



The Pie Card

Division Eight Newsletter - Mid-Central Region, National Model Railroad Association



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February 2012

Number 2

From the Superintendent's Desk



Ladies and gentlemen, my time serving as your Superintendent is drawing to a close. It has truly been an honor, and I am humbled that you have seen fit to allow me to serve. Don't get me wrong, there are still a few months left to contribute as one might. Still, the train is rapidly approaching the station.

The Nominating Committee has done a good job of providing a slate of candidates for your careful consideration.

Thank you for a job well done. The baton is now passed to the Teller to collect the ballots and tally the results. By the way, the time spent on these activities count toward your Association Volunteer certificate. Just keep records.

A constant theme in NMRA Magazine is in play that parallels our efforts. That theme is attracting and retaining new members. There are some great ideas out there – working with Scouts more proactively, autistic children, various public events, etc. The only way we will remain a viable organization will be by attracting new members, particularly younger members and their families. In turn, the only way to attract these people is by providing a service. From the feedback received regarding the last swap meet, we need to make a few adjustments, but we are on the right track.

Imagine Division 8 as a vibrant, exciting organization that is seen as a treasure to the community. This organization opens its homes and hearts to the public. It is an organization that inspires and builds dreams. Years from now, men and women will look back on the Division as the inspiration for their model railroad empires. It is up to us to make this dream a reality.

For your consideration - "Different isn't always better, but better is always different."

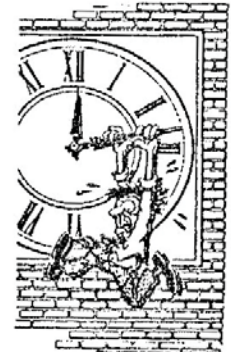
Mark

FEBRUARY MEETING INFORMATION

This month's meeting is Saturday February 18, 2 PM, at the AIRPORT INDUSTRIAL CENTER (former Naval Ordnance Plant). We will meet in Building 91, the Conference Center on Rochester Ave. This location can be accessed from either Southside Drive or Strawberry Lane. Turn south on Technology Drive. The Conference Center is on the right and clearly marked. If you are using a GPS system, enter 119 Rochester Ave, 40214. This will put you close to the building. The program will be weathering, presented by Nat King. Bob Dawson will provide refreshments.

Future programs: Building and weathering techniques by Bob Lawson in March, and a prototype Louisville rail spur you can model by Bob Dawson in April.

TIMETABLE



Feb 18, Sat, 2 PM, Conference Center

March 17, Sat, 2 PM, Conference Center

Apr 19, Thur, 7:30 PM, Conference Center

26-29 Apr, MCR Convention, Pittsburgh

May 19, Sat, 2 PM Mark & Bobbi Hedge

Jun 21, Thur, 7:30 PM, Bob & Ramona Johnson's

ALLAN BATES AND BOB BROWN

Two former members passed away within weeks of each other recently, Allan Bates and Bob Brown. Articles about them appears on page 2.

MEMBER WELFARE

Let Jack Diehl know if you or a member of your family has been hospitalized, or you have lost a loved one.



MODEL CONTEST**FEBRUARY**

March
 sApril
 May
 June
 July
 August
 September
 October
 November
 December
 January

DIESELS

Commercial Structure-
 Passenger Cars
 Cabooses
 Open Loads
 NO CONTEST
 MOW Equipment
 Photos
 Steam Locomotives
 Displays/Dioramas.
 NO CONTEST
 Freight Cars

Enter your favorite model in the contest. The judging is strictly "people's choice". If you would also like your model to be judged for the Achievement program, contact Joe Fields and he will arrange to have AP judges present.

**BOB BROWN**

By Bob Dawson

Bob Brown passed away Monday, January 9, 2012, aged 79. Along with Alan Bates, Bob was one of the pioneers of Division 8. Bob was a printer, retiring from the City of Louisville, and also operating his own print shop, Bob Brown Enterprises. Early on, Bob took on the printing and publishing of the *Pie Card*. At the time, Alan Bates was the editor. Bob at the instigation of others (although he needed no instigation) would take it upon himself to add cartoons and comments to Alan's completed submission. This is detailed in Alan's Obituary elsewhere in this issue. Bob also served for several years at the editor and publisher of *The Kingpin*, the Mid Central Region newsletter. Bob continued to print the *Pie Card* until we went to the electronic addition in 2010. Bob also printed the schedules and for the Conventions that we have held and our Train Show and sale. He did this at no charge to the Division other than an occasional cost of material. I always looked forward to picking up printing from his shop. I knew I would not get away without hearing humorous stories about the early days in Division 8. Like Alan, Bob was one of a kind, and will be missed.

ALLAN BATES

By Rick Tipton



subdivision.

Alan Lawrence Bates, known to his model railroading friends as "Alan", passed away January 1st, aged 88. Professionally Alan was an architect, and rued the fact he had been old enough to do some of the detail drawings for St. Thomas Seminary, but was still around to see that building razed to make way for the "Woods of St. Thomas"

Alan built an operations-oriented HO layout with L&N theme in the attic of his Highlands home. His engines were typically MDC or other early steam models, redetailed and decaled to represent some of his favorite L&N steam engines as seen around Louisville. In the 60's and 70's, Alan was operating this layout with a predetermined sequence of train operations and moving both freight and passenger cars with a cleverly-devised "destination switchlist". Alan had 30 switchlists for 30 days, and one feature of his technique was that, once worked, a day's lists went back into file to be pulled out and used again, over and over in any order. Notorious on this layout was a messy switching puzzle innocuously named "Campbellsburg".

An original member of the group that founded MCR's Division 8, Alan was a longtime editor of the *Pie Card*. However, the printer/publisher was the late Bob Brown (1933-2012), and the two of them seemed to feed on arguing. Alan was serious-minded, but with the probable collusion of other mischief-lovers we won't name, the *Pie Card* began running a series of jokes which showed pix of members taken at Division meetings, but with captions or balloons carrying funny or improbable remarks. The "humor war" escalated until Alan finally threw in the towel and resigned as editor. Of course, as we all know, Bob Brown continued as the *Pie Card*'s publisher for another 40 years or so.

Alan's other hobby was "western rivers steamboats", and his blueprint drawings of riverboats for modelers eventually redirected his architectural career. First, he was drafted by County Judge Executive Marlow Cook to revive the clapped-out paddlewheel steamer that became the Belle of Louisville. His success with that then led to consulting commissions on other steamboat conversions (and new construction) at New Orleans and other cities. Soon Alan became the reigning naval architect in the (re)creation of steamboats on the Ohio and the Mississippi Rivers, and indeed worldwide.

Alan taught us much about model railroad operations, and most recently was generous with help to authors of the *Trackside Around Louisville* books. With Alan's passing, we've lost a unique perspective on Louisville's railroad history.

January Contest Winners



The subject was freight cars. Above left. Jim Harrington took first place. Above right. Tom Lindstrom took second.



Above: Bob Frankrone shares his latest open load project with us. Those of you familiar with Bob's work, knows he specializes in modeling open loads. Photo by Bob Frankrone

CONTEST REPORT

Bill Lynch, Contest Chairman

The January Contest subject was freight cars. Jim Harrington took first place; he also won the contest drawing. Following with second place was Tom Lindquist.

Point Standings: 11 points, Jim Harrington; 8 points, Charlie Keeling; 7 points, Tom Lindquist and Bill Lynch; 6 points, Bob Johnson; 5 points, Fred Soward; 4 points, Rob Johnson; 3 points, Ed Brennan; 1 point, Ed Atkins, and Eric Waggoner.

TRACKSIDE WITH BILL LYNCH



Double header on the Cumbres and Toltec. Headquartered in Chama, NM the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, or "CATS", bills itself as "America's Highest and Longest Coal Fired Steam Operated Narrow Gauge Railroad. Running along the Colorado-New Mexico border and crossing Cumbres Pass above 11,000 feet, CATS preserves the center section of Rio Grande's narrow gauge main line between Antonito and Durango CO. Bill took this picture while on vacation last year; 487 and 488 are K-36 class outside-frame Mikados.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Bob Dawson, Chairman, Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee presented its report at the January Meeting. No nominations were made from the floor. The candidates are: Superintendent, Jerry Ashley and Eric Waggoner; Assistant Superintendent, Ray Rohmann and Russ Weis; Clerk, Bob Dawson; Treasurer, Mike Berry and Charlie Fackler; Trustee, Bruce Goreham and Mark Norman. Ballots will be mailed to each voting member with the address of the teller, and due date. Only ballots mailed to the teller will be accepted -- no hand deliveries. Results will be announced at the March meeting, with the new officers taking office in May.

JANUARY MEETING REPORT

The meeting was held Thursday evening, January 19, at the Air Port Conference Center. Refreshments were provided by Russ Weis. Tom Guenther presented a program about how he used JMRI to install operating signals on his layout. Tom covered the software and hardware required. (An article summarizing Tom's clinic is in the this month's issue of the Pie Card.) A motion was made, seconded, and carried to provide memorial gifts in the amount of \$ 50 each in honor of Bob Brown and of Brian Bunger's mother. This motion was necessary since neither Bob nor Brian were current members, but we felt that it was appropriate due to the service that Bob and Brian have provided the Division. The minutes for the meeting are posted on the Division Website.

MAINTENANCE TIES FUND

The Maintenance Ties Fund helps underwrite the Member Welfare Fund and the printing of the Pie Card for those members who don't have access to a computer. The Member Welfare Fund provides a gift certificate to a member who has been hospitalized. It is also used for an expression of sympathy upon the death of a member or a member's spouse. Donations of \$ 5.00 or more to the maintenance ties fund will continue to be recognized in the Pie Card. Donors for 2012 to date are:

\$ 5 to \$ 20: Ray Hager, John Ottman, Charlie Keeling, in memory of Bob Brown, Jack Jackson

\$ 25 to \$45: Bob Lawson

\$ 45 +: Don Fowler

K & I OPEN HOUSE FEBRUARY 11

The K & I Model Railroad Club is hosting an open house at their club house, the Old Fire House, 3713 Highway 146 (LaGrange Road) in Buckner Kentucky. It is free and open to the public. Dates and hours: Saturday February 11, 10 AM to 4 PM; and Sunday February 12, 11 AM to 4 PM. This is the largest HO layout in the Louisville area.

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

Joe Fields, Div. 8 Achievement Program Chairman

I hope everyone is aware that Division 8 has a multitude of very talented modelers who are more than willing to share their modeling techniques. They are ready to give you a hand, and get you over the snags you may encounter as you build your dream layout.

Check out Div. 8's web site for a list of members you can call on for help. There you will find individuals listed in all categories of model railroading. Please, call me if you want a model judged or have any questions about the Achievement Program,

GREG HOGAN

NMRADivision 8 member Greg Hogan passed away unexpectedly on January 23. Greg was 57 years of age. A welder for Vogt Ice (Henry Vogt Machine Co.) for 39 years, he enjoyed collecting model trains and cars. Greg was also a member of the K&I club and the NRA. Survivors include son, Brian Hogan; daughter, Carissa Hogan; and brother, Glen Hogan. Our sympathy goes to his family for their loss.

TRAIN SHOW and SALE

Sponsored by Louisville Division 8 • National Model Railroad Association

SATURDAY, MARCH 24, 2012 • 10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

LOCATION: RAMADA PLAZA

9700 BLUE GRASS PARKWAY

Dealer Tables available

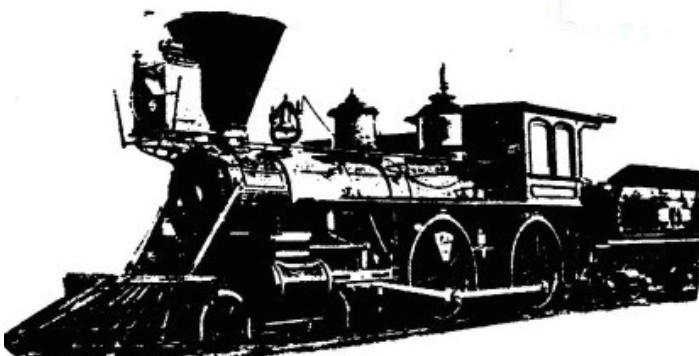
NMRA members: \$ 15/table

non members \$ 20/table

for tables call: (812) 288-8037

Admission: \$ 5.00 per person

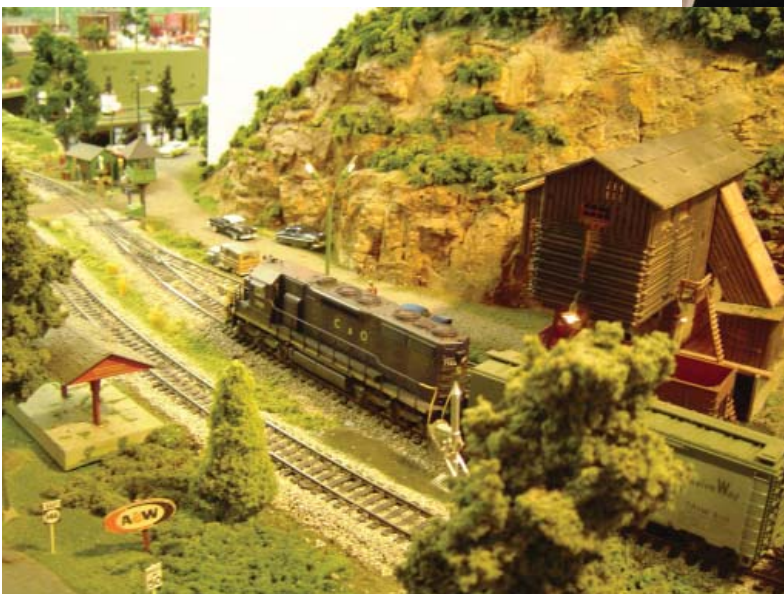
Children under 12 FREE with an adult.





Bob Johnson's new switching layout. This is how it appeared at our Fall Train Show. Bob is constantly updating and improving it.

Former Division 8 member Jim Rollwage and a crew from Ohio has been putting together a recreation of the late John Allen's famous Gorre & Daphetid Railroad. It was pictured while on the Display at the Division 7 Train Show this past fall.



One of the many scenes on Tom Lindquist's HO railroad.

SIGNALS FOR A MODEL RAILROAD-GETTING STARTED

By Tom Guenther

There are different degrees of signal system complexity for model railroads. Simplest is a signal that changes colors when a turnout is thrown. More realistic are systems that tie together block occupancy and turnout direction, but these are best done with a computer. You must decide what you actually want to do -- will the signals change when a train is in a block, or when a turnout changes, or both? Be clear whether you are going to go "whole hog," or will do something simpler with your signal system.

The advent of DCC has made it easier to add signaling. If you want to add a signal system controlled by a computer, your DCC system must be capable of connecting to a computer; be sure to check your system before purchasing components that you may not be able to use. Another consideration in choosing a signal system is your ability to understand electronics and wiring. If you have a problem setting the clock on a VCR or DVD player, or if you do not understand your own DCC system, stay with a simple signal system that does not require a computer.

Type of Signals to Use

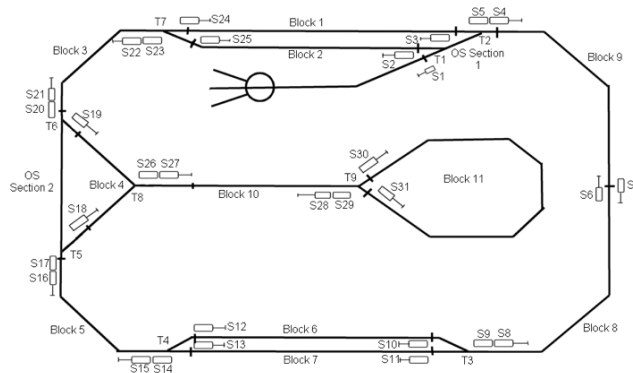
If you don't know anything about railroad signals and how they are used, you need to do some research to find out. Railroad signals are not traffic lights. They came before traffic lights, and the green, yellow, and red aspects (signal colors) mean different things. Some signal masts have two signal heads mounted on them. These usually indicate the main and a diverging route of the track at a turnout. Different railroads use different types of signals, so if you are modeling a particular prototype, you need to know what type of signals they are using.

Signal Plan

The first thing that you need to do in setting up signals for your model railroad is have some kind of "Signal Plan". Draw a track plan of your model railroad, then divide its main line into blocks. Most of your blocks will be at least long enough to hold one of the trains you run -- as an example, I run short trains on my layout, 9 to 10 cars with one locomotive and a caboose. Ideally a passing siding is at least as long as the trains you run, and the ends of your passing sidings will set some of your block boundaries. Then the blocks between passing sidings CAN be as long as the distance from one passing siding to the next, but if the distance between sidings is relatively long, it MAY be divided up into

two or more separate blocks to speed up following moves.

An example of a signal plan is shown below. It shows where the rails are gapped, the blocks and their ID numbers, the turnouts and their ID numbers, and the signals with their ID numbers. When developing the plan, place the signals first according to the signal practices of the railroad you are modeling. Then you can indicate the gaps that are required to make it work.



Each block has an occupancy detector so when a train is in that block, that status is sent to a computer program. And when a turnout is thrown or changes position, that status is also sent to the computer program. Then I have signal boards that connect to my signals. The signal boards are controlled by the computer program, thus making the colors of the signals change as these different things happen. . . . Once you have your "Signal Plan", you will have a better idea of how many blocks will be needed to detect your trains how many signals you will need, and how many sensors or controls will be needed for turnout positions.

Block Detection

A system for detecting when a train is in a block is necessary. For current-type detection, the track must be gapped on one or both rails, according to what the block detector manufacturer advises for their system. There are different types of detector to choose from, and each manufacturer has their own version and style, so some research is in order to see which one will work with the DCC system that you have.

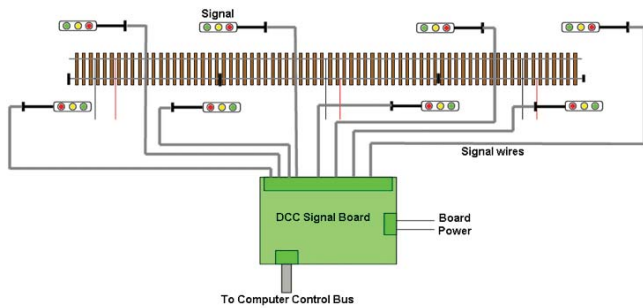
Turnout Position Detection

The computer must also know what position your turnouts are in, because this affects the signal color. Some systems will use the same computer signal that is sent to the DCC turnout controller when throwing a turnout.

Signal Board

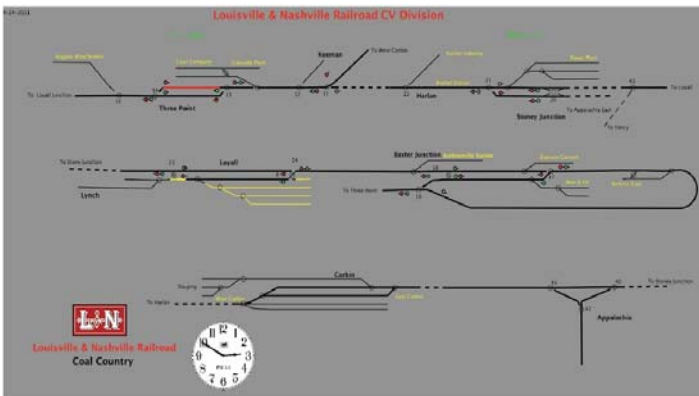
The signal board takes the computer signal and makes

the signals display the aspects or colors that the program says they should be. The "hard wiring" from board to signal can be intense, but at least boards are usually close to their signals.



Computer Program

The logic that makes it all work is associated with the computer program that you choose. The computer program controls the system. It looks at the blocks, if occupied or not; looks at the position of the turnouts; and looks at any other sensor indications that are being sent to the computer. The logic in the program takes all of these inputs, tests them with the program logic, and then sends the appropriate commands to the signal board to light the signals with their proper colors. The computer panel shown below was designed using JMRI. JMRI also provides the logic for everything to work. When turnouts are thrown, blocks occupied by a train, and the signals change, the display icons change to reflect these events.



Equipment Types

There are different manufacturers that make boards for block detection, turnout control, and signal display. You will have to choose which ones that you want to use.

Here are some web sites out of many available.

<http://www.wiringfordcc.com/signaling.htm>

<http://www.logicrailtech.com/index.htm?>

<http://www.circuitron.com/index.htm>

<http://home.cogeco.ca/~rpaisley4/CircuitIndex.html#index?>

<http://www.cti-electronics.com/?>

<http://www.rrcirkits.com/?>

http://www.digitrax.com/menu_detectionsignaling.php

As far as the equipment is concerned, both the signals and the electronic boards make it all happen. Once you pick a company for your parts, you should stay with that company if possible. It will make things easier as you build your signal system. You will also need to select a computer program to run your signal system. That means that you will need a computer. As far as programs go, there are several to choose from, including JMRI which is free.

The DCC components for the system I used are Digitrax.I have used the following products for my signal system:

Digitrax BDL-168's, for block detectors

DS64 for turnout control

Digitrax SE8C for signal boards

Locobuffer-USB for computer interface

JMRI for computer software

If you want to know more about these Digitrax boards, you can download all of their instructions from the Digitrax web site.

As you can see by this time, adding working signals to a model railroad is not cheap, and it is not simple either; but once built, installed, programmed and operating, signals add realism that would be hard to duplicate and--they are really cool!



Top signal shows green indicating main ahead is unoccupied and turnouts thrown. Red aspect indicates switch thrown against diverging route (other side of tunnel).

Division 8, MCR, NMRA

<http://div8-mcr-nmra.org/>

Tom Guenthner, webmaster

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
April 26-29, 2012

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