



Ties and Rails

Official newsletter of the Crossville Model Railroad Club
and Div. 16, Southeast Region, NMRA

July 2020

(931)210-5050

www.crossvilletrains.org

The Prez. Sez:

Can I Borrow Your Crystal Ball?

With the ever changing world around us, we are trying to determine what is in our future which is impossible to predict. The Club will be facing some tough decisions in the not too distant future and every member will be asked for your opinions and your input at these critical situations approach.

Our primary goal is to keep everyone safe but, as the original restrictions are being loosened, the virus is again spreading even faster than the first wave. In trying to interrupt what the scientists and doctors claim and then weighing that against what some politicians say, along with what others claim wearing a mask violates their Constitutional rights, it is very difficult to make an intelligent decision on what we need to do and where all this is taking us.

On the first six days of reopening, we have had what I consider a good visitor turn out and, thankfully, very generous donations, far above our fifty cent per visitor goal. The question remains, as the virus continues to set positive test numbers everyday, how long will we, the mall, the city and state remain open? Now it appears, with the moderate reopening permitted, we took two steps forward. Now we have to take one step back. It is very possible, we will need to take another step backwards if the out of control virus continues to spread and our death toll rises.

As the Board has said all along, you do not have to work a shift at the mall if you feel it is not safe for you to do so. However, since we have restarted the regular staffing levels and schedule, you need to tell Tom or Larry what your decision is so they can plan for adequate staffing levels.

Remember, we practice self-distancing and require a mask when visitors are in the suite. We also encourage everyone to wear a mask while attending meetings as well as it protects you and those around you.

Did You Know

What do the following Tennessee cities have in common?

Blevins, TN Elizabethton, TN

Johnson City, TN

See page 4 for the answer.



MTH Going Out of Business

O scales, Bruce Herring, submitted the following for the information of Club members,

“I just came across this message posted to one of my train groups I belong to:

““Dear Loyal M.T.H. Customers,

June 8, 2020—First, on behalf of M.T.H. Electric Trains, I want to thank you for the support and encouragement you have shown my company over our 40-year journey. From humble beginnings and a lot of hard work, we were able to build one of the world’s largest model train manufacturers - one unquestionably buoyed by your unwavering support.

In particular, I am proud that M.T.H. has released more models than any train manufacturer in the history of our hobby. The variety, quality, and infusion of technology throughout our offerings allowed M.T.H. Electric Trains to help bring enjoyment to all who share our wonderful hobby.

It is, therefore, with mixed emotions that I must tell you I have decided to retire in 2021 and close the business. The last two M.T.H. catalogs, our 2020 Volume 2 O Gauge catalog, and our 2020 HO Catalog and all non-delivered items from our 2020 Volume 1 O Gauge catalog, 2020 Ready-to-Run Train Set catalog, 2019-2020 S Gauge catalog, and 2019-

2020 G Gauge catalog will feature the last products produced by M.T.H. Electric Trains.

The new items featured in all of these catalogs will be available beginning Summer 2020 through April 2021 and will carry our limited one-year warranty supported by our Authorized Service Center network and the M.T.H. Service Department. Upon our closing in May 2021, our ASC network will provide warranty coverage through April 2022. A list of M.T.H. Authorized Service Centers is available on the M.T.H. website and will be updated as M.T.H. Authorized Retailers join the program over the coming months.

M.T.H. Electric Trains would not have enjoyed success without the support of the M.T.H. Authorized Retailer network. While traditional retail has changed significantly over the past decade, the independent hobby shop has been and continues to be the most important cog in our distribution chain. I truly appreciate the support and friendship these

Cont. on page 3

M.T.H. *Cont. from page 2*

shops have shown M.T.H. I wish all of them good luck and prosperity in the years to come.

Finally, I want to thank all of my employees for their hard work over the years. Most of them have been with me for decades and their loyalty and talents were paramount to our success.

With thousands of tools and molds and a wealth of intellectual property, a new model railroading company may arise from my former company as I entertain various options and buyers. One scenario is a new company organized and owned by members of my current staff. Their decades of experience, work ethic, and creative talent will ensure success regardless of who owns the assets while providing a welcome bridge between the past 40 years and the future.

The remainder of my time will be busy as we clear out inventory and other miscellaneous items accumulated over the past 40 years. As that process evolves, we will be offering consumer and retailer purchase opportunities.

Again, from the bottom of my heart, thank you for your loyal support for all these years.

Mike Wolf, President

N Scale Drive-In Start Procedures

As we have many new members and because of the long period of time since we last posted these procedures, we thought it may be appropriate for all to review them.

To start the operation of the theater, follow this procedure:

1. Once the track power is turned on, press the "Red On" button on the remote. Be sure the remote is pointed at the DVD player located beneath the Drive-In. Be sure the curtain is pulled back to give you a clear path between the remote and the DVD player.

2. Push the "Play" button and wait until the movie starts.

3. Push the "Repeat" button three times slowly and "Title" will appear on the top left of the screen.

This allows the movie to continue repeatedly until you turn it off at the end of the shift.

Thank you Art for this information. It will answer many of the questions that the Club members have. Ed.

Important Dates in Railroad History

From NMRA calendar

7/4/1828 - Baltimore & Ohio Railroad lays first stone

7/6/1862 - U.S. Congress passes Pacific Railway Act

7/15/1853 - Grand Trunk Railway formed

Did You Know

Belfast, TN still has a passenger railroad station originally built by the Duck River Valley Narrow Gauge Railroad.

It has been restored and is used as a business.

Did You Know . . . Answer

All of these communities have ET&WNC Railroad facilities still in existence

Blevins, TN has the passenger station originally built by the ET&WNC remaining and is used as a business.

Elizabethton, TN has the passenger station originally built by the ET&WNC remaining and used as a business.

Johnson City, TN has the passenger and freight railroad stations originally built by the Clinchfield and ET&WNC railroads still standing. The offices of the ET&WNC here also remain.

Public Relations

Bill Bly

Members of the Public Relations Committee met Friday morning June 12, 2020 at the Club suite to discuss PR as the Club will be reopening.

Ann G, Jim G, Bill B were in attendance. As of Monday, we have posted to the web and social media that the Club will reopen Friday—Sunday at normal working hours for those days, and in Friday's Chronicle (June 12) is a brief article on our reopening.

We have decided to reach out to the community and will be working on a strategic plan to put into place ideas we have been working on. We have reached out to Steve who has agreed to join and help with press releases and work with local media to include TV and Radio as he has national experience with this and was happy to help when we spoke prior to the holidays.

We are now closed for 90 days but with local business and activities opening up, it is a good time to reach out to the community.

Press release for local news

Reach out to local radio and TV stations

Article for Crossville Chronicle

Work with the Chamber of Commerce

Post to the Website and Facebook

Photos and videos to highlight current and new features

Steve will work on a Press Release

Jim and Ann are working on Public Relations meeting with community

We have asked Bob Houser to help with photos and video as he was prior to closing

Bill will update web, and Social Media adding content, images, video

Bill will draft an article to be reviewed by Ann and Jim

Our near focus is to provide information about the Club reopening to attract visitors and work with media to raise awareness. We expect to develop a more robust strategic plan as we move forward, one that identifies clients and how best to reach them to get people in the door as visitors and potential members. We expect to have others join the PR Committee.

Membership

John Conor

Hey guys, as of the time of this report, there is no report for new applications. But as has happened so many times in the past, things can happen between now and the next business meeting. The first weekend we were open to the public showed very positive results and interest in the Club and our displays. Think positive for the new member interest and if you're working the new schedule, please promote the Club membership opportunities.

Stay healthy and stay on track.

N Scale News - Jan Novack

The installation portion of the lighting project has been completed. The Fairfield Glade water tower is now illuminated along with more of the town area.

Testing was done on each of the three lines looking for problems with bi-directional operations. As we suspected, the main and freight lines have issues around the control panel and through the yard to its right. We are considering a redesign of that area, increasing the radius of the curves around the control panel and installing new turnouts for properly operating passing sidings and a redesign of the yard.

We've had two very productive work sessions discussing the issues with the track and turnouts near the control panel. We are putting together a proposal for an N scale meeting in the very near future to show the N scale members how we might reconfigure the track, increasing the radius to 15 inches for the main and freight lines in this area, and change out the turnouts to give us properly operating passing sidings in the yard to the right of the control panel.

We are also discussing reconfiguring that same yard for better operations.

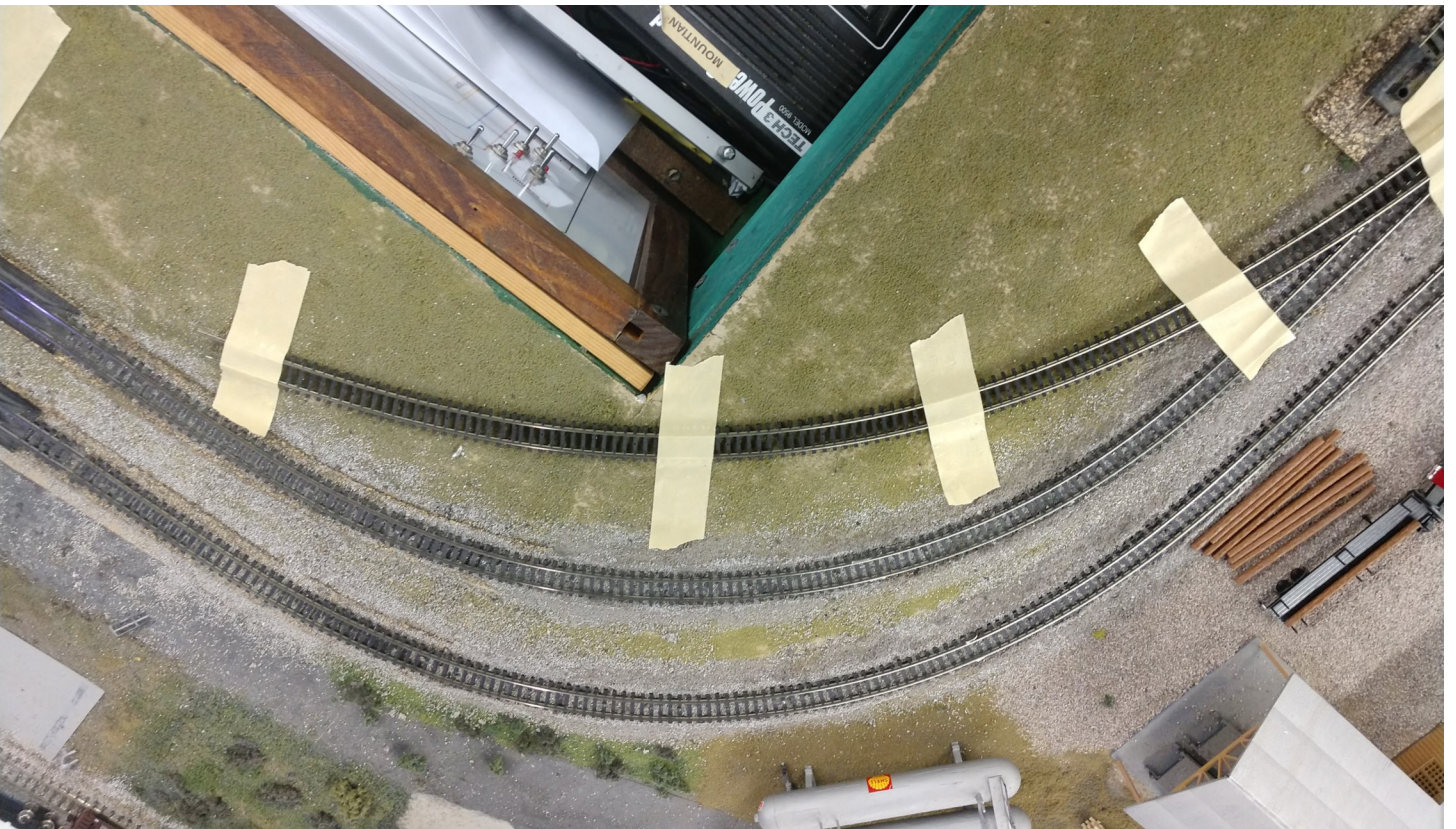
We are putting together some diagrams and a budget to present to the N scalers.

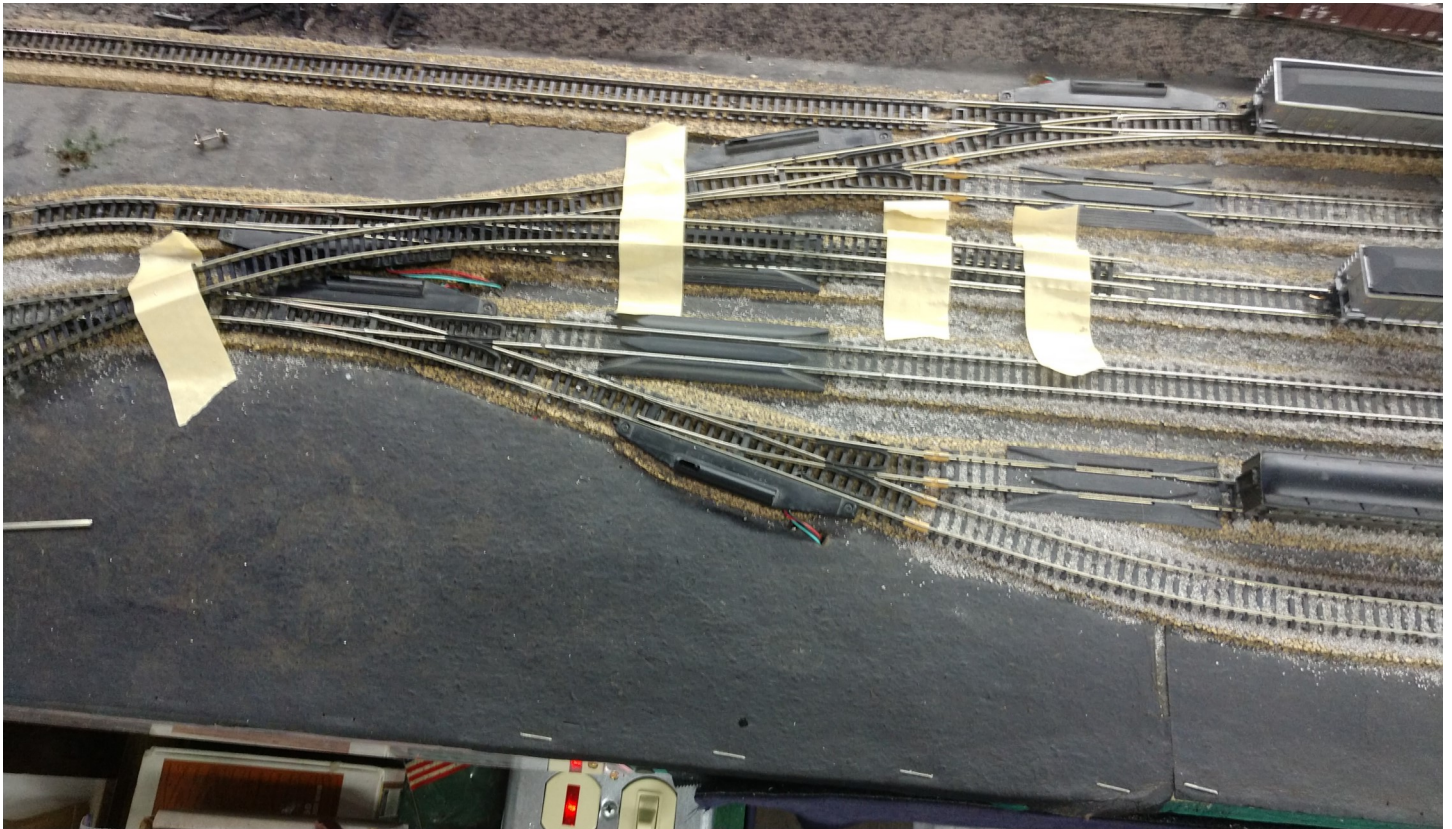
If we proceed, we have three volunteers to work on the project thus far - Art, Craig and myself.

See pages 6 & 7 of the newsletter for some rough ideas as to the new track location(s).



Ties and Rails





"I'm starting a classic railroad setup. I already have the Atchison and Topeka...
I just need to get the Santa Fe."

HO Scale News - Paul Falk

The upgrade to the Power managers has been completed with many of the power problems corrected. We will continue to address some additional problems over the next month.

Work has started on the installation of the signaling equipment that we have been asked to evaluate for a company before they put it on the market. Initial observations are that it will be a big addition to our layout once completed. It is the type system that can be added to in pieces so it will be operational continuously with additions coming on line as they are installed.

Public Relation News

Our Public Relations team got busy once we knew the club would be reopening. The website was updated for the dates and times. Information was posted on social media on the club's Facebook Page. Video clips and photos were made to promote a campaign to raise awareness to followers. Press releases were sent out to traditional media sources to include the Crossville Chronicle, the Chamber of Commerce and a number of radio stations. One station followed up with a call for an interview which Ann took. Both Ann and Jim have been very active, reaching out to strategic partners and helping to set up equipment for media. The initial media campaign had our largest outreach on Facebook to over 2000 visitors with many shares from multiple organizations - to include radio stations, train clubs, and the Chamber of Commerce along with happy visitors excited to come with their friends and family. It was nice to see so much support after being closed for months.

There have been two articles submitted to the Crossville Chronicle one about the reopening and another promoting the 4th of July. Currently the team is working on creating more media and is developing a timeline for promotional activities. A big thanks to Steve for help with Press Releases and Robert who has been very helpful with his film and video equipment. We continue to update the web then share to Facebook, especially the newsletter. We have found that promotional campaigns are bringing results. The numbers on Facebook have skyrocketed and we think continuing to network and raise awareness through traditional and new media will help to bring in more visitors and potential new members. As a result of the above publicity attendance for Friday was 67, Saturday 64, and Sunday 47.

We have a few more projects under consideration and would be happy to see others contribute. If you are active on Facebook it would be great if you "like and share" posts. Please contact Ann or Jim if you wish to help out.

We have included the two articles recently shared with the public.

Crossville Model Railroad Club opens to the public.



The Carnival in town display on G scale layout with club member Ann Grogitsky

The Crossville Model Railroad Club (CMRC) will reopen to the public as of Friday June 19th. For the past few months while the Outlet Mall was closed the Wonderful World of Trains attraction has been closed due to the Covid-19 concerns.

The CMRC is a popular attraction for residents of Cumberland County as well as visitors traveling through Tennessee. Located just off I-40 which provides easy access it is also a destination for model railroad enthusiast.

The suite is home to 5 operating layouts in the most popular scales: 'G', 'O', 'HO', 'N' and 'Z'. Visitors can tour the layouts and see trains in operation. The "G" for Garden Scale has the largest trains, an attraction that changes its look with the seasons. As it is summer time the Carnival is in town. This display now features animated models of a carnival in action complete with music a town full of attractions you would find at summer carnival or fair.

As the club has been closed to the public, members maintaining the displays have been busy. Members have been able to access the suite to work within the rules established for social distancing during this pandemic. The staff have been quietly working on the different layouts taking advantage of the down time to update displays, improve track work and wiring. The hobby is a labor of love and for many a fountain of youth.

As the club approaches its 20th Anniversary many members have been with the club since the beginning. Actually many members in addition to working on the club layouts have dedicated rooms at their homes for their own empires and in some cases outdoor layouts. Many are retired from work yet lead very active lifestyles contributing to the club efforts attending meetings and travelling to events or to visit other rail attractions.

Upper Cumberland Railroad Society (UCRS)

In addition to the Crossville Model Railroad Club you will find The Upper Cumberland Railroad Society (UCRS) which is our Educational and Historical entity. The society is responsible for the Historical and Museum displays at the Mall Suite, and the education of the public in all aspects of local Tennessee and surrounding railroads. You will also find information about train related activity on the Cumberland Plateau in the State of Tennessee.

The club will be open Friday through Sunday from 12 noon to 4 PM. Doors open at 11 AM on Saturday. Admission is free. A great resource to learn about model trains and the history of trains in Tennessee. If you have questions or would interested in joining

Patriotic trains celebrating the 4th of July



At the Crossville Model Railroad Club we will be celebrating Independence Day with special trains. Club members will have their patriotic trains traversing the layouts. This is a special treat for visitors and staff. Many of our members are veterans or career military that have retired here to Crossville. Bill Drasal at age 94 is a veteran of World War II. Several members were pilots including one lady, a colonel, that flew helicopters in multiple war zones.

The different scale crews proudly set up and run these trains. Staff have been working on getting these trains ready for the celebration.

The HO and N scale both will have patriotic engines. The HO have a military train to run along with states train. The larger O scale will be running a beautiful train with all the states cars in the order they entered the union. Our G scale has a special set of cars that are decorated for the "Constitution", "Pledge of Allegiance", "Declaration of Independence", "We Stand for the Flag", "We the People", and "Liberty Bonds".



With the 4th being a Saturday and the club recently opening up to the public, a visit to the club will be a nice treat for the family and friends. We would like to invite folks to come and celebrate and visit us at the Outlet Mall. We will be open to the public Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 12 noon – 4PM doors open at 11:00 AM on Saturday.

Suite 109, Crossville Outlet Center, 228 Interstate Drive, Crossville, TN 38555 Tel.: (931) 210-5050

Date Change

The Ops session that was previously scheduled for 4:00 PM, Monday, August 3, 2020 has been changed to 4:00 PM, Monday, July 27 due to a conflict with another activity.

Hope to see many of you there!

Time Change

The NMRA Plateau Division previously scheduled for 10:00 AM on Monday, July 27, 2020 has been rescheduled for 3:00 PM on Monday, July 27, 2020.



The DCC Shed @ CMRC

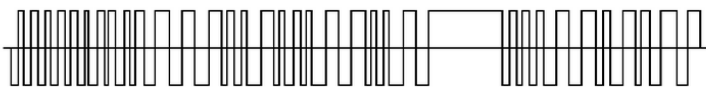
Paul Falk

Art Landrigan

Welcome, come on in.

This month, another DCC system component takes center stage. Called by some, the “Brain Box”, it’s the DCC command station. Brain box is not a misnomer. Like our brains, a command station does no actual work, it tells other things what to do. At the Club, both the N scale and the HO layouts are using Digitrax command stations. These Digitrax units are technically command stations and boosters in one unit. Command stations “listen” for commands from throttles and other devices and processes what the command intends to happen and generates a DCC signal to be interpreted and acted on by a decoder on the layout. The booster then amplifies the DCC signal to be strong enough to do actual work. Move a locomotive or change a turnout as examples. All this listening and commanding is happening on last month’s discussion topic, the loconet.

The DCC data packet consists of a *preamble*, the *address* and *instruction*, followed by the *postamble*. The most common packets are four-word bundles.



1. Preamble - Tells all decoders a data packet is about to start.

2. Address - This sequence of bits contains the address of the decoder the packet is meant for.

3. Instruction - The command that is being

sent to the addressed decoder.

4. Post Amble Error Detection - This allows the decoder to check that the packet is valid, and if it is corrupted, the decoder will just ignore the packet and wait for the next preamble.

This is from <https://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/s-92-2004-07.pdf> where extensive detail can be referenced

The DCC command stations can have limits on them like power and slots. Power is the electrical current capability of the booster expressed as amps. Typical sizes are 3.5 and 8 amps. More locomotives need more current. Larger layouts also need more current to overcome the electrical resistance of the track and wiring. Slots are a concept used in Digitrax command stations to indicate how many locomotives can be stored in memory at any one time. Slots hold the cab number of the loco being operated and can be allocated to a new loco if the previous one has been dispatched/released. A layout can only have **one** command station. It can have multiple boosters.

Command stations also provide the ability to program decoders and other devices that are attached. In the case of locomotive decoders, this is best accomplished on a dedicated programming track.

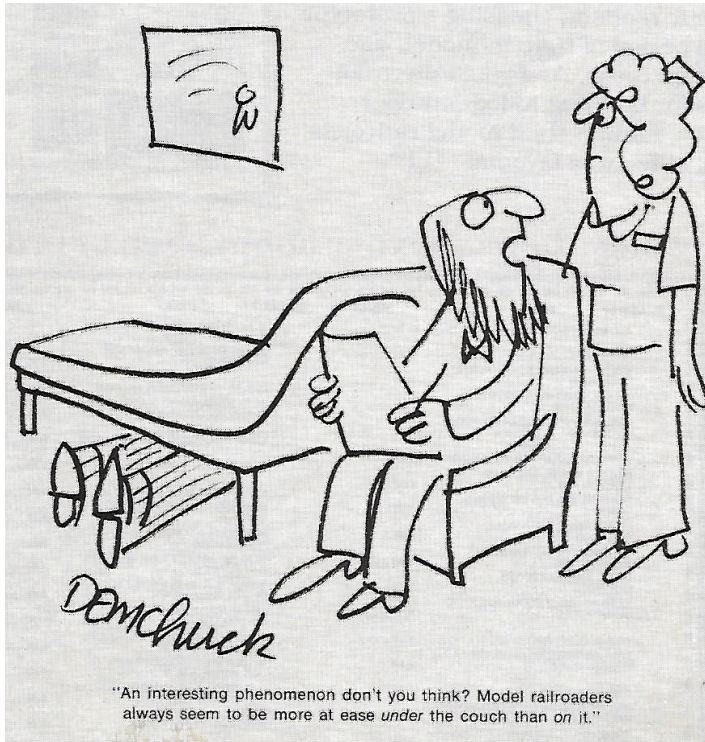
This is a very simple description of Digitrax command stations. Other manufacturers can do things a little differently. The good thing is they all provide a standardized data packet that looks the same to the loco’s internal decoder. This allows the decoders of different manufacturers to operate together on the layout.

Remember, one-on-one DCC training is always available, so let us know. We are here to help. We welcome your interest and comments. Feel free to

Cont. on page12

Cont. from page 11

contact either Paul Falk (pfalk1@gmail.com) or Art Landrigan (arcy22tn@gmail.com) with questions, comments or ideas.



News from the Plateau Division

Recently our Division was asked by a member of a neighboring Division to judge four freight cars for him as he worked toward his Cars Certificate of Achievement. Mike Ferry, Richard Morris, Tom Shallcross did the judging with Bobbie Dean and Art Landrigan observing to learn the art of judging.

This past month, Mike, Richard and Tom traveled to the Knoxville area to do an evaluation of an N scale layout for the owner as he was preparing to complete the requirements for his Model Railroad Engineer - Civil Certificate of Achievement.

These two incidents indicate the cooperation of the various Divisions within the Southeastern Region to advance the hobby of Model Railroading in the area.

Marketing Committee

Art Landrigan

The Marketing Committee held an impromptu meeting on June 11th, specifically to discuss actions taken, or required, to support our upcoming opening of the suite to the public on June 19, 20, and 21st for Father's Day Weekend. After being closed for several months, we wanted to be sure to inform the local public about our opening weekend.

Many thanks to our CMRC Publicity Group for their efforts in 'Getting the word out' in both written and verbal public service announcements. Ann G. called one of our former group members, (Steve R.) who volunteered to get with his contact at our local radio station, and the results were extremely positive, as several of our Friday visitors relayed to our staff members on duty that day. Thanks Steve.

Results for our first weekend were highly successful, thanks, in part to the efforts of our Publicity folks, and all members who performed many opening prep procedures, as well. Many thanks to all.

Our next scheduled Marketing Committee meeting is July 9, 2020 at 4 pm.

Come join us if you can.

Did You Know

The passenger station in Walland, TN was originally built by the Little River Railroad continues to exist.

It has been moved to Townsend and is used as a museum.

Introducing the best deal in model railroading.

Join the NMRA for 9 months for just \$19.95!*

- Get discounts from free shipping to 20% off (or more) from manufacturers of all sizes who've partnered with the NMRA
- Contact other NMRA members anywhere in the world for layout tours, train chat or even op sessions through our Model Railroad Directory
- Get access to more than 20,000 photos, slides, plans, drawings, paint schemes and more with the NMRA Online Archives
- Receive 9 monthly issues of *NMRA Magazine*
- Receive reduced rates on layout or collection insurance
- Take part in programs like Modeling with the Masters, the Achievement Program, Estate Counseling, contests, clinics, and more!
- Attend events at your local Division or Region

Sign me up!

Fill out this form and include your payment.

U.S.: Send \$19.95 (U.S.) to NMRA-RailPass Membership, P.O. Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37384

Canada: Send \$19.95 (Cdn) to NMRA-Canadian RailPass Membership, Registrar NMRA Canada, 9-6975 Meadowvale Town Center Cir., Suite 405, Mississauga, ON L5N 2V7

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

Email _____

Check Credit card

Credit Card # _____

Expiration _____ Security Code _____

Signature _____



**So much bang.
So few bucks.**

*RailPass offer is for new members and those who haven't been NMRA members for two years or more. Individuals can join at RailPass rates only once. Membership renewal will be at the regular membership rate. RailPass members can attend conventions and participate in contests, but cannot vote or hold office.

Ties and Rails Calendar

Tennessee Central Railway Museum, 220 Willow Street, Nashville, TN has numerous excursions throughout the year as listed in the calendar. Contact them at 615-241-0436 for specific information regarding any trip.

July 2020	Clean Up	Club	O/G Scales
7/9/20	Marketing Mtg.	Club	4:00 PM
7/11/20	Train Trip	220 Willow St., Nashville, TN	Murder Mystery to Watertown
7/13/20	BOD Meeting	Club	4:00 PM
7/13/20	Member Mtg.	Suite 112. Crossville Outlet Center	6:00 PM
7/27/20	NMRA Mtg	Suite 112, Crossville Outlet Center	3:00 PM
7/27/20	Ops Session	Club	4:00 PM
August 2020	Clean Up	Club	HO/N/Z Scales
8/6/20	Marketing Mtg.	Club	4:00 PM
8/10/20	Club Picnic	tba	Tba
8/15/20	Train Trip	220 Willow St., Nashville, TN	DelMonaco Winery Trip to Baxter
8/29-30/20	Train Show	NC Transportation Museum	Sat. 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Sun. Noon to 5:00 PM
Sept. 2020	Clean Up	Club	O/G Scales
9/5/20	Train Trip	220 Willow St., Nashville, TN	Fall Festival Excursion to Watertown
9/7/20	HO Meeting	Suite 112. Crossville Outlet Center	10:00 AM
9/10/20	Marketing Mtg.	Club	4:00 PM
9/14/20	BOD Meeting	Club	4:30 PM
9/14/20	Member Mtg.	Suite 112, Crossville Outlet Center	6:00 PM
9/12/20	Train Trip	220 Willow St., Nashville, TN	DelMonaco Winery Excursion to Baxter
9/26/20	Train Trip	220 Willow St., Nashville, TN	Train Robbery Excursion to Watertown