

Rochester Model Rails

Dedicated to Quality Model Railroading

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The oil fields at Pioneer, PA, on Dick Senges' *Oil Creek Rail Road*, circa 1866. The oil derricks were scratch built using wood coffee stirrers as were eleven oil derricks on the layout. The oil storage shed, oil loading facility (left), WC, two-tank oil tank car, barrel gondola, house (center), shed, and white office building were also scratch built. The Oil Creek Coal Mine (top) sits over an underground mine. *Digital image by Matt Kovacic.*

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See the *RMR* web site for old issues:

www.trainweb.org/rmr

Scale Model Scenery

by Rick Blanchard

One of the beauties of model railroading for me is the ability to take me away from reality and transport me to another time and place. Suddenly I am in a land inhabited by strange beasts called 'Berkshires' and 'Mudhens' that are being driven by 'Hoggers' and 'Tallowpots'. The smells of steamy cinder laden exhaust and steely wheels and heated brake shoe linings overtake the smells of house, dogs, and a recent meal. Suddenly it is 1911 in Pennsylvania, or 1946 in Arizona, or 1960 in Texas [Ed. – or 1866 on the Oil Creek]. This illusion is full of rich details that lead me into the past, as the Denver Zephyr pulls out of Union Station in Chicago. But what is that large plastic thing doing in my created world? And what is that crack doing in the river?

To be able to create and maintain an illusion is one of the arts of model railroading. It is also becoming a way to preserve a major part of our culture that is disappearing. For the newer generations, steam engines are only large display pieces that they may see on a visit to a park or town square. What that large metal sculpture #3751 did is not apparent. On rare occasions, one of these relics is fired up and kids are amazed (me too!). The ability to understand the context of when, where, how and why these machines were important are unavailable today except in books and movies. A scale model railroad with a realistic simulation of freight movement can teach the next generations what this was all about.

There are fewer and fewer people available for interviews that used to work for the railroads. In the first half of the 20th century, almost everyone worked for or was affected by the railroads. For 50 years, the railroads were the major form of transportation. That's 25% of the entire history of the US! Rail transit is returning to major cities that are clogged with automobiles, but it isn't on the same scale. The achievements and abilities of the railroads during those 50 years can only be described as heroic and epic. The railroads built this nation, and opened up the vastness and beauty of the West.

So many times I have seen beautiful models of a locomotive set in a scene that has some obvious giveaway that it is a model I am looking at and not the actual locomotive. It may be a switch machine motor, a hill with a rock moulding perched on it, or wheelsets with pointy ends in a roundhouse scene or on a MOW car. I am most pleased when I have to stop and decide if I am looking at the prototype or a model.

I have also observed that railfans will notice that UP 5947 has a dent in its air filter enclosure and race home to add that 'feature' to their model, but will fail to notice that is sitting on a mainline that has pink ballast from Arizona. They also fail to 'see' that the mainline has a 12" shoulder or that the ties are covered to within 2" of their top surface. They also might miss the warehouse from 1946 that the locomotive was passing in front of. This sort of 'tunnel (motor) vision' is where models get the detail and their setting doesn't.

When so much attention is lavished on the specific length of the spacing on the *Flexicoil* truck or the ridge on a GP15-1, I would think that equal attention would be spent getting other details of a railroad right. The art of modeling is extended adding these details to head end power or rolling stock, but what is missed is the 'sense' of a railroad in operation. The ambiance, the feel of work being performed, the extraordinary efforts of a train crew pulling hundreds of tons over the Cascades is missing.

What is needed is to extend the illusion that we are trying to create. When adding scenery to a model railroad, the performance and operations of railroad personnel have to be considered. The right-of-way was designed by civil engineers, and ought to reflect their concerns for a well-constructed roadbed, with proper clearances, easements, slope angles, cut and fill balance, and drainage channels. Tunnel portals ought to look like they were built into the hillside, not glued on after the fact. Bridges need proper support, correctly sized and spaced bracing, and allowances for expansion.

Maintenance personnel must maintain the trackage, and need structures placed where they are necessary and used. Tool sheds, line shacks, bridge runouts with sand or water barrels, spare parts storage, track and turnout parts (like piles of new ties and fishplates), all contribute to the feeling that real people are maintaining and running the trains over the tracks.

Photographs of prototype scenes show a lot of these things if you look around the locomotive. Most of the time these details are lavished on the engine house area and are minimal only a few inches away. Carry the details out along the main, including yard limit signs, battery boxes by the signals, telephone boxes, even a pile of cardboard boxes might

help. Safety is stressed highly by the prototype, with signs on all sorts of things. Add these to a bare portion of the yard and it will help the area fill in and fit.

Leave room for such things when planning the area to be modeled. Take a large piece of paper and lay it over the area to be modeled. Make a rubbing of the position of the tracks with a pencil. Now lay out the work areas needed to fit with the scene. Where do the workers park? How do they reach the area? How are supplies brought into the area? Where is the Yardmaster's Office, locker room, showers? What else is needed to make the area functional? Picture yourself as a mechanic coming to work at 6AM for a shift and follow the motions you would take on a typical morning. Is that a lunch wagon pulling up for the morning coffee break? Who is going to uncrate that new replacement engine for the tired old Geep?

It doesn't take much for the scene to help you escape from the worry of car payments and the kids' braces, plop you into West Virginia on a foggy morning, and check out the progress of those helpers pushing the coal drag into the mountains. To me, it's the essence of model railroading. Remember, it's ALL an illusion, and the longer you can sustain the illusion, the more enjoyment you can have!

(Copyright 2004 Rick Blanchard)

For Rick Blanchard's

Website

Go to

www.urbaneagle.com/data/

Scenes from the Oil Creek Rail Road of Dick Senges

The Prototype

The Model



Densmore two-tank oil tank car at Gregg Switch near Shaffer farm, circa 1866.



Posing for photos at Allegheny Transportation Company, Shaffer farm, circa 1868.



The Oil Creek Rail Road crosses Pioneer Bridge over Oil Creek at Pioneer, PA, circa 1866.

Digital Images by Matt Kovacic

Scenes from the Oregon View Railroad of Matt Kovacic



Digital Images by Matt Kovacic



Ask Doctor Dick (The Scenery Doctor)

OCRR@frontiernet.net

Bill writes:

When I butt two large plaster rock castings together and fill the crack with plaster I usually smooth over the crack with my finger and/or stipple with a toothbrush. This sometimes results in a white line and when staining the casting, the line does not take the stain the same way as the main casting, i.e., it is lighter.

Doc:

First of all make sure that the plaster that you fill the crack with is the same as the plaster that you used to make the casting. And that the mix is the same, i.e., one part water to two parts of plaster.

Try to minimize the space between the two castings. Let the plaster between the two castings dry somewhat and try chipping (instead of stippling with the brush) the plaster around the butt joint to blend the two casting together. The chipping method should result in no white line.

Larry writes:

When I make my rock castings they come out soupy and have no specific form. How do I get the casting to come out hard with sharp edges like the mold?

Doc:

It may be that your plaster mix is too wet, i.e., you are mixing too much water with the plaster. Carefully measure out the water (1X) and place that amount

into a plastic bowl. Then measure the plaster (2X), twice the amount of the water. Gradually sift the plaster into the water and stir gently. Then pour the plaster into the mold. Vibrate the mold and let sit until cured.

Also, you may not be leaving the plaster in the mold long enough before you remove the plaster from the mold. Leave the plaster in the mold until you can feel heat. If installing your casting dry, leave the casting in the mold 20 minutes to one hour, then carefully remove the casting from the mold. If you are placing the casting onto your layout "wet", don't remove the mold from the casting until you can feel heat, probably a minimum of about 20 minutes.

Bob writes:

When I plant trees I use an awe and poke a hole into the layout (*Hydrocal* plaster). When I remove the awe from the layout, a small amount of white plaster comes up from inside the hole. Then I have to vacuum the plaster before planting each tree.

Doc:

Using the awe or ice pick is not a bad idea but the vacuuming before planting each tree is tedious and time consuming. When you are pulling the awe out of the layout, first twist the awe slightly and **slowly** pull up the awe twisting as you go. The plaster will stay in the hole and not come to the surface of the layout.

The 'Model Railroad Post Office' - # 8

by Norm Wright

This is a "serviced" first-day cover of the 11/23/92 "Model Trains" series 1000Le Souvenir sheet of Sierra Leone, featuring on the stamp, the 1902 Lionel No.300 standard gauge trolley with converse body. The sheet border includes the Lionel emblem, track, diner, station, crossing signal and two race cars.

The Scott catalog number of the stamp on the sheet is 1552, and the envelope has been cancelled in two places by "Philatelic Secretary" of Sierra Leone, now an independent republic in West Africa and a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.



RIT Fall Train Show & Sale ***October 24, 2004 - Rochester NY***



The RIT Model Railroad Club Fall Train Show is quickly approaching, and preparations are in full swing. Each year growing in size, we expect our show to fill three rooms at RIT. We have had much positive response from vendors and visitors alike, and we want to keep the momentum going into our Fall show.

This year's Fall Show will be held on Sunday, October 24. As in years past, we would like to invite other clubs to come and display their portable model railroads at our Fall Show. Our brand new modular HO scale layout will be on display in the lobby atrium, as well as our permanent HO scale Rochester & Irondequoit Terminal railroad in our clubroom.

If your group is interested in displaying with us, please contact Club President Chris Stilson at 585-475-2227.

Or visit the website: www.ritmrc.org



Photos by Joanna Garcia

**GUIDELINES FOR GOOD
PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION**

or

HOW TO MAKE GOOD PHOTOS BETTER

by Leaf Shutter

Guideline No. 12

Center of Interest

Keep the main object away from the outside edges of the picture area. Arrange your light and shade so that the greatest contrast falls at the point of greatest interest. The closer an object is to dead center, the less it catches the eye; the more off center, the more it attracts. Arrange to pattern of the picture so that the eye enters from the lower left or lower right hand corner.

Visit the



www.railroadmuseum.net

Coming Next Month

[Photo Gallery – The Railroads of Ed Seus](#)

[Proto 2000 E8/9A](#)

[Reminisces - The NY W & O RR](#)

[Ask Doctor Dick– The Scenery Doctor](#)

[Canyon Creek Scenics Trees](#)

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[Recommended Train Events for 2004/2005](#)

Updated 8-26-04

September 1-4	Santa Clara, CA - 24 th National Narrow Gauge Convention
September 11	Welland, Ontario, Canada – International Division Meet
September 25	Lindsay, Ontario, Canada - Central Ontario Division Meet
September 25 – 26	Rochester, NY – Finger Lakes Live Steamers Fall Meet
October 24	Rochester, NY – RIT Train Show and Sale
November 6	Medina, NY – <i>Buffalo Gills</i> Train Excursion www.railroadmuseum.net
November 6-7	Syracuse, NY – Train Show and Sale
November 18	Rochester, NY – NRHS Meeting – “ <i>The Oil Creek Rail Road Company</i> ”
November 14	Batavia, NY – Train Show/Sale at Batavia Downs
February 2005	West Springfield, MA – Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show
March 2005	Grand Island, NY – ID Meet – “ <i>Modeling the Oil Creek Rail Road</i> ”
March 2005	Rochester, NY - RIT train Show and Sale
April 2005	Batavia, NY – Train Show and sale at Batavia Downs

For a detailed listing of events, go on the Internet to:

WWW.CAORM.ORG

Shows
Look for dates and location

WWW.RAILROAD.NET

Events
Look for date and location

WWW.GATS.COM

Great American Train Show
Show Schedule
Month of Year
Look for your city

WWW.TTOS.ORG

Calendar
Month of the year
Look for your area

WWW.GSMTS.COM

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Events

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