



The Dispatcher



Officers for 2004-2006

Superintendent:
Jeff Ashby

Dispatcher:
John Reitz

Treasurer:
Gene Cowan

AP Chairman:
Daniel Metzger

Board of Directors:
Glenn Roon

Division Scribe:
Chuck White

Dispatcher Editor:
Rich Mohr

North Central Region
NMRA

Northeast Hoosier Division 3

Meetings:
2nd Monday of each month
7:00 pm

Meeting Notes

North East Hoosier Division 3 - February 14, 2005

Attending: Dan Brown, Daniel Metzger, Don Rhodenbaugh, Chuck White, Richard G. Berger, Gary Evans, Drake Omstead, Rich Swihart, Rich Mohr, Dave Miller, Rick Van Laar, Alleyne Metzger, Art Solomon, Max Metzger, Mark Wilson, Ted V. Hansen, Jeff Ashby and Alan Bell (18 total)

CLINICS

"Concealed Layout Wiring by Ted Hansen.

Ted gave a brief (10 to 12 minutes) clinic on how he uses Masonite (with just 4 screws) to hold it in place, to cover the wiring on his upper shelf. "Makes you look organized when you're not." Ted said the Masonite also enhances the lighting of the layout. He uses 24" sections which simply slide or pop into place between the wooden support beams on the underside of his upper level.

After the break, we had a brief business meeting.

THREE RIVERS OP SIG April 1st, 2nd & 3rd, 2005

Drake reported we had 29 registrations. Several "Tune Up" Op Sessions were announced. All preparations are proceeding well.

TREASURER'S REPORT

No Report

OLD BUSINESS

Annual Meet

Alan Bell presided. Alleyne would be helping in the kitchen. Dan Metzger had plans for N, O, G, and HO (Rich Van Laar's) layouts, and Gary Evans' Timesaver. Alan had not been able to contact the coordinator with the Boy Scouts, so there would be

no Merit Badge effort this year. For the Make & Take clinics, a \$2 fee will be charged (It says so on our flyer). Alan has about 35 of our convention cars from Athearn and another 2 dozen or so from Hobbyland, for about 60 total. He's been playing phone tag with the new person at Atlas. So far, he's had no luck. One of the vendors he did talk to (Horizon?) was amazed at what Alan had obtained last year. Ah the good old days... The contest room will be handled by Dan Metzger. Dan said he should have enough judges to help. Mark Wilson volunteered to be coordinator for the greeters. A "Menu of Activities" for the day was proposed. The proposer, Chuck White said he would handle. No one knew if we had any raffle tickets. Chuck said he'd pick some up at Office Depart. Chuck advised he was still working on the Home Layout tour and would be forwarding the maps to Fergus Moore, for him to work his magic. All tours will be from 4:30 to 7:30 on Saturday, except Alan's which will be from 5:30 to 8:00. The Sunday tours will be from 1 to 5.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ACIEVEMENT PROGRAM

No Report

NMRA MEMBERSHIP

Jeff mentioned one of the excellent benefits of NMRA insurance is the coverage available for your collection. John Roberts recently wrote about this in Scale Rails, where his basement had been flooded due to the very heavy rains from a hurricane – he lives in SW Pennsylvania! The NMRA policy covered the flood damage to his model railroad items that were damaged, something his homeowners insurance did not cover. Also

mentioned was the coverage for visitors to an Open House for the Layout Tour or the upcoming Op Sessions, which would be covered on a primary basis, if you are a NMRA member, and the event is sponsored by the division. This means if someone was injured at your home while you were hosting a NMRA Division 3 sponsored event, the NMRA's insurance would be primary, or respond before your homeowners insurance would need to.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chicago & Toledo Interurban

Craig Berndt is giving a presentation on this railway at our next monthly meeting in March (3/14).

DRAWING

Our prez, Jeff Ashby was the winner of the \$10 gift certificate from Hobbyland. Please support this retailer who has been a very generous sponsor of our division.

NEXT MEETING

It will be on 3/14/05 at 7 pm at our usual venue, Sirva/NAVL, on US 30 west of I-69. Enter through the eastern most pedestrian entrance. The planned clinic will be on detailing or weathering your steam engines by Jeff Ashby.

ADJOURN

The meeting ended at approximately 9:00 pm.



Meeting Notes March 14, 2005

Attending: Dan Brown, Daniel Metzger, Don Rhodenbaugh, Chuck White, Richard G. Berger, Gary Evans, Rich Swihart, Rich Mohr, Dave Miller, Olivia Miller, Alleyne Metzger, Art Solomon, Max Metzger, Drake Omstead, Ted V. Hansen, Tony Williamson, Gale Jordan, Dave Land, John Phenicie, Steve Brigham, Walter Griffin, Gene Cowan, Steve McBride, Kevin McBride, Mike Mapes, John Cartwright and Alan Bell (27 total)

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Chicago & Toledo Interurban by Craig Berndt

Craig gave another one of his enlightening and entertaining Power Point Presentations. Like the one on the Eel River & Vandalia railroad, he's done his homework filling the program with many, many pictures of the railroad from the past and the present. There were numerous slides of structures, right of way, bridges, etc., often showing how they were then and what they look like now. We also saw numerous maps, track diagrams, town plats, and how the right of way was laid out in several communities. Craig had several rare photos of cars, which apparently are hard to come by. Craig researched archival materials presenting pictures/images never before seen or published. To say that the program was interesting would be an understatement.

Briefly, this was the line that ran north out of Fort Wayne to Kendallville & Waterloo. It was originally planned for its namesake cities (to follow the Big 4 route to Chicago), but less than one month after announcing these plans, they only built the line from Auburn to Garrett. Shortly thereafter they began working south to Fort Wayne. It was basically Y shaped with Garrett as the hub. The electrification was 33,000 volts AC stepped down to 300 volts on the centenary, which in turn passed through transformers and rectifiers, for 500 to 600 volts DC, for the motors in the cars.

Craig also had newspaper articles, old timetables and other publications reproduced in his slides. Planned in 1905, this line had 18 daily round trips between Garrett and Auburn in 1906. In 1910 there were 12 daily round trips between Garrett & Fort Wayne and 15 between Kendallville & Waterloo. Barely had the line begun operations when it slid into receivership in 1908. In 1913 the bond holders took over and in 1924 the company became part of Indiana Service Corporation. In the 1930s, passenger service was cut back and slowly discontinued. Craig listed these and the abandonments. Freight only service continued for the final years, with total shut down in May, 1945.

Again, this was a superb program. If you hear Craig is going to give it somewhere again, it is strongly suggested you go experience it. Just ask anyone who has.

After the break, we had a brief business meeting.

THREE RIVERS OP SIG April 1st, 2nd & 3rd, 2005

Drake reported we had 37 registrations. Gary Evans demonstrated a program he's been developing for Alan Bell's Op Sessions. It's an electronic version of a "Dispatcher's Magnet Board." A copy of the Word document about this software is included with this newsletter.

TREASURER'S REPORT

No Report

OLD BUSINESS

There was none

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ACIEVEMENT PROGRAM

No Report

NMRA MEMBERSHIP

There was more discussion of the Rail Pass membership. Jeff is developing a list of local NMRA members, but also has requested a print out from headquarters. We want to encourage everyone who is involved with our group to become a member of the NMRA. With the Rail Pass costing only \$9.95, finding out what the NMRA is all about is a very inexpensive proposition.

Chuck White will be attending the NMRA Midwestern Regional Convention in Madison, WI to help promote the 2007 National NMRA Convention in Detroit. This trip will be subsidized by the national. Chuck is looking for someone to go with him to help split the time manning the display. Another NCR member from Michigan is going too, but presently is going by himself.

Chuck, Gene Cowan, and several others are planning on attending the 2005 NMRA National Convention in Cincinnati.

Again, if anyone is interested in splitting the cost of a motel room, you should contact Gene or Chuck.

DRAWING

Alan Bell was the winner of the \$10 gift certificate from Hobbyland. Please support this retailer who has been a very generous sponsor of our division.

NEXT MEETING

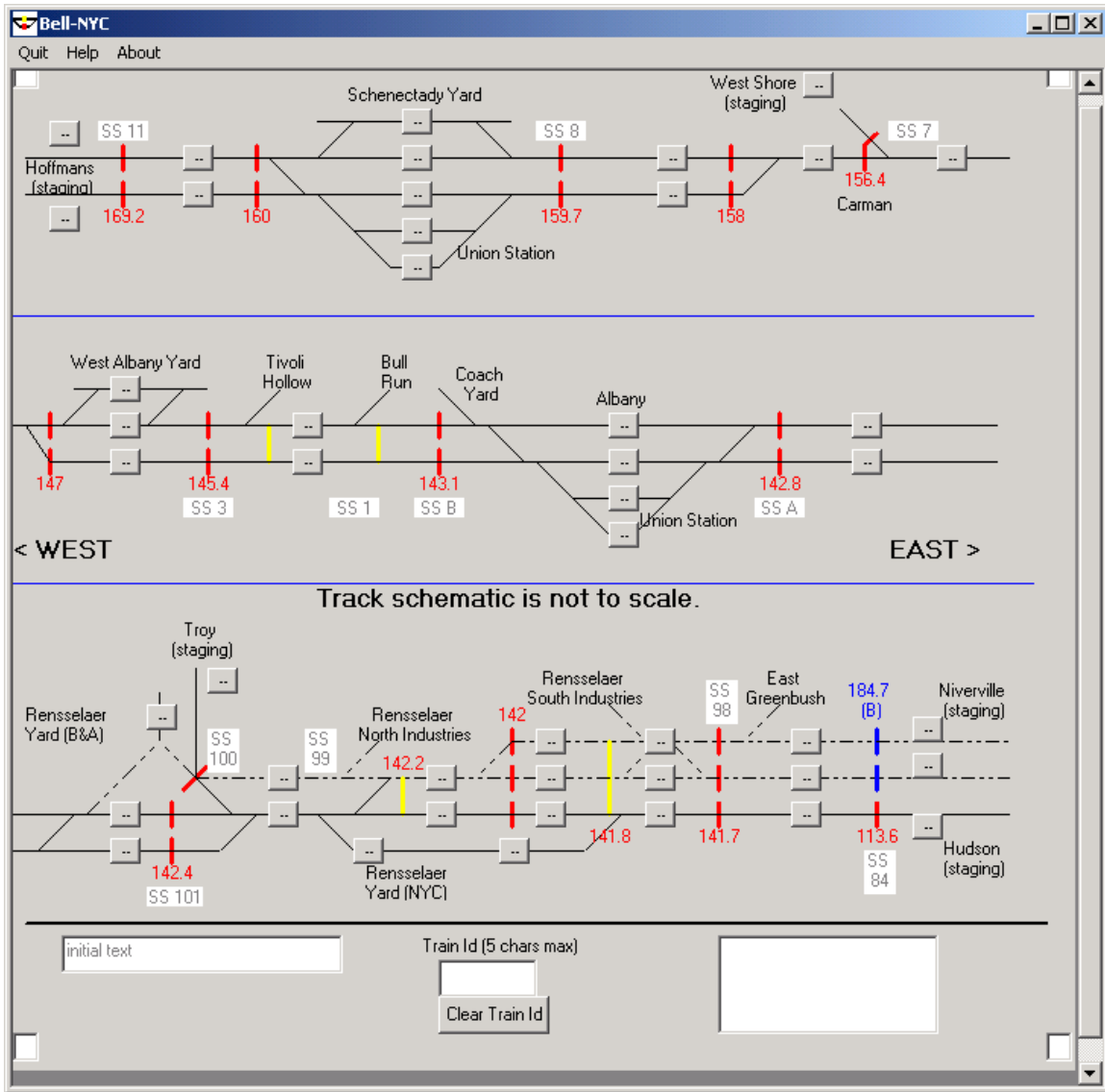
It will be on 4/11/05 at 7 pm at our usual venue, Sirva/NAVL, on US 30 west of I-69. Enter through the eastern most pedestrian entrance.

ADJOURN

The meeting ended at approximately 9:15 pm.

Dispatcher's Magnet Board by Gary Evans

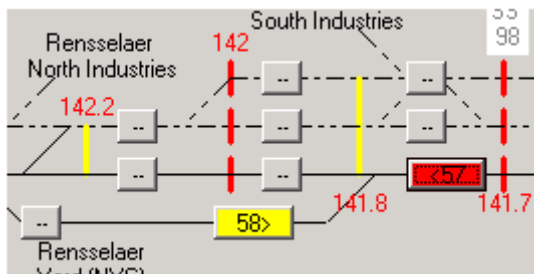
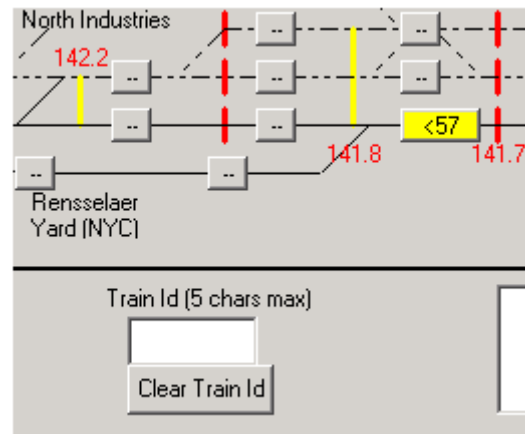
To support the Spring 2005 operations weekend on Alan Bell's NYC layout, Gary Evans has developed a Dispatcher's Magnet Board computer program. The program simulates the placement of colored magnets on a track schematic, providing the dispatcher a quick overview of the track conditions. The main display screen is shown below:



Left-clicking on a track button cycles the track section through three states:

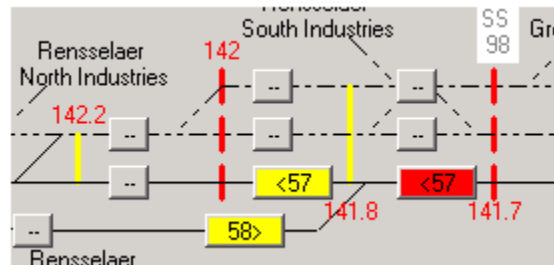
1. Gray = clear
2. Yellow = assigned
3. Red = occupied

To begin a train on the layout, the dispatcher enters the train identification (e.g. 57) in the Train Id box and then left clicks on a track button to assign the train to that section. The '<' symbol indicates a westbound direction. Trains can be assigned to as many track sections as desired according to the dispatcher's plans.

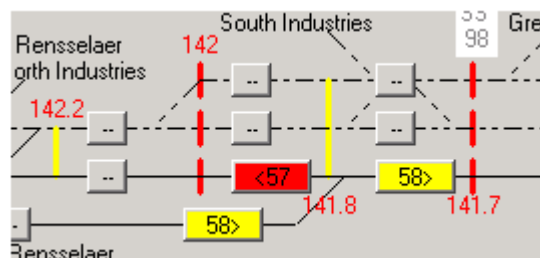


When a train is reported in a track section, the dispatcher changes the condition from assigned to occupied (yellow to red). Eastbound train 58 has been assigned to a track section, as it is ready to leave the yard.

Right-clicking on an assigned or occupied button and then right-clicking on another button will assign the train to the next section. This copy operation eliminates the need to manually enter the train identification again.



As the trains move through the track sections and are reported by the crew and towers, the dispatcher manually updates the display panel. When a train leaves a section, left-clicking returns the button to the clear state. The figure shows that train 57 has moved west and train 58 is assigned to move east.



As the mouse is moved over the track buttons, track informational text is read from a text file (prepared by the owner) and is displayed in the status field. A time-stamped log file records all activity taking place on the display.

The program is written in Visual Basic and is free software. The processing center is generic and can be adapted to any display schematic. Gary Evans can be contacted at garytrain@gbonline.com.

INEXPENSIVE AIR TANK DESIGN

by Chuck White

Does trying to have the necessary air brush equipment seem too expensive or too complicated to you? A small compressor (without an air tank) can cost upwards of \$100. Add in an air tank and regulator, and the complete set up exceeds \$200 for a small system. A medium size system will cost you around \$300, with professional systems closing in on \$1000. And this is all before you buy your air brush, paint and related supplies.

I once owned a small compressor, the kind without an air tank. I found it difficult to regulate because the pressure gauge pulsated so much with the pumping action of the compressor. Then the paint came out in spurts. It was impossible to put on an even coat of paint. Without an air tank to balance things out, this type of compressor is best suited for refilling bicycle and auto tires. I soon sold the compressor.

Because my painting is very infrequent, I found it hard to justify the expense of even a small compressor/tank system, let alone the cost of a spray booth. I own an air brush, but I use it only several times a year. Buying the small air cans at the hobby shop quickly became an expensive proposition. Also these cans become very cold as they discharge their gas, dissipating their effectiveness until they warm up. A number of years ago I read an article about someone who had reconfigured a garden sprayer into an air tank. I tried this too, but the continuous pumping was very tiresome. Then, I wore out the flapper valve in the sprayer within the first month, so I took the sprayer back to the store and got my money back.

A number of years ago, I read an article about someone who had converted a welding tank, or old gas pressure tank, into an air tank for air brush painting. I had no access to these tanks, and finding a decent used one was a problem I never solved. When I noticed portable air tanks had become available at your local discount department store (K-Mart, Wal-Mart, Target, etc.), I wondered if something similar couldn't be accomplished with one of these tanks. They come in various sizes. The most common is either in five or ten gallon capacities, although I've seen others. The five gallon size costs about \$25, while the ten gallon size is about \$40. One day, I found a ten gallon tank on sale for \$25, so I bought it to see if I could convert it into a air tank for air brushing.

First I found out that you have to be concerned about the different types of pipe thread. There are two kinds, Normal Pipe Threads (NPT) and the other kind, the kind you use for garden hoses or for gas fittings. I don't know what it is called, but this thread is coarser than NPT. Some of the air tank equipment requires NPT, and some the coarser threads, so I learned that I needed adapters. Next, I looked for a regulator valve. I found a good inexpensive one at Sears for about \$25. I also splurged for a moisture trap, which also cost me about \$25. Adding the cost of the various nipples and adapters brought my entire outlay to about \$80, although I could have kept my expense to about \$50 without the moisture trap.

The moisture trap is an option. The main concern is having your tank rust from the inside out. This can be caused by filling your tank with moisture laden air at your local service station on a hot humid day, and having the humidity of this air condense when the water vapor cools down in your cool basement. I don't know how this can be avoided or if it really is a problem. I don't know if the inside of the tank has been painted or protected against rust - I'll assume it hasn't. However, I've had my tank for about six years and it shows no signs of any weakness. Also, these tanks are now available nearly everywhere, so tank replacement in ten or twenty years shouldn't be a problem if the need arises. I've never drained any water out of my moisture trap, and I can't tell you what effect not having a moisture trap will have on your painting. Moisture traps now cost about \$40, so you decide if the expense is warranted.

My assembly started by removing the filler hose. These are 1/2" NPT threads, so I replaced them with a brass nipple about 1" long. I used pipe thread tape on all my connections to reduce the potential for any leakage. Next I screwed on a "T". This allowed me to reattach the filler hose so I could continue to use the air tank for tire refills - it gets more use for that than for airbrushing. Off the tee, I attached another 1" brass nipple, and to that I attached the regulator valve. The regulator valve includes an outlet for a pressure gauge. You need this to separately set the pressure for your air brushing. The tank comes with it's own pressure gauge, but this gauge is used to determine what the air pressure is inside the air tank. I then attached nipples and elbows so I could attach the moisture trap. The threads on the moisture trap are 5/8". I think they are also the coarser type. So I picked up a pair of reducing adapters. All of these items are available at most

hardware stores, home improvement centers, etc. Even Sears, K-Mart, and WalMart have some of the necessary nipples, adapters, etc., although their selection is limited to bubble packs which might cause you to buy some fittings you may not need or use. The final part is a 1/2" adapter available at your hobby shop, specifically made for connecting to your Badger air hose. It cost be about \$1.50. If you're using a Paasche Brush, you may not need this adapter, as I think Paasche Brushes come with 1/2" hose & connectors.

My air tank can be filled at any service station which offers free air. There are still plenty of these around in our community, but I recently needed some air in my tires in a small town, and the only place with free air had one of those compressors you plug into your cigar lighter. It took me forever to refill my tire, so make sure you have a nearby source for your air before you plunge ahead with this project. The air tank has a filler valve on it similar to what you find on a tire. Behind it is a round red plastic valve which must be opened when you are either using the air in the tank, or filling it. The valve on the air tank indicates it has a maximum capacity of 125 PSI, but I've never filled it beyond 100 PSI. I've never run out of air for any of my spray painting projects. I can recall only one occasion where we needed to refill the tank on short notice for filling tires.

The one odd thing about this system is the operation of the regulator valve. You must make sure it is completely closed whenever you're using the tank for filling tires or other items. However, the regulator valve unscrews in the opposite direction you would normally associate with opening a valve, so extra care must be taken. The only other comment I'd make is that I'm not really happy with how I've assembled the regulator valve and the moisture trap. Currently the end of the air brush adapter sticks out past the end of the tank, making it vulnerable to damage or causing injury or damage to others. It's just one of those things I've never gotten around to fixing, and so far, I've been careful enough that nothing has happened.

You operate the tank by attaching your air brush with it's hose. Then you open the red valve. You'll notice the tire filler hose will become filled with air. Next you turn the regulator valve clockwise to your desired PSI - typically about 20 PSI, and you're ready to paint. I would paint something here, but without a spray booth, this isn't advisable. So far I haven't found Accuflex paint to be a workable solution to my air brush painting needs. You'll have to take my word that this system works. I haven't supplied a parts list with prices because your assembly may differ. I have verified the current prices for the tanks, regulator valve and moisture trap.