

Modeler's Forum March 23, 2023

by Kent Waterson

The Modeler's Forum was overflowing on March 23rd with one of the largest gatherings to date. It was great to see the additional faces and their projects. Attending that night were Bob Willard, Bob Wright, Paul Lodge, Kent Waterson, Carmen Anastase, Dick Holman, Ed Webb, Steve Doughty, Travis Johnson, John McMullen, Shawn & Bryn Doyle and Jamie Robinson.

Bob led off the evening with two more Model T conversions. The first was a cement mixer based on a picture from the construction of the bridge to Bailey's Island. The picture only showed one side of the mixer, but more internet searching produced a second photograph of the opposite side. The second vehicle was a snowmobile which was a rebuild of an older project. Both models featured modified cabs and fenders.

Bob also showed a bottle of Micro-Mark Liquid PSA Adhesive. Bob's primary use is adding windows to structures. The glue is applied to the surface and quickly dries but remains tacky. The window can then simply be pressed in without worrying about the part shifting.

Lastly Bob showed an experiment he had been "just messing with." A 1/64 Studebaker cab and dump trailer. The cab was cobbled together from two of the Studebaker cabs.

Jamie followed Bob with a Great Falls caboose work-in-progress. The caboose is a 4th incarnation build. Jamie added 0.010 phosphor bronze pickups to the trucks to provide power and signal to an NCE Light-It decoder. Jamie mentioned that these Light-It decoders can be found on eBay in packs of 15 for <\$5 each. Items replaced on the caboose included wire handrails and a brass stack.

Shawn was up next with a collection of cars he had been "practicing" with. The first was a pair of flatcars with rail loads. Shawn had used some old unusable flex track rail to make the loads. Quantity of rail on the loads was based on the weight of the rail and the load capacity of the flatcars. Thread was added for cables and the cars were upgraded with metal wheels and Kadee couplers. The second car was a UP center-beam car with a load of ties. Ties were individually made and bundled into 16/bundle, total bundles were 32 (a lot of ties!). A light blue thread was used model the cables holding the bundles, the thread carefully attached to the deck and center beam. The last car was a depressed-center flat car with a forklift and crate of extra wheels and rims. The forklift will be for the steel culvert & pipe mill on the HO layout. The Walthers forklift was modified to handle the type of materials delivered to the mill based on designs where he works. The forklift was painted with genuine Toyota orange paint. Final details included wheel chocks and chains. Nice work Shawn!

Bryn next presented an update on her wheat field. The rows of wheat (molded in a line) were "planted" in a section of corrugated cardboard that had been separated, and the exposed ribs slit to capture the rows of wheat. A little dirt sprinkled in the rows and the effect looked good. She still hopes to do the same type of arrangement for a corn field, but the molded corn stalks tend to be a bit thicker and do not fit well in the corrugated ribs. A short discussion ensued with some possible solutions.

John next updated us on his layout progress, and he's been busy! A switch tower is in process, he's ordered more wire and t-taps (suitcase type connectors), he purchased

some vehicles at the Augusta show, made a radius tool for laying track and ordered some more cable for his cab bus. He currently has 60 structures completed and more to be done. John is also working on getting his training completed for Operation Lifesaver.

John also brought a Walther's HO #6 switch and had questions on how exactly to wire the switch and how to connect the Caboose Ind. ground throws. A discussion followed and left him with the answers he needed.

Travis joined us that evening with just a simple query: How are members keeping track of their rolling stock? Typical responses were Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets. Microsoft Access was also offered as a means.

Steve then presented a dilemma he encountered at home as he transitions from HO to O. Steve is using the Lionel Fastrack for his track, but obtained a turntable that was built from tube type track. The question was how to mate the two different tracks together? Steve found a great solution from Menard's in a convertor track between the two styles of track. With this he can connect to the turntable and will also use it on a lift-gate section of his track.

A maintenance-of-way car was presented by Ed based on a picture he had seen. The car was a flat car with a pulp car type structure on top. Ed built the structure from individual pieces of styrene strip, not an easy task to keep all the pieces square and in line. The car remains to be painted but looks great so far.

Dick brought along a pair of UP maintenance-of-way cars that he is painting for a customer. The cars were silver and were repainted in UP yellow. Dick is finishing up the cars by adding the UP logo and red lettering decals.

Carman presented a couple recent purchases. A Woodland Scenics chain-link fence kit ("I previously made my own, I'm never doing that again!") and some Plastruct florescent red rod (no immediate purpose but could be useful in the future).

Carman also talked about a section of his layout that will be a light rail overnight parking area and maintenance area. He sought opinions on making a covering for the area and if that would be appropriate.

Kent followed with an update on his layout at home, the helix has been started and is about 50% complete. He also brought an update to his military equipment on a flatcar diorama. Both models are now complete, and the project is close to done (the be entered in the Southern Maine Scale Modeler's contest on April 16th).

Lastly, he presented his progress on building an Operating Steam Throttle that was posted on the Model Railroad Hobbyist forum. The throttle parts are all 3D printed and necessary schematics and software were all provided. Currently all the parts have been printed and the wiring done. Next step will be loading the software and any necessary debugging.

The last two attendees for the night were mostly observers, but Paul also encouraged people to take a look at the new Ferris Wheel on the Thomas the Train layout.

Bob (Wright) stated he was simply there for inspiration, and we believe the night delivered! It was great to have a large number of participants and the excellent presentations of what's "on the bench." As always, we welcome others to come share what they are

working on, or as Bob, just come to see what others are doing and contribute where you can. We meet next on April 27th, we hope to see you there.