

THE CROSSING GATE



Twin Cities Division ❖ Thousand Lakes Region ❖ National Model Railroad Association

Fall 2016

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TCD MEMBERS HAVE SPOKEN

By Wayne Bjorlie

The TCD Board's effort at grass-roots guidance gathering, reported in the summer issue of *Crossing Gate*, provided a modest amount of important direction. It seems that TCD members still want to meet regularly and have clinics or other interesting programs. There were few suggestions as to where or when these meetings should take place. In fact, there were few suggestions about any issue bearing on the future of the TCD. No truly revolutionary views surfaced in this request for guidance.

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CHAMP DECALS ARE BACK FROM THE DEAD

In the old days, before railroad modelers could buy almost everything ready-boxed, we still had to do a little work to perfect our car and locomotive rosters to make them conform to our preferred road. Applying decals was always the most pleasant of the jobs required to transform, say a bright yellow ACY boxcar into an NP boxcar. At the decal stage, the job started to look as though it might succeed.

Then, in addition to the disappearance of certain paints, sources of decals started to dry up. Herald King disappeared for a while before being brought back to a reduced iteration of its former self. Then...BOOM!... in 2001, Champion Decal Company announced that it was quitting. To be sure, the announcement and the quitting stretched out over more than a year, allowing modelers to stock up on whatever they needed (and allowing Champ to liquidate more of its stock.) But, alas, the last day finally did arrive. We were then reduced to looking through old stacks of Champ decals at train shows or shopping on Ebay, both of which tactics did sometimes produce good results.

But, in the Twin Cities, those of us who need Champ decals are indeed fortunate because the managers of Scale Model Supplies, 458 Lexington Parkway, St Paul, MN 55104 bought all of Champ's decal stock and had the twenty-

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THE CROSSING GATE

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THE CROSSING GATE is published quarterly by the Twin Cities Division of the Thousand Lakes Region of the National Model Railroad Association. Material may be reprinted with permission.

Articles, photos, tips, or ideas are heartily encouraged and will be enthusiastically accepted! The preferred format would be in Rich Text Format (RTF), with photos as JPEGs, but we will accept any format (from a PC or Mac; MS Word, Simple Text, typed, or handwritten). Send it to your editor by regular mail to THE CROSSING GATE, 1922 Christensen Ave, W. St. Paul, MN 55118, or by email to Wbjorlie4@yahoo.com

From the Superintendent

Why do we have a hobby?

Why do we have a hobby, any hobby: gardening, cooking, model railroading? These are my hobbies. I share cooking and gardening with my wife but model railroading is my hobby. It has given me the opportunity to use my mechanical and electrical background on a small scale and on my timetable. I love railroads, and its language was spoken in our house for as long as I can remember.

We all have imagination; that's where our ideas come from. Your mind runs the creative part of the hobby for you; it forms the images. By definition, imagination is the ability to form images, ideas, and sensations in the mind.

Your creative ability has no limit. You have all the resources at your disposal—more than at any previous time. Hobbies give you rest and relaxation so you can remove yourself from the real world for a while. This is essential for good mental health.

Artists state that they spend 90% of their time problem solving and 10% of their time being artistic. Problem solving is the means to get from the idea step to the doing step. Getting the tools and materials out, getting out your old sketch book or note book, using your camera to record what you see, and asking the "how" questions. These are the problem solving steps. Then use your images to see how you would make it work. Record and organize so you can move on to the next problem.

Things to do: Dig up some dirt in your back yard. It's free. Cook it on the BBQ for a few minutes and use it for scenery. Use the internet. YouTube has a lot of interesting model railroad stuff. Go to a hobby shop and check out the new scenic materials. Walmart has Apple Barrel brand, an excellent hobby paint, and you don't have to spend a fortune. Write a scenario of an operating session. Draw a track plan, one you would like to build. Give a clinic on something you know nothing about, (don't be afraid, but you may have to study for this one). Help and encourage a fellow model railroader. Work on a club layout. Work toward an NMRA Achievement Award. Learn about a new technology in the hobby.

Hope you are well. This should be an interesting season coming up. Create something and we will see you at the roundhouse on October 13th.

JIM BUCK, Superintendent, Twin Cities Division

PRE-MEETING DINNER GET-TOGETHERS

McDonald's University Ave & Marion Street

GATHER ABOUT 5:30 PM ** EVERYONE IS WELCOME

** OR **

Keys Café and Bakery, 1682 Lexington Ave N, Roseville, MN 55113

5:15 on the day of TCD meetings. For those from the north suburbs.

From the Editor

The model railroad hobby seems to be healthy and evolving on at least the business front. Recently, I received an email from...I think it was the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA),...offering me a chance to benefit from a new educational service called the “Model Railroad Academy” (MRA). At about the same time, I started getting emails from Model Railroading magazine (MR) offering downloads and online info on modeling. I sent in ten bucks for an introductory membership in the MRA academy. The first thing they did was assume I wanted a full annual membership and promptly debited my account for fifty bucks. (Their “Terms of Service” to which I apparently agreed by sending in the ten bucks implies they can do that.) I promptly un-debited the account and haven’t heard a squawk from them yet. On MRA, I have watched a few truncated Allen Keller layout videos free. I have seen a lot of opportunities to buy other videos and downloads. I have had the chance to participate free in online discussions or seminars on modeling techniques. They have asked me what I need to make myself a better modeler. The MRA could become a 21st-century version of the NMRA with a worldwide, 24-7 membership meeting/clinic, in which case there would be little need for the old NMRA. Likewise, MR’s video offerings might eventually supplant the paper MR. It would be fun to know if the elusive Millenials are coming newly into the hobby online through these electronic avenues.

WBjorlie, ed.

(Continued from page 1) Members Speak

It seems that the Jackson Street Roundhouse will continue to be the main venue for meetings, on Thursdays, though there might be interest in visiting layouts or clubs elsewhere. There are NMRA members in outlying locations who would like to meet nearer their homes, but the board has not found a way to accommodate them in the immediate future. The idea of occasional virtual meetings online sank away.

The (hopefully) annual modeling retreat should remain a programmatic entity unto itself rather than become a TCD meeting-of-the-month, according to comments. The board has duly planned for the usual complete series of meetings and clinics in the 2016-17 season, as outlined in the TCD Timetable on page 7.

(Continued from page 1) Champ Decals

some big boxes delivered to the store, where they sat in plain view for the better part of a year.

The decals were not packaged in the sets that modelers were used to receiving from Champ in mail orders. Instead, Champ sent to Scale Model the individual components of any given car’s decoration and a complete set of guidance pictures so that almost any set could be put together by the Scale Model staff.. the herald, the slogan, the numbers, the car data. Thus, modelers can now request virtually any Champ decal set from Scale Model Supply with a reasonable expectation that the order can be filled. A few sets are simply gone—sold out and never re-printed— but most are there.

Here is your procedure for securing Champ decals from Scale Model Supplies: check the most recent Champ catalog from 2001 or one of the Champ Freight Car Lettering Plan Books to find your car. Get the stock number of the decal set. Telephone Bruce Gardner at 651-646-7781 to request your decal set. Bruce will do what he can to assemble the parts for you. He will charge way less than you would pay on Ebay.



CREATING A TIE REPLACEMENT SCENE ON YOUR LAYOUT

By Tom Gasior

I see a lot of railroad maintenance projects in my daily job as a locomotive engineer, and I wanted to show some of these scenes on my current layout. This is a simple one- or two-evening project.

Wood ties need to be replaced after many years of use. Not all the ties need to be replaced at once. The track foreman will inspect the track and mark the worst ties due for replacement. Nowadays, they use fluorescent orange paint, but you could use a yellow or white spot for older-era layouts. Once the ties are marked, the foreman can impose a Form A, slow order, if the ties are in bad enough condition to warrant a slowdown of daily trains. This usually applies if on a curve. Yellow and Green Boards will be displayed at proper locations and noted in the daily Track Bulletins crews receive. Be sure your trains obey the order!

The next task is bringing and distributing supplies to the area marked for improvement. New ties are spread along the right of way, and tie plates and bags or cans of new spikes are placed nearby as well. When the proper machines and qualified operators can be assembled, the tie replacement begins. The foreman will tell the dispatcher at least one day ahead of the work, to put in a Form B for the designated track limits, and time needed to do the work. Usually, work occurs in daylight hours only. Spikes are removed from the old ties, and they are pulled out and pushed down the railroad embankment. The new ties are slid into place under the rails, tie plates added and spikes set. A tamper will then adjust the ballast to bring the rock up to the base of the new tie and give it a solid foundation, keeping the track level. This is usually done to every tenth or twelfth tie. The old ties, tie plates and spikes are left to be picked up by a work gang at a later date. When work is completed, the slow order will be lifted, and normal operations can resume. This may take a few months from the inspection to the tie replacement.

I wanted to model the middle portion of this operation when the new ties and tie plates are in place waiting for installation. I model in HO scale, so I used Micro Engineering ties. I used black acrylic paint for new ties and rust color for the tie plates, a simple brush to paint them and tweezers to place items on the layout. I also wanted a friendly track inspector and his work truck to round out the scene.

I laid out enough ties to complete the scene, making sure I had extras if new ties were needed elsewhere. Painting these the black color and setting them aside to dry, I cut the Grandt Line tie plates off the sprue and painted them a rust color. I picked out a nice location on my layout that needed a scene to show separation between iron ore mines and add length to a run. I used my tweezers to carefully align the ties and place tie plates next to the track. I picked out a good location for my track inspector's truck, and positioned him to give roll-bys to passing trains. I added extra tie plates in a pile off to the side, and notified my crews of the 10 MPH speed restriction.

If you are an operator, you can use this scene in many sequential operation sessions. You might add the slow order first with yellow and green boards. Later, you might place the ties and tie plates next to rails place for a few ses-

(Continued on page 5)





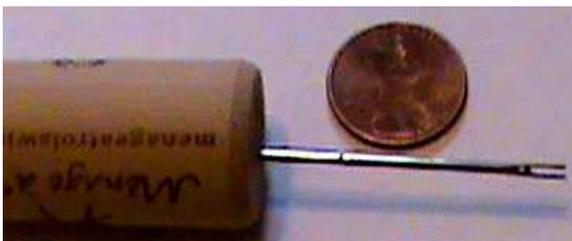
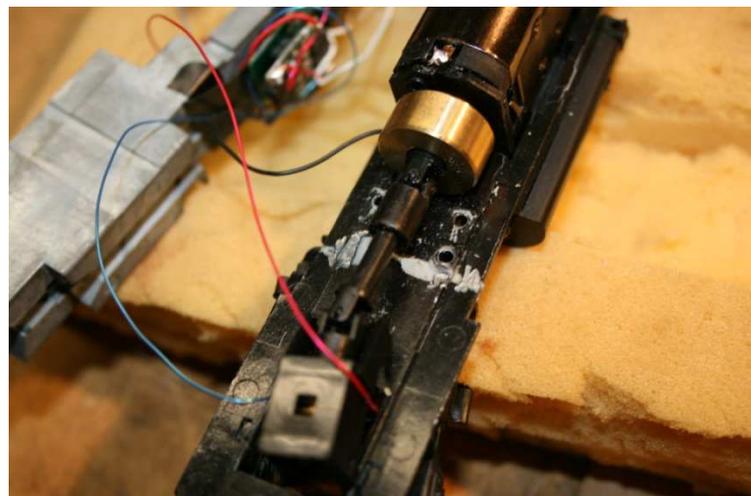
sions. Or, you might hold one big session that has the track crew working and a Form B in place. Crews must request permission from foreman to pass the area. Then, in the next few sessions, have old ties scattered until a work train can pick them up or a contractor and his heavy truck can haul them away for resale to farmers and landscapers.

This scene can be replicated in a few inches, so it does not require a long stretch of mainline. Maintenance is a year round activity, so show some ongoing upgrades to your railroad's infrastructure.

RARE SITUATION IN WHICH DUCK TAPE WON'T CUT IT

Text and Photos by Jim Buck

Walthers GP38-2. I am probably not the only person that has broken a locomotive chassis. It was bent so I tried to straighten it and it broke in two. Oops! How do I fix this? Another fine mess I've gotten myself into. This may be a difficult repair I thought. I could order a replacement chassis. Out of stock. I can fix it with epoxy. So I did a quick Google search asking. What would be the best epoxy to use? And found a YouTube Video of a test done in a machine shop of 5 over-the-counter epoxies. They did this for a customer and put it on YouTube. The winner was "Loctite Metal/Concrete" epoxy. Beat out everybody else. Back to the repair. The next problem was holding the model straight while the glue was curing. It needs 24 hours. Clamps, tape, rubber bands? Naw. The chassis weight is the full length of the car body and has screw tappings to hold it to the chassis at each end. It will hold the two pieces together. Now how do I keep from gluing the chassis to the shell? Ahh! Bakers Paper, otherwise known as Parchment paper. The glue is stronger than the metal.



HANDY GLUE APPLICATOR

Text and Photo by Walt Thompson

Cut about half of the eye off a sewing needle and insert the sharp end into a wine cork. Dip the eye into glue and apply to the model. Works well with AC glue (super glue.) Leaves a nice, fine bead of glue.

HOBBY SHOWS & RAILFANNING EVENTS

Sat, Oct 1	North Metro Model RR Club Fall Train Flea Market 9am-2pm. VFW , 1919 Coon Rapids Blvd. Coon Rapids 55433. Adm: \$5, under 13 free. WWW.nmmrc.org
Sat, Oct 8 & Sun, Oct 9	West Wisc. RR Club. Indianhead Model Train Show. Eau Claire, WI Eau Claire Indoor Sports Center. 3456 Craig Road Eau Claire, WI 54701 Sat: 10am-5pm; Sun: 10am-4pm Info: 715-877-2607
Sat, Oct 15 Also Jan 14	Newport Model RR Club Train Show & Sale. 9:30am-3:00pm. Woodbury High School, 2665 Woodlane Dr. Woodbury, MN 55125 Adm. \$5, under 12 free. Tel. 952-200-9726 for info.
Sat, Nov 5 & Sun, Nov 6	Great Train Show , Canterbury Park, 1100 Canterbury Rd, Shakopee, MN 55379 10am-4pm. Adm is charged.
Sat, Nov 19	Granite City Train Show. National Guard Armory, 1710 Veterans' Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56301 10am-3pm. Adm. \$6, under 11 free. Info: 320-255-0033 email edwardolson@cloudnet.com See granitecitytrainshow.com
Sat , Nov 19 Also Feb 4	Upper Midwest Train Show Century College, 3300 Century Ave N (Hiway 120), White Bear Lake, MN 9am-2pm Adm: \$5 Under 13 free. Info: Tom Jefferson 651-894-2926
Sat, Nov 5 Thru Feb 25	Twin Cities RR Museum Night Trains every Sat. night, 6-9pm. Adm: \$10; \$25 immed. Family; \$30 extended family. 668 Transfer Rd., St. Paul.
Thur, Dec 8	TCD-NMRA Great Holiday Train Auction and Sale. Jackson Street Roundhouse, 193 Pennsylvania Ave. E, St. Paul. Starts 7pm Adm: free

TCD Timetable

2016-17

	All meetings begin at 7 PM.	CONTEST
Oct 13	First meeting of the new 2016-17 season. At Jackson Street Roundhouse. Members will bring items or photos they worked on during the summer and will discuss their respective modeling techniques.	“Show-&-Brag” Something you did over the summer.
Nov 10	TCD will visit the Newport Model RR Club’s layout. See below for directions to the Newport layout from downtown St. Paul.	Open Loads
Dec 8	Holiday Auction. At Jackson Street Roundhouse.	Winter Scenes
Jan 12	Decaling and Dry Transfers. Hands-on experience. Bring your own car and decals or use some that will be provided. If you’re already an expert, show the rest of us how you do it! At Jackson Street Roundhouse.	Steam-era Boxcars
Feb 9	NMRA Awards Program. Special emphasis on earning the Golden Spike Award. At Jackson Street Roundhouse.	Livestock Shipping and /or Handling
Mar 9	TCD will visit Twin Cities Model RR Museum at 668 Transfer Road, St. Paul. North of Univ. Ave. & Cretin Ave. intersection.	Maintenance of Way
Apr 13	Soldering. Bring items that need soldering or for which you need advice on soldering them. At Jackson Street Roundhouse.	Produce Shipping and/or Handling
May 11	Annual Meeting. Election of Officers. Annual \$50 drawing. At Jackson Street Roundhouse.	Dioramas

NEWPORT MODEL RR CLUB. From east 7th Street and U.S. 52 (Lafayette Freeway) take US-52 about 6 miles to I-494 East. Go East, across the Mississippi River to Highway 61-S. Take the ramp going south. Take Highway 61 to the Glen Road exit. Take Glen Road to the right and follow the loop to 7th Ave. Go right on 7th Avenue down to 6th street. The club is in the building on the NE corner, across from the New Newport Admin. Bldg. 600 7th Avenue, Newport, MN 55055

THE CROSSING GATE

NMRA National Convention



Orlando, Florida July 30-August 7

In accordance with stated NMRA policy, to participate in almost any regular Twin Cities Division activity, you must be a member of NMRA or become a member of NMRA after three visits as a non-member during your lifetime.

Twin Cities Division, TLR, NMRA
4476 Mason Ave NE
St. Michael, MN 55376

Next 3 Meetings:
Oct 13, Nov 10, Dec 8
7:00 PM
193 Pennsylvania Ave E
St. Paul, MN 55130

TCD CONTESTS

Beginning with the November contest, every item entered in a contest at a TCD meeting in the 2016-17 season will entitle the owner to a free ticket eligible for the \$50 drawing held in May.

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Tom Gasior Jim Buck Walt Thompson

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651.635.9480
<http://members.aol.com/wcbecker>

Choo Choo Bob's

2050 Marshall Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55104
651.646.5252

Historic Rail

640 Taft St NE
Minneapolis, MN 55413
651.635.0100
<http://www.historicrail.com>

Minnesota Commercial Railway

508 Cleveland Ave N
St Paul, MN 55114

Hub Hobby Center

82 Minnesota Ave.
Little Canada, MN 55117
651.490.1675
<http://hubhobbycenter.com>

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6416 Penn Avenue S
Richfield, MN 55423
612.866.9575
<http://hubhobby.com>

Blick Art Materials (Roseville)

2389 Fairview Ave
Roseville, MN 55113

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4777 Menard Dr
Eau Claire, WI 54703

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715.755.3570
<http://www.trainride.org>

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