

Rochester Model Rails

Dedicated to Quality Model Railroading

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A small town in the late 1800s *Oil Creek Logging and Mining Railroad* on the HO scale model railroad of Dick Senges, Victor, NY. Note reflections in the real glass windows. A Shay pulls a logging train on the upper track as a Mikado picks up a load of coal. *Foreground structures by Rob Walker.*

Bath and Hammondsport RR – the Passenger Depot at Keuka Lake

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Rochester Model Rails

www.trainweb.org/rmr

Sociology of Model Railroading

(Abridged Edition)

by *John Bruce*

Let me start by pointing out that I'm not a sociologist, I don't play one on TV, I don't have a Ph.D., and if I did have one, it wouldn't be in Sociology. On the other hand, the hobby of model railroading represents a set of social institutions and social relationships that are worth attention, and nobody else seems willing to look at the hobby from a systematic perspective. In his extended definition of Sociology, one of the founders of the discipline, Max Weber, suggests that our task is to ask, in his words, what is the "social action" that is taking place in the model railroading hobby? How can we "arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects?" In other words, what are we trying to accomplish in the hobby via our relationships and institutions? Most important, are we doing what we say we're doing?

The method he suggests is, in effect, to try to determine what a rational person would do to accomplish these goals, and then to ". . . treat all irrational, affectually determined elements of behavior as factors of deviation from a conceptually pure type of rational action."

One of the most clearly stated goals of the hobby is to improve its public image. There is a long-standing stereotype of adults "playing with trains" as a feckless or immature activity, and it is likely that some people are deterred from participation in the hobby due to a fear of being characterized as such. It is a general goal of hobby participants to be seen as engaging in a serious and challenging pastime, and it's generally understood that as the public views the hobby in this light, its prestige will increase, and business for hobby suppliers will also increase.

The World's Greatest Hobby campaign was begun in 2001 by Kalmbach Publishing Company the publishers of *Model Railroader* magazine to ". . . raise public awareness of the hobby of model railroading and to make it easy for newcomers to get started." While the web site doesn't say it, Kalmbach began the campaign following a ten-year decline in circulation and advertising pages in *Model Railroader*, which has been regarded as the hobby's flagship publication.

The publisher has implicitly explained its own business outcomes by pointing to a perceived decline in the hobby overall, and implicitly expects an improvement in its business if the public image of the hobby improves. (This explanation appears to have succeeded within Kalmbach's internal corporate environment, since the managers who presided over the magazine's decline continued until recently to be

employed there; the Publisher's early retirement at the end of 2003 may or may not have been related to the magazine's decline.) These assumptions are also not controversial within the hobby industry; as the web site points out, "This is a program that has the backing of the Model

Railroad Industry Association with funding provided by the companies whose logos you see on these pages."

But as with all conventional wisdom, there's cause for some skepticism here. Even in a severe recession, capital has been available to fund a major high-end startup supplier, Broadway Limited Imports, as well as major new products and innovations like ready-to-run models, from traditional suppliers like Athearn. It's likely that the business analysis that justifies this level of continued or increased investment in model railroads as a commercial venture does not actually see the hobby in a state of decline -- and certainly not just an activity pursued by children or eccentric adults, or limited to the holiday season.

Nevertheless, promoting the image of model railroading as a serious and challenging lifetime activity hasn't been an easy sell. Even in a time when society has accepted lifestyle choices that in the past would have been regarded as eccentric, immoral, or deviant, many people who participate, or would like to participate, in the hobby see a tradeoff in a potential lowering of social and self-esteem. Indeed, at a time when news media style sheets have attempted to extirpate all stereotypical language in dealing with racial or ethnic groups or lifestyle choices, newspaper articles dealing with model railroading continue to take a heavily condescending, "cute" attitude toward the hobby. How, then, are members of the hobby working to improve their image through their social interactions and institutions? Are they succeeding? And while the overarching goal of improving the hobby's status is important, are these institutions succeeding at the more specific tasks they pose for themselves, either explicitly or implicitly?

I want to look at the following model railroad hobby institutions, in ascending order of complexity, to try to make some kind of an assessment of how we're doing, and to make recommendations:

- Swap Meets and Train Shows
- E-mail Groups and On-line Forums
- Prototype Modelers' Meets
- Model Railroad Clubs
- *The National Model Railroad Association*
- Hobby Magazines
- Technical and Historical Societies

Although hobby shops, mail order and Internet discount hobby dealers, and hobby manufacturers are important players in the hobby, I've left them out of the scope of this discussion, because I think they're primarily commercial ventures, rather than social institutions. If a hobby dealer or manufacturer loses money long enough, it goes out of business. The only institution listed above with paid leadership is the hobby magazines, and I feel these play an important social role beyond their commercial intent.

However, the more purely economic motivation in a commercial enterprise has clearly resulted in the current generation of hobby suppliers, such as *Athearn*, *Atlas*, *Kato USA*, *Life-Like*, *Intermountain*, *Stewart*, *Walthers*, and others making a remarkable series of correct calls in product innovation and quality, in part during difficult economic times. The magazines and the volunteer organizations, with the exception of the technical and historical societies, simply haven't been able to match this record. The possible reasons for this contrast probably belong to economic analysis and are beyond the scope of this discussion.

Next Issue: Part II

Swap Meets and Train Shows

**John Bruce's
Model Railroad**

*Los Feliz and
North Western Railroad*

www.trainweb.org/lnfwfan



Oil Creek Logging and Mining Railroad

Models and digital images by Dick Senges, Victor, NY



Morning comes early for the men of the Oil Creek Valley (above left). Note the lantern on the barrel (see insert below right). A Shay waits for a logging train to pass (above right) as two miners pick away in an underground stope loading coal into the tippel (left). Can you find the third miner pushing the ore cart?



Plan *Before* You Build – Part I

by Richard C. Roth

Probably one of the most often made mistakes for model railroaders is not enough planning prior to screwing or nailing together the first two boards that will become the layout. This results in frequent modifications and in many instances, complete rebuilds. If you talk to some of the bigger names in model railroading, they will tell you that they may spend a year or more planning before they start construction. Once begun, they adhere to well thought-out plans and drawings. The process of planning is very easy to do and can even be fun.

It all starts out by asking some basic questions about your interests, space, time, and costs to be involved. When asking yourself the questions, don't leave blanks, instead place a question mark in any you could not provide a solid response. Research those in question until you can make a firm response before moving on. This charts a clear path down the road that will develop into a much-appreciated opportunity to spend time relaxing, having fun, and learning as you go. These questions include but are not limited to the following topics.

Planning

- a.) What scale is going to be modeled; O, HO, N or something else?

If the area for the layout is small, it almost goes without saying Large or even O-scale may not be appropriate. A scale too large and there may not be sufficient space for turn-arounds. Switching also becomes problematic with larger scales in small spaces, as there may not be sufficient space to clear when attempting to do switching operations.

On the other hand, too small may cause equal or even greater problems as we grow into the layout. Maybe I should say, grow older! Many modelers find that smaller scales become too small as their eyes make the adjustment from middle age to the latter years. If a person wants to build a layout that they are going to put hundreds and hundreds of hours into building and detailing, it goes without saying, it is better done in a scale that will be compatible with age and health.

b.) What size of layout is desired - large or small?

Build a layout that size that suits the modeler and the space available. Plan for aisles and layout areas. If the layout is to be a collection of scenes, towns or terrain, don't build in a closet, there just is not enough room. On the other hand, a small switching layout in a smaller scale may be appropriate.

I once saw a very outstanding layout in a closet. The modeler had a spare bedroom that he shared with his wife's hobby, sewing. In that bedroom was a closet about 36-inches deep. The modeler replaced the original sliding doors with two pairs of hinged bi-fold doors, a set on each end. Thus each section of the door was only about 18-inches wide and did not take up much space in the room.

In the closet, he had a switching layout with 9 industries and a total of 15 sidings on which cars could be stored. At each end was a two-track yard that would hold 5 cars on each track. He would set up with a set of cars at the industries and another set on one end. The cars were then switched to their proper destinations by one of two small Alco switchers.

One of the things that really impressed me was the way he planned his layout. He could stage cars from either end. Some of the switches were facing the crew as they worked from one end, but would be trailing point switches from the other. This meant that the crews had to do some thinking as they proceeded with their work.

One each end above the layout were shelves on which he stored his extra cars. The shelves were wood built from 1 x 12 pine. The boards that formed the bottom of the shelves had slots made by a thin saw blade to serve as guides for the wheels. Each of those boards was angled up about a quarter-inch from back to front so that the cars would roll back rather than come forward.

The layout had very interesting scenery as well. Since it pretty much consisted of short industrial sidings, the density of the structures was appropriate. Many were on the sidings with rail docks plentiful. Away from the tracks were just as many buildings supporting truck traffic. In addition, these non-rail-associated structures formed barriers from which some of the trains would pop into view and just as quickly disappear again.

Part II – Next Month

The Model Railroad Post Office

Number 12 in the Series

by Norm Wright

This Japanese stamp is from a **Science, Technology & Animation** set issued 8/23/2004.



Saga Han model (1855)



First Japanese Locomotive 'VULCAN' (1871)

The 80¥ stamp (Scott™ catalog number **2897b**) depicts a miniature model locomotive built by the Saga han Samurai Group in 1855 – a precursor to Japan's first locomotive, the "Vulcan" (right) in 1871. The model, only 397mm in length, is now acclaimed as "the start of locomotive building in Japan" (a similarity between the model & the "Vulcan" is evident in these images).

The stamp was issued in vertical strips of five different stamps. A sheet of 12 stamps issued the same day (Scott™ number **2898**) also includes number **2897b**.

Bath and Hammondsport Railroad – Part 8

Passenger Depot at Hammondsport, NY

The Bath and Hammondsport Railroad passenger depot was constructed in the late 1800s at Hammondsport, NY, on the shores of Keuka Lake. The model depicts the depot after the cupola was added to the south end of the depot and an early paint scheme. The depot is still there today with even a different paint scheme. The track is gone and as is the loading dock and the northern brick structure. Bathrooms have been added to the backside (lake side). The model will be installed on the B & H model railroad of Dick Senges, Victor, NY.

*Model of the
Bath and Hammondsport Passenger Depot
View of south end – below*

*Prototype Image of the Bath and
Hammondsport Passenger Depot –
Late 1900s paint scheme. Keuka Lake is on the right.*



Bath and Hammondsport Railroad Passenger Depot - front – track side



Bath and Hammondsport RR Passenger Depot – back (lake side)



Model by Dave Armitage, Batavia, NY



Ask Doctor Dick (The Scenery Doctor)

OCRR@frontiernet.net

Larry writes:

I am trying to attach ground foam to a tree armature and have used a mixture of white glue and water. But the ground foam is not sticking to the tree branches. Suggestions?

Doc:

I am guessing that your mixture of white glue and water is too thin (too much water) and not sticky enough for the ground foam to stick to the branches.

Relative to adhesives to be used for attaching ground foam to tree branches, I suggest ones that are thicker and stickier.

Spray Adhesives

I have used *Elmer's Spray Adhesive* (acid free, fast tack, dries clear, resists bleed through) and *3M Super 77 Spray Adhesive – Multi Purpose* as well as others. These work well and are very sticky holding the ground foam on the branches of miniature trees.

These tend to work best where the branches of the tree armature are not super fine such as in a *Scenic Express SuperTree* armature. These spray adhesives can be purchased at *Home Depot* and *Michael's*.

Acrylic Matt Medium and Water

When using the *Scenic Express SuperTree* armature, *Scenic Express* suggests using a mixture of Acrylic Matte Medium and water (3:1–5:1 water to AMM). *Michael's* sells *Liquitex Matte Medium* in their art department. Make up a mixture using AMM. Spray onto the tree branches and sprinkle on the foam. Then give the tree a final shot of the ACC/water mixture. Hang up to dry.

Hair Spray

For some applications hair spray works well too. Buy the cheap stuff at the *Dollar Store – Aqua Net Unscented Extra Super Hold Professional All-Weather Hair Spray*. Spray your tree armature with the hair spray (over a trashcan). Sprinkle on the ground foam (over newspaper so you can recover the unused foam later). Then give the tree a final shot of the hair spray.

Tacky White Glue

There are also tacky white glue type adhesives that will work such as *Woodland Scenics Foam Tack Glue*, *Delta's Sobo Premium Craft & Fabric Glue*, and *Delta's Quik'n Tacky*.

For past issues of the
**Rochester
 Model Rails**
 go to
www.trainweb.org/rmr

Any interest in an
Index
 for the first 30 issues of the
Rochester Model Rails
 → e-mail: OCRR@frontiernet.net

Don't Forget to Visit
www.railroadmuseum.net



Coming Next Month....

*Sociology of Model Railroading
Part II*

International Car Exchange

Aging Wood Siding

**Ask Doctor Dick –
the Scenery Doctor**

Plan Before Your Build – Part II

Rochester Model Rails

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Recommended Train Events for 2005

Updated 4-28-05

- April 30, May 1** **Lindsay, Ontario, Canada** – Model Transportation Expo, trains, boats, planes, & autos

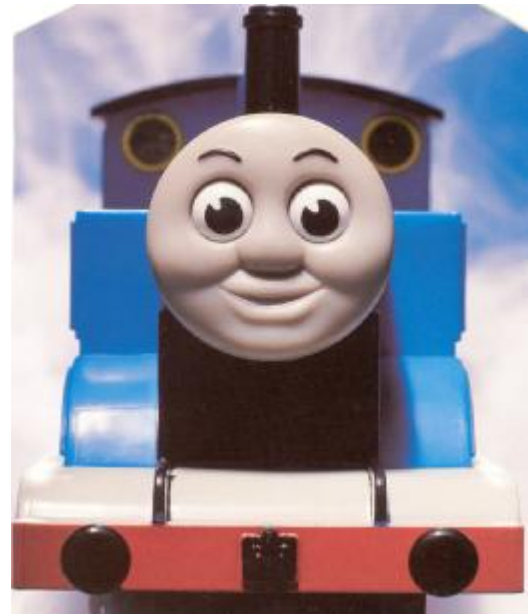
- April 30, May 1** **Lockport, NY** – Lockport Train Show , Keenan Arena

- May 1** **Guelph, Ontario, Canada** – Train Show, Guelph Model Railroad Society

- May 6,7,8** **Medina, NY** – “A Day Out with Thomas The Tank Engine” at the Medina RR Museum →

- May 7** **Stayner, Ontario, Canada** – Nottawasaga Model RR Club Model Railroad Auction

- May 13,14,15** **Medina, NY** – “A Day Out with Thomas The Tank Engine” at the Medina RR Museum →



Medina Railroad Museum
www.railroadmuseum.net

- May 19** **Rochester, NY** - NRHS meeting - “Lehigh Valley 16mm movies”

- May 20** **Industry, NY** – NMRA NFR LSD Spring Meet at R & GV RR Museum, Reg. 8:30am
1:1 scale clinics in am, layout tour in pm

- May 28-29** **Midland, Ontario, Canada** - Model Railroad Show, Midland District Railroad Club

- August 13** **Gananoque, Ontario, Canada** – Thousand Islands Model Railroad Show

- August 31**
September 3 **Dearborn, MI** – 25th National Narrow Gauge Convention – Silver Anniversary



Oil Creek Rail Road on Miller Farm, Circa 1866.

- September 15** **Rochester NY** – NRHS meeting
 "American Orient Ltd."
- October 15 – 16** **Bowmanville, Ontario, Canada** –
 Model Railroad Show,
 Bowmanville High School
- October 16** **Rochester, NY** – RIT Model
 RR Club Fall Train Show
- November 5-6** **Syracuse, NY** - Train Show
 at NY Fairgrounds
- November 13** **Batavia, NY** – Batavia Train
 Show/Sale



Oil Creek Logging and Mining Company, circa 1900.

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

WWW.CAORM.ORG

WWW.FINGERLAKESLIVESTEAMERS.ORG

WWW.GATS.COM

WWW.GSMTS.COM

WWW.MODELRAILNEWS.COM

WWW.NEWYORKRAILROADS.COM

WWW.RAILROADMUSEUM.NET

WWW.RAILROAD.NET

WWW.TRAINS.COM

WWW.TTOS.ORG