all they see is something that looks like a train should look like moving on the tracks way down there.

We need to get the layout closer to the viewing public and involve them more in what there is to see on the layout.

- The layout needs to be raised from its current level by about 6 feet, or more. It needs to be brought up to the viewers level in order for them to access what is there to see.
- The layout needs to be redesigned so that there are interesting things for the public to see and be engaged with. Things need to be happening on the layout.
- Whether the layout is smaller or larger is not an issue. What is an issue is that it has to be something that challenges the average skill level of the viewer to try something new. [I'm currently looking at a layout design that is 10' x 12' that I may modify to our needs/space.]
- The indoor layout does not need to be in one place. A work in progress can be going on somewhere else along the balcony so that people can see how modeling is done.

Some of our ideas need to be rethought. We need more people involve, not just in the Garden Railroad Dept. but in the whole club. We need to attract, mentor, and involve a lot more than we currently do. Not just for one, but for all of us!

Calendar of upcoming events

2010

- Sep 9-12 **2010 NER Convention** Burlington, VT
nermra.org
- Sep 18 Time Table #56 Review Session at 3:30 & 7:00 PM. Look for sign up sheet on bulletin board under Pittsburgh.
- Oct 2 BOD Meeting at 4:00 PM
- Oct 29—Nov 2 **MER Convention**, Princeton, NJ
Mernmra.org
- Nov 6 BOD Meeting at 4:00 PM
- Nov 26, 27 & 28 **Annual Light & Sound Show**
- Dec 3, 4 & 5 **Annual Light & Sound Show**
- Dec 10, 11 & 12 **Annual Light & Sound Show**
- Dec 18 BOD Meeting at 4:00 PM

2011

- Jan 8 **Garden RR Dept. Annual Meeting**
12:00 PM at the Club / Jan 15 Alt.date
- Jan 8 **N Dept. Annual Meeting**
1:00 PM at the Club / Jan 15 Alt.date
- Jan 8 **HO Dept. Annual Meeting**
2:30 PM at the Club / Jan 15 Alt.date
- Jan 8 BOD Meeting at 4:00 PM
- Jan 22 **Annual Membership Meeting**
1:00 PM at the Club/Jan 29 Alt. Date
- Jan 22 **Board of Directors Reorganization Meeting directly following the Annual Membership Meeting/Jan 29 Alt. Date.**

Time Table 56 review sessions on September 18,

ATTENTION MEMBERS:

Please make sure you keep your contact information current. Any address changes or other updated information should be written legibly on a piece of paper and dropped in the mail slot in the lobby of the Club building, attention "Roster Clerk." Thank You.

Bill Jambor, Roster Clerk

ATTENTION MEMBERS:

There will be a club wide cleanout sometime before the show. All personal items that are not in your locker need to be removed from the club or they will be tagged for disposal. See Tom Voytac for details.

The Model Railroad Club, Inc.

Founder: Paul Mallery (1918-2004)

Board of Directors:

President:	Carlos Langezaal
Vice-President: <i>Development Dept.</i>	Bob Nalbene
Treasurer:	John Wilkens
Secretary:	Gene Mikijanic
Director: Building Department	Thomas Voytac
Director: <i>Membership Department</i>	Russ Fiero
HO Department.	Peter Ezzard
N Department.	John Cicero
Garden Railroad Department	Roger Oliver

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Office Manager:	Bill Jambor
Club Librarians:	Roger Oliver
	Russ Fiero
	Brian Cicero

Assistant to the Librarians

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Civil Engineer:	Rich Cornell
Club Architect:	vacant
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Club Construction Supervisor:	Paul Preuss

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Electrical Committee Chair:	vacant
Operations Committee Chair:	Russ Fiero
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N Scale

Master Mechanic:	John Cicero
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Bench work Chair:	vacant

Garden Railroad Department

Master Mechanic/Electrical:	Russ Fiero
Layout Design/Track work:	vacant
Construction/Horticultural:	vacant
Community Outreach:	vacant

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The CLEARBOARD Commentary

By Roger Oliver, ed.

Our Annual Light and Sound Show is fast approaching and we have got a lot of things that we just haven't gotten to. Last Saturday Peter Summers, a new applicant to the Garden Railroad Department and I, cleaned up the area designated for storage under the layout for the Garden Railroad Department. We moved Scenery Department materials and Electrical Department materials to other areas under the layout, sorted through and threw out extraneous boxes for Garden Railroad equipment, swept, and organized what things we kept.

In theory, the whole club was supposed to have had a clean up day in August, but it just didn't happen. The truth is that cleaning up should be an ongoing task at the club. We have too much unused or unusable "stuff" lingering in the dark corners of the building. The library has been cleaned up and a lot of material has been moved out from the aisle under the "steel mills". The work stations in the member's lounge have also been cleaned up so Joe Mareteo can work on finishing them so we can start to use them for something other than storage.

The first steps that we all need to take is to clean up after ourselves. If we don't know where something goes we need to ask someone and find out where it is supposed to be put. We need to stop bringing "stuff" down to the club that we don't have a specific purpose or immediate use for. I know that everything has a use and has some sort of value. Some things, however, just need to be left at home until we know what that use or value is! By storing lots of materials that won't be used in the near future (next month or two) we make the club look like our attic, basement, or garage. In reality our club looks like it is one step shy of the city dump. It is cluttered, unsafe, and attracts or houses vermin.

Murphy's Law...

By R. Oliver, esq.

Murphy, obviously an Irishman, is otherwise, as far as my research has been able to uncover, an unknown and obscure individual other than for this legal maxim attributed to him. I imagine him as being the one who said, "We can take on the British now that they've gotten rid of King Charles!" "They'll all be too busy arguing among themselves in Parliament and have no time to bother with us." He learned by bitter experience that whatever can go wrong, will go wrong and do so in spades.

How does this all relate to us at The Model Railroad Club? Well, when we started collecting the materials for our library we wondered how to access the huge amount of information that is contained in it. You go to a town library and you use a computerized card catalogue. The task of compiling a card catalogue or an index for all the holdings at the club would require years of dedicated full time work by several people. But, there was an index for most of this material on Trains.com.

This index was started back thirty years or more and is fairly complete and current. It was hosted and maintained by the Kalmbach company and available on line. A month or two ago Trains.com took it off the web. The reasons given were that the software is old and can not be upgraded, it is susceptible to virus attacks, and it is hard to maintain. The rumors are that Kalmbach has given the index to the NMRA and or the Kalmbach Library to see if they will do anything with it.

In the meantime, we are looking for alternatives. One just came available in the form of an index to TRAINS Magazine that is available on either CD or DVD. It is pricey, about \$150.00, but this may be what we have to do. Any other ideas would be welcomed. Otherwise...what are you doing next summer vacation?



August 17, 2010, a group of operators at the Tuesday night operation session. Some haven't been around for some time. Why don't you come down and join us too.

RAISING THE BAR Part 1: Why Is It There?

By Bob Nalbone

In this series I'll be taking a critical look at all facets of the HO scale layout, from track plans to scenery and everything in between – including operations. I'll offer suggestions for improvements and corrections on things that are just plain wrong. The intent is not to hurt anyone's feelings (in most cases I don't know – and don't care – who did the work), but rather to offer instruction and improve our modeling efforts. In other words: raising the bar.

We begin by asking the question: "Why is it there?" The "it" referring specifically to structures on the layout. For our illustration, we travel to Gladstone.

Gladstone on the Hudson, Delaware & Ohio, like the prototype it's based on, is at the end of a branch line. There are a few industries and a small yard for storing commuter train sets in between their runs. The switches (turnouts) and track power are controlled from a panel directly behind the Gilberton/Ashland panels. On the prototype these switches are all hand-thrown, and always have been. Operationally speaking, so are ours. There was never an interlocking tower at Gladstone on the prototype, but there is on our model of Gladstone (see Photo 1). Why is it there?



Probably because someone made a false connection between the purpose of our model railroad "towers" and a tower on the prototype (oh, we have a control panel "tower," that means we need a building on the layout – an incorrect conclusion).

The solution is to remove the building and find a more appropriate location for it (it just so happens I have someplace in mind, but that can wait for now). Until then, the building

can be placed in storage. The area in front of where the tower was formerly located should be reserved for use as a parking lot for railroad employees and commuters. This improves realism.

Model railroaders often give in to a temptation to fill up every square inch of available space on a layout with something – so long as it looks "railroad-y." This is not railroad modeling and at best it is mediocre model railroading.

By way of example: Why is there an elevated crossing shanty adjacent to the depot (see Photo 2)? These were used on the prototype to control manual crossing gates, among other things. But there are no crossing gates protecting the two road crossings on our model Gladstone. So, again, why is it there?



Solution: Remove the structure. It is not appropriate for the location. It can be replaced with a tiny shanty, just barely big enough for a small stove and a watchman with a stop sign. Or, train crews can simply "flag" across the crossing.

There is a structure that was located in Gladstone Yard (it might still be there, or at least a modern version of it) that is not represented on our layout: the car department shanty. This structure housed cleaning supplies and other materials car department personnel used to service commuter equipment laying over in the yard. It should be represented on the layout. Fortunately, an appropriate structure is already in Gladstone, just not where it needs to be (more on that below).

Let's turn our attention to the Gladstone depot. It is not a replica of the prototype still in use by N.J. Transit. It is, in fact, it's a bit Spartan. It also looks a bit unsteady because, like too many buildings on the layout, it is merely placed on top of uneven ground cover instead of imbedded into the scenery base, as depicted in Photo 3 (this is another beginner's mistake that should not be seen on our layout).

There is a small out building next to the depot, whose purpose can not be articulated by a single member. Indeed, no such building exists on the prototype. Happily, it is about the right size and configuration to be re-assigned as the car department shanty I mentioned earlier. It's even painted in the official HD&O colors for structures. A couple of simple modifications, some weathering, a little lighting and a beat-up 55-gallon drum (for garbage) are all that is needed. (→ pg. 7)