

# The Journal Box



**“The Best Region Under The Sun”**

Winter Issue 2022

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# The Journal Box

Volume Seventy-Five Number 1 Winter 2022

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Looking for the latest Region activities? Check us out on website at [www.sunshineregion.org](http://www.sunshineregion.org). You can also get there via links from the NMRA website at [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org). Thanks to John Crellin, our Webmaster, for keeping the site up to date. You can also try sunshineregion groups.io Group and join the egroup for latest information. Richard Webster is owner and moderator of this site.

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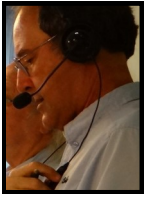
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To have news from your club appear in the Journal Box  
Send an article and photos to  
Robert Raymond, Editor  
[RobertRaymond@bellsouth.net](mailto:RobertRaymond@bellsouth.net)

### Journal Box Submission Deadlines

|              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| Spring Issue | February 15 |
| Summer Issue | May 15      |
| Fall Issue   | August 15   |
| Winter Issue | November 15 |

The Journal Box will be in the mail 2-3 weeks after these dates. Please do not include events with dates close to mailing dates as information will not reach readers in time.



**Journal Box**  
**Editor**  
 Robert Raymond

One thing I should point out—the *Journal Box* actually has a staff of two. Oh, of course I move the pretty pictures about, type in an occasional article or figure out how your submissions (with all those photos) are going to fit in the issue. And let’s not forget Ski Guzowski coming up with some last minute notice after I’m blowing the sawdust off the minted copy and getting ready to forward it to the Farnhams for final review and forwarding to the printer.

That other person on staff is my wife Jane, whom you might have met helping Bev Farnham at the convention (and also running Hialeah Yard on the *Florida East Coast*). When an issue is done, I give it to her and get out of the way since red ink is going to flow like blood on Halloween. She’ll curl up with the cats on the sofa and make *scritch scritch scritch* noises with the Red Pen ‘O Doom. And let me tell you, she’s thorough.

Yes, she catches me out all the time. And with you submitters, she has a field day. She’ll spot spaces before periods, unneeded commas, incorrect use of numbers, even *its/it’s* and *there/their/they’re* misuses. Even as I type this, I wonder what “Hawkeye” will spot in this column.

And that’s good. Years back, she’d turn my hackneyed novels into serious submissions—page after page, inked and circled, every error caught. I don’t think that first novel of mine had any serious typos (unless you count the ones the publishers added with their meddling). She made the product clean.

I read years back that “To write, you must hypnotize yourself to imagine the scenes and moods. To edit, you have to un-hypnotize yourself.” Well, I’ve never been much of an editor but I married one so that’s fine.

So as you read this issue, think of the tireless work of my wife as she edited Number 75 into a much better form than the wreckage she received.

And also, when you get a train lined up in Hialeah Yard, think of my wife, your yardmaster, when you roll through the tunnel and into the train shed of the FEC.

Thanks, hon!

*Post-edit note: She found five errors in my column alone!*

**Cover Shot:** Southern Pacific F-units fly across the desert with a string of beautiful Daylight coaches, nearing the tiny town of Black Rock. Aboard, John J. Macreeedy, a one-armed World War Two veteran, is about to discover the arid town’s terrible secret.

If you’ve never seen *Bad Day at Black Rock* it’s worth a watch, if only for the opening helicopter shots of Southern Pacific’s golden daylight express.



The *Journal Box* wants to share your Thoughts! Photos! How-tos! How-nots!

If you have anything that can help me burn white space, please don’t hesitate to contact me, Robert Raymond, at...

***RobertRaymond@bellsouth.net***

We pay a generous royalty of NOTHING except the prestige of seeing your words and images here in print. Don’t delay! Our next deadline is February 15th!

# Convention Memories

Photos by Greg Komar



Picture Notes (Preceding Page)

Upper-left: Rich Mahaney  
Upper-right: Paul Beckstrom  
Center: The Train Medina  
Lower-left: John Crellin  
Lower-center: Steve Miller  
Lower-Right: Ken Farnham

Picture Notes (Right)

Following a clinic, an ops session commences on the interlocked and dispatched Tuscarora Branch Line with Engineer Ken Farnham, Towerman Donovan Lewis, and Coal-lugger Doug Bowman. Dispatcher Robert Raymond takes his seat.



And more on Interlockings (my favorite subject)....

*Article on following page...*

*Editor's confession—I saw this structure at the Convention and loved it. Michael Collins has filed a bunch of articles for my use, but this one got bumped to the front of the line...*





**Contributor**  
 Michael Collins  
 MMR 157  
 AP Chair—  
 Southern Division

## Abandoned Control Tower

*When a control tower becomes too small for the operation and beyond improvement, a new tower is usually built; and the old one is repurposed for some other function, torn down or abandoned.*

Here is the current control tower [Preceding page] (which is scratch built with an interior) that replaced the original tower to control the LV Bronx Terminal. The old building was used for storage, but now is abandoned and ready to be demolished. I wonder where all the animals will go?



I made random cuts on the ‘wood’ boards to reflect deterioration. Then added some various markings, signs, plus a barrel, handcar wheel, squirrel, two pigeons and a skunk.

Painted the structure a railroad gray, the doors, window frames and smoke stack brown; and the roof black. Weathered with a mix of liquid black shoe polish and winter-green alcohol wash, then applied weathering powders and dull-coated.

### Dimensional Load

Uh-oh! After the celebration, somebody was not watching where they were going. It’s time to move this Award to the shelf next to last years Presidents’ Award and Best-of-Show.



To create this condition on this (HO) AM model, I broke railings and steps, boarded up two doors and one window. Scribed cracked, broken windows, and made a bullet hole in one using a hobby knife.





## Off The Wire

# 2023 Eastern Division Workshop

NON-Members Welcome

AP Judging Available

March 4, 2023

Location: Tony Rosa Community Center 1502 Port Malabar Blvd NE, Palm Bay FL

Time: 9:30am to 4:00pm

Admission \$ 20.00

Pre-Registration Includes Lunch

**Four Clinics:** 'Storage Tanks 101 for Model Railroads' - 'Understanding how stuff is made, how rail-road supports that car with placement, just in time deliveries, Modeling Industries and Operations' A fabulous Lunch

'Big Pipes' adding pipe details to various industries - 'Making Stuff' for model railroads

Guest Presenter: Rich Mahaney, from Gobles, MI

Raffle with great selections of Model Railroad items

Concluding with an Open House at: **FEC Railway Brevard Division Chamberlin Branch**

Pre-Registration by Check: NMRA Sunshine Region, Inc. 462 Chamberlin Ave NW . Palm Bay FL 32907

Registration, Send with payment:

Name: First \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

NMRA Number \_\_\_\_\_ NON-Member \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Cancellation must be before 2/18/2023 for refund

Information Beverly Farnham , Eastern Division Superintendent – 321-373-2293 - bevchase@aol.com

# PROTOTYPE RAILS 2023

COCOA BEACH, FLORIDA, JAN 5 - 7, 2023

An NMRA Sanctioned Event

A Prototype Modeling Meet Featuring Modular Layouts in O, HO and N Scale 1000 Models on Display - Please Bring Models!

Contact Marty Megregian at [indianfourdoc@aol.com](mailto:indianfourdoc@aol.com) for info

## Hotel

COCOA BEACH HILTON OCEANFRONT

1550 N. Atlantic Ave. [Highway A1A], COCOA BEACH, FL.

Phone: 800-526-2609 or 321-799-0003.

2023 Room Rates start at \$149/night, including free parking and free WiFi.

Please mention group code "NMR23" when reserving your room.

## Registration

2023 Registration is still only \$45 in advance (postmarked by 12/31/2022), or \$50 thereafter.

Spouses/Guests not attending presentations do not have to pay registration.

Please make your check payable to "Prototype Rails" and send to:

Tom Meyer, 2321 Kumquat Dr., Edgewater, FL 32141.

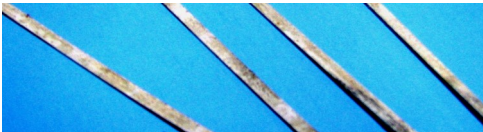




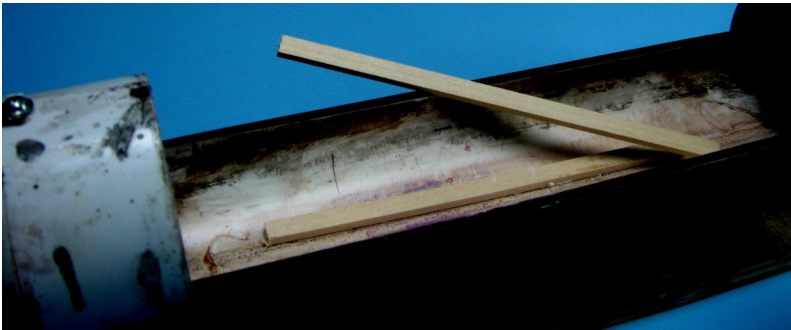
**Contributor**  
Al Sohl, MRR 305

## Another(!) method to replicate PEELING PAINT

We will show you the method which allowed us to achieve the look seen in Photo #1 (Below). Yes, another method to get the look of old 'out in the weather' with minimal upkeep! Just what we love to model...right?



See photo #2 through #6 (Right). Prepare your 'stain' which we use to grey up your boards before applying the 'paint' with about (no real science here!) 16 Oz. of 91% Alcohol (less water than the 70% which is a good thing!) and one bottle of black SHOE DYE (NOT POLISH) . The lower bottle is my 'mixing bottle'.



In pictures #7 and #8 (Left) see my tool(s) used to put grain into my boards BEFORE staining. The red Xacto handle has a piece of a zona saw blade in it, the blue piece of steel is a hack saw blade and the black handled knife is a sharp flat metal blade which we will use later to make board separations.

Use your favorite tool by dragging it over the boards to be weathered, in the direction of the grain, sometimes jerking the saw blade up and down to get different wavy patterns. No need to spend a lot of time on this.



AP information can be found on the SSR website, at...

<https://www.sunshineregion.org/nmra-ap-program>

<https://www.sunshineregion.org/nmra-ap-program1>

<https://www.sunshineregion.org/nmra-ap-certificates-status>



Once all the boards are ‘grained up’ we will stain them in our diluted alcohol solution we made in the first step. I made a nice holder for the wood boards and stain out of a couple of pieces of PVC pipe but you can use a coffee can, jar or what ever. See Photo # 9 (Right) & #10 (Below)



(All photos for the below section appear on the following page)

I floated the boards in the stain mix, removed them after a minute or so (again...no science here!) and let them dry. I suggest you use rubber gloves or your fingers will be stained (for awhile) with the shoe dye! I sometimes use my heat gun (on the low setting) to speed up the drying process by the way.

Now we come to the peeling paint process! I poured some Lacquer Thinner into a small glass (empty paint) bottle and a second bottle for the ODORLESS Mineral Spirits. For the Mineral Spirits I used an empty Solvaset Bottle as it had a neat brush stuck in the cap.

You will need to have the bottle of Acrylic ([water based](#)) paint ready as well.

I dipped the stained board into the Mineral Spirit bottle, to wet both ends. And I used the brush to wet the board with more Spirit. I got a paintbrush full of my paint and painted the board.

IF...the board is wet enough with the spirits the paint will pull away from the stained board in places achieving the look we are after. BUT...the board HAS TO BE WET!

I went one step further by loading up my (clean) brush with Lacquer thinner and wetting the painted board (do NOT paint the board with the thinner just daub it) . You want to puddle the thinner on top of the board. I did this while the white paint was still WET by the way.

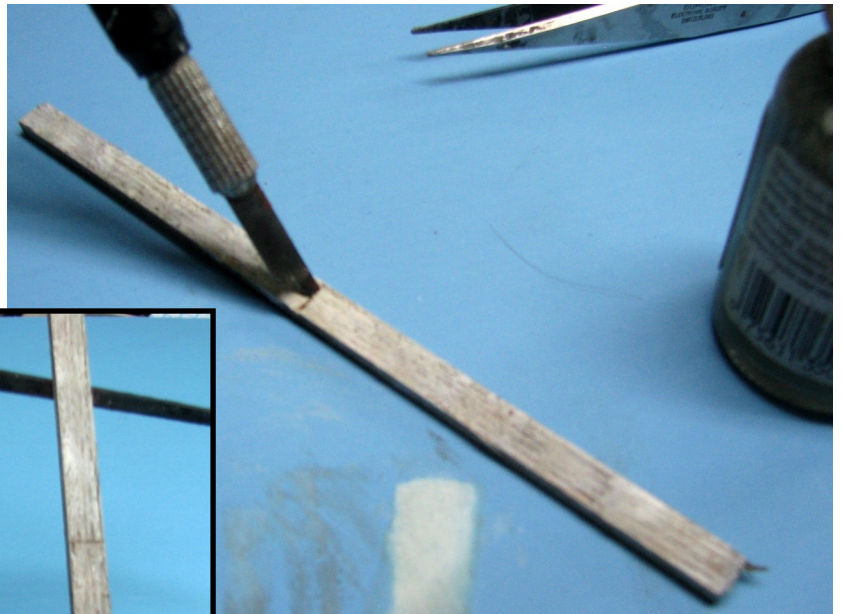
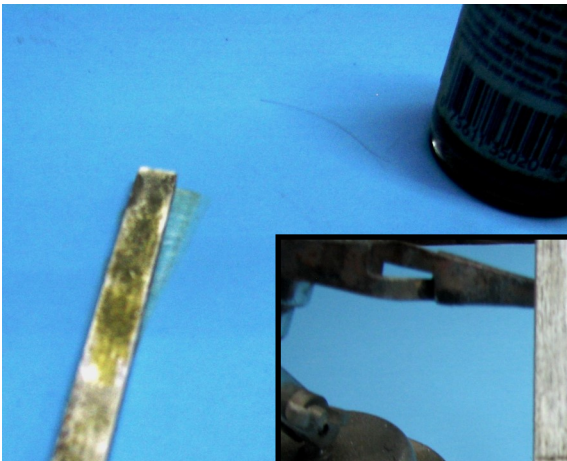
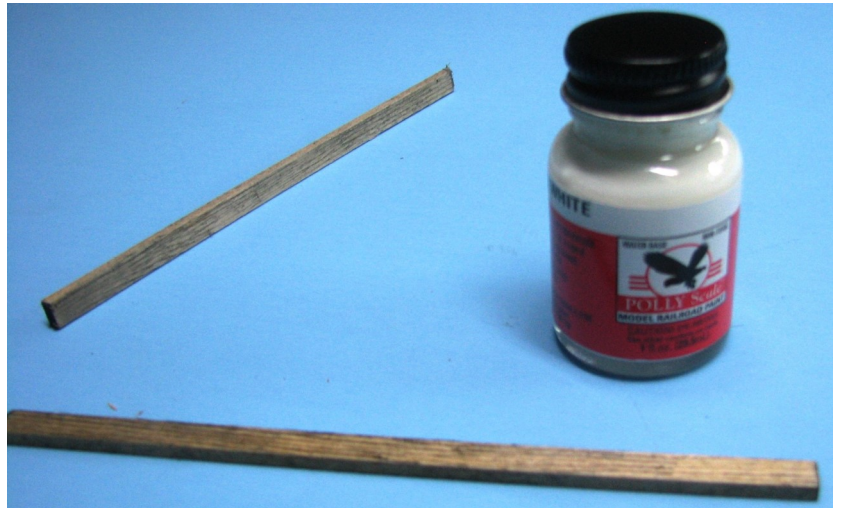
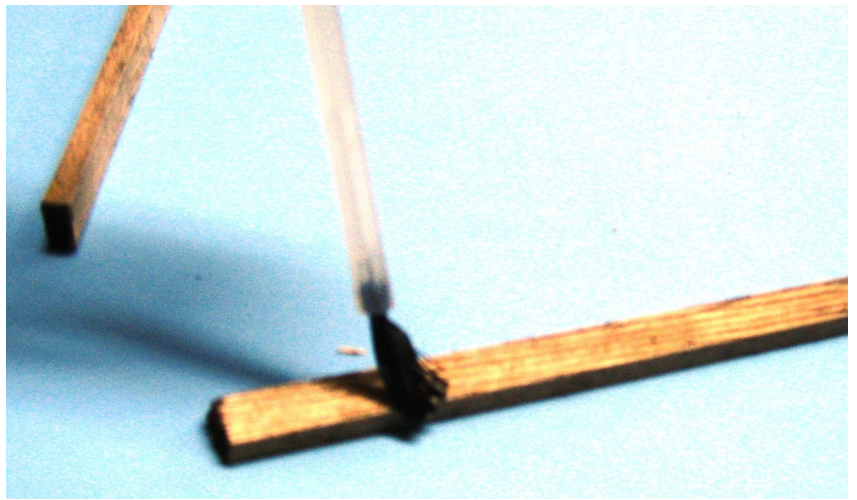
Now take a rag and Daub the board.

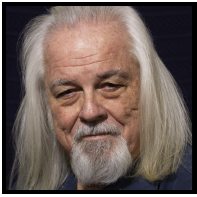
If you plan on adding nail holes and board separations, use your tools (an Xacto Knife, a sharp flat blade or even a sharpened screw driver) to create the separate board look and use a large hat pin to add the nail hole impressions) and let your boards dry. I used my heat gun again to speed things up.

We are almost done...finally! My last thing (to really make the nail holes pop out) was to wash a diluted alcohol stain (by diluted I mean use some stain from the top of the bottle of your stain mix (NOT shaken) to flood the board. If it is too light, shake the bottle of stain a bit and apply another wash. If it came out too dark just pull your board thru the rag (why we waited for the white paint to dry!). I like using a brown Shoe Dye Mix for this but black will work. In the final picture, the board on the left was stained with the black and the one on the right was done in brown.



To the left, an example of the effect Al achieves with his techniques.





**Contributor**  
**Ken Farnham**

## Hosting Operations

In 1999 I began hosting operations after building a model railroad in my home. What brought this about was having been invited to an Ops session from a Master Model Railroader John Wilkes. After a couple of visits operating on his model railroad, the bug took hold, and I wanted to have my operation on my layout.

The first OPS I conducted started well but, within about 15 minutes after starting a short circuit happened bringing the session to an abrupt halt. Scrambling to find the problem I reluctantly had to call the end to the session. Not all was lost as all the guests went to a local eatery and spent the time having lunch and the comradery that is model railroading. Upon the return home I dug into the problem and within a few minutes I found a metal screw shorting a frog in a hidden area.

Not discouraged, I have continued to have Ops on a regular schedule. In having guests join you and your layout you discover issues that, as the owner, you might overlook. As things are found by your guests your layout becomes more reliable and enjoyable.

So how does this all come to the topic of this article. First, I do enjoy having Operations and meeting new friends while gathering with old friends as well. To begin, it does not matter how large or small your layout is, you can have others over to enjoy your model railroad and a train running session.

Others have discussed how to

have Operations, many books and articles have been written discussing this topic. What I hope to bring into focus is how you might start operations. The word operations reflects how the Class 1 railroads go about their everyday schedules. Being model railroaders, we have things that reflect actual railroads or, even better, what your personal desire of what you want your railroad to be.

Many times, we can only represent a condensed segment of real life, so we need to have a reason for our railroad. This can be as simple as moving passengers or commerce in box cars. They can be grouped and shuffled to simulate actual events.

By having a second or more operators our railroad comes alive with movement and sense of purpose.

To start, all the track has been laid for the railroad. A schedule has been formulated; the schedule can be simple as move the train to here and back. Or switch a classification yard and build a train with these cars in order. One of my first layouts was just a classification yard. This Yard had a run around track where I could send and receive trains so they could be brought back to the yard as a different train that needed to be classified.

Your guests arrive, you meet and introduce everyone. You might offer refreshments. And then you would have a discussion on how your railroad runs. You provide instruction to the Operators as to how their train will operate on your layout. You provide an overall schedule of how you expect the session is to operate. You introduce your guest to your layout and explain locations, directions of travel, where trains arrive, and depart, and how switches, throttles, and equipment they will be using work. Do not forget to tell them where the facilities are located. You open for questions, which you will have

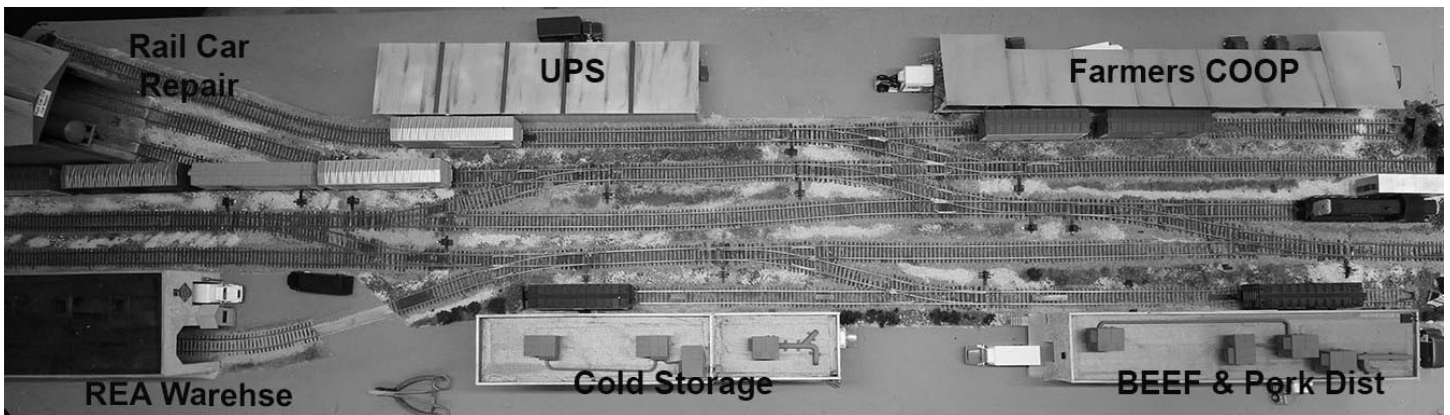
more during operations. You explain the Paperwork, what you use to switch the cars or move the trains. There are many methods available, or you may have your own, but your operators need to know how you intend them to work on the layout.

After the pre-OPS discussion you would withdraw to your railroad. Some operators may have to wait for their assignment which would be covered in the discussion. Now comes the fun part as your operators go about their assignments; if an issue arises, have them make a notation so you can correct the problem after the session. Things like a switch does not work or trains derail at a given location or even if your rolling stock malfunctions, all these items you can correct after the session. If an event happened which might terminate the session have your operator let you know at that time, it may be easily corrected and only halt the session for a brief time.

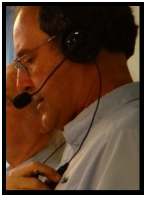
After the session and a few gray hairs more, you would have a post OPS discussion, asking question of each operator on how things went for them, assuring them that you use their comments to make a better session. So, when they return for another OPS, these issues will have been corrected.

If you have not joined an operation of a model railroad; many times at model railroad conventions in their venue Operation Sessions are offered. Modelers open their railroads to guests to join them. I offer OPS to clubs and have an open invitation to individuals on my web site ([www.fecbrevard.com](http://www.fecbrevard.com)) and have had guests from around the country join in.

Many times, we all shy away from having an operation or even opening our model railroad to others, but once you do you will find a community that embraces the same hobby as you.



How Ken spent the Pandemic—The Pineda sheds is a new peninsula on the *Florida East Coast*. Two shifts work the various spurs, an eye towards the clock since mainline freights will arrive to drop more reefers and carry off the loaded ones. It makes for a lot of action and brings more services into the mix for this dynamic operation.



**Contributor**  
Robert Raymond

## The Hill You Are Going To Die On

Some of you might have attended my clinic on building the Tuscarora that I gave at the Plant City convention this year and last. I talked at length about my interlocking tower and the attendants actually ran six scale hours of ops on it afterwards.

When I designed the tower, I combed the information available. I knew that levers were generally “normal” in forward (away from the operator) position, and “reversed” when pulled towards him. Black levers were turnouts (normalized was a straight/default route) and red levers were signals (normalized was red). The blue levers were facing point locks (which locked the turnouts in place—you had to lock them to run a signal across them). And I *assumed* (we all know the line) that the normal position was *probably* locked. I didn’t give it much thought since I couldn’t find any data. And that’s the way we coded the software.

Since then, an old train friend of mine passed away. In his estate was the wonderful book, *The Classic Railway Signal Tower*, by Stephen A. McEvoy. He worked Berk Tower (on the Northeast Corridor) in the sixties. The book details every aspect of tower operations. But my blood ran cold when I read these words...

*When a blue lock lever was normal, the associated switch, derail or bridge was unlocked. When the blue lock lever was reversed, the movable field device was locked.*



In the lower-left, there is a photo of his tower—changing routes on the busy four-track main occurred infrequently. Given that, we can see the usual “at rest” position was turnouts (black) set normal, facing point locks (blue) locked back. Looking over old *Model Railroader* articles on milling out physical interlockings and watching YouTube videos only confirmed that I’d programmed my locks backwards.

Railroads, by nature, are made up of many corporations, technologies, and rules. It’s very hard, even with probing research, to get it right. And what should you do when you get it wrong?

As my sister was prone to say, “You need to pick the hill you are going to die on.”

In this case the reversed blue lock levers drove me crazy. I pondered and paced. The worst thing was that it made a lot more sense to do it, not the Raymond way, but the Railroad way. You throw every turnout you need to. Then you lock every turnout on that route. And then, lastly, set the signals. My method was a whole lot of unlock-turnout-lock activity.

Interestingly, even though the blue lever controversy was eating a hole through my soul, I was willing to look the other way when it came to my interlocking signals. Pictured in the upper right is a home signal protecting Tuscarora. It has a number plate. Virtually every railroad has a rule that if the signal mast has a no plate, a train must stop and remain there until the aspect changes. With a plate, that signal is stop-and-proceed, meaning just that. You come to a stop, then proceed through it at restricted speed (15mph or so), watching for trains ahead of you.

But my interlockings have number plates. I can assure you that signals in the Tuscarora interlocking plant are considered absolute. A red signal likely means that there is a turnout thrown and locked ahead of you. Sure, I could maybe file them down, patch them and make them



correct. But those seven-bulb signals are (a) hard to get and (b) loaded with wires. Cutting off the plate is like tampering with an unexploded bomb. So, no, the signals stay as is. And the lever? It’s going to change. That’s my hill.

Fortunately all our interlocking software is on a single removable chip. My software guy bought a second one which we carefully programmed to reverse the lever. The original effort was two years ago and he’d gotten a new computer so my death on this particular hill cost him ten hours or so of library tinkering and software fenagling. It’s not all time lost since he has another project coming up and would have had to do this anyway.

And the worst thing? I bungled some of the logic and missed an obvious reversal, so you can unlock the turnout even if a signal has been set against it. That’s bad. So once the *Journal Box* is on its way to the printers, the postal service, and through to your eyeballs, I’ll change the code again and test it again.

But I’m going to admit—the first time I ran the new interlocking, it was like... coming home. It just makes more sense doing it that way.

So if, in your modeling career, you find yourself realizing that you bungled something critical, that the locomotive you just painted and detailed has two domes, not just one, that the rolling stock you loved has a maintenance reporting mark beyond your layout’s date, something big, something small, take a few days to consider it. Is it something you can live with? Or is it the hill you are ready to die on.

It’s your railroad. It’s your choice.

Good luck!



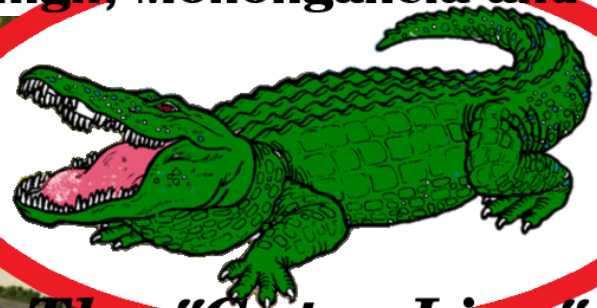
### Rolling Hot Orlando N- Trak's LM&O

Once the Unobtanium had been safely delivered via efforts of the West Virginia Northern, government authorities were faced with an unexpected problem. The covered hopper used in transport, being yellow, would stick out like a sore thumb. Soviet operatives might be able to pinpoint the location of the secret research facility by backtracking its outbound movements. In this, a bold strategy was adapted: the car was repainted with false reporting marks and sent via the PRR through Tuscarora Branch to the Martin Yard interchange with the Lehigh, Monongahela and Ohio Railroad at near Pittsburgh. From here, it would be rolled east.

SSR #1980, now flying false colors as WM #5527, is picked up by the Harris Glen local on its final extended run to Martin Yard. With the number boards swapped from 941 to 942 for the return trip, the train prepares to cross the Appalachians and return to Calypso Yard. (Right)



## Lehigh, Monongahela and Ohio



### The "Gator Line"



Storming through Pittsburgh, picking up momentum for the stiff 2.5% grade facing it, train 942 rattles through the diamonds. The One Sister Bridge and the Sixteenth Street Bridge loom in the background. (Left)

*Editor's Note: In retrospect, the oblivious crew should have probably placed the possibly-radioactive car behind the limestone cut.*



Having just worked Hidden Spur mines, the crew of 942 holds their collective breath as they ease across the aging trestle over Notman Falls. (Above)

Once clear of the trestle and reaching the summit at Harris Glen, 942 touches air brakes and eases on the dynamics as they roll down the siding, passing an idling ore train, empty after supplying the furnaces of Bethlehem Steel. (Left)



*Editor's Note: Unlike other "staged" editions, the photos in this edition of **Rolling Hot** were shot during an actual operating session at the Orlando N-Trak by accomplished photographer/local engineer John DeVasto. The face of the editor (who was piloting the ore train to the left) was clumsily photoshopped out (and replaced with a pleasant mountain background) by our limited art department.*

With setouts and meets made, 942 hums downgrade, pacing express train 95. Through the magic of scene separation and selective compression, the local is halfway to Lehigh, PA while the passenger train is making a station stop in Carbon Hill, OH. 942 will not have a chance of holding abreast of the varnish as it is about to enter a spiral tunnel and pass beneath 95's route.

The Orlando N-Trak club is open for visitors any Wednesday night at 7:00pm. Located at 15232 Old Cheney Hwy, Orlando, Florida 32828, the club hosts operations every fourth Wednesday and often press-gangs visiting boomers to work the line.



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