

# **YouTUBE MODEL BUILDERS** eMag

A Free YouTube Model Builders e-Magazine  
Produced by YouTube Model Builders.

BE PART OF THE  
COMMUNITY

**YTMB LIVE! SHOWS**  
**YTMB HANGOUT SHOWS**

VOLUME 3

[www.YouTubeModelBuilders.com](http://www.YouTubeModelBuilders.com)

MAY 2017

ARTICLES

YOUTUBE CHANNELS

COMMUNITY

TIPS & TRICKS

## **MODEL RAILROADING A FAMILY AFFAIR**

### **INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

- Modeling Trains Together, Builds A Family Bond
- Memories of My Grandfather, Frank Ellison
- Confessions of a Train Addict's Mother
- The Wife of a Model Train Enthusiast
- A Family Affair with Trains
- A Haunted Experience

Be Sure To Check Out Columns From  
Jack Hykaway, Geno Sharp, The Track  
Planner, Harry M. Haythorn,  
and Andy Crawford

Cover Photo:  
Courtesy of Josh Cohen

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT

**YouTUBE MODEL BUILDERS LIVE!**  
Join Us LIVE Every Month



# Welcome YouTube Model Builders!

**W**e are excited to present the May, 2017 issue of the **YouTube Model Builders eMag** to the community. The YouTube Model Builders “Team” is committed to putting the “eMag” together with the assistance from the model railroading community at large.

We deliver a useful and informative publication for model railroaders who travel this vast net of information. In this publication, we include many informative, tutorial-based articles, information on happenings in the community, listings of up-and-coming YouTube channels, information about the **YouTube Model Builders LIVE!** show, **Hangout Presentations**, along with general information that is inspirational in building of our model railroads.

## **Our Vision:**

To establish free, online resources as a primary source for model railroad techniques and inspiration in an ad-free, selfless service environment.

## **Our Mission:**

The mission of YouTube Model Builders is to inspire individuals for sharing model railroad building techniques through the use of YouTube and other free online resources. Our goal is not only to share knowledge in a community but also assist individuals who are learning or looking for inspiration through the online model railroading community.

— The YouTube Model Builders Team

# Editor's *Note...*

**I**t won't be too long before schools will free the children to take a well-deserved break for the summer. By then we will have planned our summer vacations and model railroading just might take a hiatus as well. Yes, I know the outdoors beckon. However, this is the perfect time to spend with family and friends, introducing them to our great hobby of model railroading. When friends and family are over for a cookout or a pool party, do take a tour of followers and the curious to the train room or the basement. This is the best time to garner more support for our hobby.

Behind every successful model railroader, is a support network of family, friends, and resources. YouTube Model Builders is one of those resources with the monthly Live!Show!, the many weekly topic-driven presentations and community-based hangouts (I have seen many friendships forged on these hangouts), as well as this eMag. When it comes to having support from family and friends, our model railroading start has always included a family member, be it a grandparent, parents, or aunts and uncles, who have introduced us to the hobby. In this issue, we celebrate that support by soliciting the viewpoints of modelers' family members.

Michael Moonan takes us through a pictorial essay describing memories of his grandfather Frank Ellison and his fascination with model trains. Jen Hanson confesses her affinity for model trains and her desire to support her family's participation in the hobby in her piece entitled "The Wife of a Model Train Enthusiast." Sam Hanson, (Jen's husband) writes about his perspective of the hobby and how it has enabled him to build a closer bond with his family. Josh Cohen's grandmother Kathy Edwards describes Josh's love of trains and model railroading that was nurtured by her and his other grandmother (Grandma Choo Choo). A.J. Kleipass and his mother Yvonne discuss how AJ's passion for model trains grew into what AJ calls a "train addiction" in their article "Confessions of a Train Addict's Mother." Lynn Terry, who enjoys photographing trains, shares her poem "A Haunted Experience" which describes a ghostly scene of lonely train tracks she captured on a misty day.

The Track Planner breaks down the definition of selective compression and how to properly apply it to our model railroad layouts. Jack Hykaway writes about how the London and Northeastern Railway (LNER) was saved with the development of their new streamlined A4 Pacific steam engines and the breaking of the speed record by their A4 Pacific Mallard. Harry Haythorn introduces us to the history and current uses of diamond railroad crossings in his column "UP-Hub." Andy Crawford describes his frustrations and struggles with finding a balance point between work, family, and model railroading time in his column "Food for Thought..."

We hope you enjoy this special "Family Affair" issue of the YouTube Model Builders eMag. Happy Model Railroading!

– **Loggin' Locos**  
Editor-In-Chief



# Table of Contents...

## The Mainline

### 06 Memories of My Grandfather, Frank Ellison

By Michael Moonan

### 16 The Wife of a Model Train Enthusiast

By Jen Hanson

### 19 MODELING TRAINS TOGETHER BUILDS A FAMILY BOND

By Sam Hanson

### 23 *A Family Affair with Trains*

By Sam Hanson

### 33 Confessions of a Train Addict's Mother

By Yvonne Kleipass and AJ Kleipass

### 50 A Haunted Experience

Photograph and Poem

By Lynn H. Terry

### 52 Google+ Hangouts and Etiquette

By YouTube Model Builders

#### About the Cover

"Grandma Choo Choo" and Josh enjoy a ride in a passenger car at the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum in Chattanooga, TN. Cover photograph was taken in 2014 by Terri Cohen (Josh's mother). Photograph Courtesy of Josh Cohen.

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## The Staging Yard

### 40 **COMMUNITY COLLAGE**

The collage showcases model railroading pictures from the community.

### 41 **Pick 3**

Pick 3 showcases three YouTube channels that stand out for their contribution to the YouTube model railroading community.

## The Branch Lines

### 26 A Perspective On Track Planning

**Selective Compression**

By William (Bill) J. Beranek —The Track Planner

### 29 Harry's UP-HUB



By Harry M. Haythorn, UPHS #4043

### 37 Geno's Corner

**The Journey of a Model Railroader**

By Geno Sharp

### 42 Jack's Junction

**ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY SIX**

By Jack Hykaway

### 54 *Food For Thought...*

*A Thin Grey Line*

By Andy Crawford

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# **YouTube Model Builders HANGOUTS**

## **We have different types of Hangout Shows each month!**

For the latest schedule updates please go to [www.YouTubeModelBuilders.com](http://www.YouTubeModelBuilders.com).



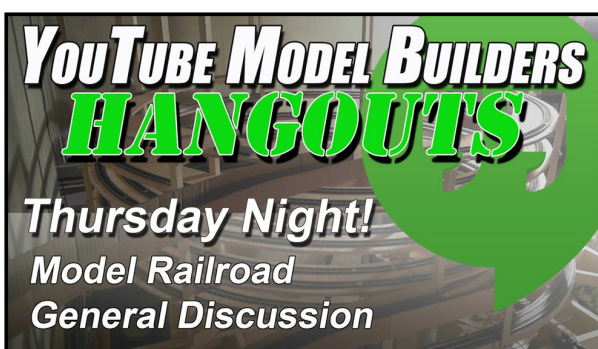
Hangout Shows are topic-driven and are hosted by Johnny of Southeast Rails and Barry Rosier. The shows include various topics and interesting guests such as Miles Hale and Bill Beranek (The Track Planner).



The MRR Tech Show is hosted by Barry Rosier and Mike Dettinger.

The MRR Tech show is all about the technology of model railroading. Covered topics include DCC, JMRI, animations, 3D-printing, and much more.

Calling all geeks!



During this Thursday night show, open presentations are topic driven and fellow YouTube modelers join in to discuss various model railroading topics.

# Memories of My Grandfather, Frank Ellison



By Michael Moonan

It's a bit worn and road-weary, but I wouldn't trade this old locomotive for anything. I don't recall if it already was in this shape when it was given to me by my Mother's Father, Frank Ellison, whom we called Grandpapa; I was about 6 years old at the time.

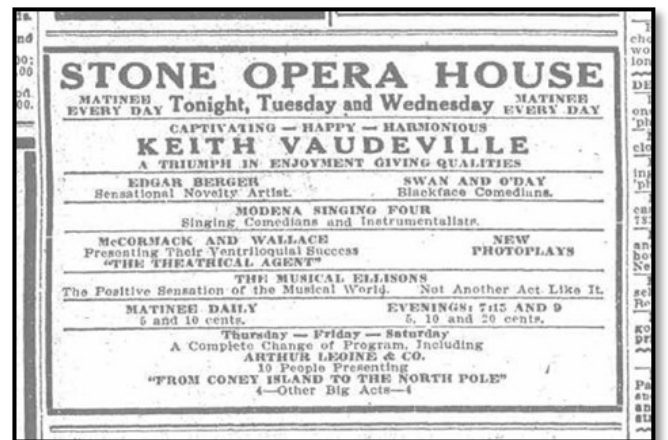
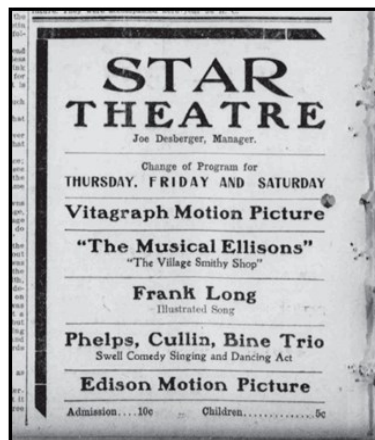
But I'm getting ahead of myself; let me fill you in on the story behind this keepsake and the man who gave it to me.







My mother would tell tales of her childhood, of a home alive with creativity, humor, and musical and theatrical talent.



Frank and wife, Nellie, had a vaudeville act known as *The Musical Ellisons*.

In their act, they would wow audiences with their prowess on the xylophone and other instruments. Frank hoped to return to the theater someday, incorporating his children into *The Musical Ellisons* act.



This photo shows my Grandmama Nellie (back row, left), my aunts and uncles, and my Mother, Virginia (circled).

Mother told stories of practicing the xylophone and other instruments with her brothers and sisters, sometimes late into the night; my Grandfather was a perfectionist, and they weren't allowed to go to bed until they had gotten it right.

But alas, it was not to be; vaudeville wasn't coming back. Frank's dreams for *The Musical Ellisons* remind me of the 1950s movie, *The Seven Little Foys*, starring Bob Hope.



No description of Grandpapa would be complete without a description of the Ellison family home; the living quarters were on the second floor, and the basement was occupied by Grandpapa's *Delta Lines Railroad* and his workshop.

All my memories of him are inextricably linked with this house. One of the bedrooms had been converted into a study, where Grandpapa kept his drafting table and drafting tools.

It was hard for me to envision this as a lively place — the way my Mother described it was during *The Musical Ellisons* years — given the somber atmosphere that enveloped the house when I was a child.





Grandpapa was of the old-school belief that small children should be seen and not heard. (You can hardly blame him, having raised seven of his own.) My brother and I (that's me on the right) had to keep the noise level to a minimum so as not to disturb Grandpapa as he worked in his study on the articles and book he was writing.

Through a set of double pocket doors was the living room, with Victorian furniture and ornate, locked glass display cases filled with interesting memorabilia. I would spend many a quiet hour in the silent semi-darkness — the curtains were usually drawn — admiring the contents of this unique space and absorbing the unspoken connection to the Ellison past.



# The Delta Lines Railroad and Beyond

This brings us back to the old locomotive; I had already destroyed all of my uncle's carefully-constructed model airplanes, and I guess Grandpapa figured I couldn't break the engine, which is larger than O gauge.



Next to the pantry in the hallway of the house was the door to the basement, the home of *The Delta Lines Railroad*. I recall that a string, threaded through eye hooks and weighted with a bolt on

the upper end, served to turn on the bare bulb on the landing halfway down the stairs.

We didn't really interact very much until I reached the age of 9 or 10 years when he began to teach me things about electricity: solenoids, resistors, splicing and soldering, and how they were used in model railroading – *The Delta Lines* in particular. A maze of wires ran beneath the tables upon which rested what was, to me, a world of wonder. I sometimes surreptitiously reached up and played with the small cars and trucks on the set, but I was only allowed to run the trains under close supervision. It was a thrill unmatched by any other to see that train roll down the tracks, under my control.

Nobody is certain how Grandpapa came to be a model railroader; my mother always said his love of trains originated because he and Grandmama traveled by train during their vaudeville days.

Once a week, when a group of fellow railroad enthusiasts visited, there was an operating session. Each of them sat at one of the many operating stations located around the layout and was responsible for the operation of that station. I was allowed to watch – but not participate, of course – on one occasion. The trains ran on a timetable, with specific tasks, purposes, and destinations. There was a large clock on the wall to make sure everything was on schedule. Their goal was to keep things perfectly coordinated, just like a real railroad, picking up and dropping off cars in different places.

When I was 11, shortly after the death of Grandmama, we moved to a distant suburb of New Orleans, and our visits became less frequent. It was during these visits, though, that Frank began to plan an HO set with me that we would later build. We drew a layout, and he showed me how to mix paint colors for painting the scenery, a skill transferred from constructing his own sets in the theater.

The HO set never materialized, but we did make plans to restore an old, 1930s model speedboat that had belonged, I suppose, to one of my uncles. We sat at the kitchen table and drew up plans while he chain-smoked and drank endless cups of coffee.

I remember going to the hobby shop with him in his brand new, white,

57' Chevy. We had a list of parts needed to complete the speedboat, but not all of them were available that day; we bought the driveshaft and the propeller, but the right motor wasn't in stock. The boat was never completed.

Later that year (1957), we moved to the Washington, D.C. area. I seldom saw Grandpapa after that, but I will always remember the thrill of seeing that *Delta Lines* train, controlled by my hand on the sliding wooden throttle, and hearing – and yes, feeling – the smooth sound of it rolling down the rails. At that moment, I instantly understood Frank's fascination with model trains. 🚂



## About the Author

Michael Moonan was born in New Orleans, LA, and he lived there until his family moved to the Washington, D.C. area. He went to college in Kentucky and graduated with a double major in psychology and English literature. After graduation, he returned to the D.C. area, where he lived and worked until 1992. He now lives in Mexico, where he is employed at a public university as an English professor. He has four children ages 18 to 49.



# YouTube Model Builders Presents



Next Show—June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
8 PM Central / 9 PM Eastern

**All Newbies Welcome!**

**Please join YouTube Model Builders along with Chris Heili and guest panelists, who will build live, various projects using the Arduino platform. \* Projects include lighting, sensors, servo control, and animation. Each project is quite easily accomplishable by any beginner hobbyist.**

**Let's explore and learn together some of the coolest projects in model railroading. We encourage you to ask questions directly to the presenters and chat live with them during the workshops. Share videos, pictures, and comments of your accomplishments on our [YouTube Model Railroaders Google+](#) community page.**

\* Participation in workshops requires an [Arduino based project kit and breadboards](#). For more information, please see the [YouTube Model Railroaders Google+](#) community page and posts announcing the workshops.



# **YouTube Model Builders Proudly Presents The FineScale Live Build Show!**

**Next Show Is June 13th, 2017**

Have you been reluctant to approach wood and craftsman structure kit construction? Are you fascinated with highly-detailed weathered structures and dioramas you see within model railroading publications? Then this is the show for you!

Join Miles Hale and Barry Rosier, along with your hosts Andy Crawford and Johnny of Southeast Rails, as they take you from beginning to end of constructing highly-detailed wood structures and scenery - from box opening to complete dioramas.

In this show you will:

- Learn from a live, “camera-down”, clinic-style approach to construction.
- Obtain practical fine-scale modeling tips and techniques.
- Understand multiple methods for each step of the construction process.
- Develop your modeling skills and overcome the fear of fine-scale modeling.
- Build confidence in your own abilities as a modeler.

Please join us, build along, and learn as you go. We encourage you to ask questions directly to the presenters and chat live with them during the show. Then share videos, pictures, and comments of your progress on our [YouTube Model Railroaders Google+](#) community page.

# The Wife of a Model Train Enthusiast



By Jen Hanson

I remember the day the obstetrician declared our unborn baby was a boy. A boy? Ugh ... I should have seen this coming! After all, I grew up with three bossy older brothers. “Don’t touch that!” they would say. “Put that down, Jennifer! How dare you touch my stuff! Stay out! No girls allowed! Do not touch my trains!” I couldn’t relate to my older sister because she was busy painting her face in the mirror for two hours a day. Like, really? Who has time for that? She was the cheerleader and didn’t want

to throw a baseball because she was worried she would break a nail; talk about a major buzz kill. But my older brothers would play baseball with me. Sure, they often made me fetch the ball in the field. Here I am, running through the fields in my overalls, looking for our only baseball in the tall grass. Unlike my older sister, who was afraid of snakes, I had no fear back then. I did whatever my older brothers did. I was the youngest of five children in a middle-class home.

One day, my older brothers were given train sets. Oh cool! They spent hours every day setting up the trains. But as a little girl, I became entranced by those early 80s engines. I remember that they were Lionel, and some of their trains puffed smoke, lit up, and made whistling sounds. I was a tiny little thing and used to sit in the middle of their train track, just watching. I often pictured myself onboard the train. Where would we go? What would we see? Would we see the Colorado Rocky Mountains? Would we see the desert? Would we see monstrous cities built on hills? Would we see the vast oceans? My imagination ran wild (and still does today).

Now, back to that ultrasound ... a boy! Terror struck me at first. Then I took a ragged breath. Well, thank goodness it isn’t a girl! What if she turned out like her Aunt Becky, primping and teasing her hair in front of a mirror? No, we’re better off with a boy. So, on December 29, 2005, Zachary Hanson was born. He was as mad as a pit bull. His face was all scrunched up and he didn’t want to leave me. I remember the look on Sam’s face. He was overjoyed: a boy! Zach is here!

*Figure 1. A happy little boy opens the gift of a CSX locomotive.*







*Figure 2. Life looks good from the inside of an oval of track.*

As our son grew, he went through his “Cars” phase. And then he discovered “Thomas the Tank Engine.” He had to have every train on that list. You could blame us since he was our firstborn; we spoiled him rotten because we struggled to have a second baby. We bought him tunnels and bridges, as well as Emily, James, Oliver, Henry, Thomas, and a variety of other little toy trains.

It wasn’t until I was pregnant with our second son, Daniel that I brought up the topic of model trains (as opposed to toy trains). I remember lying in bed next to Sam as our second son shifted his legs and arms around inside me. When I brought up the story of my brothers having a model train back in the 80s, Sam said he had a model train, too! I asked him, “Do they still do that anymore?” Sam shrugged his shoulders and responded, “I don’t know, but I can find out.”

To my husband’s excitement, he found a fellow model railroad enthusiast and YouTuber, Eric Siegel, and Sam was blown away. Not only did I lose my husband to the hobby that day, but I lost my oldest son, too. Here they were, sitting on a computer watching Eric talk about his dad. Eric showed them a lot of O scale model trains. My husband and brothers had HO scale model trains; they looked tiny compared to the O scale. Eric stood there proudly in front of the camera as he showed all his trains to us. My family of soon-to-be-four disappeared in front of a computer. “Are you hungry?” I asked. “Nope, we already ate,” my husband said. He pointed at the screen and said, “Eric is going to build his layout in his entire basement!”

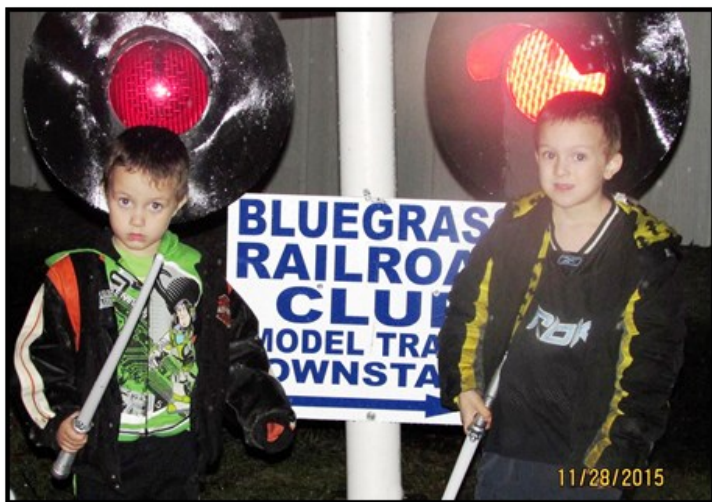
*“Really? And his wife is going to let him do that? Is she crazy?”* I didn’t say that last part out loud, but the thought did cross my mind. I didn’t

warm up to the idea at first, but my answer came when I saw the joy in their eyes. I saw my husband and sons bond together, and Zach fell in love with the trains.

By the time our third son Jasper was born in 2009, I began to give up on the idea of a daughter. I came to grips with having more males in my house than women. We did T-ball, swimming, and the other activities one does with children.

The obstetrician told us not to have another baby or my life would be in jeopardy; in fact, I could have ruptured with Jasper. That scared us. I cried and lamented on not having a daughter. So, I started writing books, mainly to conceal the pain of never having a girl. I put my idea of a little girl into a novel to help me get over the grief. Yeah, it did feel like I was being left out in the cold. But, I love our sons: three remarkable little boys who have stolen their daddy’s heart.

Zach, my little Pitbull made me play with his toy trains. We spent hours unscrewing the bottom of his trains and putting more batteries in them. He would giggle and cheer when Thomas clacked away on his plastic train track. Zach also had this nasty habit of leaving his train tracks out. So, when you were stumbling to the kitchen for a baby bottle and one of those suckers hit the soles of your feet, you might say a few swear words and hop around in the kitchen. I can’t tell you how many trains I replaced from stepping on them; you can’t see in the dark and your eyes are half-open and you have a baby wanting food. At times like those, you aren’t on the lookout for James



*Figure 3. Jasper (left) and Daniel (right) having fun checking out model trains at the Kentucky Horsepark in Georgetown, Kentucky.*

the engine; I replaced him at least three times. The only train we didn't replace was Toby.

But yes, I bought my husband his first model train in a long time. His eyes lit up like the fourth of July. (Hey, for a girl, I didn't do too bad.) I bought him a green and black Burlington Northern, O scale train. Then I bought him a huge train that was blue and yellow, a CSX O scale model train (actually, it was a gift for both Zach and Sam). The joy on their faces that year said it all.

The first photo (Figure 1) shows Zach, who was almost six years old. The little boy in the pajamas, standing up is our youngest son, Jasper. He was only two years old at the time. I still remember the joy and the look of surprise on his face when he opened his presents. And remember how I was that little girl who sat in the middle of my brothers' train tracks? As you can see in the other photo (Figure 2), the tradition carries on! Figure 3 is a photograph of Jasper and Daniel looking at model trains at the Kentucky Horsepark in Georgetown, Kentucky.

History has a funny way of repeating itself, don't you think? Yes, I love

trains, and I love the joy it brings to my entire family. As for that little girl? Well, I had surgery, and by a miracle, our daughter and final child, Samara, was born on my birthday. And guess what? She wants a pink and purple train. Zachary is still into trains, but he doesn't like the work involved in setting up everything. That's okay because he still enjoys trains.

As for me? I'll continue to write and hope for a publishing contract. I don't get into fashion, jewelry, or purses. I collect books, Star Wars, The Walking Dead, and Lord of the Rings stuff. I'm not your average wife. I don't complain or nag at my husband, and I'm cool. Hey, I enjoy those trains too; put in a steam locomotive and I'm hooked! I sit and read books while the husband builds his grand layout. Just as long as I have a place to write, I don't care. Build the entire house out of model trains. But let me tell you a secret: I can't go to sleep unless I hear an actual train whistle down the road from us. Most people hate hearing trains but it relaxes me. It's a soothing balm, and I can sleep. It reassures me in a weird way. I love listening to the rain and the trains. 🚂

## About the Author

Jen Hanson is a writer, and currently working on an epic fantasy, "Red Skies (formerly 'The Enforcers')."

She spends her time chasing around four children: Zachary, Daniel, Jasper, and Samara while editing and writing. She shares an interest in model trains with her husband, Samuel Hanson.

Jen enjoys trains, reading books, reviewing books, vlogging on YouTube, writing tips, giving self-publishing advice, discussing mental health, autoimmune diseases, and is a child advocate.

She has earned three "best fantasy romance" awards from the months of November to February 2014, from allromance.com for three of her previously titled books: "Brotherhood in Blood," "Fairies of Light," and "Bloody Vows." Jen is currently deep in the weeds with editing.



**YouTube Model Builders  
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shows discussing  
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YouTube, and Web  
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**Check out the LIVE show  
that airs monthly.  
— Free to you!**

# MODELING TRAINS TOGETHER BUILDS A FAMILY BOND



By Sam Hanson

**C**hristmas of 1977 was just coming to a close when Grandpa said he had another present for me. I was surprised and excited to see what gift I had received, and Grandpa soon arrived with a huge gift (well, in my eyes it was huge). I tore the paper and my wondering eyes beheld a Lionel steam engine train set (see Figure 1). WOW! I was shocked, to say the least.

You could only imagine my excitement. I tore open the box and put the train set together right away. That Christmas was what sparked my lifelong obsession with trains – my Grandfather and I would play with the set every weekend, and we would come up with new ways to run the train. Over time, he would

buy more track to add to our fun.

As a kid, Grandpa often took me to the Galesburg Railroad Museum (see Figure 2). They have an old CB&Q Pullman *Meath* parlor car and a caboose. My Grandfather instilled in me an appreciation of the beauty and importance of trains.

Visiting the museum was something I always looked forward to doing. I enjoyed spending time with Grandpa and seeing the trains; it soon became our family “thing,” as I would call it. The visits brought Grandpa and me closer together. Unfortunately, he passed away in 1980. While I miss him greatly, the lessons he taught me about family being a whole unit and doing things together have stayed with me.

Unfortunately, I didn’t have the same bond with my parents and trains. They felt that trains were toys, and I needed to grow up. We moved to Abingdon, Illinois, and we lived next to the train tracks. I still had the love of trains, but I expressed it differently. I would sit out on the back steps and watch

the trains go by. The town had a walking bridge that went over the tracks, and it was my favorite spot to go (see Figure 3). I would always think back to Grandpa and all the good times we had together.

## Christmas of 2008 & 2011

Fast forward to the year 2008, at Christmas. My wife and I were going to surprise our son Zachary with Thomas the Tank Engine. At this point, I had put my love of trains on the back burner – it seemed that I had allowed life to stand in the way of the passion I had as a kid. It didn’t happen overnight, but getting Thomas the Tank Engine for Zach slowly pulled me back into my love of trains. I found myself buying more Thomas track to make a huge layout on the floor. He had various engines and so much track; I would spend countless hours with Zach and Thomas. We built new and different layouts, which kept Zach and I entertained with brand-new routes zig-zagging across the floor.

Soon after, I told my wife that I would like to start my own train layout. Zach was beginning to love real trains, and he was nearly ready to “graduate” from the Thomas set into something different. We bought him

*Figure 1. My first train set from Lionel.*







*Figure 2. The Pullman Meath parlor car sits outside of the Galesburg Railroad Museum in Illinois.  
Photograph By Peter Van den Bossche [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons.*

his own CSX Lionel ready-to-run set (see Figures 4 & 5). It felt like I was with my grandpa again. Only this time, I shared the hobby with my oldest son.

## **Girls & Wives Love Trains, Too!**

The building of family unity can come in many different forms. I used trains to bring everybody together. In the beginning, Zach and I were the only ones involved. We did videos and built two layouts together. There are no words to describe the closeness we shared thanks to those layout projects.

The younger kids showed interest in modeling their own ways. They always wanted to help whenever they could. (See Figures 6 & 7)

My daughter, Samara, will see me on the computer and ask me if I'm watching train videos. She often tells

me that she loves watching train videos. She will climb up in my lap and watch the trains roll by with me, sometimes for hours. Now Samara wants a pink train. A pink train? What on earth! Even though she's a

girl, she can still become a part of our family trainset. As her dad, I will find Samara a pink train.

To have my kids interested and involved with trains is awesome, but

*Figure 3. The Walking Bridge in Abingdon, Illinois.*







*Figure 4 (left). Zachary Hanson and his ready-to-run, Lionel CSX train set.*

*Figure 5 (right). Zachary's ready-to-run CSX train set.*

our family bond doesn't end with them. What if I told you that my wife is involved, also? Some say it wouldn't ever happen. I had heard other wives say, "as long as he is happy, I don't care if he 'plays' with trains." My wife, Jennifer, has never taken that approach; she always has been behind me in the hobby. She always has kept behind the scenes until recently, when she – a writer of several books – took on the role of

assisting in editing the YouTube Model Builders eMag. Shoot! She even bought several HO and O scale trains for me – I truly have a wonderful wife!

## Coming Together

My family has come together with the aid of model trains; I call it "Hanson Trains." I was looking for a name for my railroad layout, and I

was having trouble coming up with a good one until one day when my wife said she wanted to run her own trains – and she wants to run Z scale equipment! The fact that my wife wants to run trains is awesome for us; so I decided to use our initials in the new name. The layout became the J & S Railroad, with our kids in tow (see Figure 9). Growing old with my wife and modeling trains together is a dream come true. I

*Figure 6 (left). Our two middle sons, Daniel & Jasper Hanson playing with Thomas & Friends. Figure 7 (right). Daniel Hanson falling in love with a Z-scale model at the Kentucky Horsepark in Georgetown, Kentucky.*





*Figure 8. Samara Hanson fell asleep watching YouTube videos on model trains with dreams of owning a pink train set.*

hope through this adventure I will pass down the love of trains to my family of future hobbyists. This hobby has brought us so much closer as a family, and we've made a lot of great memories in the process. 🚂

## About the Author

Sam Hanson is a YouTube model vlogger who is currently rebuilding his third layout in HO scale. He was a previous O scale model vlogger. He works outside the home, five days a week while his wife, Jen Hanson holds down the fort at home. Father to Zachary, Daniel, Jasper, and Samara; he shares his passion and love for trains with his family.

Google+ YouTube Model

Railroaders Community! This is the place to be to discuss model railroading, YouTube production, and most of all, share your model railroading layouts and videos!

Look for future videos on his YouTube channel that deal with his layout, trains, and the joys of being a father. In June of 2017, Sam will be recruiting his wife on another future YouTube channel, coming soon!

Sam Hanson's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5x8QvQeD6DSW-EBdX4GXsA>.

*Figure 9. Our Railroad Crew. Left to Right: Jasper, Zachary, Daniel, and Samara Hanson in front. (On a caboose in Sadieville, Kentucky.)*





# A Family Affair with Trains



**By Kathy Edwards**

## “Oh, Grandma, isn’t this beautiful?”

Josh exclaimed as we watched the Norfolk Southern 3407 round the bend somewhere near Enon Valley, Pennsylvania. “Where are we going to next, Josh?” I asked. He replied, “We are going exploring, Grandma.” Ever since Josh was a little boy, I have been his playmate, dispatcher, and train watching companion. After a long day of train watching and exploring, Josh would crawl into bed

and say “Oh, Grandma, I had fun!”

I remember getting a phone call from Josh’s other Grandmother (Joyce) in Alabama, better known as “Grandma Choo Choo” (she earned this name by purchasing him a fleet of Thomas the Tank Engine trains). She and Josh had been train-watching at the U.S. Steel pipe works plant when Josh started talking to a train engineer who was waiting to dispatch with a full consist. After about an hour of talking, the engineer invited Josh into the cab, and he was al-

lowed to move the train! Afterward, as they were driving home, Josh suddenly asked Grandma Choo Choo to pull off the road; he just had to make a phone call to his other Grandma in Ohio (me). (see Figure 1). I can still hear the excitement in his voice on the other end of the phone: “I drove a Norfolk Southern train in Alabama! Oh, Grandma, I had fun!”

Another time, Josh and I were visiting the [Canfield War Vet Museum](#) in Canfield, Ohio; the Museum housed a train club in the basement, and the club had several different gauges of train layouts. Josh and Jack Whitehouse – the last member of that original train club – became fast friends. While working on a steam locomotive, Jack wished aloud that they had more help; Josh replied, “Mr. Whitehouse, we should start a train club!” Jack agreed, and the Canfield Model Railroaders was born. As we left the Museum that day, Josh looked at me and said, “Oh, Grandma, I had fun!”

After just a few weeks, the new club began to grow (see Figure 2). The

*Figure 1. Grandma Kathy Edwards, sitting in Josh’s layout room.*





*Figure 2 (left). Mr. Whitehouse (with the beard) works with these young Club members. Josh is in the center, back.*  
*Figure 3 (right). A train prepares to round the bend on one of the Club's layouts.*

club had inherited the layouts of the previous club, and the members rearranged the layouts, changed their era, and updated the scenery (see Figure 3). Our [club](#) now sees visitors from all parts of the world, and members are present to greet them and give tours of our fabulous layouts. Acting as tour guide is one of

Josh's favorite activities, plus he currently is creating an operation plan for the club's layouts. Memorial Day is a great family day at the museum, with a parade and cookout, thanking our veterans for their service!

In addition, every Tuesday you will find Josh and his Step-Dad enjoying

"boys' night" by working tirelessly on his 12'x15' layout in the basement. Grandpap Bill (my husband), who once worked at PRR Conway yard, enjoys operating sessions with Josh (see Figure 4); these sessions typically are held once a month during the winter. As a tribute to Grandpap, Josh replicated Freedom,



*Figure 4. Grandpap Bill Edwards (foreground) and Dave Haslett (background) during a Coal & Steel Railroad operating session.*





his favorite photo subjects are trains.

I am very grateful to have the opportunity to be involved in this young man's life. To be there for all the fun moments, such as eating at a McDonalds by the train tracks and meeting the railroad police. I hope someday I'll see a Norfolk Southern train speeding down the tracks with Josh, as the smiling engineer, waving and tooting his horn at the train watchers! "OH! Joshua, I had a fun day!" 🚂

## About the Author

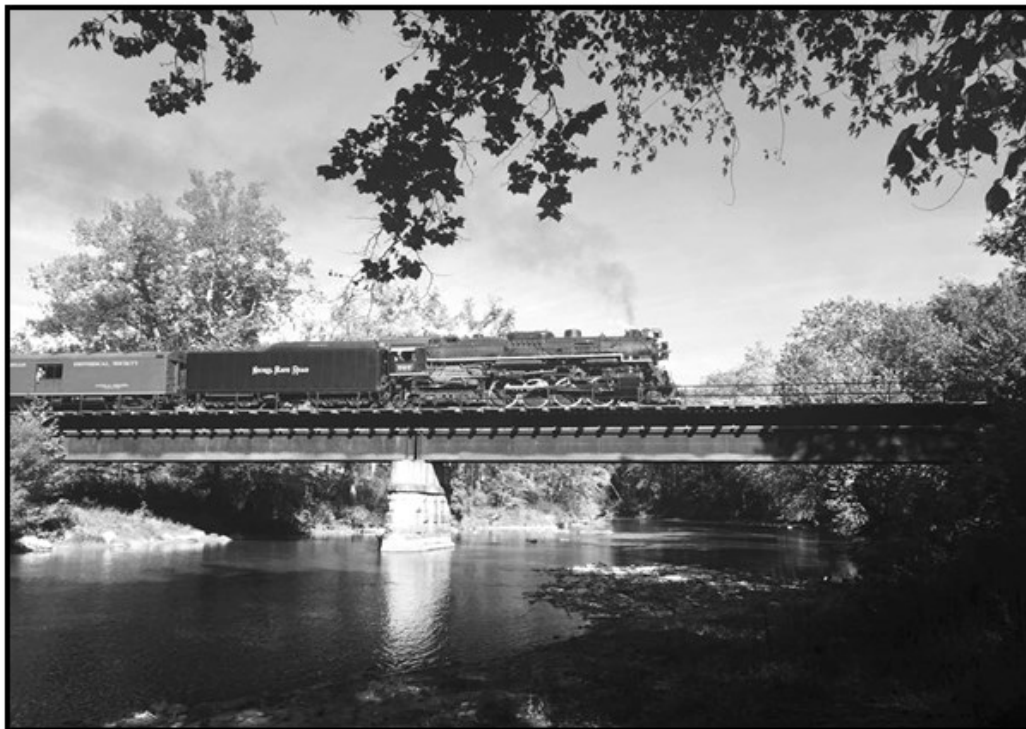
Kathy Edwards is a retired florist living in New Waterford, Ohio. She has three children and four grandchildren; Josh Cohen is one of those grandchildren. She and her husband Bill live along the NS Fort Wayne line, and Josh [models](#) that railroad as it was in the year 1950.

*Figure 5. Nickel Plate Road #765 (here renumbered as #767) on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad. For these excursion trips in 2016, the locomotive was cosmetically changed to the number it once wore when on display. Photograph by Josh Cohen.*

Pennsylvania, where Grandpap was raised. Throughout the op sessions, Grandpap enjoys telling Josh the history of that small town. Josh even commissioned me to be the "scenery assistant." Josh's mom serves a great lunch for the crews

during the op sessions, along with Josh's favorite dessert, Allagash cake.

Josh now is 18 years old, and he has developed into quite a talented model railroader and photographer (see Figures 5 and 6). Needless to say,



*Figure 6. Nickel Plate Road engine "#767" puts on an impressive show running across the Cuyahoga River.*

*Photograph by Josh Cohen.*

# A Perspective On Track Planning



By William (Bill) J. Beranek —The Track Planner

## Selective *Compression*

**F**or years, prototype modelers have had a running battle with “selective compression.” Prototype modelers tend to focus on one railroad. It can be an existing railroad or one of the “fallen flag” railroads.

Selective compression is one of the pitfalls of prototype modeling. Many prototype modelers invest so much time and effort studying the prototype that when they get around to building a layout, they have a hard time deciding what to include and what to leave out.

When designing for prototype modelers, I have to be aware of how the prototype looked within a given region and era. My clients tend to know much more about the prototype than I ever would. Concerns from the client usually arise when I incorporate “selective compression” into the design. For some prototype modelers, it is very hard to deviate from how the prototype looked or how things were done.

I have seen this type of attitude cause “paralysis by analysis.” The prototype modeler wants to build the perfect prototype model. But in extreme cases, they end up building nothing, because they can’t decide what to leave out. Some have studied the prototype to the point

where they know the complete history and every detail regarding how the prototype operated; I believe that some know more about their prototype than the people who work for the railroad.

In many cases, they’ve studied the prototype for years, in hope that one day they will build their dream layout. Unfortunately, they never seem to get past the planning stage. For some, it’s all about the hunt for information, not about a model railroad, and that’s perfectly okay! There’s nothing wrong with the quest for knowledge. In this age of Google, the information is out there. (And in many cases, there is too much information!)

Regardless, the bottom line is this: for those individuals whose prime objective is to build a model railroad, selective compression is a reality, not an option.

### Definition

One definition of “selective compression” – within the context of model railroading – is, “a technique used by modelers to compress out features of the prototype to fit the available space, while still keeping those key features recognizable in the model.”

In my mind, selective compression is about omitting things that do not add to the overall “believability” of the layout. The trick always has been reaching an appropriate balance between the real world and the model world.

### The Prototype vs. The Model

Model railroading has needed and always will need to incorporate some form of compression. The main areas where selective compression is most notable are scenery, track, and structures. Regardless of how large of a space you have, you will need to incorporate some form of selective compression in all three areas. I’ve operated on layouts that take up as little as 100 square feet, and I’ve operated on the Colorado Model Railroad Museum layout, which encompasses 9,700 square feet! Regardless of their size, both required some type of selective compression.

### Scenery

Scenery requires the greatest amount of selective compression. There is simply no way to model scenery inch-for-inch. One of the best examples are model cities: has there ever been a layout where the

builder modeled a major city structure-for-structure? I highly doubt it. I like to design plans that incorporate mostly rural scenes. It is much easier to compress a rural scene, as compared to a large city. Most of my designs contain small rural towns with just a few structures. In many cases, you only need to include three or four buildings to give the impression of a small rural community. Large cities are usually represented (on my designs) by hidden staging – that is, the places trains “go to” or “come from.”

## Tracks

Classification yards and engine servicing facilities are common areas where selective compression comes into play. Even the smallest short-line railroad will have a classification yard and service area too large to model track-for-track and structure-for-structure on the average-sized layout.

The physical distances between rural towns is an area where modelers and designers do extreme selective compression. In HO, a scale mile is just over 60 feet. In rural America, if the towns were fifteen miles apart, on average, you would need approximately 900 linear feet of HO track between towns!

## Structures & Industries

Trackside industries are another area where extreme selective compression comes into play. One of

the best examples is a steel mill; unless you have thousands of square feet available, it is impossible to design an average-sized steel mill one-to-one. The complexity of the industry, the massive size of the buildings, and the sheer number of tracks within a steel mill prevent all but the largest layouts from coming close to modeling the full industry. The layouts that most successfully represent this industry are ones where the builder has concentrated solely on steel mill operations. That is, the mill is the major focal point of the layout.

The modern grain elevator complex is another good example; it would not be unusual for a modern grain complex to ship/receive fifty or more cars per day. How many home layouts do you know of that can handle one hundred grain cars (fifty in and fifty out) per operating session?

It's a safe bet that there's lots of selective cropping taking place when modeling intermodal operations. Do a Google Earth search for intermodal yards; even the average intermodal yard is many times larger than can be depicted accurately on a model railroad. I've operated on a 2,700-square-foot, modern-era, home layout that has an intermodal yard. Even on this large layout, the owner had to compress the intermodal yard down to three or four tracks, including storage tracks. The owner designed the yard to sit along the front edge of the benchwork, giving the

illusion that the intermodal yard extends beyond the front edge of the benchwork.

## Selective Compression vs. Believability

As I stated above, I like to design track plans with rural scenes versus city scenes. Rural scenes can be, by their very nature, smaller in scope. Rural scenes can be selectively compressed without losing the fidelity of the scene. That said, when I design a plan with largely rural scenery, I have to be careful not to compress the scenes too much.

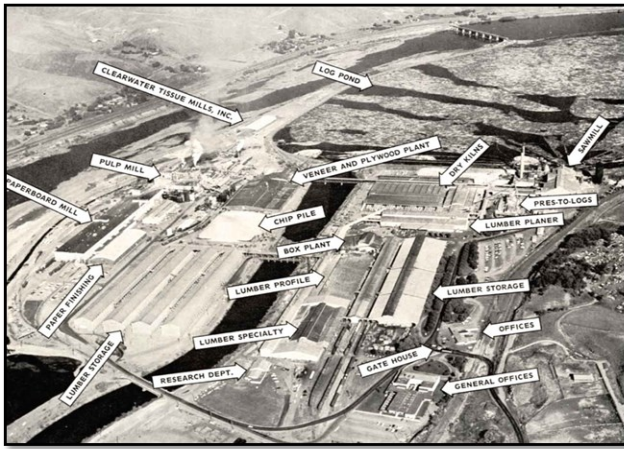
A good example of over-compression is when rural towns are spaced too closely together. Have you ever operated on layouts where consists are so long that the engine is arriving in one town while the caboose or end-of-train has yet to leave the previous town? (I have.) That's an example of a believability issue. There's a fine line between selective compression and believability. Achieving a believable balance is one secret to a successful layout.

When we look at the words “selective” and “compression” separately, we come up with compatible, but separate meanings for each word. In my opinion, “selective” – in the context of model railroads – means, “if it's not important, don't model it!” Likewise, “compression” means, “whatever you do model, compress it!” Selective compression is about omitting things that do not



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*Figure 1(left). Aerial view of the Potlatch Paper Mill and associated industries in Lewiston, Idaho.*

*Figure 2 (right). The paper mill on my Camas Prairie Railroad.*

“add” to the layout. When the two words are combined and used correctly, that creates “believability.”

## Example of Extreme Selective Compression

On my previous layout, I modeled the Camas Prairie RR in west central Idaho. In the town of Lewiston, ID, the largest employer is the Potlatch Paper Mill. (See Figure 1.) Since I modeled Lewiston, I wanted to represent the paper mill. Looking at the photo, you instantly realize there is no way to model accurately a complex that large. The complete, prototypical mill takes up hundreds of acres and has dozens of structures.

My CPRR track plan was an “around-the-wall, center-peninsula” design, which means that all benchwork was relatively narrow. The space I dedicated to the paper mill measured approximately 2' x 10'. (See Figure 2.) With a space that small, I had to do what I call “extreme selective compression.” Out of the dozens of buildings on the prototype, I chose only two! One had three tracks servicing the building, which created a lot of traffic during operating ses-

sions. Given the track arrangement into and out of the plant, even an experienced operator could spend upwards of 45 minutes (in real-time) switching out the six tracks that made up the paper mill complex. During operating sessions, operators would pick up between 10 and 15 cars, while dropping off an equal number. The interesting thing about the paper mill job was its popularity with operators; it was one of the most sought-after jobs on the CPRR.

## In Conclusion

Let “selective compression” be your friend. Don’t treat it as a negative. If you’re a prototype modeler, it would be best to think “outside the box” rather than “inside the box.” By allowing yourself to “let go” of things that drew you to the prototype, you will free up your creative mind. Then, you can put down the books, get out of the recliner, and start building your dream layout!

Unless all of your friends also are into prototype modeling, most visitors to your layout will not know that you left out any section of track or industry – or that you placed an

industry on the wrong side of the mainline, relative to the prototype.

Remember that “selective compression” can be your best friend. Likewise, “paralysis by analysis” can be your worst enemy. 🚂

## About the Author

Bill Beranek - The Track Planner has over forty years in the model railroading hobby. Bill enjoys golfing, travelling, and of course designing “prototypical operations” focused track plans. He has been a member of a local 135+ member model railroad club since 2003 and has served twice as the club’s president, twice as a board member, and is currently serving as the club’s treasurer.

Bill is currently working on his latest triple-deck HO scale layout depicting the SP&S (Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway) in southern Washington and the OTL (Oregon Trunk Line) on the upper level in northern Oregon in the mid-50s.

You can find more about Bill—The Track Planner at:

[www.thetrackplanner.com](http://www.thetrackplanner.com).

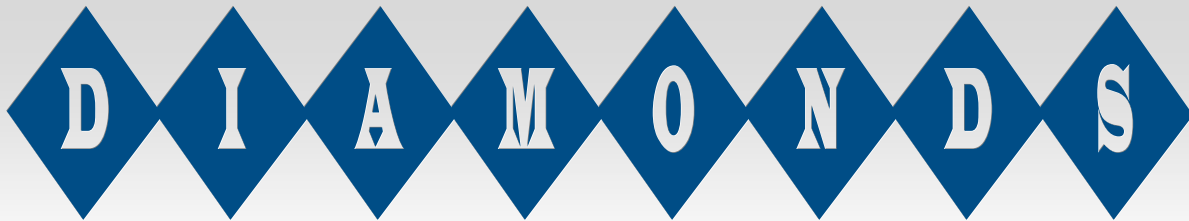


# HARRY'S



# UP-HUB

Harry M. Haythorn, UPHS #4043



## Railroad Crossings at Grade

**A** railroad diamond is formed by the crossing of one track over another at grade; the diamond is formed in the empty space between the two rails. Diamonds are forever and known for their beauty and luster, but in the railroad world, they are not permanent fixtures by any means. In fact, one of the only things railroad diamonds have in common with the rare stones of the same name is their immense cost – railroad dia-

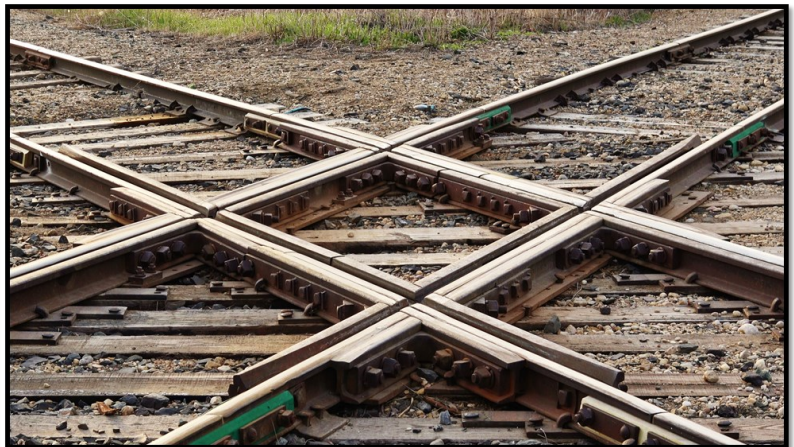
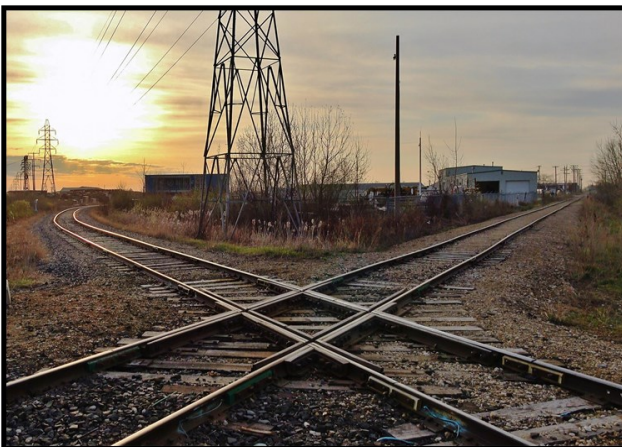
monds often cost up to 100 times more than normal track. However, the cost of the diamond itself is not the only capital spending that the railroads must fork out; the wheels of the locomotives and rolling stock take a beating as they slam across the diamonds. The slamming and banging of train wheels passing over at speed are the reason why diamonds require more maintenance than any other piece of track work. Their life span is measured in mere

months – most last 36 months or less.

### History of Diamond Crossings

In the flurry of railroad building in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, surveyors and track crews often ran into trouble when it came to crossing another railroad. The most obvious option to keep traffic flowing was a flyover on a viaduct or dig

*Example photos of a simple diamond crossing. Notice the diamond shape formed at the center of the crossing.*  
*Photographs by Jack Hykaway.*



a duck-under, but that cost a lot of money and manpower and would slow the construction crews considerably. The only other solution was to cross on level ground at grade. Casting a frog at 90 degrees and keeping each route level ensured the construction could continue with minimal delay. The bill for the newly-constructed diamond was usually paid by the second railroad to reach the location.

Once the new diamond was built and in service, the first railroad company to construct a line through the location usually had priority on the crossing and usually provided a tower with staff that controlled the signals that governed train movement over the crossing. There were many types of crossing control systems; everything from a flag to stop signs, and gates to ball signals and semaphores, then finally to absolute block signals and automated block signals

as well as multiple others. These signals were controlled by the staff of the control tower on-site.

As technology became more and more sophisticated, most diamond towers were condemned and the crossing was automated with block signals controlled by a dispatcher hundreds or even thousands of miles away. One of the busiest diamonds in the golden age of railroading was the Grand Crossing in Chicago, where a total of 14 tracks intersected. Six tracks, running south-to-north, belonging to the Illinois Central crossed eight tracks from the New York Central Railroad and the Pennsylvania Railroad at this Chicagoland interlocking. Griffith, Indiana also had a crossing where 14 tracks from the Chesapeake and Ohio, Grand Trunk Western, Erie Lackawanna, Elgin Joliet and Eastern, and the Malvern & Camden (Rock Island) crossed.

## Modern Day Diamonds Crossings

In recent years many diamonds have been eliminated and replaced with flyovers, which keep traffic flowing and have lower maintenance costs for both roads involved. Most carriers would love to eliminate each and every diamond crossing but it is not always feasible. There are many factors that can limit or hinder the elimination of a diamond. The biggest factor is the amount of traffic over the lines; other factors to be considered are the ground and soil conditions, airspace restrictions, and surrounding features of the diamond location.

In the advent that the diamond can't be replaced with a flyover, technology has the answers to wear and tear problems associated with trains running over these crossings. These advances have led to lowered

maintenance costs and less maintenance downtime required.

*A 1902 photograph of Grand Crossing in Chicago.  
Photograph is in public domain; via Wikimedia Commons.*



One of the biggest advances in diamond technology – known as flange-carrying – has been widely used on many diamonds that intersect a mainline and a lightly used branch-line. Small ramps on each side of the diamond force the train's wheels up off of their running surfaces and onto their flanges before they roll over the top of the mainline rails, therefore eliminating the need for a





*Rochelle Gazebo (left) and a Union Pacific SD70s cross the Rochelle Diamond with a stack train in tow (right).  
Photographs courtesy of Microsoft Clipart.*

cut in the mainline rails. The flange-carrying frogs have been used on street and trolley lines for about 100 years but the ability to carry the huge weight of locomotives and rolling stock had not been perfected until about five years ago. The frogs are constructed of manganese as it is strong enough to carry the weight but also soft enough to not crack, break, or deflect under the stress. One installation of these new flange-carrying frog type diamonds is in Milano, Texas, where the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) crosses the Union Pacific. This installation allows for track speeds across the uncut mainline rails of up to 50 MPH, where most diamond crossings only allow for track speeds of up to 20 MPH or less.

Tower 55 in Fort Worth, Texas, is one of the busiest railroad diamonds in the US; over 100 trains from BNSF, Union Pacific, Amtrak, and Trinity Railway Express slam through the four diamonds at Tower 55 each day. This set of diamonds was last replaced in 2014 at a staggering cost

of \$115 million. The new diamonds are more robust, thus allowing higher train speeds and reducing delays from 90 minutes to less than ten minutes.

The other well-known crossing is the diamond in Rochelle, Illinois, where Union Pacific and BNSF lines cross each other. The Rochelle Railroad Park, open all year, provides the best views of this busy crossing, which averages 85 trains daily. The park features a gazebo where you can watch trains safely and a gift shop that is open during regular business hours. If you can't get to the park, you can watch the action on their webcam feed 24/7. I hope you have enjoyed this look at railroad diamonds and until next time, high ball my friends.

You can view the Rochelle Railroad Park's live webcam by following the link and creating your free account. <http://www.rochellerailroadpark.org/webcam>. 

## About the Author

Harry is a rancher in Nebraska who works with his father and grandfather to help run their 22,000-acre, 1500-head of mother cow, ranch. Harry has been model railroading for over 20 years and models the Union Pacific Steam era from the 1930's to the 1960's, in central and western Nebraska. Harry is a Sustaining Member of the Union Pacific Historical Society and a member of the UPHS Streamliner 100 club. He is a National Model Railroad Association member currently working on his Master Model Railroader Certificate. Harry regularly posts videos on his YouTube page. You can follow Harry as he works on his 7th layout at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6-MPHmYU3Cc2uEVfjZDIcQ>.



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# Confessions of a Train Addict's Mother

With Color-Commentary By AJ Kleipass



**By Yvonne Kleipass and AJ Kleipass**

**G**reetings, Dear Reader! My name is AJ Kleipass and I am a writer, actor, theatre Jack-Of-All-Trades, railfan, and model railroader. Scratch that ... I am not a model railroader; what I am is a model train addict, and I am very grateful that Model Railroaders Anonymous is not a thing (yet).

I do not have a particularly massive collection – about 375 models (and counting) – but they are varied, ranging from a 1:29-scale doodlebug to a Z scale boxcar lettered for the late Lynn Westcott's model railroad, with Lionel, HO, N, and 2-rail O scales fleshing out the fleet. The G and Z scale items are oddball one-offs, while the O, HO, and N each have intentional projects behind their purchases (see Figure 1). The Lionel represents my entry point into the hobby at around two years of age, and for that, I typically blame my family.

When I approached my mother, Yvonne Kleipass, about writing a thousand-word piece about me for the YouTube Model Builders eMag,

she said she could write about life with this model railroader in one word...

**Mom:** *Expensive!* AJ's hobby can be very, *VERY* expensive!

Of course, as he points out, in a way I have my mother and myself to blame for introducing my son to trains. You see, when he was a little boy, his grandmother took a few Lionel O gauge trains out of the storage room – they had been bought for my brother back in the 1950s (see Figure 2) – and AJ would sit for hours on the kitchen floor pushing these couple of train cars around on the linoleum tile and, later, on several pieces of track that I had found in another box.

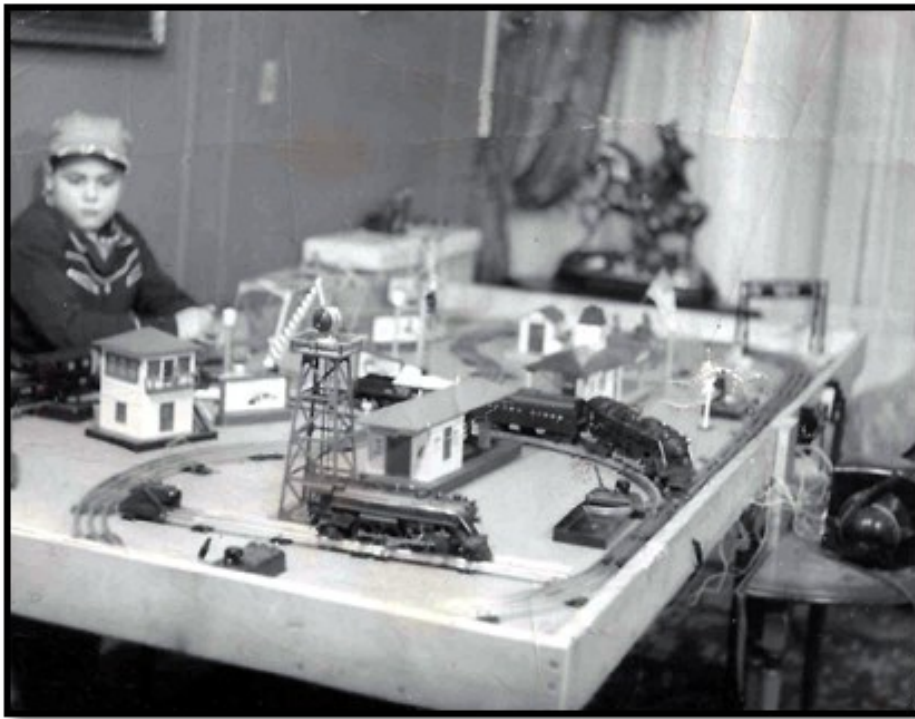
As time went by, I grew worried that these trains would

become damaged, so I asked my brother to get AJ a train set of his own. The set his uncle bought him was a plastic push toy set with tracks that you could assemble in various patterns.

**AJ:** That train set was roughly HO or maybe TT scale, and it was much like today's wooden-tracked toys, only it was all plastic with a gray plastic track that (as I recall) had ra-

*Figure 1. The BTR as of April 2017 - slow progress.*





*Figure 2. William Kleipass Jr. (AJ's uncle), circa 1957 with the Lionel trains that started it all.*

ther realistically molded ties and ballast.

**Mom:** This, too, he played with for hours on end. But most of all, he wanted to play with the Lionel trains. Seeing how much he loved them, I chose to buy him a set of his own for Christmas. It was a Lionel 027 set with a Nickel Plate Road steam locomotive, Santa Fe flatcar, NKP gondola and caboose, an oval of track, and a little, black, square transformer that seemed minuscule compared to the Lionel ZW transformer my father had bought my brother.

**AJ:** I'm sure I got that set in 1975, when I was three, and before we left Flatbush (mom thinks I was a bit older). Thinking back forty years, either of us could be right, but since I'm the one compiling this...

**Mom:** The unwrapping of this pre-

sent was the opening of Pandora's Box! Days began with AJ racing to play with his little choo-choo trains, and days ended with the struggle and torrent of tears when it was time to go to bed at night. His uncle and grandmother didn't help, for soon the old Lionel trains came out of storage, and the 027 oval gave way to the bigger O gauge track with its turnouts and bumpers and operating car track sections.

My father passed away a few weeks after AJ was born. Watching his love for model trains blossom before us, brought bittersweet memories. Growing up in the mid-1950s, my dad would always set up a 5'x9' train board in the living room for my brother around holiday time. I would watch as he assembled the sections of track, cutting some with a hacksaw to fit; then he would position the buildings and add some scenery, which wasn't very much

compared to what they do today. We'd then lay on the floor beside the train board, my dad would connect the wires, and I'd hand him tools or jump up to see if something worked or not. When the board was completed, the trains were ready to roll, and each building had sprung to life; I would join my brother at the controls.

**AJ:** The Lionel ZW transformer: encouraging siblings to fight over the train controls as though they were in the Hunger Games since 1948!

**Mom:** I think my father loved those trains more than my brother did, and now I was seeing that same enthusiasm blossoming in my son.

Living in New York City it was impossible to avoid trains – the real ones, that is. On the subway, AJ would kneel on the seat, face pressed to the glass, and stare out; it didn't matter if we were in a tunnel or above ground. As he got older and taller, he wanted to ride in the first or last car so that he could stand by the "railfan window" in the end door.

**AJ:** I loved to gaze out the windows ... provided they weren't blacked out with graffiti!

A quick side note here: my first clear memory of a train ride was on the Long Island Rail Road to Great Neck, Long Island, where my late grandfather's brother and sister-in-law lived. I was about 3 or 4 years old at the time. Back then, and to this very day, my impression of the train was that it was a giant carriage of glass – which is probably the result of the lack of graffiti on the LIRR equipment. I don't recall the trip



home, but I blame that on head trauma; we stayed the night, and since they didn't have a crib, my mother and grandma pushed the beds together and had me sleep between them, where I would be safest... in the middle of the night, I fell through the gap!

In 1976, we moved from the Flatbush section to the Brighton Beach section of Brooklyn, just two elevated station stops from Coney Island. Our new apartment was on the 15th floor, and directly outside of my bedroom window was the Ocean Parkway station on the Brighton Line: a 6-track-wide EL structure at that point. (See Figure 3.) And in the distance, I could see the other three trunk lines that originated at Coney Island. It was like having the "most awesomest" Lionel layout in the world!

**Mom:** As AJ got older, I began to take him to various model train exhibits in NYC, such as the famous ones that used to be displayed at Citibank, Macy's Herald Square (at Christmas time), and the New York Transit Museum. I suppose it was inevitable that he would discover that these trains came from somewhere besides Santa, Macy's, and normal toy stores. He was about 10 years old when he learned about hobby shops (from the September 1982 issue of *Model Railroader*, he says). At the time, Train World was located just a few local stops away on the subway line that ran past our apartment building. It was a small shop in those days; you could survey their display stock from the doorway, and yet, AJ could lose himself there for an hour or so, and we NEVER left empty-handed.



*Figure 3. A northbound work train passes two sets of R32 subway cars that are laying over midday between express runs (as seen from AJ's window, circa 1990).*

I kept expecting toy/model trains to be a phase, as it was with my brother and that soon, the Lionel would return to the closet to await another generation of the family. I was half-right: the Lionel was put away, but it was put away to make way for a 4'x8', HO scale layout in the middle of the living room. He had ordered the lumber from a home center near his uncle's house using his birthday money. What he didn't do was figure out if it would fit.

**AJ:** The short of this is that I learned the hard way that a 3/4" thick, 4'x8' sheet of plywood does not fit into a small passenger elevator and that it gets exponentially heavier the higher you have to manhandle it up the emergency stairs. (Did I mention that we lived on the 15th floor?)

**Mom:** The new layout grew along with his interest in scale model railroading, and by the time he started

high school, in the fall of 1985, we had added hobby shops in Bay Ridge, Sunset Park, two on Staten Island, and several in mid-Manhattan to the rounds of places he liked to visit.

**AJ:** 'Places I liked to drag her,' is more like it; I always knew when it was time to leave the store by the look on my mom's face!


**Mom:** Family vacations were not a vacation from trains. We would take Amtrak there and back – which I admit that I enjoyed – and the trip would include a visit to local hobby shops. At first, this seemed a minor thing, but then a trip to Utica, NY in the late 1980s resulted in the return home with several model train kits, a couple of train books, and two shopping bags worth of magazine back issues he discovered at the Utica Union Station newsstand. This "phase" was starting to become an expensive and expansive part of daily family life!



*Figure 4. Mom and AJ flanking fellow YTMB member Ton Conboy at a train show in Arnold, MO.*

for long hours; turning bits of wood, metal, and plastic into works of art, but I love seeing what he creates and how his face lights up when he talks about it. I've also enjoyed myself at the various train shows, and seeing the layouts others have set up. (See Figure 4.)

Yes, being a model railroad train buff is an expensive hobby, but it is, indeed, as enjoyable for me as it is for him, and I encourage him to continue ... within financial reason!

**AJ:** In other words, just because I am a model railroader, my bank account shouldn't look like Penn Central's did in its final days. 

## About the Authors

Yvonne Kleipass retired in 2012 after nearly three decades working for various agencies of New York City government. In retirement, she has begun to listen to the voices in her head and is embarking on a new career as a writer.

Alan J. "AJ" Kleipass worked in New York City, primarily as a stage actor (but also in film and TV work) until his move to rural Missouri, just outside of St. Louis. He is a published author of science-fantasy stories, and now is working on a political science-fiction novel. AJ is building The Bonne Terre Railway – a 40"x80", N scale layout – in his apartment. Learn more about his multi-scale modeling efforts on his website, <http://trains.rockycrater.org>.

**AJ:** I confess to my addiction. Last year, before the move to Missouri, we went down to Philadelphia for a couple of days to visit a family friend. The idea was to travel light: a backpack each, plus a laptop briefcase. I ventured out in sub-zero weather to visit Nicholas Smith Trains. Several hundred dollars later, our baggage had more than doubled for the return trip. Thank goodness for an understanding Red Cap who helped us to find space for it all on the train!

**Mom:** My son's enthusiasm for trains has only grown with age, and while I will admit that he appears to buy things with an apparent reason in mind, the various scales he has just boggles the mind. He has even managed to get one car in Z scale, though I don't know why.

**AJ:** Hey! I didn't go out looking for that Z scale equipment; it merely came paired with its N scale twin ... and a Gorre & Daphetid, N scale boxcar ... and ... and ...

Yes, I am an addict.

**Mom:** The only thing we rarely experienced in New York City was train shows. We went to two: one on Staten Island (held by the Staten Island Model Railroad Club) and one on Long Island (I think it was a Greenberg show at Hofstra University) between the 1980s and 2016. Since coming to Missouri, he has made up for that with three shows, two hobby shop visits, and one trip to see a steam locomotive (UP 844) in just the past few months.

And, 24/7, there is always eBay! And Amazon! And the rest of the internet!

Somewhere along this forty-plus-year "phase" my son has been going through, I became addicted too. It's hard not to become so when you love a train enthusiast. I might not have his patience to wander through stores or train shows for hours, or the skills to sit hunched over a table





# The Journey of a Model Railroader



**By Geno Sharp**

*All Photos by Geno Sharp*

**H**ey, folks! Welcome back to the corner! I was sitting and reminiscing about who helped me start in the hobby of model railroading and how.

## Fond Memories

I am sure many of us have those special memories of receiving trains for Christmas. I cannot recall a time

when trains weren't a huge part of my life, whether it was modeling or railfanning. I am sure that my parents didn't have a clue what they started when I received my first train for Christmas at two years of age (see Figure 1). It was downhill from there.

As a kid, the biggest influence and mentor for me was my uncle Her-

man Stedham. He would carry me down to the Southern Railway depot in Anniston, Alabama three or four days a week to watch trains. I'm sure it was an attempt to keep me occupied, but it was what really got me hooked. I was fortunate enough to grow up on the southeast side, and the steam shops for the railroad's Excursion Program were in Birmingham, AL. I had a front row seat to see the ferried moves of the Excursion Program's stars. I was lucky to see Southern locomotives 4501, 722, 2716, and other famous locomotives of the program in their prime. It was then and there that my fascination with the Southern Railway started.

I was at the station so much that the crews took time to talk to me and let me do things that most kids my age would never be allowed to do today. Most of my time was spent at the depot watching trains from the cab of one of the SW-7s assigned to work what was – back then – a fairly busy Anniston Yard, or from one of the road units (usually a GP-35 or 38) assigned to one of the local jobs worked out of Anniston.

*Figure 1. Gknos Model Trains, back in the day.*





My favorite train is the Southern Crescent. Ed Steele, one of the firemen on the Crescent, would let me up into the cab of the lead E8 during the station stops, and he would let me sit in the fireman's seat while the passengers and baggage were loaded. I even got to give the two blasts of the horn that signaled the Crescent was leaving before he assisted me down from the cab so the train could speed off for its evening arrival in Atlanta. That was the thrill of a lifetime for me, as a kid. A few times a year, Uncle Herman took a day off from work, and we would ride the Crescent from Anniston to Birmingham and back; there was only an hour or so layover between the north and south bound Crescents. I loved watching that train, and I cried the day Amtrak took over the Crescent. It was never the same.

It was on one of those many trips to the depot as a kid that my dad handed over the keys to his Polaroid camera. With that camera, I took my first railfan photo. It was one of the mid-train helper units, or



*Figure 2. Southern #3095 through the lens of a child's Polaroid camera.*

“slaves” as they were known on the Southern, SD-35 #3095. (See Figure 2.) It is not the best angle or focus, but it was a train photo and it was all mine! And before you ask, yes, I still have that camera today.

## Uncle Herman

My Uncle Herman made sure I had a train set under the Christmas tree every year. In the months leading up to December, he always would take me to the local hobby shop, or we would thumb through the pages of the Sears and Roebuck Christmas catalog, and he allowed me to pick out which set I wanted that year. Time after time, the pristine train set was placed underneath the tree on Christmas morning (see Figure 3). Even for Christmas of 1980, after battling cancer from his hospital bed, Herman made sure my

mother bought the new train set I wanted that year and had it placed under the tree for me. Uncle Herman died two days later. My trips to the depot were not as numerous as they were before, but my dad often would take me when he was not busy at work. Over time, the crews, and the railroad changed. Things were just not the same as they were in times gone by.

## All Aboard!

All of those train sets and the many trips to the depot as a kid led to numerous layouts and railfanning trips over the years. The journey we travel through this hobby of ours is a great one, full of fond and cherished memories. From the old, oval loops on a 4'x8' sheet of plywood (which my dad tolerated sitting on our dining room table), to the current South Dixie layout I have today (see Figure 4), to the many railfanning trips to capture photographs of the prototypes (and the mullet) that we used to model our favorite railroads

*Figure 3. A wonderful Christmas morning*



*Figure 4 (right).  
Just another day  
on the South Dixie.*



(see Figures 5 & 6), have shaped my journey. Model railroading is more than just the love of the train; it is about family and the friendships we have made. Sit back, kick your feet up on the dash, and enjoy the ride!



## About the Author

Geno Sharp is a retired law enforcement officer with 21 years of service.

Geno has been involved in model railroading for over 30 years and is now a YouTube channel owner.

He produces a monthly layout blog video for his YouTube channel, [Gknos Custom Models](#), as well as various "how-to" and structure build videos.

Geno is currently working on his HO-scale South Dixie Railroad which is home to the Central City

Belt Line. The layout is set in the late 1940s to early 1950s. It features steam and first generation diesels from many of the deep south railroads. His layout features many highly detailed and weathered scenes, and hand-laid track.

You can learn more about Geno's weathering techniques and about his Central City Belt Line on his YouTube channel [Gknos Custom Models](#).

*Figure 5 (below left). A steamer that now sits on display.  
Figure 6 (below right). One cool dude poses with a train.*





# COMMUNITY COLLAGE



**I**n this issue, we present photographs from JD (Loggin' Locos)'s layout. His initial layout was built to involve his two children into model railroading. (See his "Food for Thought" article in the [July 2015](#) issue of the eMag.) He is currently planning his logging and mining layout. You can visit his YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPYcxEM4sIqJJs0WzImVykA>.

If you would like to share pictures of your layout in the Community Collage, please contact us at [YTMBeMag@gmail.com](mailto:YTMBeMag@gmail.com).





# PICK 3

**I**n each issue we share with you three YouTube Model Builders' channels that provide the community interesting ideas, tips, tricks, and resources. Here are three channels that will help you be more creative in your modeling efforts.



## NSTrainFan (Ben)

<https://www.youtube.com/user/NSTrainFan>

Follow along on his channel as Ben builds his N scale layout. Regardless of the scale you model, you'll enjoy and learn from Ben's how-to and layout tour videos, in which he highlights other modelers' railroads. Beginner or seasoned model railroader, scenic diorama artist or model builder, you will find something on Ben's channel to help you advance your craft.



## TheTerrainTutor (Mel)

<https://www.youtube.com/user/TheTerrainTutor>

Mel is a lifelong war gamer with a passion for making terrain. Whether it's deep jungle tables or Eldar cities, Mel applies his skills and experiments with new techniques to create realistic scenes. As model railroaders, we can enjoy his videos and learn as our layouts benefit from Mel's talent and innovation.



## The Bennett Railroad (Stephen Bennett)

<https://www.youtube.com/user/SirDopeyTheBear>

Stephen's channel is full of videos that track the progress of his new model railroad, problems and all! He has a lot of fun showing how he models so that you can share in his experiences. Stephen covers a wide variety of topics, including benchwork, backdrops & scenery, track & wiring, control panels, and C/MRI computer control.

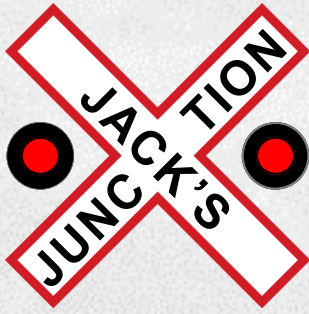


Into Facebook?

Check out the YouTube Model Railroaders Facebook page!

# ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY SIX

## THE *SPEED* THAT SAVED THE LNER



By Jack Hykaway



Image courtesy of Ben Brooksbank [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons.



Now working for LNER's successor British Rail,  
*Mallard* passes the Waterloo Power Box.





**L**ONDON, 1934 – Plumes from grimy industrial smokestacks in central London stretch to the skies, unimpeded by the heavy rainfall. The sooty plumes disappear behind the clouds as city life continues below. Horse-drawn carriages clomp down the rain-soaked streets, pounding any loose cobblestones back into their place. Across the street, pedestrians hidden underneath umbrellas shuffle down the sidewalk, walking briskly to their next dry destination. Then, an unfamiliar rumble disrupts the rhythmic clopping – a drone of internal combustion bounces down the street, screeching to a stop along the curb. Rain pounds on the metal roof of the self-propelled carriage.

A well-dressed businessman emerges from the motorcar hunched over, making a quick dash to the dry canopy of King's Cross Station, no doubt on his way to catch a train to somewhere important. It is odd; King's Cross seems much quieter this soggy morning than it normally is. The beating heart of London has lost some of its hustle – perhaps train travel is losing its appeal. But that couldn't be – train travel is the future of transport, how else would one get around?

The London and Northeastern Railway (LNER) has also noticed the drop in traffic at King's Cross, but they are much more concerned. The railroad's ridership has dropped significantly over the past years, and

it seems like no coincidence that the automobile is gaining popularity. Motorcars are becoming more reliable and more affordable, and the LNER risks losing everything if the company doesn't realize that its competition is beating it to Edinburgh.

The LNER needed to develop something more economical and much faster than the automobile – and fast. They handed the daunting task to their top engineer, Nigel Gresley. Gresley recognized the problem at hand. Although he could simply use more powerful locomotives to make for a faster trip, the added power burns through more fuel which would, in turn, bump up ticket costs. Passengers surely would not be

*LNER A4 Pacific Mallard crosses the Knaresborough Viaduct.*

*Image courtesy of Jo Turner [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons.*





*A4 Union of South Africa at speed near Hitchin.*

*Image courtesy of Ben Brooksbank [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons.*

pleased. He needed to look elsewhere for speed, and where better to look than to where one cannot see.

Gresley realized that air resistance was what he needed to eradicate in order to create a faster, sleeker train without using more power. Conventional steam locomotives were not very aerodynamic – they were never designed to be. The large cylindrical boiler and pilot make a near-vertical wall, pushing against the air as the train advances down the track. The huge air resistances kept conventional trains to top speeds of only 50 or 60 MPH.

At this time, railroads around the world were already introducing new streamlined designs. In America, the CB&Q's *Burlington Zephyr*, a stream-

lined diesel-electric service had already reached speeds of 112.5 MPH, while in Germany, the German State Railways were consistently hitting the 85 MPH mark with their *Flying Hamburger* diesel-electric train.

The LNER did not want to invest in new diesel trains as the technology was still very young and underdeveloped. Gresley was searching for ideas. He had already been inspired by riding the *Flying Hamburger* in Germany, but he turned to his close friend Ettore Bugatti, a racing car designer, for more inspiration and information. Bugatti used wedge-shaped noses on his cars to allow them to slice through the air with ease, therefore allowing a higher top speed. Now fully inspired, Gresley got right to work on designs for a bold new LNER locomotive.

It took Gresley some time and multiple tests in the wind tunnel at the National Physical Laboratory to get the design for his new locomotive just right. Finally, in 1935, Gresley presented the LNER with the blueprints of his brand-new Class A4 Pacific steam locomotive. The locomotive was of a bold, streamlined design, featuring a sloped wedged nose to deflect air over the top of the train, and curving metal skirting along the sides of the locomotive to guide air around the 6-foot 8-inch driving wheels.

Gresley's A4s were designed specifically for use on the LNER's brand-new express train to Newcastle; the *Silver Jubilee*. Gresley's first elegantly-designed locomotive of this class, named the *Silver Link*, demonstrated speeds of up to 112.5 MPH on a test





*Mallard rests at on the grounds of the National Railway Museum in York. Normally stored indoors, the world speed record holder seems to be enjoying the sunshine.*

*Image courtesy of PTG Dudva (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 or GFDL], via Wikimedia Commons.*

run from London to Grantham with the streamlined cars of the *Silver Jubilee*. On October 1st, 1935, the new *Silver Jubilee* service began operation with a fleet of three new A4 Pacific locomotives, running on a four-hour schedule from King's Cross station in London to Newcastle. The public flocked to the LNER to ride the fast service, which conveniently connected two major cities.

The LNER had successfully blown their competition – the automobile – out of the water with its new *Silver Jubilee* streamlined express trains. The company was so impressed with the performance of the London – Newcastle service that they added an extension to Edinburgh, which led to the building of another five A4s. In 1937, the LNER continued to reap

the benefits of speed and they introduced a third service, connecting Leeds and Bradford. Eight-car trains in regular service reached speeds of 90 MPH, as they thrashed up and down the East Coast Mainline every day.

From 1935 to 1938, the LNER's Doncaster Works built a total of 35 A4 locomotives, each one as reliable as the last. The LNER's fleet of A4s was so mechanically reliable that only 10 out of the 1,952 *Silver Jubilee* services over the years experienced delays caused by a mechanical issue.

## More Competition

In 1937, the London, Midland and Scottish Railway's (LMS) streamlined service *Coronation Scot* attained

speeds of 114 MPH in revenue service, beating the LNER's 112 MPH runs with the A4s. The LNER decided to keep its near-flawless safety record intact; before speeding their trains up, they decided to test new braking systems. After all, the faster the trains, the longer it takes them to stop.

Testing of a new Westinghouse system began in 1938, and on July 3rd the Westinghouse team arrived on LNER property to do onboard testing. The test crew was surprised to see that the train's consist had been changed – the new consist had a dynamometer car in place of some of the coaches, and the then four-month-old A4 Pacific *Mallard* powering the train. Once onboard, the Westinghouse team was informed by





*A4 No. 4468 Mallard rounds the bend at Sheepbridge Bank.*

*Image courtesy of Ben Brooksbank [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons.*

the train crew that they would be attempting to break the world speed record, running the train at upwards of 120 MPH. The LNER shrouded the mission in secrecy so as to not alert rival railroad LMS.

After completing several conventional brake tests and soaking the wheel bearings in oil, the record run commenced. The massive pistons of the A4 forced the drivers forward, dragging the 240-ton seven-car train along. *Mallard* was accelerating rapidly, passing Grantham at 24 MPH, and the Stoke Signal Box at nearly 75 MPH. The 110 MPH mark was passed by milepost 94, and 120 MPH was achieved for three miles before the acceleration slowed.

Driver J. Duddington was determined; he pushed every horsepower from *Mallard's* cylinders, demanding all that the locomotive could muster. The throttle was kept wide open and fireman T. Bray was frantically feeding the hungry locomotive. The fireman fueled the fire with coal to keep sufficient steam pressure for *Mallard's* final push to 125 MPH, which was touched for a short distance of 306 yards as the train was descending a slight grade.


Engineer Duddington was forced to back off the throttle by this time to slow for the upcoming junctions at Essendine. Upon inspection of the dynamometer data, it was established that the *Mallard* had reached a

speed of 126 MPH – squashing the previous German record of 124.5 MPH.

By this time, the press had heard about the new record, and they were waiting on *Mallard's* arrival at King's Cross Station in London. Little did they know that *Mallard* was currently suffering the side effects of this incredible speed and was stopped at Peterborough with an overheated wheel bearing. Unable to run under its own power with this injury, *Mallard* was towed to London behind an Ivatt Atlantic locomotive.

After the record run, *Mallard* was inspected and she was back on the

rails in revenue service within nine days. *Mallard* continued to serve the LNER and successor British Rail dutifully until her retirement in April of 1963. *Mallard* is currently enjoying her retirement on display at the National Railway Museum in York.

The A4 was a spectacular piece of mechanical engineering. The locomotive's bold design established the image of high-speed British steam, while her power and reliability have been unchallenged for nearly 80 years. Ever since that July day in 1938, when *Mallard* rocketed through the English countryside at 126 MPH, the record has never been beaten. 

## About the Author

Jack Hykaway is 17 years old and lives in Winnipeg, Canada. Model railroading and rail-fanning are his favorite hobbies. He spends his free time working on his HO scale layout, or trackside waiting for the next train to roar past. Jack has been in the model railroading hobby since he was seven years old.

Like most people, Jack started with an oval of track, and a rugged train set. He built his present layout when he was 11 years old, and he is constantly upgrading it. However, there is still a long ways to go. Climb aboard and follow Jack's progress on the Silver Lake Junction layout on his YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/WinnipegRailfanner1>.

# LNER A4 *Mallard* Statistics

Courtesy of the sources listed below

<b>Class</b>	A4 Pacific
<b>Builder</b>	LNER Doncaster Works
<b>Build Date</b>	March 3, 1938
<b>Serial Number</b>	1870
<b>Wheel Arrangement</b>	4-6-2
<b>Wheel Gauge</b>	Standard
<b>Driver Wheels Diameter</b>	6'-8"
<b>Locomotive Length</b>	70'
<b>Total Weight</b>	165 Tons
<b>Boiler Pressure</b>	250 psi
<b>Tractive Effort</b>	35,455 lbf
<b>Operators</b>	LNER, British Rail
<b>Retired</b>	April 1963

## Sources:

For more information about the A4 Pacific Class, please visit these links:

- LNER Encyclopedia: <https://www.lner.info/locos/A/a4.php>
- LNER Class A4: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LNER\\_Class\\_A4](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LNER_Class_A4)
- Big, Bigger, Biggest – “Train”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crQmu5FaQOw>
- Record Breaking Mallard Run: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqmYFotXqDg>

# **YouTUBE MODEL BUILDERS eMag**

A Free e-Magazine Produced by YouTube Model Builders.

## **Welcome to All New Subscribers!**

Here are some themes we are developing for our upcoming issues:

- **Electronics and Control Systems for Model Railroading**
- **Using 3D Printing and 3D Modeling in Model Railroading**
- **Model Railroad Photography**
- **Modeling Passenger Trains**
- **Prototypical Operations**
- **Modeling Narrow Gauge**

If you are interested in contributing to the eMag an article or photographs related to any of the above topics, or even a topic you would like for us to consider, please drop us a note at [YTMBeMag@gmail.com](mailto:YTMBeMag@gmail.com). To learn more about the eMag, or to subscribe now, please visit [www.YouTubeModelBuilders.com/emag](http://www.YouTubeModelBuilders.com/emag).

We look forward to hearing from you soon!





# A Haunted Experience

By Lynn H. Terry

A rural drive with gothic pillars in crumble...  
Spirits draw me where I tremble  
Dueling banjos may sound from the heavy ghostly mist...

Empty rails lay nude below...  
Silence screams something from unknown figures...  
Chained within a past...  
Luring me to read letters scattered random...  
Tortured visions flash with scars, my mind nare bare...

Fear ensued  
Frozen feet  
Refusing to move

Silence un-soothing

The spell uncast

I ran as fast as a cannonball ignites....  
Never looking back.

©LYNNHTERRY

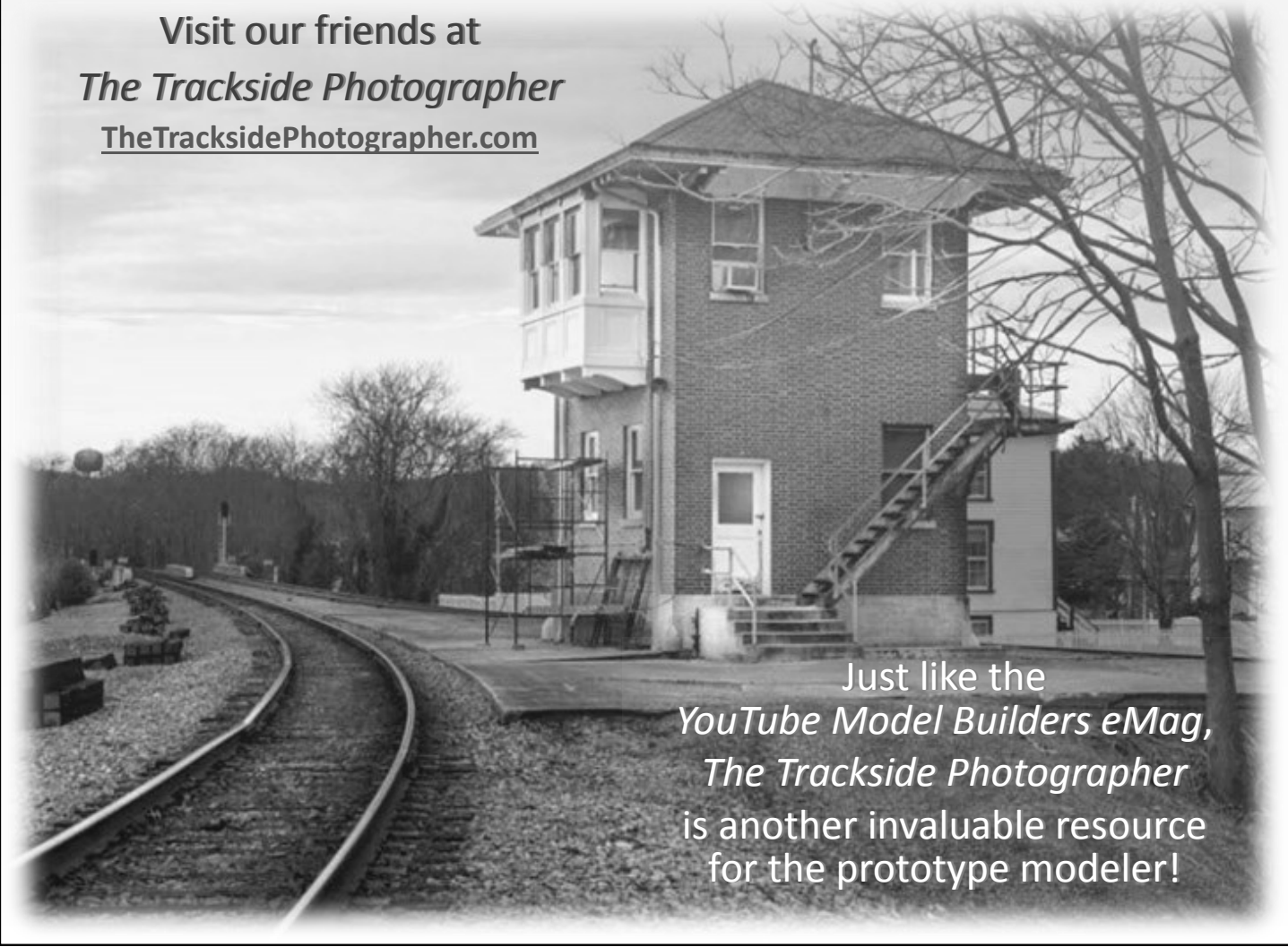
©2017 Lynn H Terry  
Poem and Photograph

# The Trackside Photographer

If you are looking for a wealth of interesting railroad lore along the tracks: depots, freight houses, signals, interlocking towers, bridges, trestles, shops, turntables and other trackside structures and equipment, then look no further than *The Trackside Photographer*.

Visit *The Trackside Photographer* and explore the visual and cultural landscape that the railroad moves through, with photographs of trackside structures and scenery and writing about the history of sites that are rapidly changing, or have already disappeared.

Visit our friends at  
*The Trackside Photographer*  
[TheTracksidePhotographer.com](http://TheTracksidePhotographer.com)



Just like the  
*YouTube Model Builders eMag*,  
*The Trackside Photographer*  
is another invaluable resource  
for the prototype modeler!



# Google Hangouts And Etiquette



**By YouTube Model Builders**

**Y**ouTube Model Builders works very hard to bring YouTube model railroaders together in what is called Google Hangouts. Google has many free resources for us to use and we look forward to taking full advantage of these resources.

What is Google Hangouts? It's an application that runs through a web browser that allows up to 10 people to connect with webcams. Using this forum for model railroading discussions is great! It builds friendships, inspiration for model railroad building, and most of all, a great place to air your designs, models, and share in your building adventures with others in real-time. Many of the YouTube video producers you know "Hangout" in these Google Hangouts.

Many builders simply place their webcam on their project they are working on

and show others what they are doing; it may be they are building a model, laying track, or working on anything model railroad related. Many look for feedback from the group, get questions answered, and elaboration on the many projects on which they are working. It's simply a great place to interact in real-time with other YouTube model railroaders.

These Google Hangouts are posted most every day on the [Google+ YouTube Model Railroaders Community](#) page. You are not required to use a webcam or even a microphone; you may only use the provided chat box if desired.

With the utilization of Google Hangouts by many model railroaders, YouTube Model Builders has scheduled specific types of events for the community members. Here are the Google Hangouts that we have arranged to

help bring more model railroaders together.

## **Topic Driven, Hangout Shows:**

YouTube Model Builders invites specific guests to explain techniques in model building, and many times these individuals are invited to our topic driven hangouts based on videos they have produced.

Showing progress real-time, the topic driven hangouts are moderated by YouTube Model Builders staff, which keeps these hangouts on subject and informative. These Hangout shows are much like clinics as they are more so for instruction and techniques shared by the presenters.

We have several topic-driven Hangout shows. One of the shows is the FineScale show, which is hosted by [Andy Crawford](#)

and Johnny of [Southeast Rails](#). In this show, Miles Hale, along with [Andy Crawford](#) and [Barry Rosier](#) are going to take you from beginning to end of constructing highly-detailed wood structures and scenery.

One of the monthly Tuesday night shows includes guests such as Miles Hale and [Bill Beranek \(The Track Planner\)](#), while the Barry and Mike MRR Tech Show, which is moderated by [Barry Rosier](#) and Mike Dettinger, focuses on the more technical aspects of model railroading such as DCC controls and JMRI. There are plenty of opportunities to learn from many experts in model railroading through these Hangout shows. So come and join in!

### **General Moderated Hangouts: Thursday Nights**

Where many hangouts (posted through the Google+ YouTube Model Railroaders community page), encompass many subjects and often have many people showcasing their layouts, YouTube Model Builders has a weekly scheduled, Thursday night, general moderated hangout, to specifically keep on the subject of model railroading. The Thursday night hangout is moderated by Johnny of [Southeast Rails](#) and the topic selection is really driven by community feedback.

YouTube Model Builders as a team helps drive these Hangouts, to spread the word, and get the YouTube Model Railroaders involved. Many people participate and as these numbers have grown, a simple etiquette is followed for the hangouts posted on YouTube Model Railroad resources.

Below is a simple guideline for participating in any YouTube Model Builders hangout event:

- Always keep the conversation G Rated.
- Refrain from political/religion based conversations.
- When not speaking, mute your microphone.
- Keep the hangout fun and on model railroading subjects.
- Remember, you're in a room with others, try not to monopolize speaking time. Allow others to get in their input.
- If you have your camera on, please be presentable – remember others can see you!

Following these simple etiquettes will make hangouts fun, and most of all, suitable for anyone who might want to join! We hope to meet you in a hangout in the near future if you don't already participate! If you have any questions on this subject, feel free to ask any one of the involved YouTube Model Railroaders to help get you into the fun sharing in the Google Hangouts. 🚂



# Food For Thought...

## *A Thin Gray Line*



**By Andy Crawford**

**T**he expression "no man is an island" tells us that nobody can become who they are without others in their lives. Everyone is influenced by others; parents, guardians, siblings, friends and teachers shape our lives and personalities. Leading balanced lives with time for family and friends is a priority, therefore time-consuming hobbies such as modeling are put on the back-burner. It is difficult to discover how to "load-balance" the scale so there's room for the large weight of our hobby.

Before diving into this complex topic, let me begin by saying that in the following paragraphs, you will not find any profound deconstruction of this complicated balance. Instead, they will showcase my struggle to discover my own critical balance, and some tips that could help you find yours.

Our hobby is – or can be – very time-consuming. Any progress on our models is at the mercy of the free time we possess, and many

times it seems there is none to spare. The quest for establishing a healthy balance – much like our hobby – can be achieved in many ways; there are more than one "right way" to go about it, it simply depends on the person.

My approach to the hobby and to my vision of the hobby in my life results in many time-consuming projects. Granted, I am arguing about my lack of time when many modelers with busy family and work commitments seem to find a few spare hours to invest into their miniatures. How do these modelers find time for the hobby to develop in their lives? I am sure it is not easy!

I am lucky to have a short commute to the office and a flexible work schedule; I own my own business, therefore, I have a certain degree of control over how much I work. Often times, however, work still claims my evenings and sometimes my weekends. I save some more time for modeling by not engaging in time-wasting activities such as watching

too much television. Even with my efforts to save time for my hobby, I still have trouble finding enough time to dedicate to my larger, longer projects. I can't seem to find the time to get in the train room. Why? It just seems like I should have a bit of spare time every week, but it never happens like that.

The difficulty is in finding a balance between spending quality time with my wife and spending time in my hobby. It seems that when my hobby advances to my satisfaction, the relationship between my wife and I suffers, and vice-versa. Sometimes my work takes me away from my hobby for long periods of time. It happens, and it is expected as a proprietor of a business. All other things – even things within the hobby itself – tip the scales in this balancing act to one way or the other.

Modelers building mid-to-large-sized layouts all testify that the task of successfully building their layouts is mostly due to good time management. Building a layout is essentially

project management – something I've done professionally for years – but there's a slight difference. With in the hobby, there's no clear force for balancing, whereas, in business, the balance is determined by profit and deadlines. As a solo modeler – a "lone wolf" – there's a series of choices that mostly come down to "time versus result."

Time is closely tied to the quality of the finished project: not enough

time, the results

will be mediocre. To achieve the best result possible, there must be enough time invested into the project. Take as an example hand laying track or building craftsman/fine-scale structures. The results are incredible because the modeler had the time to develop his/her skills and invested countless hours into every detail of the build.

"Social modelers" are a demographic who often experience a lack of modeling time. The balance between socializing with fellow modelers and productively progressing with your own layout is difficult to maintain, and as in most cases, socializing takes the front seat. We at YouTube Model Builders are a part of the social modeler experience; we host countless Google Hangouts where modelers socialize, as well as hours of live broadcasts where modelers can interact with the panel and/or host. While the shows are in-

formative – from building models to learning Arduino – it's always the social aspect that takes the front seat. It's my favorite part of the hobby these days, but it also cuts my time to progress with my layout.

I apologize for the fact that this article doesn't clearly define my perspective and for the fact that this

text does not try to impart any perspective for you.

This was simply an exercise for me in self-discovery as a social

modeler; defining for

myself the challenges I face. While I spend time modeling, my modeling skills improve, but at the same time, I seem to get worse with time management.

For me, it is a thin gray line that I walk as best as I can, like a tightrope walker without the aid of a balancing pole, sometimes on a slack line of time. And it is easy to lose the balance. I am curious if we all find it to happen this way – do you? How do you manage time within the hobby, between the hobby, and the life outside? How do you walk the thin gray line? 🚂

## About the Author

Andy Crawford, 38 years old, is a technology provider to mid-sized businesses and financial institutions,

and a lifetime model railroader. Starting young in the hobby with a train set, like many others, and after spending a decade as an armchair modeler, he returned to the hobby a few years ago, in full force. He models a very exacting replica of a 15 mile section of the Clinch Valley District of the famous Pocahontas Division of the Norfolk & Western Railway in 1952.

His interest in exacting replication of the prototype, fine scale craftsmanship, weathering, and prototypical operation can all be seen in his work. For him, recreating the experience of being a railroad professional, 1/87th the size, in the 50's is all the focus that is needed. You can check out Andy's YouTube channel here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8l2bTYfzVY37328sGPD9Bw>.



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