



# CABOOSE KIBITZER

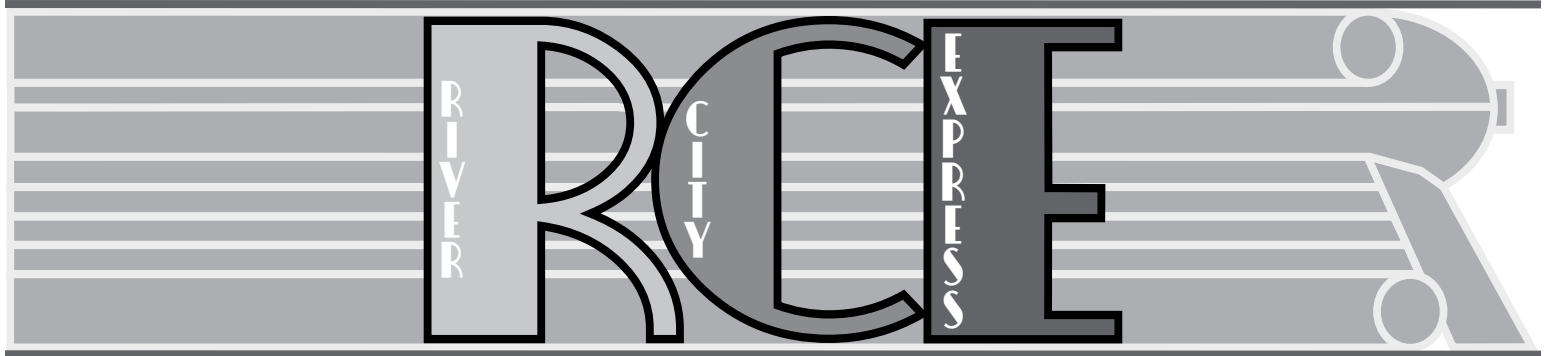
SPRING 2006

VOLUME 56, ISSUE 2

CONVENTION PREVIEW ISSUE  
100 OFTEN-OVERLOOKED DETAILS  
100% CLUB IDEAS  
ROUND ROBIN RAILROADING  
DCC DETECTOR CIRCUIT USING CURRENT SENSING

Mid-Continent Region NMRA

# CONVENTION AND TRAIN SHOW



JUNE 1<sup>ST</sup> - 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2006

Mid-America Center, Council Bluffs, Iowa

(Northeast of the junction of I-80 and I-29)

## PUBLIC TRAIN SHOW INFORMATION

### Hours

9am - 5pm Saturday, June 3rd

10am - 3pm Sunday, June 4th

### Admission

\$7 per person, children 12 and under free

(look for \$1 off coupons online and in our newspaper ads)

### Show Highlights

Vendors, Operating Layouts, Clinics, Switching Contest, Door Prizes, Operation Lifesaver

Vendors and Exhibitors: contact Al or Terry Nordmeier at (402) 596-9348 or 2006show@whdnmra.org.

## CONVENTION INFORMATION

See the Convention Preview article in this issue

or contact Charles Fennen at 2006convention@whdnmra.org or (402) 680-8811.

### Convention Highlights

Layout Tours, Prototype Tours, Clinics, Model Contests, Silent Auction, Hospitality Suite, Banquet, raffle

PLUS access to the Train Show

Presented by the Western Heritage Division, National Model Railroad Association PO Box 241382 Omaha, Nebraska 68124-5382



## CABOOSE KIBITZER

Official publication  
of the Mid-Continent Region  
of the National Model Railroad  
Association

[www.mcor-nmra.org](http://www.mcor-nmra.org)

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**Submissions:** The Caboose Kibitzer welcomes articles, photographs and other model railroad or railroad-related contributions. Contact the editor for more information.

**Advertising:** All advertising inquiries should be directed to the Advertising Manager. MCoR reserves the right to refuse or drop advertising for any reason. Advertising in the Caboose Kibitzer in no way constitutes an endorsement by MCoR or the NMRA.

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# WAYBILL

SPRING 2006  
VOLUME 56, NUMBER 2

## FEATURES

100 OFTEN-OVERLOOKED DETAILS .....	8
by Scott G. Perry	
100% CLUB IDEAS. ....	10
by Barbara Lundquist	
THE RIVER CITY EXPRESS .....	11
by Wendy Harlow	
SUBMISSIONS .....	15
by Wendy Harlow	
THE ROUND ROBIN APPROACH TO MODEL RAILROADING .....	16
by Tony Bowen	
DCC DETECTOR CIRCUIT USING CURRENT SENSING .....	18
by Richard E. Napper, MMR	

## DEPARTMENTS

Callboard □	4
The Head End .....	5
Conductor's Call .....	5
The Switching List .....	6
Pike Registry .....	20
Dealer Directory .....	21
Region Club Roster .....	22
Advertising Rates .....	22
NMRA Membership Application .....	23
Prototypes .....	Back Cover





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# THE HEAD END

BY RICHARD NAPPER, MMR  
MCoR PRESIDENT

I would like to welcome everyone to the new Caboose Kibitzer. The new editor, Wendy Harlow, is doing a great job with the new look for the CK. I have asked Wendy to emphasize the modeling side of the Mid-Continent Region in the new CK. There will still be the Call Board of MCoR within the Caboose Kibitzer, but the rest of this publication will have information about the up coming MCoR convention in Council Bluffs, 1-4 June 2006, meeting dates for the various divisions in MCoR, and lots of modeling articles. For those of you that have access to the internet I highly recommend you visit our web site at <http://www.mcor-nmra.org>. It is filled with news about the divisions, has Gary Hemmingway's switching list which shows the shows and swap meets within the MCoR region. There is a ask the experts section, where you

can ask the MCoR MMR's anything about your modeling, and I think Wendy plans to have such a feature within the pages of the CK. Would you like to see articles specific to narrow gauge, ON30, HO, N, O, S, or G? Become the editor for that section of the CK, but at the very least write an article on your favorite modeling subject, prototype, or rail fanning, they are all welcome. This is your publication; it will be only as good as you want to make it!

I though you are due an explanation of why the winter 2006 CK was so late getting to you. The past editor got the CK to our printer, Al Latwaitis on time, and then things started going very wrong. Al had sold his printing business about a year ago but had arranged with the new owner so he could come in and print the CK for us. When Al went to do just that he found the print shop closed and the bank was foreclosing on the business. Al did not tell me he was having problems until I called him. Al got the CK printed with another printer and then mailed it out to you very, very late.

Since Al has lost his ability to print the CK, the new editor, Wendy Harlow has contracted with a new printer in her home town of Omaha, NE, and everything should return to normal.

Remember the FRISCO!



**M**odel Railroading runs in my family. My father has been "playing with trains" as long as I can remember - many nights I fell asleep to the whine of a Dremel. I started going to train shows at about eight years old, where I would help him set up his module and admire the other club members' work. I would acquire odd cars here and there, things that struck me - a Hershey's box car, a Grandmother's milk car, and a searchlight caboose-type contraption that actually lit up. My first full train set was a Bachmann DeWitt Clinton with three tiny cars.

My primary modeling interest is creating little worlds that trains happen to run through. I collect very early steam models and odd historic locomotives in HO and Z scales. I especially love the Freedom Train and the SP Daylights.

My husband collects European train models in various scales. My three children have been involved with the Western Heritage Division literally since they were born (my oldest daughter was three months old when she went to her first train show!). My father, Claude Lundquist, is the HO Module Chairman for the Division, and my mom, Barbara Lundquist, is the 100% NMRA Club Chairperson for the Region as well as

the AP chairman for the Division.

I've managed the Western Heritage Division's website for the last three years, and have also served as historian and archivist. I'm designing various items for the 2006 MCoR Convention, including the goodies given to the registrants and the Timetable. Other hobbies I enjoy are painting, beading, sewing and photography.

My hope is that I can do the Region justice in its publication, and produce the best magazine I possibly can.

Thank you for the votes of confidence, Richard and Bob. Thank you to everyone for offering their support.

## CONDUCTOR'S CALL

BY WENDY HARLOW  
EDITOR

# THE SWITCHING LIST

BY GARY HEMMINGWAY

The Switching List contains all known Mid-Continent Region, NMRA, train shows and Division meetings. It also lists all known club shows and swap meets in the Mid-Continent Region (IA, IL, MO, AR, NE, KS, OK).

## DIVISION MEETINGS

**KANSAS CENTRAL DIVISION** meets the 1st Saturday of February, May, August, and November at various locations around the division area. BOD meetings are usually at noon and general meetings are at 1 p.m.

May 6: Emporia Public Library, Info: Gary Hoffman, 1013 Union St., Emporia, KS 66801 620-342-6908, hoffmang@emporia.edu.

Aug 5: Tom Katafiasz, 2105 Northwood, Salina, KS 67401 785-827-8167 tommarykat@aol.com.

Nov 4: Robert Stewart, 249 Redbud Estates #249, Manhattan, KS 66502.

**GATEWAY DIVISION (ST. LOUIS, MO)** meets 3rd Monday each month, 7:00 P.M. Odd numbered months: Trinity Lutheran Church, 14088 Clayton Road at Woods Mill Rd (Hwy 141), Ballwin, MO; Even numbered months: VFW Hall, O'Fallon, IL <http://www.gatewaynrmra.org/division.htm>

**TURKEY CREEK DIVISION (KANSAS CITY, MO & KS)** monthly meetings 4th Tuesday, 7:00 P.M. Johnson County Courthouse, NE Branch, 6000 Lamar, Shawnee Mission, KS (DMV Building on SW corner of Lamar and Mastin)

**WESTERN HERITAGE DIVISION (OMAHA, NE / COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA)** Our meeting location is the Sump Library, 84th and Second Streets, Papillion, NE. on the 2nd Saturday of each month from Noon to 3:00 pm. The meetings consist of a business meeting followed by a clinic, slide show, and sometimes a layout tour. During the months of June and December we do not meet at the library, they are reserved for the annual picnic (June meeting) and the annual holiday dinner (December meeting).

**EASTERN IOWA DIVISION** - to be announced.

**KATE SHELLEY DIVISION (AMES/DES**

**MOINES, IA)** meets monthly on the fourth Thursday of each month 7:00 p.m. at the St. Paul Lutheran Church, 15th & Wilson, Ames, IA.

**INDIAN NATIONS DIVISION** meets at the New Hardesty Library at 8316 E. 93rd. St. (Just east of Memorial) in Tulsa, OK. The time is from 9am to noon. The dates of the remaining meetings are, March 18th, May 20th, September 16th, and November 18th. Each meeting we have various presentations from How to's, to slide shows. After the meetings we have a layout tour on one of the members layouts. Contact Dave Salamon at [drs\\_rr@yahoo.com](mailto:drs_rr@yahoo.com) for further information.

**CLAREMORE & SOUTHERN RR OPERATING SESSION**, 2nd Friday each month starting at 7:00PM and finishing by 10:30PM. 9372 E. Clover Creek Drive, Claremore, OK 74017-1487, Info: George F Maulsby, 918-341-9446 or [www.csrailroad.com](http://www.csrailroad.com). Normal operating session has 34 trains running and extras as needed.. Please send a confirming RSVP if you are planning to join us.

## TRAIN SHOWS & MEETS

**MAY 7, 2006:** Mid- America Train & Toy Show (formerly "Mid-America Train Meet"), BTC Exhibit Hall, I-435 and Front Street, Kansas City MO, 9am - 2pm, Adm: \$5 adults, 12 & under, free, 7am early bird adm, \$10 ea. Trains, models, RR collectibles, toys, train movies, door prizes, operating layouts. Free parking. Info: Steve & Sherri Stich, P.O. Box 369, Leavenworth, KS 66048 or 913-651-5864. Directions: From I-435, exit 57 west (Front St) to Universal Ave. and turn right at stoplight. Or, from I-35, exit Front St. and continue east to Universal Ave., then turn left at stoplight.

**MAY 27 - 28, 2006:** Parsons Katy Days 2006, sponsored by the Cherry Valley Model Railroad Club. Labette Community College Multipurpose Bldg., Parsons, KS. Sat. 8am - 4pm, Sun. 11am - 3pm. Free admission, dealer tables \$15. For more information, please visit [www.cvmrc.com](http://www.cvmrc.com) or [www.katydays.com](http://www.katydays.com). For registration card please email [rwintle@terraworld.net](mailto:rwintle@terraworld.net).



**JUNE 1 - 4, 2006:** Mid-Continent Region's Annual Regional Convention and Train Show Mid-America Center, One Arena Way, Council Bluffs, Iowa. Sponsored by the Western Heritage Division, MCoR. Convention information and schedules available at [whdnmra.org/convention2006/](http://whdnmra.org/convention2006/). Vendor information is available at [whdnmra.org/convention2006/vendors.htm](http://whdnmra.org/convention2006/vendors.htm). This will be the first MCoR Regional Convention after NMRA moves to a single membership for all members. Check the websites and make your plans now to attend this great convention!

**JULY 2 - 9, 2006:** Independence Junction NMRA National Convention, Philadelphia, PA. Information is found at <http://www.ij2006.org/index.html>.

**JULY 22, 2006:** 15th Annual La Crosse Great Tri-state Rail Fair, La Crosse Center, 300 Harborview Plaza, La Crosse, WI. Sponsor: The 4000 Foundation Limited, 9am - 3pm, Adm: \$3.00, under 12 free w/ pd adult. Proceeds support the La Crosse Short Line Railroad Display. Info & reservations: The 4000 Foundation Limited, PO Box 3411, La Crosse, WI 54602-3411. Mark Hamre (608) 582-4761, Phil Lamke (608) 784-0036, [pdlamke@juno.com](mailto:pdlamke@juno.com) or [www.lacrosseshortlinerr.org](http://www.lacrosseshortlinerr.org).

**AUGUST 12, 2006** - Turkey Creek Meet, Lenexa Community Center. Contact Paul Myers at 816 734 7319 or [paulwmeyers@kc.rr.com](mailto:paulwmeyers@kc.rr.com).

**AUGUST 12 - 13, 2006** - Beatrice Area Railroad Enthusiasts, Gage County 4-H Building, Gage County Fairgrounds in Beatrice, NE, setup time on Friday AUG 11th, Adm: \$5.00 for Adults and children under 12 are free. Information John M. King, [wtf048@yahoo.com](mailto:wtf048@yahoo.com) and [www.trainweb.org/barerr](http://www.trainweb.org/barerr).



**AUGUST 13, 2006:** Mid-America Train & Toy Show (formerly "Mid-America Train Meet"), BTC Exhibit Hall, I-435 and Front Street, Kansas City MO, 9am - 2pm, Adm: \$5 adults, 12 & under, free, 7am early bird adm, \$10 ea. Trains, models, RR collectibles, toys, train movies, door prizes, operating layouts. Free parking. Info: Steve & Sherri Stich, P.O. Box 369, Leavenworth, KS 66048 or 913-651-5864. Directions: From I-435, exit 57 west (Front St) to Universal Ave. and turn right at stoplight. Or, from I-35, exit Front St. and continue east to Universal Ave., then turn left at stoplight.

**SEPTEMBER 9, 2006:** Boeing Employees' Railroad Club-st. Louis Railroad Swap Meet. Greensfelder Recreation Complex at Queeny Park, 550 Wiedman Rd., St. Louis, MO. 10am - 3pm. Adm: \$3, under 12 free w/pd adult, Tables \$15. Seller setup 8 am - 10 am. Info: Wayne Schimmel, 733 Hwy Y, Winfield, MO 63389-2206 wwhtehrse@aol.com or 636-668-6313 after 6 pm.

**OCTOBER 14 - 15, 2006:** Mississippi Valley N Scales 16th annual Greater St. Louis Metro Area Train Show. Kirkwood Community Center, 111 South Geyer Road, Kirkwood, MO. Sat 10am - 5pm, Sun 11am - 4pm. Adm: \$4, children under 12 free w/pd adult. All scales show, layouts, door prizes, free parking. Info: David Johnson 636-225-2405 or the MVNS website <http://mvns.railfan.net>.

**OCTOBER 29, 2006:** Wichita Toy Train Club 12th Annual Train Show, Auction and Swap Meet. 4-H Bldg, 21st & Ridge, Wichita, KS. 9am - 3pm. Adm: \$3, under 12 free w/pd adult. Vendor setup 7am, tables \$12 each by 9-30-06 then \$15 until show date, \$20 at the door if space. Info: Bill Laughlin 316-744-2527 email weldoc@juno.com or <http://members.cox.net/wttc>.

## SUBMISSIONS

To list your event send it to: Gary Hemmingway, 3201 SW Stone Ave., Topeka, KS 66614, email garyonho@cox.net, Fax: 785-273-3350. To subscribe or unsubscribe to the electronic Switching List, send an email to the above link.

Division Directors, Train Show Chairs, or Club Show Chairs: ANY MORE EVENTS IN 2006 or 2007? Get your information to Gary at any of the above addresses. Let's get the word out about your next event! This is a service of Mid-Continent Region, NMRA. Information provided is accurate at time of printing; contact sponsor to confirm.



## ANNOUNCING! 2006 Mid-Continent Region

The Rock Island Line's 1937 AAR Modified 10' 6" - 40' boxcar, built in 1942 by the Pressed Steel Car Company. Only 199 of these all-steel boxcars were stenciled with "Ship Rocket Freight".

This **ready-to-run HO-scale InterMountain boxcar** will be offered in four (4) road numbers and has the correct 5/5 Dreadnaught ends, Murphy raised panel roof and Youngstown doors.



*Order  
Now!*

NMRA members can purchase these cars for \$28 per single car, \$54 for the 2-pack, and \$106 for all four.

## Convention Special

Purchase up to four cars for \$24 per car when you register for the 2006 MCoR Regional Convention in Council Bluffs, IA. See the

Registration Form in this issue of the Caboose Kibitzer, or visit <http://whdnmra.org/convention2006/register.htm>



**Check This Out!**

### 2006 MCoR Regional Car Order Form

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ NMRA #: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ APT: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP+4: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Single car @ \$28.00

2-pack @\$54.00

All four cars @ \$106.00

Add S & H:

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Total enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected delivery of June 1, 2006.  
Applicable taxes included.

# 100 OFTEN-OVERLOOKED DETAILS

BY SCOTT G. PERRY

SOUTHEASTERN REGION , NMRA

**W**hen you are building a model it is sometimes handy to have a list of forgotten details that you might have missed. A quick review of the list is an easy way to catch oversights and increase Achievement Program points. With the help of the Internet, several train enthusiasts helped me create a list of 100 often-overlooked details. If an item says (period), then it is time-period sensitive and you will need to check the era that you are modeling. Enjoy!

## UP ON THE ROOF...

- 1.** If you have a building with a flat gravel or tar roof, put some used tires on it (if you are modeling snow country). The tires prevent ice from freezing solid and pushing the parapet wall out and thus allowing the roof to collapse.
- 2.** Model a flat gravel roof with bumps and ridges where air pockets have formed under the roofing material.
- 3.** On the roof add an air-conditioning service man climbing from the parapet onto his ladder.
- 4.** On the roof add an A/C company rigging a multi-ton rooftop unit into place.
- 5.** Add rust stains around smoke stacks that exit a roof, or rust running down the wall from metal hardware.
- 6.** Place a TV antenna on every roof prior to cable (period).
- 7.** Water tanks on many buildings in urban type environments are common.
- 8.** Roof details like chimneys, exhaust stacks, sanitary vents, etc.
- 9.** Roof access, hatch and penthouse doors.
- 10.** On roofs add leftover roof material: tar paper, little piles of gravel, pieces of lumber.
- 11.** Satellite dishes.

## RIDING ALONG IN MY AUTOMOBILE...

- 12.** Have a guy underneath a car jacked up with a bumper jack and it has just collapsed on him - maybe use one of the Preiser male cheerleading figures, on his back, with arms and legs outstretched.
- 13.** Use plenty of properly detailed and painted vehicles.
- 14.** On car or truck, add "Bondo" or primer on vehicle.
- 15.** Dents on cars and trucks.
- 16.** Fuel oil trucks.
- 17.** Red or yellow fire trucks.
- 18.** On autos, sand a little off the bottom of the tires so the vehicles don't look like they're toptoeing through the foliage.
- 19.** Colors on cars were also rarely bright until the early 50's, with white, a greenish white, maroon, dark blue, dark green and black

colors predominating.

## NO PLACE LIKE HOME...

- 20.** In earlier eras, illuminated signs were not backlit plastic; they were either neon or lighted by floodlights.
- 21.** Window- and roof-mounted air conditioners.
- 22.** Houses and businesses have numbers and mailboxes.
- 23.** Street corner signs are everywhere.
- 24.** Garbage pails on the curb.
- 25.** Overflowed Dumpsters behind businesses.
- 26.** Puddles of water painted with semi-gloss black paint.
- 27.** Leaves piled up on lawns and around curbs, drains, etc.
- 28.** Every parking lot has a soda/beer can somebody left behind.
- 29.** Trailers, mobile homes, campers, motor homes, tents, etc.
- 30.** Clotheslines with clothes drying.
- 31.** Fire escape ladders.
- 32.** General junk and debris.

## DANCING IN THE STREET...

- 33.** Electrical and telephone wires.
- 34.** Streetlights.
- 35.** Public trash containers or Dumpsters.
- 36.** Traffic lights.
- 37.** Storm drains.
- 38.** Man holes and covers.
- 39.** Parking meters in every downtown area.
- 40.** Painted crosswalks and/or signs.
- 41.** Public phones and phone booths.
- 42.** Newspaper machines.
- 43.** Sand on the roads, or loose gravel.
- 44.** Litter that gets blown against old buildings.
- 45.** Fences of all kinds.
- 46.** Brown glass bottles, beer bottles, soda cans.
- 47.** Oil drips on driveways and parking spaces.
- 48.** Half-moon scrapes in the pavement or dirt from swing gates that have sagged.
- 49.** Convincing ruts and/or mud puddles in rural dirt or gravel roads.
- 50.** Drivers/passengers in cars and in HO passenger trains.
- 51.** Weeds in sidewalk cracks and along the edge of asphalt or



cement roads.

**52.** Markers and boxes for underground utilities.

**53.** One of the most commonly overlooked details is the color of commonly-included details, so check the color of the prototype.

**54.** Stop signs (earlier era) were yellow, not red.

**55.** Old, olive drab phone booths.

**56.** Those telephone boxes that are placed in neighborhoods, on sides of buildings, etc. with the truck parked nearby.

**57.** Billboards.

**58.** A manhole cover that has a street line painted on it, rotated.

### ALL THE LONELY PEOPLE...

**59.** Someone washing the car in the driveway.

**60.** Someone raking leaves.

**61.** Someone mowing the lawn.

**62.** People sitting on wood crates.

**63.** Someone working outside in the garden.

**64.** A bicyclist with his front tire stuck in a grate...and he's up in the air about eight feet, suspended from above on a wire.

**65.** People having a garage sale with lots of junk on the driveway.

**66.** Kids playing in the yard.

**67.** Paperboys selling newspapers.

**68.** People sitting at the bus stop.

**69.** People reading the newspaper.

**70.** Winos taking a nap or a drink.

### DOWN BY THE RAILROAD...

**71.** Oil stains on the ballast and ties on uphill grades and at stations, etc., where locomotives would normally sit.

**72.** Cinders around tracks.

**73.** Rail joiners and tie (fish) plates on track and rails.

**74.** On rails, modern welded joints.

**75.** Flange greasers.

**76.** Cans of rail spikes.

**77.** Loose or used crossties.

**78.** Switch stands.

**79.** Relay stations.

**80.** Signals and marker boards.

**81.** Whistle posts.

**82.** When we add crews to our locomotives all too often they are looking out the cab windows as though they are staring at us! I prefer to have my crewmen looking into the cab at one another or out the front and back windows vs. out the side windows.

### I SEE LEAVES OF GREEN...

**83.** Foliage everywhere - no "pool table" lawn areas or golf club type greenery.

**84.** Model regional plants like Osage Orange in Illinois, Kudzu in North Carolina, Tree of Heaven and Bluebonnets in Texas.

**85.** Lawns, fields, wetlands, gardens, flowerpots.

**86.** Patches of weeds.

**87.** Stumps of trees.

**88.** Plowed fields.

**89.** Puddles of water in low-lying areas with some grass or other foliage growing around it.

### THIS AND THAT...

**90.** Pigeons, dogs, cats, and other wildlife.

**91.** Don't forget pigeon "exhaust".

**92.** Goat farms.

**93.** Bicycles in bike racks at schools and theaters.

**94.** Boxcar ends and doors used to make fences around storage yards, especially near railroad yards.

**95.** Manure and maure piles at stock pens, stables, barns, etc.

**96.** Horse, horse drawn rigs, hitching posts, "road apples".

**97.** Quantity of details, either too many people, or not enough people.

**98.** Smells, like the aroma of a stockyard.

**99.** Bears in the woods, and around trash cans.

**100.** A model railroad club moving modules from the clubroom to the vans for a show.

(Reprinted from the Mid-Eastern Region newsletter, The Local, Jan/Feb 2006 issue. Used with permission.)



# 100% CLUB IDEAS

BY BARBARA LUNDQUIST

MCOR 100% CLUB CHAIRMAN, WESTERN HERITAGE DIVISION

An interesting discussion came up during one of our Division meetings. Our Director, Charles Fennen, mentioned that Division leaders from other areas of the Region had asked him how the Western Heritage Division had gotten our "womenfolk" involved. Most members chuckled at that, then ideas started popping up.

Our Superintendent, Terry Nordmeier, instantly said, "Never, ever, mention the word 'railettes'." While it seems a simple answer, it goes much deeper.

Simply stated, the idea is inclusion and respect.

Traditionally, model railroading has been a male-dominated hobby. In the last several years, that fact has started to change. More women are finding that "toy trains" are just as worthy a hobby as anything else, and are joining the NMRA to explore it. Some join to support their significant others and to spend time with them. While the Division didn't specifically discuss this issue in early meetings, it was tacitly accepted.

In some ways, the Division has become a support group for "railroad widows" - no one understands the challenges of living with a railnut like the spouse of another railnut!

Early Division leaders recognized that spousal support was crucial for the Division's long-term success. Members were (and are) encouraged to bring their spouses to monthly meetings as well as the "special events" like the annual holiday dinners and summer picnics. Every effort is made to ensure that the Division is family-friendly, both in attitude and in meeting planning.

It is acknowledged that not everyone has the same level of interest in every aspect of the hobby, and that different people have different areas of expertise outside the hobby that they can lend to the Division. Some people want to run a real miniature railroad, complete with waybills and dispatching schedules. Others have a more laid-back approach, preferring to tackle the "unseen" parts of the hobby - wiring and benchwork planning. Still others aren't very interested in the trains themselves, but focus on the worlds the trains pass through. Other members are simply railfanners. While good-natured ribbing does happen on occasion, different points of view are respected. This creates an atmosphere where people's strengths are used to full advantage as they help each other with their modeling questions and difficulties. Through this exchange of ideas, their horizons are broadened as they try things they wouldn't have normally considered.

No member is treated differently than another because of their expertise or level of railroad interest. Everyone has an equal opportunity to be elected to leadership positions and to be selected to head committees. When discussions are held, everyone is expected to participate and all ideas are open for debate.

No one is expected to be an expert, especially those just starting in the hobby. The Division tries very hard to create a supportive



atmosphere for new modelers, encouraging them to try all aspects of the hobby until they find their "niche".

The 100% Club is designed to help provide support for Divisions in keeping their membership active and interested. If you have any suggestions or ideas, please feel free to contact me.

Contact Barbara Lundquist:

504 Pioneer Rd  
Papillion, NE 68046-3778

(402) 597-3988

blundquist1@cox.net

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\*Rail Pass offer is good in the U.S. only and is for new members and those who have not been NMRA members for two years or more. Individuals can only join at Rail Pass rates one time; membership renewal will be at the regular membership rate. Rail Pass members can vote, attend conventions and participate in contests, but cannot hold office and will not receive a New Member Kit.



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# THE RIVER CITY EXPRESS

2006 MID-CONTINENT REGION CONVENTION PREVIEW

BY WENDY HARLOW

**N**ow departing from the Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and headed for railroad modeling inspiration! Get ready for a whirlwind tour of the fantastic events slated for the Convention this year!

## VENUE



The Mid-America Center has become one of the most popular places to hold conventions in the greater Omaha/Council Bluffs area. One reason is its proximity to the junction of I-80 and I-29 in Council Bluffs. Other reasons are its friendly staff and excellent facilities.

The facility boasts a large exhibition hall (with NO posts!) with easy access from the outside, both for vendors and visitors. The Center is surrounded by 2,800 FREE parking spots, with plenty of handicapped parking available. Country Inns and Suites has a hotel next door, which is connected by an enclosed walkway.

Surrounding area attractions include The Plaza, a brand-new shopping area immediately west of the convention venue, with shops and restaurants including Famous Dave's BBQ. Bluffs Run Casino, Star Cinema and Bass Pro Shops are also close by.

## REGISTRATION

**FULL REGISTRATION** allows you complete access to all convention activities. The rate is \$45 per person. Extra-Fare items are not included in the registration fee.

**NON-NMRA MEMBER REGISTRATION** allows you full access, without joining the NMRA. The rate is \$55 per person. Extra-Fare items are not included.

**ONE-DAY REGISTRATION** allows you complete access on Friday or Saturday only at a reduced rate. The rate is \$25 per day, per person. Extra-Fare items are not included in the registration fee.

**GUEST REGISTRATION** allows your spouse and children access to the train show, silent auction, clinics and contest room. The rate is \$5 per person; children under 12 are free. This rate is only available WITH a one-day or full registration. Extra-Fare items are not included in the registration fee. Convention bags are also not included.

**EXTRA-FARE ITEMS:** Extra-Fare Items are available to all registrants - Full, Non-Member, and Guest - at the full rate.

**HANDICAPPED PARKING:** Please tell us if you require a handicapped parking space. The Mid-America Center will set up as many as we need, but they need to know ahead of time. A handicapped parking permit is required to use those parking spaces - this is strictly enforced.

**CONFIRMATION:** You will receive confirmation of your registration when it is processed. Please be sure to keep this information for your records.

## CHECK-IN

Registration/check-in tables will be set up beginning Thursday night in the Country Inns and Suites' hospitality room. From there, registrants are encouraged to pay a visit to the old Rock Island Depot near downtown Council Bluffs to enjoy an exclusive operating session presented by the Greater Omaha Society of Model Engineers. Check-in will move to the Mid-America Center lobby during the day Friday, then back to the hospitality room Friday evening. Saturday morning it will once again be in the MAC's lobby.

At check-in, you will receive your Convention bag filled with goodies from the Omaha and Council Bluffs visitors' bureaus, your pre-ordered shirts/pins/patches, the Regional car, and your tickets for the activities you registered for. You'll have the opportunity to alter your itinerary, subject to space and time limitations.

## PROTOTYPE TOURS (EXTRA-FARE)

Transportation and guides are provided for these tours. They are limited to the first thirty registrants each. Because of security concerns, your Convention ID pass will be

required to board the bus and must be worn the entire duration of the tour. Be sure to bring your walking shoes!

**TOUR A:** Harriman Dispatching Center and the Union Pacific Center. Friday, 8am - noon. Cost: \$10.00. View the heart of UP operations, then tour the new UP headquarters building in downtown Omaha.

**TOUR B:** Harriman Dispatching Center and the Union Pacific Center. Saturday, 8am - noon. Cost: \$10.00. See above.



**TOUR C:** UP Heritage Fleet Shops and the Union Pacific Railroad Museum. Friday, 1pm - 5pm. Cost: \$10.00. See the UP Passenger Fleet and shops and view UP's historic collection of railroad artifacts.



**TOUR D:** Omaha Zoo Railroad, Kenefick Park, and Durham Western Heritage Museum. Friday, 8am - noon. Cost: \$10.00. Watch as the staff performs steam-up, tour the shop, and enjoy the first run of the day.





See the Big Boy No. 4023 and Centennial No. 6900 as they overlook the Missouri River. The Durham Western Heritage Museum is housed in the historic Union Station.

**TOUR E:** Bunge Oilseed Processing Plant and Mid-America Energy. Friday, 1pm - 5pm. Cost: \$10.00. Tour a modern food-grade soybean plant using RCL. Then see a coal-fired utility featuring a rotary dump.

**TOUR F:** Non-rail - Lauritzen Gardens. Saturday, 1pm - 5pm. Cost: \$10.00 (includes garden admission) "Relax while cultivating your mind in this living plant museum, conveniently located in the beautiful riverfront hills." (from the Garden's website).

## HOME LAYOUT TOURS

These tours are self-guided - basically, you're on your own. Your Convention package will include addresses, directions and maps of the area. Because of limited space and the nature of these tours, they are available for Convention Registrants ONLY. At printing time, there are 16 tours listed.

## CLINICS

We have a full slate of 28 clinics for Convention goers to participate in. We're fortunate to have so many talented people willing to share their experience and skills - several of our clinicians are MMR's! Some are Extra-Fare - those are listed on the Registration Form.

## CONTESTS

Entrants are encouraged to have all documentation and contest forms filled out in advance. Forms are available from your local AP chairman, or on the Web at the NMRA's website, or the WHD's website. The **NARROW GAUGE LIGHT IRON AWARD** is an independently sponsored award presented to the MCoR Convention contest model that most exemplifies the spirit of narrow gauge railroading.

### • ARTS AND CRAFTS

- General
  - Kit built
  - Original
  - Pattern
- Needlework
  - Kit built
  - Original
  - Pattern
- Railroadiana
  - Kit built
  - Original
  - Pattern

### • PHOTOS/PASS

- Model as Subject
  - Black and white (A)
  - Color Print (B)
  - Slide (C)
- Prototype as Subject
  - Black and white (D)
  - Color print (E)
  - Slide (F)
- Pass contest

### • MODELS

- Motive Power
  - Steam locomotive
  - Diesel/other
  - Traction
- Rolling Stock
  - Passenger car
  - Freight car
  - Caboose
- Other
  - Non-revenue car
  - Structure - on line
  - Structure - off line
  - Display - on line
  - Display - off line
- Popular vote
  - Favorite train
  - Thumbs
  - Photo match
  - Creativity (structures)

### • MODULE CONTEST

- Group
- Individual

## PUBLIC TRAIN SHOW

It will be held June 3 and 4 from 9am - 5pm Saturday, and 10am - 3pm Sunday, in the Mid-America Center Exhibition Hall. General admission is \$7 per adult, children under 12 are free with paid adult. Admission to the train show is included in the Convention fee for ALL registrant levels. Convention registrants and Guests will have exclusive access to the train show from 8 to 9am on Saturday morning. Clinics will be provided for show attendees by Dirk Reynolds of Reynolds Railways in Dupo, Illinois. His layout was featured on the Gateway 2004 Convention's Layout Tour.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

The semi-annual Board of Directors Meeting will be held Saturday, June 3rd, from 9am-noon.

## BANQUET (EXTRA-FARE)

Join us as we time-travel to the mid-1940's, the era of Streamliners and big band music. Feel free to dress the part! The banquet will be Saturday, June 3rd at 7:00pm, at the Mid-America Center.

We're excited to announce that our keynote speaker is Steve A. Lee, Manager of the Union Pacific Steam Program in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

We will be served a gourmet buffet including:

- Grilled New York Strip Steak
- Pecan-Crusted Chicken Breast
- Tossed Salad with your choice of two dressings
- Cole Slaw
- Rice Pilaf
- Roasted Red Baby Potatoes
- Chef's Choice of Seasonal Vegetables
- Homemade Rolls
- and a Fine Assortment of Cakes and Pies



The banquet is an Extra-Fare item, and costs \$40 per person. Family members of convention registrants are welcome to attend.

The annual Regional Members' Meeting will be held immediately afterward, at which Regional recognitions will be awarded and contest winners announced. The evening will conclude with door prizes and a Chinese raffle. Each banquet purchase includes one raffle ticket, and **ADDITIONAL RAFFLE TICKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE DURING THE CONVENTION.**

### RESOURCES:

Convention website: <http://whdnmra.org/convention2006/index.htm>  
 Contest forms and info: <http://www.getnet.net/~dickg/nmra/contests/>  
 Convention Chairman: Charles Fennen  
 Show Chairmen: Al and Terry Nordmeier



# RIVER CITY EXPRESS

## 2006 MID-CONTINENT REGION CONVENTION



### Primary Registrant

NAME		NMRA MEMBER NUMBER	
ADDRESS		APT OR STE	
CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE + 4	
TELEPHONE		EMAIL	
I require a handicapped parking space.	Yes No	I plan to check in Thursday night.	Yes No
I'm interested in a Layout Operating Session.	Yes No	I prefer to receive Convention updates by email.	Yes No

### Guests/Family

NAME	UNDER 12? Yes No	NAME	UNDER 12? Yes No
NAME	UNDER 12? Yes No	NAME	UNDER 12? Yes No

### Convention Registration (free clinics, show, layout tours, contests)

	Quantity	Price each	Subtotal
Full Registration - NMRA Member		\$45	
Full registration - Non-member		\$55	
Guest registration (family registration)		\$5	
One-day registration - choose ONE:	Fri Sat	\$25	

### Extra-Fare Items (not included in registration fee)

Award Banquet featuring speaker Steve Lee	Sat 7pm-10pm		\$40	
Clinic A - "Building Buildings Beautifully" by Fran Hale and Miles Hale, MMR	Fri 8:30am		\$25	
Clinic B - "Sky's the Limit" by Miles Hale, MMR	Sat 8:30am		\$15	
Clinic C - "Tabletop Modules" by Drew Cannon	Sat 1pm		\$15	
Prototype Tour A - Harriman Dispatching Center/Union Pacific Center	Fri 8am-noon		\$10	
Prototype Tour B - Harriman Dispatching Center/Union Pacific Center	Sat 8am-noon		\$10	
Prototype Tour C - UP Heritage Fleet Shops/UP Museum	Fri 1pm-5pm		\$10	
Prototype Tour D - Omaha Zoo Train/Kenebeck Park/Western Heritage Museum	Fri 8am-noon		\$10	
Prototype Tour E - Bunge Oilseed Processing Plant/Mid-America Energy	Fri 1pm-5pm		\$10	
Non-Rail Tour F - Lauritzen Gardens	Sat 1pm-5pm		\$10	
MCoR Regional Car (max 4 per registrant at reduced rate)			\$24	

Total enclosed \$

Send completed form (with payment) to Mark Erikson, Registrar, 818 Wilshire Ln, Papillion, NE 68046.

Make checks payable to "Western Heritage Div. NMRA".

# 2006 Mid-Continent Region Convention Timetable

	Registration	Hospitality Suite	GOSOME Layout Display	Home Layout Tours	Clinics	Prototype Tours	Non-Rail Tour	Public Train Show	Silent Auction	Contests	Board Meeting	Banquet	
Thursday, June 1st													
5:00 pm													
6:00 pm	Hotel	Hotel	Rock Island Depot										
7:00 pm													
8:00 pm													
9:00 pm													
10:00 pm													
Friday, June 2nd													
8:00 am	MidAmerica Center Lobby	Hotel				Tour A & Tour D							
9:00 am													
10:00 am													
11:00 am													
12:00 pm													
1:00 pm													
2:00 pm													
3:00 pm													
4:00 pm													
5:00 pm													
6:00 pm	Hotel						Setup ----- MidAmerica Center Exhibit Hall						
7:00 pm													
8:00 pm													
9:00 pm													
10:00 pm													
Saturday, June 3rd													
8:00 am	MidAmerica Center Lobby	Hotel				Tour B		Setup					
9:00 am								Preview					
10:00 am													
11:00 am													
12:00 pm								Open to public -----			Hotel		
1:00 pm								Close					
2:00 pm							Tour F	MidAmerica Center Exhibit Hall	Pick up	Judging			
3:00 pm													
4:00 pm											View		
5:00 pm													
6:00 pm										Pick up			
7:00 pm													
8:00 pm													
9:00 pm													
10:00 pm													
Sunday, June 4th													
9:00 am													
10:00 am													
11:00 am													
12:00 pm													
1:00 pm								Open to public					
2:00 pm													
3:00 pm													
4:00 pm								Pack up					
5:00 pm													



# SUBMISSIONS

BY WENDY HARLOW  
KIBITZER EDITOR



**A**rticle, artwork and photographic submissions to the Caboose Kibitzer are ALWAYS welcome. In order to ensure high-quality and timely output, however, here are a few guidelines.

**DEADLINES:** These are absolute. If your submission arrives late, it will be held until the next issue.

Summer '06 ..... July 1, 2006  
Fall '06 ..... October 1, 2006  
Winter '07 ..... January 1, 2006  
Spring '07 ..... April 1, 2007

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**GENERAL:** Email is a good delivery system for articles and small image files. CD's through the mail are good as well. If you wish to use a re-writable cd, it can be returned to you for reuse. All articles will be placed into that issue's file - original files will not be saved. Be sure to back up your own copies - just in case!

**PAYMENT:** No payment can be made for submissions to the Kibitzer.

**EDITING:** I reserve the right to make **MINOR** edits to articles (verb tenses, typos, etc.). Please take the time to use a spell checker, and have someone proofread it.

**CONTACTING THE EDITOR:** By far the best way to get in touch with me is through email.

**ARTICLES:** Plain text is the best, in either DOC or TXT format. Please do not use any formatting besides bold or italics. Any formatting you apply will be stripped away anyway. Please be sure to include any photographs (with captions!) you'd like published with your article (see Photos below). PDF's are acceptable, but not preferred (see PDF note below). It seems obvious, but be sure to include your name as the author.

**ARTWORK:** EPS and TIF format are easiest to work with. Adobe Illustrator (AI) files are also acceptable. Rough art or sketches can be cleaned up if desired, but the process takes time. Be sure to submit it early.

**PHOTOS:** TIF is the best digital format for photos. JPG's, by their nature, lose data when they are compressed (that's why they get "artifacts" where the colors aren't smooth and outlines aren't crisp). If you must use JPG, please use the highest quality compression setting available to reduce artifacts. Do not use GIF format for your photos. Photos should be at least 150ppi at published size (a 2-inch by 3-inch photo should be no less than 300x450 pixels in size). 300ppi is preferred. A large file is preferable to a too-small one. Keep in mind that the Kibitzer is printed in black and white. Good contrast is a must! Photos taken with cell phone cameras will not be accepted. Photos may be resized or cropped, if necessary. Prints will be scanned and returned unharmed.

**COVER PHOTOS:** If you'd like to submit a photo for consideration for the Kibitzer's cover, please be sure that it is large enough, both in size and resolution. The cover is 8.5 x 11 inches, with a 0.125 inch "bleed" (the area that "bleeds" off the paper to ensure that the image goes all the way to the edge of the cover when it's trimmed by the printer). The photo should be no less than 2550 x 3300 pixels for best quality reproduction. Use TIF format to preserve the quality of your work.

**ADVERTISEMENTS:** PDF's or high-quality scans are preferred. Scan your ad at as high a resolution as you reasonably can, especially if it contains a lot of small type. Please make payment arrangements through Louis Siebel, our Advertising Manager.

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# THE ROUND ROBIN APPROACH TO MODEL RAILROADING

BY TONY BOWEN

EASTERN IOWA DIVISION, MCOB

In the fall 1998 I officially started to build benchwork on my railroad. At the time, I figured I would be the only one operating it, with the layout only being seen by family and friends. After about two years of building benchwork on my own I was getting at times a little frustrated and overwhelmed with some of the ideas I had planned. So I took a small break, rethought some of my ideas of what I could accomplish on my railroad, and thought how I could get some help from others in the area where I lived. At the time there were no other model railroaders that I knew of in Coggon (Iowa).

My first thought was to run a small advertisement in our local small-town newspaper. Sure enough, I had someone call the same day the ad ran in the newspaper. So I made arrangements to visit the other modeler in my area one evening after work. When I stopped by George's house, he welcomed me in to see his railroad. I suggested that if he would like he could also stop by and visit my railroad, to which he said he would.

Once I entered George's basement I realized that his view in model railroading and mine were very different. His layout consisted of a 4' x 4' HO-scale boxed train set which he had picked up at Wal-Mart on an after Christmas sale. There it sat in the corner of his basement, the train traveling around and around on that tight 18-inch radius track, going as fast as it could go. George then started to dig out some of the items he had picked up at an auction. He had all of the classics: the Styrofoam tunnels, the Bachmann and Tyco loading ramps, and many other accessories.

I wasn't sure what to say, so I didn't say anything except, "I like what you have started." Which, thinking back, may have led him to on to this type of modeling, but then I thought, *Wait...this hobby is his and he can do with it what he may, as long as he is enjoying it.*

After about fifteen minutes, George asked if we could head over to my house to see my railroad. All of a sudden, I felt real fear coming on. What would George think of my railroad? Would he be offend-



Round Robin host, Tony Bowen, works on scenery on his own railroad during a work session night. The materials cart in the picture with the scenery materials in clear canisters make it handy for everyone to access during a work session.

ed, amazed, or inspired? I wasn't sure. So George and I headed on over to my house. George took one step inside my train room and was amazed. However, I got the feeling that George realized right then and there that his version and my version of model railroading were quite different.

After not having much luck by trying to advertise for model railroaders in the area, I sent out a letter to fellow model railroaders who I had known from an HO Club that existed at one time in Cedar Rapids. I was hoping it would result in getting together with other modelers.

In January 2003, I sent out my first Round Robin Newsletter entitled "Corn Country Rails: Round Robin News". The first newsletter was an invitation hoping to drum up interest in the idea for a Round Robin Railroad Group. I, of course, hosted the first meeting in hopes it would encourage others to host future ones. Sure enough, the first Thursday of the month came, which was going to be the Round Robin Night, and in typical Iowa fashion, we had a snowstorm. No one showed up. So everything was postponed to the next month. The first Thursday rolled around in February and three people showed up. At the time I thought, This is a waste; I sent out fifteen newsletters and only three people showed up. However, I learned quickly that this was okay; not everyone is going to be able to make it to every Round Robin get-together. Also, the more people I had over at one time, the more jobs I had to plan - which was something I had not planned very well at first.



Everything set up in the family room for an evening of building N scale DPM kits during a Round Robin work session at Tony Bowen's house. Notice each work area had its own cutting board with other tools and glues in the center of the table.

One of the Round Robin Nights was spent around the computer researching the different ways in which a person could set up a car forwarding system and adapt it to their own personal needs of their model railroad.

Over the next three to four months, we really started to bond as a group. It was not long before other modelers started to show up on the first Thursday nights of each month. The other item that was helpful was the newsletter. The newsletter recapped what took place during that last Round Robin session for those who were unable to attend, and also set the agenda for the next month's get-together. I was in charge of putting together the newsletter and mailing it out. The other modelers were more than helpful in either giving money towards the postage or just providing me with stamps. Since then, I have updated to a newsletter sent electronically via email.

Everything seemed to be going well; however, we were still not a real Round Robin Group yet. I was hosting all of the meetings, and that was all well and fine as the progress on my railroad was moving along. But the goal was to move to other modelers' homes from month to month. During the summer of 2003, we took a break from regular meetings and planned to pick up again in the fall. Over that summer, I developed a calendar which would encourage others to sign up for a month to host. When that newsletter went out the following fall, the Round Robin months filled up with others who either wanted to host work sessions or have operating sessions. Now the plan of a Round Robin group was complete, with the group actually moving from home to home each month.

Now it's our third year, and it's helped all of us out as modelers. We have had some pretty deep discussions on operations, way-bills and car forwarding. We have also had some exposure to working in different scales and on different layouts, which has given us inspiration to look at our own railroads and try new or different techniques. We have also moved to holding summer operating nights just to keep us involved in the hobby. The past two years we



Michael Stocks of Manchester, Iowa oversees the activities in the West Liberty Yard during an operating session on Tony Bowen's layout. Note the extra board in the background for crew calls during operating nights. This helps to keep the train room from getting overly crowded at one time. The off duty crews hang out in the family room (crew lounge).



have taken one of our summer operating nights and have turned it into a potluck picnic - grilling hamburgers, eating outside, operating trains and finishing the evening off by watching some railroad slides.

There is always room for others to join our Round Robin Group since there is always a need for operators on running nights, and benchwork can get built so much faster with help during work session nights. Unlike model railroad clubs, there are no dues. Just make sure the host makes a plate of goodies and provides something to drink, and the model railroading fellowship will take over from there.

On average, I have fifteen people who receive the Round Robin Newsletter that I send out electronically. There seems to be about eight to ten of us that get together regularly, depending on our schedules. One thing that has helped is that we have moved away from the first Thursday of the month for our get-togethers. Instead we let that month's Round Robin host pick the day and time that works for him, which has resulted in a better turnout.

Let me know if you would be interested in receiving the "Corn Country Rails Round Robin Newsletter" electronically as an extra model railroading activity that takes place within our area to promote that hobby in which we all share enjoyment.

Email Tony Bowen at [railroadteacher@coggonia.net](mailto:railroadteacher@coggonia.net) and in the email message say that you would like to receive the "Corn Country Rails Newsletter", or visit The World's Greatest Hobby at [http://www.greatesthobby.com/wgh/directory/clubs\\_info.asp?recid=1681&type=2&mode=view](http://www.greatesthobby.com/wgh/directory/clubs_info.asp?recid=1681&type=2&mode=view).

### MODELING TIP:

"Like everyone else I used to use wet water as a wetting agent. But my friend, Scott Rennick, put me on to using rubbing alcohol instead. The only problem is that if it gets on Testor's Dullcoat, it will turn the Dullcoat white. I could not find anything to clean off the white coating until yesterday. Walther's Solvaset will clear it right up."

~Richard Napper



# DCC DETECTOR CIRCUIT USING CURRENT SENSING

BY RICHARD E. NAPPER, MMR  
PRESIDENT, MCOR

I'm getting ready to start my second layout since I had to tear down my first layout when I moved to Topeka, KS from Manhattan, KS in October 2000. My first layout was a learning experience for me, just like it was for most of you.

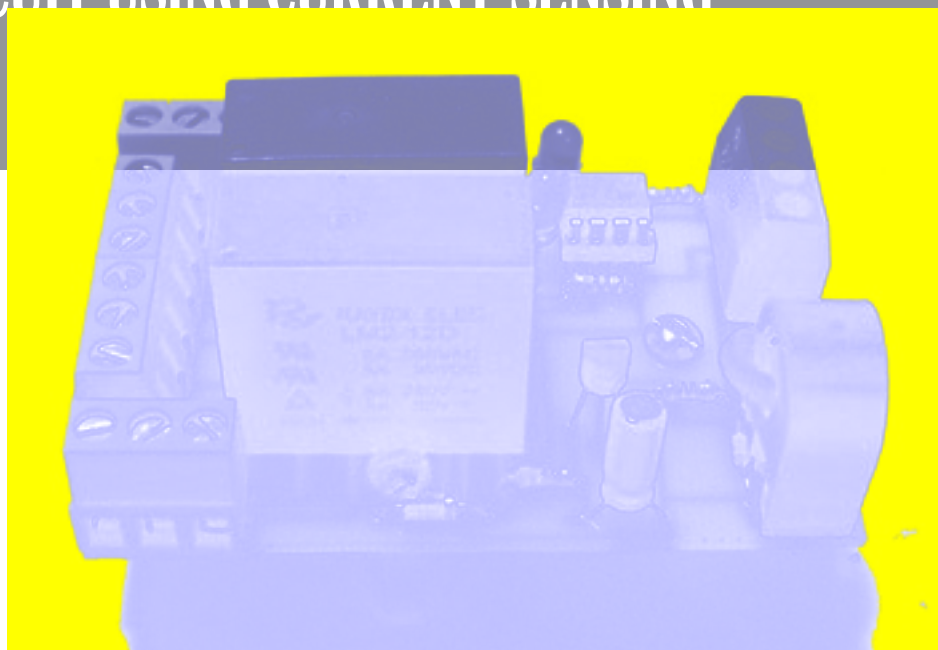
I learned not to make the layout so wide you cannot reach important things like my turntable, I could not even align the tracks to the turntable because I could not see the pit track ends very well. Reaching things was the most important lesson I learned from my first layout.

There is a circuit you can buy that uses a stepper motor for your turntable, so you can align the tracks perfectly, and it will remember the settings. It's about \$300.00 but well worth it in my opinion. The diamond turntable I had before is no longer made, so I will have to make my own or maybe purchase a Bowser turntable, I have not decided yet which way I will go.

Most things did go right and I will repeat them on my second layout. It will be an island layout with no duck unders shaped like a large "J". Under the long side of the "J", I will have a six track hidden staging yard over thirty feet long at a height of 48". The actual layout will be built at a height of 54" because I do not like the airplane view of a layout, and I think it causes you to do better modeling since you are so close to a eyeball view of your layout.

One thing I promised myself is that this second layout will be fully signaled. I thus will need some kind of track detection circuit so I know where my trains are located on my new layout. I also promised myself this layout will be 100% DCC, that will take a lot of time and money, but it will be worth it in the long run.

The signal system will need to have both rails insulated at both ends of the blocks for train detection to work, and that is the way I like to wire a layout anyway. I do not use common rail, and I use toggle switches to turn off all track blocks, making troubleshooting shorts a lot easier. Block wiring is useful even with DCC.



Now there are a few different ways to detect your train in a block. You can use photo detection, also called optical detection. Not a bad way to go, but it is very difficult to place the photocells correctly to get detection of the whole block if the block is long. Another way is to use the Twin "T" or diode detection circuits that detect the voltage drop across a diode when a train draws power while in the block. This requires that you install a bridge rectifier in series with each block power circuit, which causes a 1.5 to 3 volt voltage drop, so you have to increase the starting and running voltage to your trains. This is a little better than the optical option.

I wanted some way to detect the train in a block without causing the voltage drop and that would detect the train as long as

the train was in the block, not necessarily moving! I found the answer while cruising the Internet. I was looking at the Dallee Electronics, Inc. web site, and noticed they had a current sensing detection circuit they call the TRAK-DT. So I ordered myself one circuit for evaluation. The TRAK-DT uses a Coilcraft D1869L 50 turn, 5 mH sensing coil and a LM358 integrated circuit on the 2" x 3" circuit board. The TRAK-DT can be used on DCC and DC layouts. It has one DPDT relay on the circuit board for output. With shipping one board cost me about \$34.00.

I will probably have at least 50 blocks on my layout, so that means \$1700.00 for TRAK-DT circuit boards. I might be able to get a discount with that kind of order, but I am not sure.

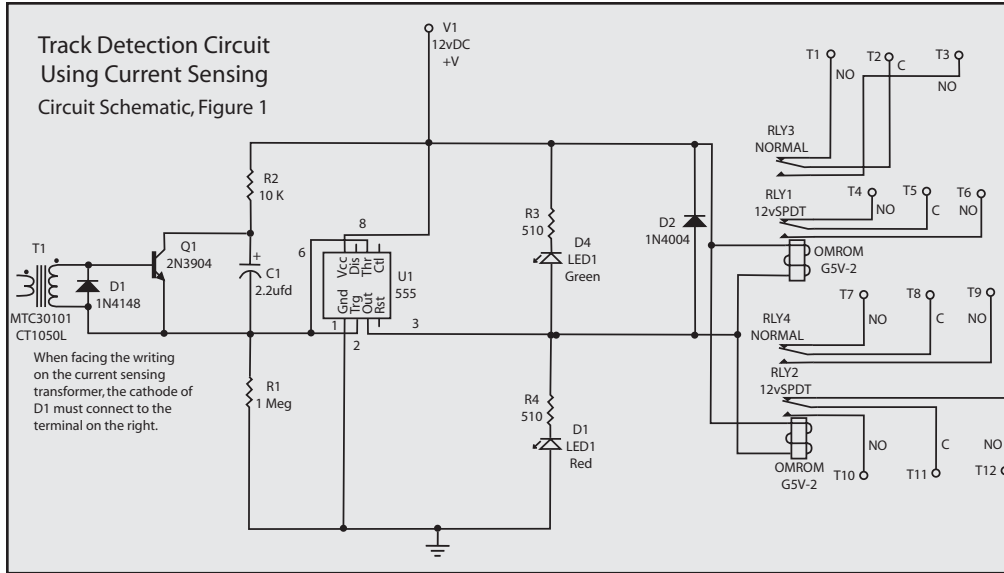
Wait just a minute! I'm an electrical engineer; I should be able to design my own current detection circuit with the outputs I want at less cost than \$34.00 each. So I went back on the internet to find the current sensing transformer that Dallee used, and that is how I found out it was a Coilcraft D1869L. In my opinion I like the more substantial CS1050L in a plastic hardened case. I finally settled on the MTC30101 sold by Jameco Electronics.

While running around the Internet I visited <http://Home.cogeco.ca> and there was the circuit I needed in his VT-5 which I have modified to my own use. The VT-5 is two detector circuits using a LM556 timer but it had no output relays of any kind. That was



## Track Detection Circuit Using Current Sensing

Circuit Schematic, Figure 1



a decision that he made to keep the cost down and to put two detector circuits on one circuit board. So using his basic circuit I designed my own current sensing detection circuit.

I went with this final design because this little circuit has one big advantage; it will detect a locomotive in a block even if the locomotive is not moving! This circuit will work with DCC only, but is sensitive enough to detect a motor controller circuit inside a locomotive, even if the locomotive is not moving. Although I have not tested it this way, I do not see any reason why the circuit would not detect a resistance wheel set, or a lighted caboose or passenger car.

switching diode

Part# 164718CB MTC30101 Current Sensing Transformer

1N4002 power diode

1 10K ohm ¼ watt resistor

1 1Meg ohm ¼ watt resistor

2 510 ohm ¼ watt resistors

1 IC 8 pin socket

1 Red LED

1 Green LED

3 ¼" 6-32 Screws

3 ½" plastic insulators

1 three inch piece of 16 gauge lamp cord

1 Home made circuit board

The most expensive parts were the relays at \$2.45 each and the current sensing transformer at \$2.65 each, but the more you buy, the less each unit costs.

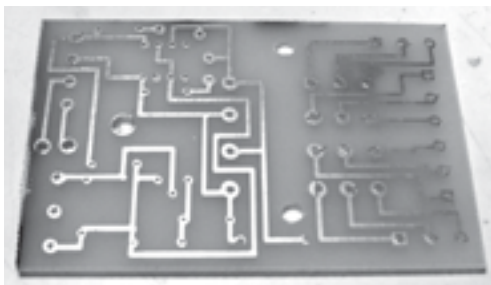
I used two DPDT relays for four independent SPDT set of contacts that I can use in any way I want to when I build my signal system using LEDs. If you want to cut the

cost even more, you can eliminate the two LEDs and two 510 ohm resistors, but that will only save you maybe 25 cents.

Please refer to the circuit schematic (fig. 1) and I will explain how this simple circuit works. You place one power wire from your DCC track power through the hole in the center of the current sense transformer, and then run both wires to your track block. When there is no power being drawn in the block, then the 2N3904 transistor is turned off, the capacitor C1 is fully charged up, and has the LM555CN timer turned on so output pin 3 is at 12 volts DC. Since there is 12VDC on both ends of the relay coils, they draw no power and are not energized. The Red LED is turned on, or lit. Now as soon as a small current is drawn in the block, the current sensing transformer outputs a voltage which is limited to about ½ volt by the signal diode, 1N4148. That is enough voltage to turn on the 2N3904 transistor which shorts out the Capacitor, C1. That action turns off the LM555CN timer and its output drops to zero volts. Now the two relays draw power from the 12 VDC power supply and both of them turn on as well as the Green LED which is now lit. Once the current draw in the block drops back to zero, the circuit resets to off in about 1.5 seconds. Dirt simple, but it works!

Although I designed and manufactured my own circuit board, since I will need quite a number of them, I will probably have them commercially made at a later date. If you would like me to make this detector for you E-mail me at [renapper@mindspring.com](mailto:renapper@mindspring.com) or call me at 785-582-4209 or write me at 7244 NW US Highway 24, Topeka, KS 66618-5605 and we can discuss the cost.

Remember the FRISCO!



Here are the parts I used in my design. I got most of the parts from Jameco Electronics at [www.jameco.com](http://www.jameco.com).

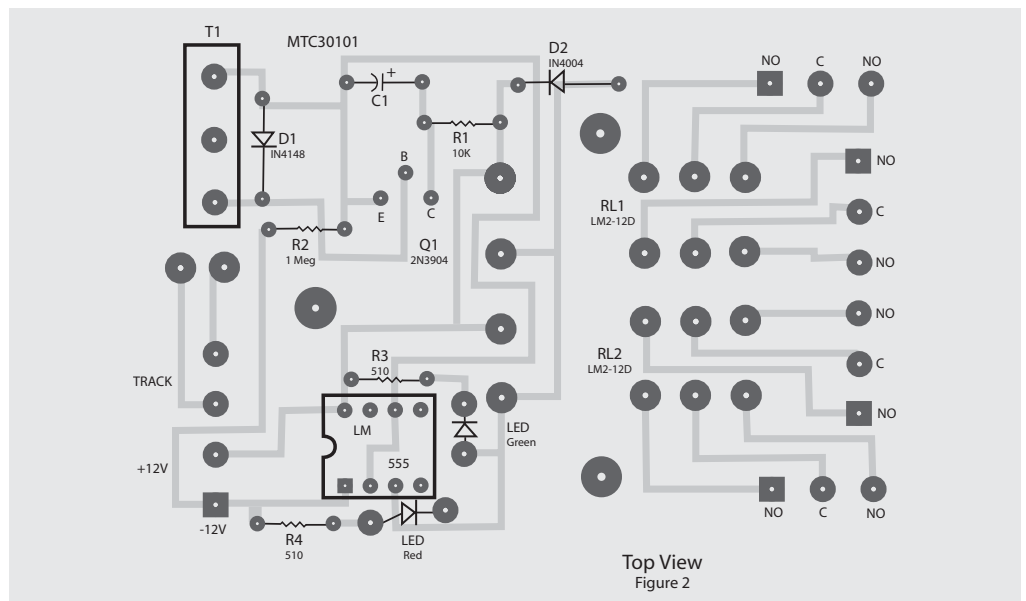
Part # 99397CB 5MM 3 Terminal block - used four (I also used one 5MM 4 Terminal Block I got from Hosfelt Electronics. [www.hosfelt.com](http://www.hosfelt.com))

Part# 27422CB LM555CN 8 pin Dip IC Timer

Part# 174377CB 12 Volt Relay LM2-12D  
Part# 330405CB Electrolytic Capacitor 2.2ufd 16 WVDC

Part# 38359CB 2N3904 NPN Transistor

Part# 36038 1N4148 signal fast







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Webster Groves, MO 63119  
(O)

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[mvns@railfan.net](mailto:mvns@railfan.net)  
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North Kansas City, MO 64116  
(HO)

## Modular HO Narrow Gauge Society

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Saint Peters, MO 63376  
(HO)

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14906 W 150th St  
Olathe, KS 66062  
(all)

## Nishna Valley Railroad Society

1303 Eighth St  
Harlan, IA 51537  
(HO)

## Northeast Kansas Garden Railway Society (NEKAN-GRS)

1308 SW Caldon  
Topeka, KS 66611-2412

## Northwest Kansas Model Railroad Club

603 S Smokyhill  
Oakley, KS 67748-2321

## Ozark Model Railroad Association

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Springfield, MO 65803  
(all)

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Cherryvale, KS 68335  
(HO)

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(HO, HOn3)

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(HO, N)

## Southern Illinois Train Club

PO Box 1633  
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(HO, N, G)

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(HO)

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PO Box 5452  
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607 S Shore Dr  
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PO Box 48082  
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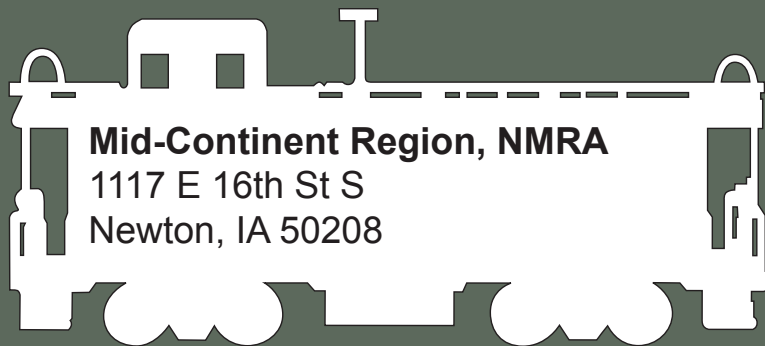
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## PROTOTYPES



### EVER WONDER WHAT TO DO WITH THAT EXTRA SECTION OF TRACK?

The track panels are used to quickly restore service when the track has been torn up by a derailment. The panels can be prefabricated switches, as you see here, or straight sections with only the regular rails. The sections of regular rail would not be as wide so they could be loaded on flat cars instead of in a gondola. In use, the ground is leveled and then the panels are laid out end to end, bolted together with "rail joiners" and then aligned to prevent more derailments as the train passed, at an extremely slow order speed.

Many times, panels of track can be seen stacked in yards, waiting for loading into gondolas or on flat cars for transporting to the area they are needed. It would be a stretch to assume that Atlas picked up on this and designed their sectional track after this practice, but the sectional track could be used as a load in a gondola. Sectional track could be used as a scenery item in a yard as well.

Caption by Claude Lundquist, photos by Wendy Harlow.

