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Caboose Kibitzer

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The **Caboose Kibitzer (CK**) is the official modeling publication of the Mid-Continent Region (*MCoR*), *NMRA* and is available on a subscription basis to members on a quarterly basis. The price of the *CK* is \$6.00 annually for a hard copy and it will be available later off of the web for a lower price. (The price will be determined by the Winter 06 issue of *CK*.

MCoR is a part of the *National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Inc.* Starting October 1, 2005, membership in *NMRA* includes membership in the geographic *Region* (we are in *MCoR*) where the member lives as well as membership in the *Division* where the member lives. For more information about Divisions, please see the *Callboard* on page 2.

Most memberships in *NMRA* (see the membership application form on the last inside page for explanations) include a subscription to the monthly *Scale Rails*.- that includes the *NMRA Bulletin*) and in *MCoR* also includes a subscription to the quarterly *Handcar* - informational publication of *MCoR*.

Application for either new or renewal membership in the *NMRA* and *MCoR* may be made by using the form provided on the inside back cover of this issue. Send your application to the National Model Railroad Association at the address shown therein.

Materials For Advertising

Please submit all requests for advertising to the Advertising Manager at the address shown on the inside back cover.

Materials For Publication

Items for publication <u>must</u> arrive before the dates listed below to be considered for inclusion in the corresponding issue.

Winter 06 February 1, 2006 Spring 06 May 1, 2006 Summer 06 August 1, 2006 Fall 06 November 1, 2006

Send all material for publication to the editor, Bob Jefferis at 6000 W. Richards Drive, Shawnee, KS 66216-1721. Or if it

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- 5 The Brasspounder's Desk Bob Jefferis
- 6 Prototype AP Modeling Marty Vaughn MMR
- 9 MCoR AP Report Marty Vaughn MMR
- 9 Cover Photographs
- 10 CB&Q Class GA-2 Gondola Gene R Tacey
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- **22 Cover Photos and Coming Attractions**
- 23 Advertising Rates and Index

can be transmitted via e-mail, send it to jeffbobj@swbell.net. It must be understood that no payment can be made for material submitted for publication.

Contributions of typed material can be made electronically (preferred), printed on *white* paper (please, no pretty pastels) with a laser or inkjet printer or a typewriter with a good ribbon. Acceptable but LOTS more work for me are dotmatrix printer or *neatly* handwritten (printed) – I can't scan dot-matrix or handwritten. Electronic versions can be as an MS Word file (.doc), text file (.txt) or an Adobe Acrobat file (and I really prefer the Word or text file). Media for transport to me can be via e-mail (jeffbobj swbell.net), a CD or a 3.5" floppy disk. (If you send e-mail, please use "CK Material" as the subject.)

If you have drawings in AutoCad, we can read those directly and print them. (Wonderful!)

Contributions of photos have lots of possibilities. Prints **made from photo negatives**, color or b&w, in sizes from 4x6 to 8x10 will work well. **Electronic images** of approximately 2 Megapixels work very well. 1 Megpixels photos are marginal and ½ Megpixels (such as made by most cell phone cameras) provide a photo that is very hard (if not impossible) to reproduce well. If possible, photos of individual models should be made with a neutral background. E-mail *may* work but your IPS may limit file size. Most do not permit attachments of over 2 Meg. 3.5" floppy disks are fine but they are limited to 1.44 Meg. CDs are excellent and lately are cheap.

<u>General Notes</u>

Our webpage – **http://www.mcor-nmra.org/** - will answer many of your questions.

Correspondence relating to your subscription, extra copy requests or a change of address should be directed to the MCoR Secretary (see page 2). Unless noted to the contrary, the editorial policy and content of this publication reflect the opinion of the editor and contributors, and do not necessarily represent the policy of the MCoR/NMRA. Unless specifically restricted, any item in this publication may be reproduced as long as proper attribution is made.

Fall 2005

Switch List

THE HEAD END By Richard Napper MMR

As you probably have heard by now the big changeover which was scheduled for 1 September 2005 will be delayed until at least January 2006. As a result of this I shall continue to send out the Mid-Continent Region (MCoR) membership cards until January 2006. Why January? Because the membership information I get from HQ is always one month behind in its reports. I will still be sending out membership cards to all members after the consolidation so members can use the number to get the CK on-line.

I have been in contact with the two new directors for the MCoR region to the national Board of Directors (B0D). They are the western and central area directors. When asked by me if either one would give the region a report of what the national BOD has decided, I was told by both of them that they would not do it as it was too large a burden upon them and that was the job of the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) director. So we can expect no further help from either of them, but they were elected by your region to that position.

I have further asked both of them to submit a petition to the agenda of the next national BOD to put MCoR region back together either in the western or central area. We will see if either of them is willing to give it a shot. This is the very reason why I recommended you vote no on the new national regulations, you have in effect lost all representation from your region to the national BOD, being that they can only act on the best interest of the NMRA and not you.

The only person that has corresponded with me is the RAC director since as your President I am a member of the RAC.

As of this writing, I have asked the national VP the name of the database program they are trying to install at HQ with no reply. I guess it is a trade secret or something.

Also, the national treasurer has not given us the president's fund report which he promised the region within thirty days of each national BOD meeting.

If you are getting the impression that I am not impressed with the new NMRA you are correct. Under the old system, the trustee that you elected to the national BOT would attend all MCoR BOD and report to us what the national BOT was doing that affected us, and your MCoR Trustee had the opportunity to hear the concerns of the BOD and take them back to the BOT. That is now all gone under the new Regulations. I will be more than glad to pass on any concerns the MCoR BOD has to the RAC director but that is the only correspondence you now have, and I am only one voice of all the Presidents of the regions, so I do not have that much influence, but it is all you now have at your disposal.

At the upcoming MCoR BOD meeting in January 2006 in Kansas City, the BOD will put the final touches on the way you can receive the Caboose Kibitzer. For a yearly subscription fee of \$6.00, you will continue to get a hard copy, four a year. You can also subscribe to the Caboose Kibitzer (CK) on-line for about \$4.00 a year. You will need your four digit MCoR number, and a valid E-mail address in our database in order to access the CK on line in PDF format. The CK will



not be posted to the internet at www.mcor-nmra.org until the hard copies have been mailed to the membership. You can pay either subscription fee to HQ when you renew your membership in the NMRA or you can mail them to the MCoR membership dispatcher which is me. My address is listed on the front inside cover of each CK and is also on the MCoR website listed above. As of 1 January 2006, every NMRA member living within the MCoR boundaries will be a MCoR member and will receive at least two Hand Cars from me each year which will contain the information about your region and the actions of the MCoR BOD as well as the AP program and BOD minutes. It is my hope that the CK will emphasize modeling on all pages.

Remember the FRISCO!

Richard E. Napper, MMR MCoRR President





At times, three months seems "like forever" (remember Decembers when you were small and awaiting Christmas?) and other times it seems to be leaning all over you (as in "didn't I just finish the CK just a few days ago?") This is one of those times and I'm pushing to get CK out. The fact that I have a part time job with the U.S. Department of Labor which is a "light month-heavy month" type with Spring and Fall CK publications coming on a "heavy month", has nothing to do with it (it says somewhere in very fine print). Also, in April and October I have a 10 page newsletter to get out for the Kansas City Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. I think I'll call November my semi-annual "rest month"!

The only problem now is, there is nothing in the hopper for the Winter 06 issue! (Remember, editors always have to have something about which they can gripe!) OK now, you budding authors, it is time to get the old scribble stick out and sharpened. While I'm on the subject and you are reading all the good things to know about submission of things for CK (see page 3), please let me add a couple more If you are going to include photos of smaller objects, please try to get them separate from all the other objects in the area and in front of a contrasting color or texture background. If you can, please try to avoid flash or other light glares on the subject. I did say two, didn't I? How about checking the focus and being sure the camera didn't move while the shutter is open? Thanks.

Speaking of model trains – and I think that's the way we are supposed to be headed – your editor is one of those odd ducks that likes large scale trains. My Dad had two coal-fired steam locomotives at one time, first a 15" gauge from the House of David in Benton Harbor, MI and later a 12" gauge Ottaway, manufactured in Wichita, KS. After Dad died in 1966, Mother sold the Ottaway to a drive-in theater owner in Crocker, MO, so it apparently left my life. Later I wound up with two 7-1/2" gauge coal-fired steam locomotives, one being a 1-1/2" inch scale Little Engines Mogul (2-6-0) and the other a 2-1/2" scale 0-4-0T. (The plans it was built from were from Allen Models and was called *Chloe* – an 0-4-2T plantation engine but it was built without the trailing truck.) I sold them a few months ago after our Kansas City Live Steamers club dissolved.

Now I find that my oldest son has joined a model railroad club in Atcheson, KS, the Northeast Kansas Railroaders Inc. I knew that Dad's Ottaway had wound up there but I had never gotten that far afield – especially since I had the 7-1/2" gauge locos. It turns out that the NE KS RRers operate two sizes – HO Modular and 12" gauge! Furthermore, they have two steamers – both Ottaways – and two diseasels (pardon, I think some call them diesels), one a Miniature Train G-12 and one "scratch built".

The photo below shows the Ottaway that was my Dad's (the other is off getting boiler work done) and the Miniature Train Company locomotive. The photos were taken by son Brint on October 23rd. The other diesel was in their storage building/train shed at the time.

Is this the model railroading most people think of when "model railroads" are mentioned? NO! But once you get a chance to run trains in this size range, things are never quite the same again with the smaller ones.

Take care, Your Editor



PROTOTYPE AP MODELING

By Marty Vaughn MMR

ATTENTION ARMCHAIR MODELERS and those of you looking to possibly change scales. Have I got a deal for you! The Achievement Program has category called Prototype Modeler that is solution to your problem!

This certificate requires you to model a scene from a prototype photo. In other words you model exactly what you see in the real photo. While the scale you model the scene in does factor in, there is no size requirement to this category, you only have to built it large enough to fit everything in. All you need to do is:

Construct an animated or static model of a prototype scene containing at least six models of prototype equipment or structures.

I suspect that everyone who is a model railroader has a favorite prototype photo, so you probably already have one in mind. If you haven't found that photo that cries out to be built yet there are all kinds of resources available. Try your favorite historical society, the Kalmbach Library, or if you are interested in the Civil War or 19th century railroading try the Library of Congress or the Denver Public Library on the web. I personally have always had an interest in the American Civil War and my prototype photo of The Dictator, a 13 inch sea coast mortar on a flatcar at Petersburg, Virginia in 1864 was an easy choice.



The mortar Dictator or Petersburg Express at the siege of Petersburg

At the time that I built this I have to confess that a move had forced me into being an armchair modeler. Because my basement had "shrunk" as a result of the move I was also seriously thinking of switching from HO to N scale. I used this prototype scene to try some things in N scale to see if (1) I could do them in N scale and (2) to see if I liked doing them. In my case the answer to both questions was yes. My prototype model of this scene is in the next photo.



N scale prototype model of the scene

The view in any photo gives you a cone shaped view (in two dimensions think pie slice), but you don't have to build a triangular scene. In my case, I built a rectangular shaped base and added to the scene logical things that would have been seen beyond the view of the camera.

One of the things that I wanted to try was building a base in foam. There is no plaster or hard shell in this. The base is a combination of bead board and blue construction foam. One of the things that I learned was that blue/pink/gray construction foam works great! Bead board is not so great.

I also wanted to see if I could hand lay track in N scale. While there isn't a great deal of track in this model, it is all code 55 hand laid on a combination of wood and circuit board ties. I found that it wasn't nearly as difficult as I had thought it would be.

The other requirements for this certificate are: A. At least four different types of models must be represented:

- 1. Rolling stock,
- 2. Railroad structure,
- 3. Caboose or passenger car,
- 4. Motive power.

B. Any two of the six models must be <u>scratch</u> <u>built</u>: the remainder must be <u>super detailed</u>.

Continued on Page

Plans or photographs must be provided to verify the final prototypical appearance of each model and of the total scene. You must earn a Merit Award of at least 87.5 points with the above scene.

As you can see from the prototype photo and the model photo, the rolling stock and motive power are present. Also in the prototype photo, but difficult to see without a magnifying glass and partially blocked by the figure standing to the right of the tracks is a railroad trestle at the very far right of the railroad track. Three of the four required items are in the prototype photo. But what about the last item, caboose or passenger car? The certificate requirements provide some flexibility. In my case while there is no caboose or passenger car in the prototype, I could document that and add a Way Car (an early version of a caboose) that is directly behind the engine in the model photo.



Two elements, rolling stock and railroad structure (track), are in this photo.



No caboose or passenger car but a way car (early version of caboose) is present. The four required elements are together.



A third element, motive power, is in this photo.

If your prototype photo lacks a structure, you could add one as long as it is prototypically correct for the era.

It is surprising how much detail you can find in a photo when you really review it. The trestle I mentioned earlier is one example. In addition I discovered there are at least two tents in the woods to the left rear of the train. From this and another photo taken from a slightly different angle at the same time and location I found that there are at least two more loading ramps like the one from the bank to the flat car with the mortar. While my model of the scene is only 26" by 16", I started adding to it. I decided that there had to be a reason for the other loading platforms, so there must have been a supply dump of some sort, so I added that.





A road needed a bridge

And of course the railroad trestle in the prototype meant there was a creek or stream which meant that the road would also need some kind of a bridge and there should be some traffic on the bridge, so I added that too.

A supply dump, just to make everything work



The supply dump from a different perspective

Since all supply movement off the rails was by wagon there had to be a road for the wagons to move the supplies on to the forward units, so I added that.



The bridge needed traffic

In the end this small model ended up with over 100 figures, 40 horses and mules, 50 trees and 9 wagons. I didn't bother to count all the boxes, barrels and crates! And it was a lot of fun!

This was a great way to try another scale without having to make a big invest or to get out of that armchair and put some of those things you've been reading about into practice. And if you are modeling in the era of more "modern" photography with color and high-speed film you have it made. Never having been to Petersburg it wasn't until later that I learned the trees in the background should have all

Continued on Page 9

been pines and the soil is a distinct reddish color. You wouldn't have had that problem.

BUT WAIT! There's MORE! Remember that part at the beginning of this article that says:

"Any two of the six models must be <u>scratch built</u>: the remainder must be <u>super detailed</u>."

Well you can use those same models as part of your models for the Structures and Rolling Stock AP

MCoR AP Report

certificates! That's right, THIS AP certificate has a 2 for 1 offer! The models count twice! Is this a great certificate or what? You can find more information on this certificate on the AP page of the NMRA web site.

All joking aside, this was fun and got my modeling juices flowing again. Give it a try, I think that you will like it...and I will be looking forward to processing all those AP certificates!

There were 25 AP certificates and 6 Gold Spikes

been an MMR earned in the MCoR in nearly 18

months. You folks in the Divisions without any one listed above don't have to wait, I am ready to

process your certificates as soon as you send

feel free to call, write, or email me.

Remember, if you have any questions about the AP

since the last report in the Caboose Kibitzer. This is ok, but we can do a lot better! There hasn't

Fall 2005 CK

Congratulations to the following members for earning the following AP certificates!

Gold Spikes

John Shaw Scott Rennick Charles Fennen III Barbara Lundquist Claude K. Lundquist Jay B. Harlow

<u>Volunteer</u>

Gary Davidson Earl Mullins James Lorhan Kay Hemmingway Tom Katafiasz Philip Alyward Gary Hoffman Chris Dancy John O'Neill Raymond Immel Scott Rennick

<u>Cars</u>

Thomas Shook David Bartz

Civil Engineering

Paul Myers

Official

James Lorhan

Cover Photos

The date was February 9 in 2004 which saw Union Pacific's Challenger (4-6-6-4) #3985 hot and on display at Kansas City's Union Station. This "largest operating steam locomotive in the world today" (which it truly is) makes an impressive sight.

Scenery

James Schall

Scott Rennick

Gary Hankins

Earl Mullins

Electrical

Author

Thomas Shook

Gary Davidson

them to me!

Marty Vaughn MMR

Structures

Earl Mullins Paul Myers Scott Rennick

Lawrence A. Burkholder

Things get more interesting when Amtrak's *Southwest Chief* - being pulled by a Genesis locomotive - happens to come along (because it was running late) in time for the photographer to catch it also. If you look closely you will see the bi-level Chief car just in front of the steamer.

Photographs by Bob Jefferis

CB&Q CLASS GA-2 GONDOLA FROM A RED CABOOSE MODEL

By Gene R. Tacey



This is the assembled model that we use for our starting point. From here we will develop the desired model.

There are no exact models of a Burlington Class GA-2 and I wanted to add some variety to my Gondola fleet. The closest model I could find is a Red Caboose Model of a Southern Pacific prototype. It is very close to the dimensions of the prototype and looked like a relatively easy modification. Because I could find no plans I worked from prototype photos in the Burlington Bulletins of the Burlington Route Historical Society. I do not spend a lot of time trying to get an exact model unless I am building it specifically for a contest. I just wanted a car that closely resembled the GA-2's. The main differences on the model were the side sills, end brake gear details, trucks, ends, and having ladders rather than grab irons.

I started with an assembled model since I could not locate a kit and looking at the Red Caboose website it appears all their models are assembled. I carefully removed the ends, ladders and grab irons. Several of the grab irons broke during removal, which was ok as I knew I would have to make a new set of grabs anyway. I removed the brake mechanism and the door operating levers on the ends.

Once the model was disassembled I cut the upper lip off the ends and made new ends from sheet styrene. I glued the new ends and filled any small gaps with Squadron Green and sanded this smooth. Using Evergreen 2"x2" scale lumber size styrene I made the two vertical external braces for the ends.

The next step was to modify the bottom of the car sides. I cut off the door operating mechanism rod just outside the first rib on each end of the car. I

then cut the side sill plate on the ends at an angle to match the prototype photos. I scratchbuilt 4 operating levers for the door mechanism from old turnbuckle parts in my scrap box and 3/4" scale brass wire and glued them to the sides with a touch of ACC. I used Details West steps that I had in my scrap box to make the new stirrups. I then made new grabs for the car and installed them. I used brass wire and a brake platform step from my scrap box to make the brake gear for the end of the car. I made new poling pockets from styrene tubing glued to small pieces of styrene filed at an angle to get the poling pockets to face outward at a slight angle. The brake wheel also came from my scrap box.

I left the underfloor brake rigging alone as it had nice detail and these cars had this type added in later years. A "K" brake system would backdate it further.

I painted the model with Floquil Southern Pacific Lettering Gray for a primer and let this dry for several days. I then applied a finish coat of Scalecoat Boxcar Red. I used Champion Decal Company CB&Q general freight white decals and used the herald without the black background although the black background would also be correct. The car data was made from a mix of Champion and Micro-scale decals. I used MDC Arch Bar trucks and Reboxx wheel sets. When all the decal work was done I airbrushed on a very light coat of Floquil grime to give it a little weathering on the lower sides, trucks and ends. I then finished the model with a coat of Floquil clear flat.

The result - while it is not an exact model of the CB&Q Gon, it is very close and will convince all but the "foamers" or "rivet counters" that is is a model of the Class GA-2 Gondola.



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IMPROVE YOUR CHOPPER By Richard E. Napper, MMR

Over the years I have purchased all three types of the NorthWest Short Line Chopper. I own a type I, a type II, and a type III. Although they improved the Chopper by going to Type II, I still think you can improve all three models to make them very reliable. As most of you know, it did not take very long to wear out the base on the Type I, which is why they decided to make the Type II. One project and the Type I base was worn out completely. But there is an easy way to improve the Type I & III to make them last forever, I would like to acknowledge that I got the idea from a NMRA slide show clinic many, many years ago, but I do not remember the clinicians name. Shop around in your local telephone book and find someone that sells tool steel blanks. Get two from them for your Type I and another two for your Type III if you have one. I would recommend getting 3/8" blanks but 1/4" will also work for you. They should not cost very much, or you can pick some up from work like I did years ago.



Now we will fix the Type I & III. Glue two very small pieces of .010" styrene between the ends of the two tool blanks. The two pieces should be in parallel with a small slot .010" between the two tool steel blanks. This slot is where the razor blade will drop into in the new base of your Chopper. Place your two pieces of tool steel on the Chopper base and put your razor blade down into the slot. Now trace around the tool steel blanks on the Chop-per base. Using any method you want, cut out the base until your tool steel blanks will fit in the cut-out from below. Be sure and put them in the base so the razor blade will fully seat into the slot be-tween the two blanks. The two tool steel blanks will make a base structure that will not wear out in 100 years. The other addition to the Type I & III is a General HO Scale Stainless steel ruler that I put on the top of the Chopper so I could make mea-surements directly on the Chopper. If you are in another scale, just use the appropriate scale ruler.



Chopper Type I – Overall view



Chopper Type I – Note the tool steel blanks inset into the top on either side of the space for the blade.



Chopper Type III – Showing the tool steel blanks inset in the top



Chopper Type III – An overall view – Note the square used to keep work straight in the Chopper.

Continued on Page 12

The Chopper II is an improvement in one respect and not in another. The replacement pad takes care of the base problem, but the Chopper blade holder is so big you cannot see very well to make an accurate measurement. The backstop is so thick that adding a scale ruler to the base will not work very well. I solution came in the form of an article in the Narrow Gauge and Shortline Gazette March/April 2004 issue by author Dave Rygmyr entitled upgrade your North West Short Line Chopper II. I used his idea but in my opinion I improved upon it somewhat. He used a wood base, I used metal, i.e., aluminum rack panel but you can use anything you want. Cut the rubber feet off of the Chopper II base. Using a drill press, drill four #50 holes in the very corners of the Chopper Base, set the Chopper II on the metal base, and drill the #50 holes in the base through the holes you already drilled in the Chopper base. Enlarge the holes in the metal base with a #44 drill and countersink the holes. Use a 2-56 Tap to tap the Chopper II base; screw it to the metal plate using 2-56 brass flat head screws. Use .064" thick Brass strips, drill a hole through two short pieces and stack them up and put them on the 2-56 screws,



Chopper II – Overall view with calipers in place

so you raise each corner of the Chopper II up by two .064" thick pieces. This is very important to get the Chopper II base raised up so the Caliper on 1" standoffs will be the correct height. I used a General HO scale plastic Caliper, but they will be hard to find because General does not make them any longer. You can use a standard metal .001" Caliper, but you will have to convert the measurement to your scale if you do not use the General HO Caliper. Cut the inside measurement tip off of the Caliper, the one that moves with the dial. Drill four holes in the Caliper for either 4-40 or 6-32 Screws as seen in my photo. I used feed trough standoffs to mount my caliper to the metal base plate. I tapped the base, and screwed the screws into the base plate. Close the calipers so the dial is at zero, put a piece of .064" x 1 /2 brass strip on the Chopper II, and butt it up against the closed razor blade. Cut the brass strip to length. Clamp the strip to the Caliper moveable jaw, drill and tap two holes for 2-56 screws, and screw the strip to the calipers.

Your Chopper II modification is finished.



Chopper II – With the blade down



Chopper II – Showing the spacer on the corner of the base

Remember the FRISCO!



Chopper II – With the blade up

I HAVE MADE THE PLUNGE INTO DCC By Richard E. Napper, MMR

For vacation this year I helped my friend, Scott Rennick set up his railroad for DCC operation. I have decided to go DCC on my next layout which I will be starting shortly in my new basement. It will be a island layout in the shape of a "J". The bottom of the J will be about 25 feet square with the leg about 30 feet long and five feet wide. I will have the layout at a height of 54 inches with a hidden yard below the long leg at 48 inches.

My cost for DCC will be in the thousands of dollars over many years because I have over 400 locomotives to equip with decoders, and I want most of them to have sound as well. I also like LED headlights, mars lights, etc. on my locomotives. With DCC, you have a constant 15 VAC on your tracks at all times, so you can light cabooses, passenger cars, etc. as well as run your locomotives. I have looked into various systems and I have decided to go with North Coast Engineers Procab system. The system for the layout will probably be built with five power blocks, all of which will be 5 amp capacity and I plan on using Radio Control Procabs. Working with Scott Renncik, equipping his locomotives with decoders, I have obtained a starter system for use at my work bench. Along with the control, I have built in a four-foot test track on the front of my bench. I can test the decoder, add it to the locomotive, test and program the engine all at my bench, so my layout will not need a program track.

I highly recommend you go to Loy's Toys website and buy his DCC cyclopedia on CD. It is about \$50.00 but gives you over 500 pages on just about every DCC subject there is in the world. He sells Digitrax, but I like NCE because it is much easier to program the CV's in the decoders. Also visit Soundtraxx, LokSound, and NCE websites. Download the manuals from all of them because the will give you valuable information about there systems and DCC in general.

I highly recommend you buy two items, the first is a decoder tester. Mine came from Loy's Toys and cost about \$25.00. Second get a resistor selection box; mine also came from Loy's Toys for about \$10.00. You see it is necessary to test each decoder BEFORE you install it in a locomotive. That way you know when you are done with the installation if your problem is a bad decoder or a bad installation. I purchased a Z scale decoder because it was the only one that would fit in an Atlas S2 switcher. Along with it came the very handy installation guide from Loy's Toys. I also bought the NCE decoder from Loy's Toys. He is not the only one in town, but he has given me very good service.

The sound decoders from Soundtraxx that I have used so far came from Caboose Hobbies in Denver, CO. But you can get them directly from Soundtraxx which is located in Durango, CO. NRC is also making generic sound decoders for about half the cost of the Soundtraxx and LokSound units. However, the Soundtraxx and LokSound units are for specific steam and diesel sounds for example, you can get the Alco 244 diesel engine sound, or a E-8 EMD diesel sound, etc.

All decoders, whether they have sound or not, come from the factory set to address 3. You connect the decoder tester up to the output of the NCE controller, select address "3" and test the decoder to see if it runs the motor and operates the headlights before you install the decoder. Connect the Blue wire to the long lead of your LED, connect the resistor selection box to the other LED lead, and then to the White wire of the decoder. Make sure the resistor selection box is set on 1000 ohms, and turn the forward headlight on. If you like the light output from the LED you are done. If it is not bright enough decrease the resister value on the box until you like the brightness. You can also use the resistor selector box for light bulbs if you prefer them instead of LEDs. The value of the resistor on the box is the value you need to install in series with the bulb/ LED and the White wire. Be sure the resistor wattage rating is at least 1/4 watt - 1/2 watt is better. Do not put your resistor in the Blue wire lead, always put it in the White, Yellow, or Green return wire for the light function you are using. You will need a resistor for each light function!

You are now ready to install the decoder in your locomotive. You do not have to replace Athearn motors with can motors unless you just want to do so as they DO NOT draw so much current that you will burn up the decoder. I consider replacement a waste of my modeling dollars. You must be sure that any motor is fully isolated from the locomotive frame! Take your VOM and set it for very low resistance; if it has an audio tone position, even better. Connect one lead to the locomotive frame, and touch the other one to both motor connections. If you get a tone or a zero resistance reading, that motor lead is connected to the frame of the locomotive and MUST be isolated from the frame! As an example, the Atlas S2 had the bottom motor brush connection directly connected to the motor can and that was connected to the locomotive frame! After a lot of milling using my Dremel Tool, some electrical tape, replacing a metal screw with a nylon screw, I had the motor isolated from the frame. I was then able to install the decoder on the

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locomotive. By the way, before you start the installation, connect your regulated power supply to the motor leads and determine which one is positive when the locomotive moves forward. The Orange lead from the decoder must go to the positive motor lead when the locomotive moves forward. The Gray wire from the decoder goes to the negative motor lead. The Red wire from the decoder connects to the engineer's side of the locomotive truck pickups and the Black wire from the decoder goes to the fireman's side pickup. If connect this way, the locomotive will move forward when you tell it to move forward.

The Blue wire is the Positive wire for all lighting functions, etc. The White wire is the forward, front headlight return wire and is the one which must have a resistor in it. The Yellow wire is the rear headlight return wire. The Green wire is for another lighting effect such as Mars lights, beacon, etc. The papers that come with your decoder will tell you what wires are used for what function. You can also get decoders with an NMRA eight pin plug on them for those locomotives which come with the NMRA socket already installed on them.

Installing a decoder is not that hard but it can take a little time. The best thing to do is READ the instructions that came with your decoder. You can get sound units that have just the sound functions for older units that already have a decoder in them, but the better way to go is buy a SoundTraxx, or LokSound decoder that has both motor/light functions as well as the sound function on the same decoder.

Now hooking up your layout for DCC is not that hard to do. For HO, you use a power transformer of about 15 VAC and 5 Amp capacity for each power block you want to power. The square wave pulse power from your controller rides on the AC power that is on the tracks at all times. The first thing the decoder does is use a full wave bridge rectifier and filter to change the AC track voltage into DC voltage the decoder can use to power itself and the motor, etc. in your locomotive. Your only problem is the reversing loops on your railroad. Don't forget the turntable, wyes, and other forms of reversing loops. The first thing is the reversing section must be long enough so all of the locomotives you will use in a consist can only be crossing one gap at a time! Both rails must be insulated at both ends of the reversing loop. After that, I suggest you install one of the auto-reversing loop controllers you can by and use one on each reversing loop that you have on the layout. Yes it makes a difference even with AC on the rails!

If you are installing a sound decoder you should put the speaker inside a enclosure that totally encloses the back of the speaker. If you do this, your sound will be louder for any given speaker size because the front sound is not cancelled by the back speaker sound, thus the reason for the enclosure. Decoder prices are still pretty expensive, especially the sound decoders, but prices are coming down but do not expect to get into DCC for much less than a thousand dollars for the start up cost for the average layout. But remember there is always next year to get started. As the demand goes up the prices will keep falling and the decoders will become more functional for less cost.



NCE Decoder



Decoder Wiring Sheet

Continued on Page 16



Decoder Wiring Sheet



DDC Control Station



1" Speaker



Procab Controller



Loy's Toys Decoder Tester

Remember the FRISCO!

Continued on Page 17



Regulated Power Supply



Resistor Selector Box



Heat Shrink Tubing



Sound Decoder



Fall 2005

INSTALLING ATLAS UNDER-TABLE SWITCH MACHINES

By John O'Neill

This article covers the process I use to install the Atlas Model #65 HO switch machines used for under-table installation that are designed for Atlas Turnouts. I have used Atlas turnouts on all the layout construction I have done over the last 30 years. While there are other brands of turnouts out there, the Atlas ones have done the job for me in my applications. I first became interested in hiding switch machines under the benchwork about 25 years ago. I didn't want to get into complicated linkages, so I simply mounted switch machines designed for above-table use in a vertical orientation under the table mounted on a block of wood. They worked ok, but did take extra work to get them mounted and adjusted properly. I remember one of the worst parts was getting the little screws mounting the switch machine to the wood installed.

When the Atlas switch machines for under-table switch machines became available, I started using them. They took less structure to mount them and provided good performance when installed and adjusted properly. For me, the hardest part was getting them fastened to the table, and then adjusting them if needed so they were centered for the turnout stroke. The little screws were the hard part of this process. To deal with this problem, I developed the following process.

The first steps are following the instructions in marking and drilling the hole for the switch machine pointer to operate in. I use a 1/2 inch drill bit and wiggle it around a little after drilling the hole to enlarge it a little in the direction the turnout slides. Then I install the switch, including connecting to adjoining rail sections, using track nails. I make sure the throw bar slides freely before moving on to installing the switch machine. If it hangs up, sometimes the cork roadbed under the throw bar can be notched out a little to enable the throw bar to move freely. I have also installed them on wood without cork roadbed z- usually I need to cut a small groove in the wood to allow the throw bar to move smoothly. Sometimes the nails holding the switch down are too tight and need to be loosened.

The next step is to prepare the switch machine for installation. I glue the adapter plate to the switch machine with the holes aligned. Next I drill the mounting holes in the switch machine larger, using a 5/16 drill bit. I then locate the switch machine under the table by inserting the switch pointer into the throw bar hole and apply a strip of masking tape over the switch machine to hold it in place after centering it over the switch hole. The tape should not cover the mounting holes in the switch machine. I then try to move the slide button on the switch machine to see if it moves the throw bar evenly from side to side. If it is too far off, I reposition the



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switch machine and masking tape until it appears to be close to being centered in the stroke. We can take care of final adjustments later.

Next I fasten the switch machine using $#6 \times \frac{1}{2}$ "sheet metal screws with slot hex washer heads. The washer head gives more support to the switch machine and the hex head allows me to use a screwdriver type nut driver to install the screw. I install the screw furthest from the pointer, trying to put the screw in the middle of the drilled hole in the switch machine. I don't drill a pilot hole first because the nut driver holds the screw securely and lets you push hard enough to start the self-tapping screw in the wood. I tighten the screw snugly, remove the masking tape, and then check the movement of the switch. If it is not quite centered, you can rotate the switch machine a little until it is centered. Then you can install the last screw, trying to center it in the hole in the switch machine. By centering the screws in the holes, you give yourself the ability to make some later adjustments if needed. Tighten the screws so the switch machine cannot move, but be careful not to over tighten – sometimes if you do, the switch machine won't move smoothly. If you need to make later adjustments – just loosen the screws a little, move the switch machine until the throw bar strokes to both sides correctly, and retighten the screws. The final step is to trim the pointer shorter so it doesn't hit your rolling stock.

The key elements to my process are the drilling of the oversize holes in the switch machine mount, and using the sheet metal screws with a nut driver instead of the screws provided with the switch machine. This changed a job I used to hate to one that is very easy to do. It also made the switch machines easier to adjust when I needed to.

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MCoR NMRA Clear Creek & Quicksilver "The Mountain Goat" Allen Pollock P.O. Box 243 General Manager Jefferson City, MO 65102	SYCAMORE VALLEY LINES 544 E. SPRUCE OLATHE, KANSAS 66061-3357 (913) 782-8553 GEORGE & MARY FILKINS	Missouri Pacific Lines	



Region Club Roster

This roster was created for the benefit of members of the Mid-Continent Region. It identifies those clubs that are presently active in MCoR. Any group that wishes to be included in the listing should send the editor the clubs name, contact address and scale interest.		<i>Northwest Kansas Model RR Club</i> 603 S. Smokyhill Oakley, KS 67748-2321
Arkansas Valley Model RR Club	<i>KC O-Scale Modulars</i>	Ozark Model RR Assoc.
(HO,HOn3,O 2rail, On3, S, Sn3, and Large scale)	(O)	(all)
7 Chaparral Lane	10334 Ash	424 W. Commercial
Little Rock, AR 72212-3619	Overland Park, KS 66207	Springfield, MO 65803
Big Bend Railroad Club	<i>Kansas City S Scalers</i>	Parsons Model RR Engineers
(O)	(S,Sn3)	(HO)
8833 Big Bend Boulevard	11519 N. Wayne Ave.	Cherryvale Depot
Webster Groves, MO 63119	Kansas City, MO 64155-2914	Cherryvale, KS 67335
<i>Capital City Model RR's</i> (HO) P.O. Box 243 Jefferson City, MO 65102	<i>Manhattan Area Rail Joiners</i> 1223 Pierre Street Manhattan, KS 66502-4331	Quincy Society of Model Engineers(HO, HOn3)2139 E. HarrisonQuincy, IL 62301Ursa, IL 62376rrbob9@adams.net
Claremore & Southern (HO) 3049 Clover Creek Drive Claremore, OK 74017	Mississippi Valley N Scalers (N) PO Box 460161 St. Louis, MO 63146 http://mvns.railfan.net mvns@railfan.net	<i>Society of Model Engineers</i> (HO,N) 5715 W. 81 st Street Prairie Village, KS 66208
<i>Columbia Model RR's</i>	<i>Missouri Northern RR Society Inc.</i>	<i>Southern Illinois Train Club</i>
(HO)	(HO)	(HO,N,G)
410 Camelot Drive	P.O. Box 12591	P.O. Box 1633
Collinsville, IL 62234	North Kansas City, MO 64116	Marion, IL 62959-7833
<i>E. Jackson City Mainliners</i> (HO) 807A Main Street Blue Springs, MO 6415	<i>Modular HO Narrow Gauge Society</i> 914 Summer Leaf Ct. St. Peters, MO 63376	<i>SW Independent Modular RR's</i> (HO) 3107 W. Capitol Little Rock, AR 72209
<i>Gold Creek RR Co.</i>	<i>Mo-Kan Railjoiners Inc.</i>	<i>The Sugar Creek Model Railroad & Historical Society, Inc.</i>
(1/2")	(all)	(All N Modules for shows)
8324 Hall	14906 W 150 th Street	P.O. Box 5452
Lenexa, KS 66219	Olathe, KS 66062	Bella Vista, AR 72714
Kansas Central MRRC	Nishna Valley MR Society	<i>Tri-City Model R.R. Association</i>
(HO),	(HO)	(HO,N)
530 E. 3 rd Street	1303 8 th Street	607 South Shore Drive
Hutchinson, KS 67501	Harlan, IA 51537 Northeast	Hastings, NE 68901
Kansas Area N-Trak	Northeast Kansas Garden Railway	<i>Wichita Model Railroad Club</i>
(N)	Society (NEKAN-GRS)	(HO, HOn3)
2046 S. Elizabeth #1306	1308 SW Caldon	P.O. Box 48082
Wichita, KS 67213	Topeka, KS 66611-2412	Wichita, KS 67201

Advertising Rates

MCoR invites you to consider the Caboose Kibitzer for your advertising. This magazine serves over 800 National Model Railroad Association members in our seven-state area of Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Arkansas and Oklahoma.

Our Commercial advertising rates are as follows:			
Ad Size	Cost per year (4 issu	es)	
9 ½″ x 7 ¼″	Full Page	\$120.00	
4 ¾" x 7 ¼"	Half page	70.00	
4 ¾ x 3 ½"	Quarter Page	38.00	
2 ½' x 3 ½"	Eighth Page	22.00	
2" x 3 1⁄2"	Business Card	15.00	
Dealer Directory:			
1 3/8" x 2 3/8"	Business Card	10.00	
Pike Registry Ads:			
1 3/8" x 2 3/8"	Business Card	5.00	

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The editorial staff hopes that our readers will make an effort to patronize establishments that advertise in the Caboose Kibitzer. It is in the best interest of all parties concerned, since the quality and availability of this publication is directly related to: 1) Regional interest and participation in NMRA and MCoR, and 2) the level of commercial support which it receives in the form of advertisements.

Single issue Commercial ad rate is 35% of the yearly rate. Want ads are free to current MCoR members. They are subject to available space and acceptance at the discretion of the editor, and are limited to 25 words or less.

Ads need not be identical throughout the year. Prices listed above are for **camera-ready copy**. Design and 'typesetting' services are available on request at extra cost. **All inquiries and payments should be sent to the Advertising Manager:** *Louis Seibel, 1069 N. Logan, Olathe Kansas 66061.* Make checks payable to the <u>Mid-Continent</u> <u>Region.</u>

NMRA and Mid-O Membership Applicatio	Continent Regi n and/or Renewa	ON al Form
Name	Phone	
Street Address		
City	State	Zip
NMRA Member Number	MCoR Member	r Number
Primary E-mail Address	Preferred	Phone ()
\$ is enclosed for <i>combined</i> NMRA, Mid-Cor as of September 1, 2005, <i>all</i> members of NMRA (th the MCoR and their nearest Division. This is for a N Regular Member one year - \$45.00 [] two years \$6 Youth (must be a full time student) \$ 30.00 [] Family Member (see note below) \$9.00 [] Affiliate Member (see note below) \$23.00 [] Sustaining Member one year \$90.00 []; two years Membership includes subscriptions to <i>Scale Rails</i> (th newsletter) <i>except as noted</i> . They do <i>not</i> include modeling magazine – to be available either in hard NMRA and MCoR Life Memberships are no longer av Please make out you remittance to: National Model Send your Application or renewal to: NMRA; 4121 C Notes: Affiliate Members and Family Members do <i>not</i> recei A Family Member is a spouse or minor child of a me	ntinent (MCoR) and le national organiza lew [] Renewal [90.00 [] \$180.00 [] he NMRA Bulletin) a subscriptions to <i>C</i> copy or electronica ailable. Railroad Associatio Cromwell Road; Cha ve any publications	d Division dues. Please note that ation) are also members of both] membership. and <i>The Handcar</i> (MCoR Region <i>Baboose Kibitzer</i> (now the MCoR ally) or your Division newsletter. on. attanooga, Tennessee 37421.
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Mid-Continent Region NMRA CONVENTION AND TRAIN SHOW

JUNE 1ST - 4TH, 200C Mid-America Center, Council Bluffs, Iowa SEE PAGE 11 FOR DETAILS

RES

www.mcor-nmra.org