

NMRA MID-CENTRAL REGION, DIVISION 9

# Up The Holler

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

Dave Brandeberry's  
Chessie System and  
DT&I Railroad



also:  
Scratch Building Flatcars  
Digitrax Decoder Product Review

# Up The Holler

The Coal Division's Official Newsletter

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## Comments from the Head of the Holler

By Lin Young, Superintendent

The old news is that Bob Weinheimer, our Assistant Superintendent, became Master Model Railroader number 402 on 10/1/07. He is committed to assist any of us who want to be a MMR. To sustain that commitment he has been appointed Co-Chairman of our Achievement Program to assist Ed Keith. Bob has studied and understands requirements for the AP Awards. Scale Rails, our NMRA national publication will be highlighting "The Year of the MMR" in its issues this year. Bob is featured in the February issue which should be in your hands by now. See Bob's article elsewhere in this issue for more on Achievement Program activity. Keep up the good work!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

We have been blessed with a gift of money by three Divisions in the Mid Central Region. Division 6 (Columbus), Division 7 (Cincinnati) and Division 8 (Louisville) have sent checks. We were given a plethora of merchandise at the Mid Central Region Board of Directors meeting in October from various Divisions to help us raise money. All that merchandise has been sold at good profit. We now have a respectable balance of over \$1,000 to promote our hobby.

We continue to have good attendance at our meetings. With just about

60 members we have about one third of you at every meeting. Dan Mulhearn, from Pipestem in the extreme eastern portion of our division (a two hour drive away), brought a guest last meeting. Dan, keep bringing them, and you other members bring a guest too.

Mid Central Region President Jerry Ashley and NMRA President Mike Brestel have had recent health problems. Both are recovering nicely. Coal Division member Dwight Sherman is recovering slowly from his recent stroke. Please keep them in your prayers and thoughts.

The Mid Central Region annual meeting May 15-18, 2008 will be hosted by Division 4 in conjunction with the New York Central System Historical Society at Independence, OH (south of Cleveland). For those of you who model New York Central's Kanawha and Michigan it is a must attend. You can anticipate the Superintendent's quarters will have a reception for fellowship and libation after each day's activities.

*Lin*

Up The Holler is the quarterly newsletter for the NMRA Mid-Central Region, Division 9. Copies are free to Division 9 Members. If you would like to receive your copy of Up The Holler electronically, please email the division clerk at clerk@coaldivision.org. Receiving your newsletter electronically not only helps control our mailing cost, it also enables you to view all pictures in full color. If you would like to receive a high resolution electronic copy to print on your own, please email the editor. Be aware the file can run between 5-15 megabytes in size and would not be recommended for dialup internet service.

Up The Holler is in need of articles to fill our pages. If you have a topic or layout you would like featured in our newsletter, please contact us at editor@coaldivision.org. We can assist with editing and photographs.

Help support the cost of our newsletter. Register your railroad today with a pike ad in Up The Holler. Cost is \$10 per year. To have a pike ad created, contact the editor for further details.

# COAL DIVISION NEWS AND EVENTS

## Assistant Superintendant Report

article by Bob Weinheimer

The last few months have seen several very well attended and interesting meetings. Our last newsletter came out just before the October meeting. That meeting saw a very nice clinic presented by Jim Rollwage from Wilmington, Ohio. Jim discussed all the thought behind the planning for his new layout. I had the dubious distinction of helping him toss his old layout into a dumpster in advance of his move from suburban Louisville to Wilmington. Jim took this as a challenge and the new layout will be better than its predecessor. Several of our members have had the opportunity to see the work in progress and we all agree that Jim is building one great layout.

Our November meeting was held at the St. Albans, WV C&O depot, we were the guests of the Saint Albans C&O Modelers (SACOM). Our clinic was a presentation by yours truly on the Achievement Program. I did what I could to show the program is not as formidable as you might imagine. By passing around copies of the documentation I submitted for the various certificates, I hope I was able to convince folks that the AP is not a writing program but truly a modeling achievement program.

Our December meeting was outstanding, so much so that member Mark

Maynard sent the officers an email describing his delight with the day. That note is printed in this newsletter. About 20 members attended the meeting, well over one third of our entire membership. The contest was "Modeler's Choice". We saw all types of rolling stock as well as two small scenic displays. There were so many models submitted that it took quite a while for all entries to be described. The vote was tough but Gary Burdette's C&O scene came out on top. Gary then presented a clinic about how to capture the feel of the prototype on a layout.

The January meeting was almost as good as the December meeting. Once again we had a great turnout. We had members from as far south as Bluefield, WV and as far west as Portsmouth, OH. The contest was cabooses. Congratulations are due to Bob Johnson for his partially built O scale narrow gauge caboose. This car is being built from scratch board by board. Bob had indicated it was not complete and was only for display but the group felt, even incomplete, it was better than anything else submitted and voted it the winner! Gary Burdette presented another clinic, this time on mold making.

Our February meeting will feature a clinic by Ed Keith on backdrop model-

ing. The contest will be diesel locomotives. Don't miss the fun, come out and join us Saturday February 9 at Teays Valley Hobby and Craft. We will have the room set up at 1 PM, the meeting will start at 2. Come early and socialize prior to the meeting.

As mentioned elsewhere, Greg McCartney will be earning his Association Volunteer certificate very soon. As his family is about to add another member, Greg will be stepping down from his roles as Clinic and Contest Chairs. Dan Mulhearn quickly agreed to step in to replace Greg. Each of these jobs pays one point per month toward the 60 points needed for Association Volunteer. If Dan does these jobs for the next 30 months, he, too, will earn the AV certificate. Greg will be staying on as Up The Holler editor.

*(continued on next page)*

### Monthly Contests

January, Cabooses

February, Diesel Locomotives

March, Freight Cars

April, Passenger Cars

May, Steam Locomotives

June, Online Structures

July, Offline Structures

August, Traction

September, Photographs

October, Open Loads

November, Non-revenue

December, Modeler's Choice

### Monthly Meeting Schedule

- **March 8th, 2008** Coal Division Meeting at West Virginia Hobby and Craft Teays Valley, WV. Fellowship time and committee meetings start at 1 PM. Business meeting at 2 PM. The contest will be freight cars. Greg McCartney will present a clinic on signals. (subject to change)
- **April 5th, 2008** Coal Division Meeting at West Virginia Hobby and Craft Teays Valley, WV. Fellowship time and committee meetings start at 1 PM. Business meeting at 2 PM. The contest will be passenger cars. Mark Maynard will present a clinic on switch machine installations.
- **May 10th, 2008** Coal Division Meeting at West Virginia Hobby and Craft Teays Valley, WV. Fellowship time and committee meetings start at 1 PM. Business meeting at 2 PM. The contest will be steam locomotives. John Harris will present a clinic on scenery techniques.

### Events Around Our Division

- **April 11th-12th**, St. Albans C&O Modelers Inc. 9th Annual Hawks Nest Modelers Meet. Held at Hawks Nest State Park in Ansted, WV. See SA-COM's web site for details. [www.sa-com.org](http://www.sa-com.org)
- **May 15-18, 2008**, NMRA Mid Central Region Convention, Independence, OH. Go to <http://www.div4.org/> for details.

(Asst. Super. Continued from page 2)

Shelby Young has hit the ground running as our new Membership Chair. In November he raffled off a book form his personal library. This generous action netted the division something in excess of \$30. In more recent meetings Shelby has raffled off gift certificates to Teays Valley Hobby and Craft.

The Mid Central Region convention is coming up in Cleveland in the middle of May. From the looks of things, this will be one great convention. I feel that regional conventions offer the best value for the dollar and cannot urge you strongly enough to consider attending. Entry forms can be found at [www.div4.org](http://www.div4.org). If a lack of internet access is the only thing stopping you from attending, let anybody know and we will gladly download the registration form for you.

We have heard that Allen and Sharon McClelland will be selling their home near Dayton and moving into a retirement community. Allen, of course, is the owner of the Virginian and Ohio. It appears there will be one last open house in March as part of a joint meeting between Divisions 3 (Dayton) and 7 (Cincinnati). Lin is looking into whether we will be welcome to invite ourselves to the event. We will keep you posted.

Our website, [www.coaldivision.org](http://www.coaldivision.org), continues to be visited often. Between October 1 and January 26, we have had 7178 visitors. The most popular pages are layout photos (604), schedule (594), and various issues of the newsletter (281 total). Virtually every file on the site gets looked at every month. Fewer than 10% of the hits come from search engines or links from other sites. I suspect that means the other 90% come from typing in the url or having it bookmarked in a browser.

I want to close by thanking all of you who had kind words for me upon my designation as a Master Model Railroader. It was quite a challenge but also lots of fun. I will gladly help any of you who participate in the Achievement Program. I also hope to be able to return the favor and congratulate many of you when you become Master Model Railroaders.

## Achievement Program News

By Bob Weinheimer, AP Co-Chair

Achievement Program activity is continuing steadily in Division 9. Jerry Doyle recently had his Author certificate approved, we hope to be able to present the actual certificate soon. Jerry and Lin Young, have had their scenery work judged. Both need only to take some pictures then submit the paperwork. Jerry and Greg McCartney are both very close to having all the time in for Association Volunteer. Gary Burdette's structures were all judged prior to the January meeting, he will be sending in the paperwork shortly. Jerry, Lin, and perhaps others have the hours in for Chief Dispatcher. Again, all that is lacking is some paperwork. I must stress again that the paperwork is not that bad. If that is the only thing stopping your submissions, please let me know and I'll help you with it.

Between the May and October MCR Board meetings, Division 9 members earned 5 certificates. On a per member basis, we had the most Achievement Program activity of any division in the Mid Central Region. The paragraph above indicates that there are eight or more certificates out there for the taking by various members. I challenge those folks to submit their work by the middle of March so it can be tallied before the next Board meeting.

**Get the Division 9 logo applied  
to your shirt!!!  
Cost is \$9.00 per shirt  
See Lin Young for details.**

**Pike Ad Space Available. Cost  
is \$10 a year. See the division  
clerk or editor for details.**

**WME**  
**WESTERN MARYLAND RAILWAY**

**Thomas Subdivision**

Russel Miller-Superintendent  
russel22@msn.com

## 2008 Division Elections

By Greg McCartney, Editor

2008 is the year in which we elect a new Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for the 2008-2010 term. A nominating committee has been formed and chaired by James Heilmann of Ripley WV. Other members of the committee are Bill Wadsworth of Dunbar WV and Ed Keith of Chesapeake Ohio. According to the by-laws of Division 9, nominations for Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent will be made to the nominating committee by petition. It is required that five members sign this petition. All petitions are to be announced at the January meeting of the election year. In addition, nominations are to be taken from the floor of the January meeting. Once the nomination process has been closed, the election is to take place by mailed ballot. The ballots are to be mailed to the membership not less than thirty days prior to the March meeting. The March meeting date is the deadline for accepting marked ballots.

To date, the committee has not received any petitions to nominate any members to the offices of Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent. The floor was not opened up to nominations during the January meeting. To date, no nominations have been made for our two elected offices.

Since we have missed some key deadlines on our nominating process, the deadlines will be extended. We will be accepting nominations from the floor at the February general meeting. Petitions will also be accepted until then. Ballots will be mailed 31 days prior to the April meeting. There will be an option for a write in candidate on the ballot. All ballots must be returned by the date indicated on the ballot so they can be counted at the April general membership meeting. Anyone having questions or concerns about the nominating process should contact Jim Heilmann for further information.



## The Chessie System and DT&I

article by *Dave Brandeberry*  
 photographs by *Jerry Doyle*

My layout models the Chessie System and the Detroit, Toledo, and Ironton (DT&I) railroads. Modeler's license has been used to make improvements. The lines happen to pass through the towns where I grew up looking at trains. The era is 1977, the year my wife was born. The layout is still very much under construction but occupies a 26 x 40 foot portion of the basement. There will be two levels.

The Chessie System portion of the layout starts at a yard representing Huntington, WV. The line follows the Ohio River toward Point Pleasant. Along the way it passes the Goodyear Plastics pellet plant. At Point Pleasant it serves a cargo transfer facility that handles containers. This industry is on the site of an old boat building facility that reinvented itself with a new business model. At Point Pleasant a large steel viaduct carries the line across the Kanawha River,

the town, then the Ohio River. The Ohio River crossing is at the site of the Gavin and Kyger Creek power plants.

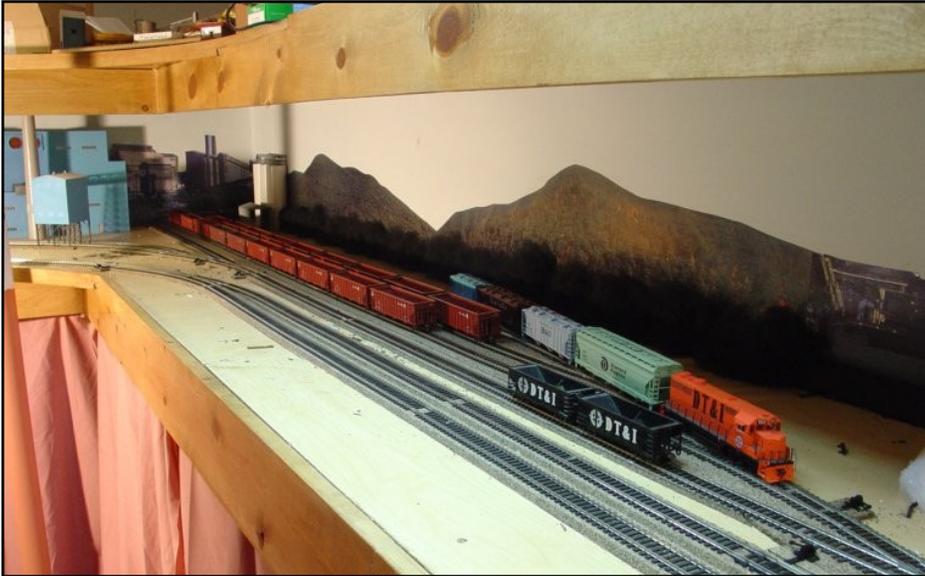
Once in Ohio, the line goes west to Gallipolis. There is a car ferry dock and a farm machinery plant at Gallipolis. The line continues west to Hamden, Ohio where it interchanges with the DT&I. The Chessie line passes Miegs County Coal Mine No. 2 then is planned to head west toward Chillicothe, Ohio. At Chillicothe the line will serve the Mead Paper mill, the Union Spring factory, and a grain silo. The line then heads to staging at Washington Court House.

The DT&I branch serves the Heater Coke Company at Hamden then travels south to McArthur, Ohio where the Pillsbury Foods and Gem Soda companies are big customers. The line then heads to Jackson, Ohio, site of the Apple Festival. As it happens, it is festival time and

the city is crowded with tourists. The main shippers in Jackson are two grain silos, the Merrillat Cabinet Company, Jackson Implement and Propane Gas, and the Jackson Iron and Steel Company (JISCO) mill. My wife's grandfather worked at this mill. He would be glad to see that it has expanded to include a new rolling mill. From Jackson there is an extension to Oak Hill where the DT&I serves a scrap yard and a clay products factory. From here it goes to staging.

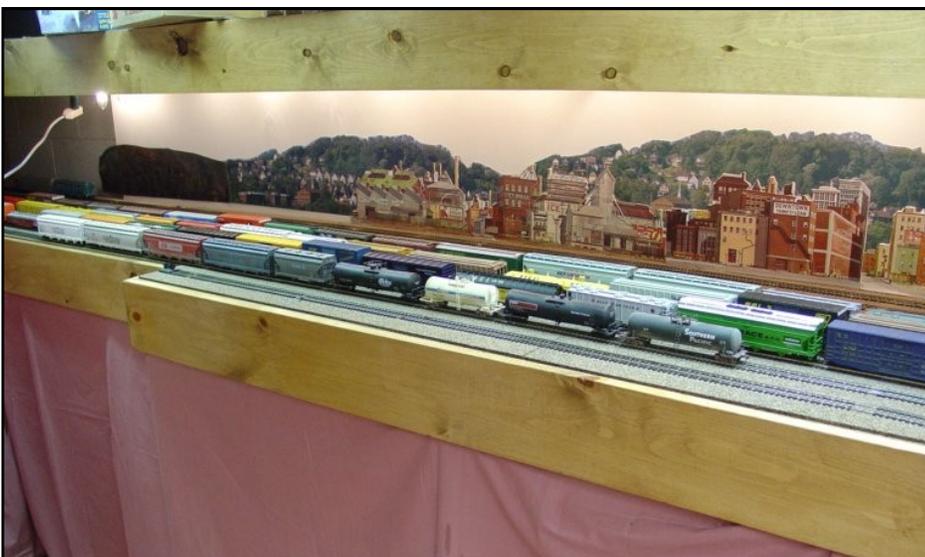
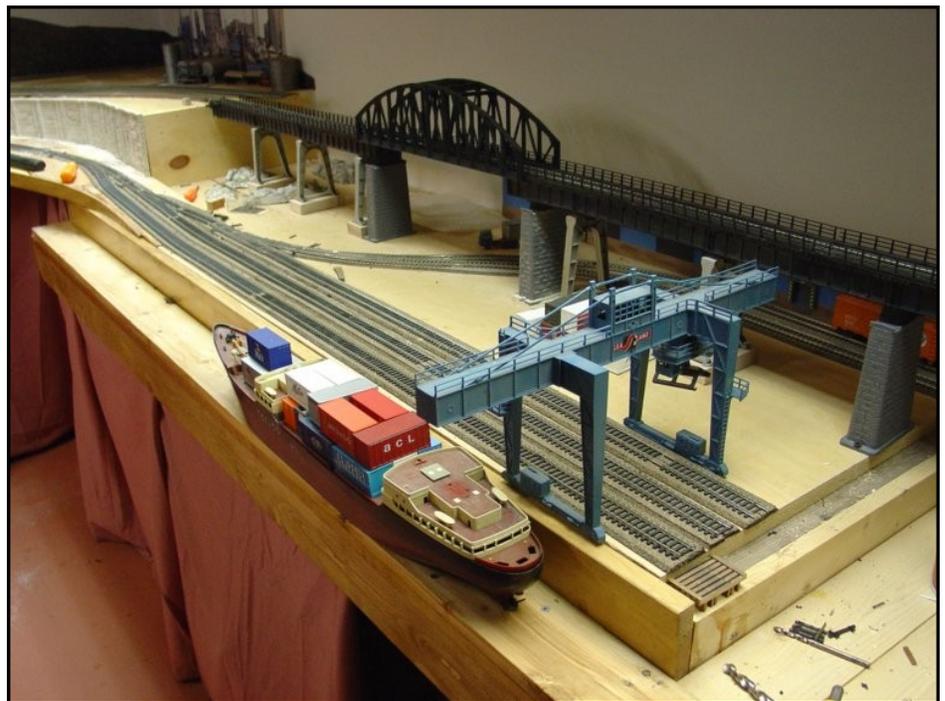
The layout is coming along nicely but, as with most layouts, there is plenty left to do!

**Above:** JISCO Steel locomotive idles in front of the rolling mill at Jackson, OH.



**Left:** Gavin Power Plant

**Right:** Cargo transfer facility at Point Pleasant, WV.



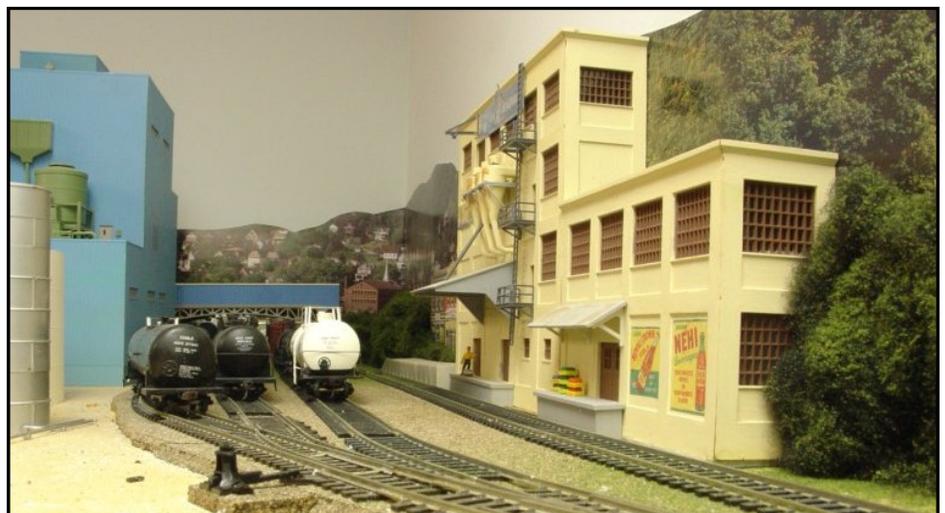
**Left:** Huntington Yard in Huntington, WV.

**Right:** Tracks entering the JISCO Plant at Jackson OH.



**Left:** Electric furnace at JISCO (molten metal inbound, steel slabs outbound).

**Right:** Corn syrup tank cars at Pillsbury Foods, Gem Soda is to the right.

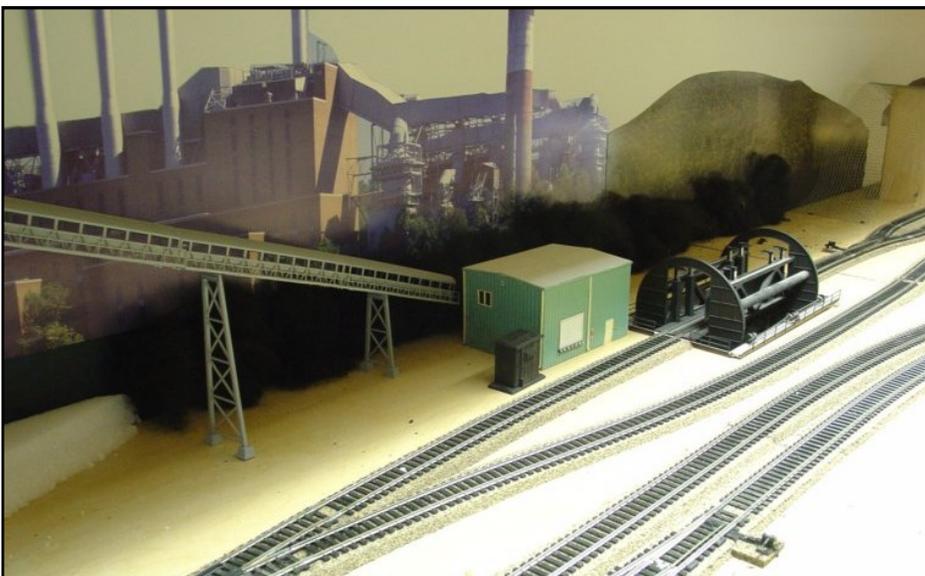




**Left:** Merilat Cabinets.



**Right:** Down town Jackson, OH.



**Left:** Kyger Creek power plant.



## A Tale of Two Flat Cars

article and photographs by *Bob Weinheimer*

Folks have joked that the easiest way to earn the NMRA Achievement Program's Cars Certificate is to build five flat cars plus three other cars. A boxcar has, for example, a top, bottom, two ends, and two sides. A flat car has the top and bottom and only the most diminutive of ends and sides. That should make a flat car easier to build. If building a car for judging, however, the challenge is to have enough complexity in the car to earn a good score. I learned that boxcar ends and doors can pile up points. Without ends and sides, be sure to add plenty of detail to the deck and underframe of flat cars. If you are building a flat car for operation on a layout, there is another challenge. Where does one hide any weight? Find the answer below!

I built these two cars because my layout needed some more 60 foot flat cars. In years past the MDC kit was a serviceable offering. With all the changes in the hobby marketplace in recent years, I decided it was easier to just build these cars. I had a good photograph I had made of one of these cars in Lansdale, PA December 29, 1986. The

September and October, 1997 issues of Model Railroad Craftsman have articles on Trailer Train 60 foot flat cars. Although the articles contain no good prototype photographs of this type of car (F60AH) they were still very useful for determining general TTX practices.

By the time I started these cars I had already built the C&O boxcar and Southern tobacco car described in earlier issues of *Up The Holler*. As a result, I found these cars reasonably straightforward to build although they posed some of their own problems.

Although these two cars are substantially the same, one went through a painful step in its construction process that I will describe later. Both are 60 foot flat cars built for general service. Except for the deck, the cars were built upside down since most of the detail is in the underframe. Construction started with a piece of 0.030" sheet polystyrene on the bench. Side and end sills of 0.030" x 0.250" stock were built around the sheet. A layer of lead shot was placed over the sheet and secured with white glue. Another sheet, this time of 0.010", covered

the lead shot. There is no added weight in the center sill. This added weight assured that the car would meet the NMRA weight standard and that it would operate well on a layout with or without a load.

Construction of the underframe continued with longitudinal stringers. One car has 0.010" x 0.040" stringers while the other car uses 3/64" tee stringers. The center sill is made from 0.030" x 0.250" stock spaced apart then capped with another piece of 0.030" x 0.250" material. Ribs were built from trapezoidal pieces of 0.030" stock and covered with 0.030" x 0.156" stock. A Details West brake set was used to build the brake systems on each car.

The stake pockets are made from short pieces of 0.060" x 0.060" solid stock. I considered some sort of open shape but the smallest was still too large for credible stake pockets. At this point I painted the cars with Floquil Railbox Yellow and lettered them with Micro-scale decals.

After painting, the decks were built from pieces of Micro Engineering ties.



There are about 175 pieces of wood in each deck. According to prototype photographs, the center line of the car has longitudinal timbers. These are represented on the models with full length switch ties. Scraps of switch ties and regular ties were used for the cross pieces. It was necessary to cut or notch some pieces to clear the stake pockets. The deck was sanded to decrease the thickness of the ties somewhat. The ties were stained with a wash of India ink in isopropanol. A light weathering of Floquil Earth and Floquil Grimy Black was applied to the sides with a heavier weathering applied to the underframes. As you might imagine, painting the car before installing the deck eliminated the need to mask the ends of the wood deck pieces.

These cars each contain about 300 parts made from plastic, wood, and wire. The only commercial parts used were couplers, trucks, brake parts, and the four steps. The various grabs were scratch built. All but the four steps are allowable commercial parts. Since the

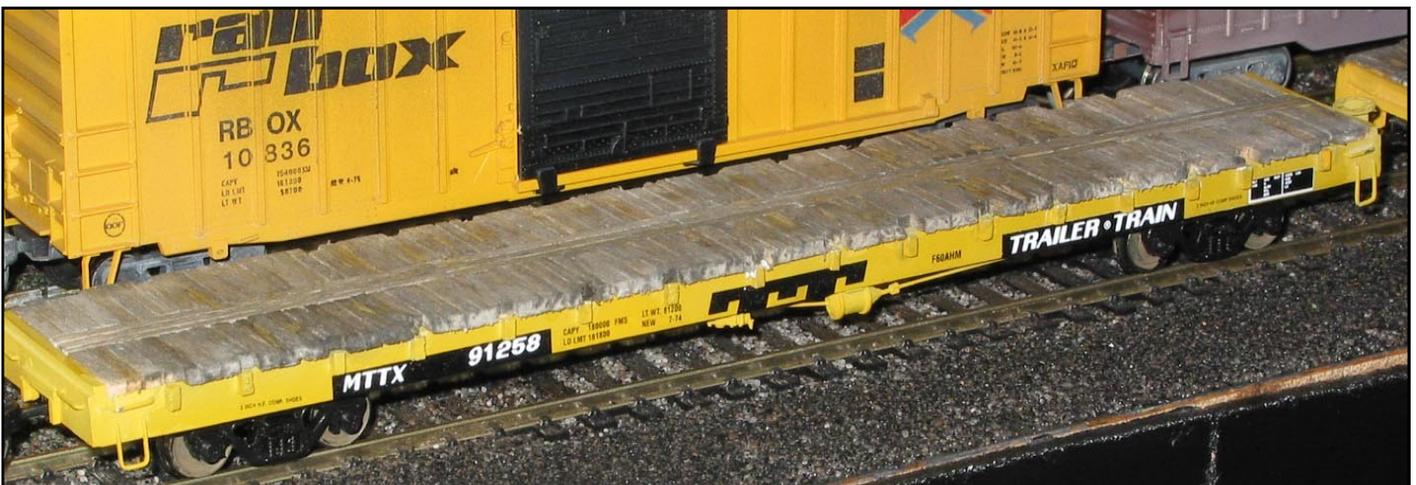
four steps were well below 10% of the cars' total parts, these cars qualified as scratch built for NMRA Achievement Program purposes.

I mentioned above that one of these cars went through a painful construction process. When I started, I built one car as described above. I became concerned, however, that the center sill would protrude too far below the side sill and look bad. This was due to the thickness of the lead shot layer. Before finishing that car I started the second car without the weight layer. The underframes of both cars were then built. When I set them on the track over trucks it became apparent that the first car, with the lead layer, looked very good. The height of the deck above the rail was almost exactly the same as the prototype. The car without the weight rode low. It was so low that the coupler would have to have been mounted at deck level or slightly above. I removed the side sills from that car and rebuilt the deck with the weight layer. The ends of the cross pieces in the underframe were partially exposed, not

fully against the side sill. They were ripped out and replaced. The center sill and bolsters remained.

As a final note, I really did build two cars! Take a close look at the photographs and you will see that the B end of each car is on the right. Also, the same components of the brake rigging are visible on each cars. You are not looking at opposite sides of the same car! These cars were judged at the same time as the other two cars I scratch built. As you can imagine, they received slightly lower scores than the house cars. In the grand scheme of things, that is not really important. A minimum of 87.5 points is required for the merit award. Sure, lots of good hard work will earn more points but after months and years the exact score will fade from memory and all that will matter is that the model passed.

I hope that other Coal Division members will step forward and share their scratch building or heavy kitbashing articles in future issues of Up The Holler.



## Division Mail Bag

### Member Feedback

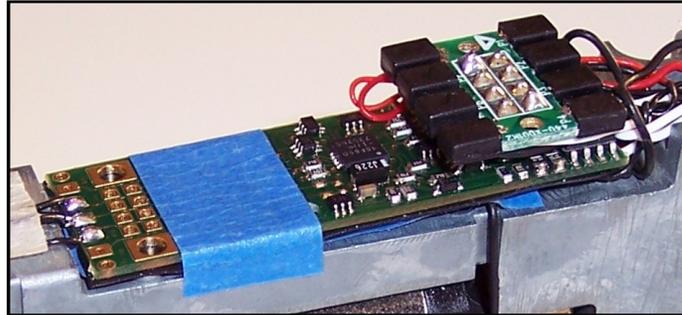
**W**ow! That just about sums up my description of the December meeting for our division. Not an empty seat in the house, and at one point a couple of folks were standing in the back. I have never been to a meeting with such a large turnout (did everyone's wife go shopping on the same day?). In any case, we definitely had something going quite right. The model contest was outstanding, I didn't know there were so many talented people in our little group. It was the first time that I can remember that there were so many excellent entries, that it was truly difficult to decide which entry to vote for. Then we had a most informative clinic on how to model area specific locations without the need to model every inch of what would really be there. Our clinician, Gary Burdette called it modeling to "get the feel" of the real location. And for proof of his ability to do so, his diorama won the model contest. I think everyone thoroughly enjoyed the meeting. I just thought I would send along this comment so that maybe next time, we will have to add more chairs and make the contest space a little bigger. Great Job Everyone!

*Mark Maynard*

## Digitrax DH165 Series Sound Upgradable Decoders

### New Product Review

By Greg McCartney



**Left:** The DH165LO installed in a Proto 2000 GP38-2.

**Below:** Examples of the DH165AO and DH165Q1.

**D**igitrax has released a new series of decoders for HO scale locomotives for those individuals who would like sound but are not quite ready to make the plunge. Building on their DH163 series of decoders, the new DH165 series decoders come with a plug that will allow the modeler to install a separate sound module called the Soundbug. The SFX004 Soundbug features the user ability to design and upload sounds to the decoder. A special programmer is required for this feature. The Soundbug retails for \$49.99 and comes with a 28 mm speaker and capacitor.

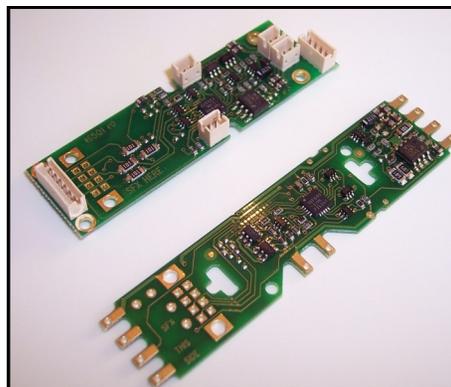
The DH165 series decoders come packed with features such as silent drive, back EMF, six function outputs with lighting effects, and optional switching speed at the press of a function key. These decoders like their DH163 predecessors had special circuitry to allow the use of 1.5 volt bulbs or LEDs without installing a resistor. It should be noted that this feature is only on two function outputs generally used for headlights. If the user desires to use 12 to 16 volt bulbs, a simple modification to the decoder is necessary. This modification would be permanent. The price on these decoders makes them attractive as well.

Retailing for \$26.99, the DH 165 line is well under the current retail prices from NCE and Lenz for similar decoders. Currently Digitrax is offering the decoders in six drop in sizes for different locomotive manufacturers.

The DH165LO is designed to fit in Life-Like locomotives. The user only needs to swap out the constant lighting circuit board. There is no need to change the headlights as in the past making most Life-Like locomotives truly DCC ready. It should be pointed out that some of Life-Like locomotives such as the GP38-2 with more than two light bulbs for the head lights need special consideration.

Digitrax also offers the DH165Q1 which is marketed to upgrade QSI sound equipped locomotives or non sound equipped locomotives with internal metal weights designed for the QSI sound decoder. Unfortunately this did not work out for the Atlas Silver series B30-7 and SD35. While both of these locomotives had metal weights designed for the QSI sound decoder, special hardware was not installed to hold it, making it difficult to install the DH165Q1. Users of this decoder should check their locomotives carefully and make sure all parts are there to use the DH165Q1.

Other decoders of this family include the DH165AO which is similar to NCE's DA-SR. This decoder is designed to be a drop fit for many Atlas and Athearn Genesis locomotives. Digitrax has two decoders designed for Kato locomotives: the DH165KO and DH165K1A. The DH165IP finishes out the line for now. The DH165IP is a postage stamp sized decoder with an integrated NMRA 8 pin plug that will fit many DCC ready locomotives. To date Digitrax has not released a 9 pin JST version of the DH165.



### Railroad Prototype Modelers Valley Forge

Sponsored by Philadelphia Division, MER, NMRA

**March 28-30, 2008**

at the  
Desmond Great Valley Hotel & Conference Center  
Malvern, PA

- Clinics
- Model Displays
- Vendors' Room
- Home Layout Tour (Sunday)

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REGION, DIVISION 9**

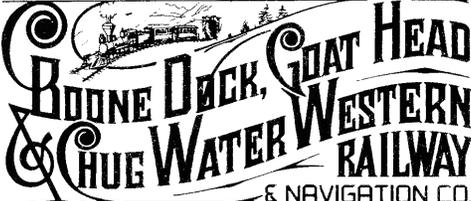
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We are looking for articles for our newsletter. If you have a model railroad or modeling project you would like featured in our newsletter, please contact Greg McCartney at editor@coaldivision.org.

Please help keep our newsletter costs down and elect to receive your newsletter electronically. Benefits include all pictures in color. Please see our web site at www.coaldivision.org for details.



Ed Keith, MMR  
President  
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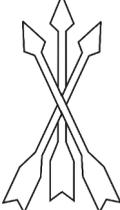
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