



Thousand Lakes Region

National Model Railroad Association



# The FUSEE

Volume 58 Number 1

[www.thousandlakesregion.org](http://www.thousandlakesregion.org)

Fall 2011

## A tale of two bridges

by Tracy McKibben

story and photos by the author

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. My new N scale layout was underway, progressing nicely. All of the benchwork was completed, solid as a rock, and the base layer of pink foam was in place. The track plan consisted of two loops, both traveling different paths **on the 9'x9' around-the-walls layout**. Conceptually, the layout represented two towns separated by a river. To cross that river, the two loops would converge to cross a double-tracked bridge. Running parallel to that bridge would be a highway bridge, allowing non-rail traffic to travel between the two towns. I was on a roll, the two loops were nearly completed, and I was ready to start constructing the bridges. This section of the layout would also serve as a duck-under, and was, by design, quite narrow. Hmm, this looked good **on paper, but there's not enough room for two bridges!** Now what? All this work, potentially at risk, can things get any worse?

I pondered this problem for a week, before someone in an online forum (thank you, Mark Watson!) suggested the idea of a double-decked road/rail bridge. A what? I had never seen **one before, and didn't know they existed.** After five minutes of **online research, I found that they're not uncommon.** I also found a prototype



photo at <http://bridgehunter.com/me/cumberland/323/> that depicted EXACTLY the original look that I wanted for the river crossing, with the bonus of a double-decked bridge.

A few revisions to the track plan, and I was ready. I purchased three of the Walthers double-tracked truss bridges, and enough Rix highway overpass parts to span the 30 inch river **crossing. I couldn't find a set of N scale bridge piers** that would accommodate both the road bridge and the rail bridge, so I chose to use a set of HO scale cut-stone piers from Chooch Industries. A couple of easy cuts with a scroll saw, and the bridge piers were ready.



**After cutting out the "notch" for the road bridge, the white cast resin pier innards showed.** It needed a disguise. Rummaging through the scraps box turned up a partial sheet of printed stone cardstock. The stone pattern on that sheet was nearly an IDENTICAL match for the stone on the bridge piers. Cut, cut snip, snip, and the bright white resin disappeared. After weathering the piers, and applying the same weathering to the **cardstock inserts, the "paper" rocks virtually disappeared.** So, at this point, I've figured out how to get both cars and trains across the river. I have a solu-



tion without a problem - I needed a **river!** To the "other" scrap box I went, the one that holds all of my **assorted pieces of "pink stuff".** I scrounged up enough to stack up to form the opposing riverbanks, glued them in place, and the next day, carved them to actually look like a riverbank. An extra Rix deck piece was sacrificed, cut in half to form the bridge aprons on each hillside. The hills were painted light brown/tan, the deepest part of the riverbank, and the areas in between were blended from black to tan, to simulate shallower water. For good measure I also added ground foam and talus along **the water's edge.**

A day or two later, after the paint and glue had fully dried, I poured a layer

*(continued on page 10)*



## View from the Cab by TLR President Gerry Miller

Hope everyone had a great summer! I attended the NMRA national convention in Sacramento during July. Getting to Sacramento via Amtrak was half the fun—**here's** why.

Two days before I was to leave on the California Zephyr, Amtrak called and said the train was cancelled. This was because of flooding in Nebraska and the train/semi wreck in Nevada. Luckily I was able to take the scenic route on the Southwest Chief to LA and then took Amtrak north to Sacramento.

My wife Peggy and daughter Amanda were also on this train. They vacationed in Los Angeles while I was at the convention. We all met up in San Francisco for a few days before heading home on the Zephyr. We saw amazing scenery on both trains. Sleeping in a roomette bunk has a lot to be desired.

I attended as many great clinics as I was able to. I also shadow judged in the contest room. There were 275 amazing models entered this year. I picked up a lot of modeling tips on how to make my models award winners!

The layouts that I toured had some very interesting designs. Most homes in California do not have basements, so attics and garages are the rooms of choice for home layouts. One layout was in a two stall garage. The owners still had room to park two vehicles. Challenging.

**Sacramento is a railfan's paradise. Fifteen Capitol Corridor trains a day make stops as well as four of Amtrak's long haul trains. Sacramento's light rail also stops at the Amtrak depot every thirty minutes, making for many photo opportunities.**

All in all, I had a very good time. I met a lot of people and **was able to put some names with faces. I'm looking forward to next year's convention in Grand Rapids, Michigan.**

The TLR board meeting this fall will be held on Friday, September 30<sup>th</sup> for those who would like to attend. It will be **held at 10:00 a.m. at Cooper's Pub, 1607 Park Place Blvd., St. Louis Park, Minnesota. It's located near the intersection of U.S. 12 (I-394) and Hwy. 100.**

### 33rd Annual Spud Valley Hobby Show

Sunday,  
October 16, 2011  
9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Admission: \$5  
(under 12 free with  
paid adult)

Ramada Plaza  
Suites  
Crystal Ballroom  
1635 42nd St. S.,  
Fargo, ND

For information, call Don, 701-234-9351

- ◆ 17th annual "Plastics on the Prairie" model contest
- ◆ Large and small operating model railroads
- ◆ Vendors selling farm toys, plastic models, model railroad items, die cast vehicles, old toys, railroad collectibles and more
- ◆ Door prizes—no need to be present to win
- ◆ Valley RC Flyers display their planes

### FRom the EDitor

By Alan Saatkamp, Fusee editor

Fall beckons. With it come shorter days, leaf raking, cool weather—and of course, model railroading season. **Just check the lineup of fall events on page 12 if you don't believe me. Perhaps you've been busy outdoors (except during the heat waves) or at the lake (assuming there was a lake suitable to visit), but soon it's time to gear up to enjoy whatever aspect of model railroading that toots your horn or rings your bell.**

**This issue includes a greater than usual number of "how to" articles, to inspire and motivate you. There are plenty of opportunities to learn from fellow TLR members. Familiar names, such as Master Model Railroaders Les Breuer and Fred Headon share their wisdom in print, along with a couple of newcomers from the Twin Cities Division—Tracy McKibben and Jeremy Dummier. May you benefit from all four authors' suggestions. I look forward to reading yours too, when you decide to send them my way for publication. Fresh material is always welcome.**

Modeling tips and suggestions demonstrate a positive trend in our region--more sharing of wisdom. Whether at a division or region meet, clinics seem to be growing in popularity. You can expect the trend to continue next **May when the Dakota Southeastern Division hosts "Rails to the Rocks" in Sioux Falls. In the meantime, take a look at the clinics available from NMRA national too—learn more about that on page 10.**

## Modeling tip: upgrade your rolling stock

### A different approach to coupler pocket screws

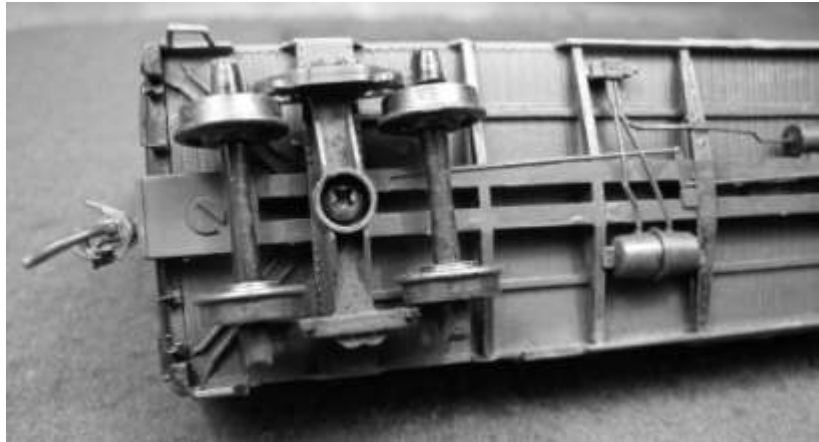
by Lester "Les" Breuer, MMR  
story and photos by the author

When you read a rolling stock upgrade article, a common item is to drill and tap coupler pocket covers and coupler pocket posts for 2 - 56 screws, replacing the plastic pins. I did this for many years. One problem that occasionally occurred was a split coupler post due to its small diameter when being drilled with a No. 50 drill for tapping. This proved a major frustration.

Of course, you can replace the split coupler pocket post with one made from a kit sprue or round rod styrene. A lot of time can be spent finding the proper sprue size. Once a kit sprue is found you still have to fit, install, drill and tap it. Could there be a better solution?

One day, after a coupler pocket post split, I was talking to fellow hobbyist Dave Vos about the frustrating experience. He told me another modeler had told him to stop using the 2 - 56 screws and instead drill and tap coupler pocket covers and coupler pocket posts for 1 - 72 screws. He found it worked well and encouraged me to give it a try.

On the next car upgrade, I dug out a No. 47 drill and the 1 - 72 tap I had in the Morris carbon steel four tap set I own. I drilled and tapped the coupler pocket covers and coupler pocket posts for 1 - 72 screws. I used a countersink bit on the pocket covers on the top of the hole, allowing the 1 - 72 flat head screw to be even with the coupler pocket cover top surface rather than projecting above it. After installing a Kadee Number 5 coupler in the pocket I attached the coupler pocket covers with Walthers brass machine 1 - 72 flat head screws. I liked the result.



Since that car upgrade, I've not experienced any split coupler pocket posts. All coupler pocket covers are attached with Walthers brass machined or other 1 - 72 screws.

If you've been frustrated splitting coupler pocket posts, I encourage you to try using 1 - 72 screws instead of 2 - 56 screws. I believe you too will agree, "wearing a smile is better than a frown" after installing your rolling stock couplers.

### Correction

The summer Fusee erroneously listed the Granite City Train Show start time as 9:00, rather than 10:00 as properly shown below. My apologies for any confusion.

The editor

www.granitecitytrainshow.com

All Aboard!

ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA

# GRANITE CITY TRAIN SHOW

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2011**  
Buy, sell, trade or just view hundreds of trains under one roof.  
10am-4pm - National Guard Armory - 1710 Veteran's Drive - Saint Cloud, MN  
Admission \$5.00. Kids 12 and under FREE

**REGISTER TO WIN** **WIN A LIONEL TRAIN SET!** **REGISTER TO WIN**

**FOOD & REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE**

**COME SEE!** Model & Toy Trains (all scales), Accessories, Books, Videos, Railroad Collectibles and Memorabilia, Antique Toys, Hobby Items and More!

**TEST TRACK ON SITE**

**Operating Model and Toy Train Displays**  
**Childrens' Railway Play Area** - Kids can help build a wooden train layout or run a model train.

**Vendors and hobbyists welcome!**  
Call 320-255-0033 or visit [www.granitecitytrainshow.com](http://www.granitecitytrainshow.com)  
email: [edwardolson@cloudnet.com](mailto:edwardolson@cloudnet.com)

**Map & Directions:** [www.granitecitytrainshow.com/GCTS\\_map.pdf](http://www.granitecitytrainshow.com/GCTS_map.pdf)

# Adventures in Retailing

by Paul Ullrich

I don't buy trains from mail order houses or eBay. I prefer to order what I want from my local hobby shop. There are many practical reasons for doing this - they handle all the shipping and warranty headaches. My one exception to this rule is when I go to conventions. I like to patronize the hobby shops in the area that support the convention. They also give great deals to the attendees.

I had two things on this year's want list - a Berkshire steamer and an 80 watt transformer. Curiously enough, it was cheaper to buy them as a set than individually. The set also included four quality cars and a figure eight of track. I contacted TLR President Gerry Miller to see if I could order the set through Fagan's Hobbies in Dubuque. He told me that they not only could get the set in, but they'd would knock \$70 off the list price. Bonus!

The factory sealed set, fresh from Lionel's warehouse, was waiting for me at Fagin's. This is not only a very well equipped hobby shop, but a shoe store as well! Hey, you gotta do what

you gotta do to keep a hobby shop alive in these troubled economic times. I should've asked if the discount that he was offering to conventioners also applied to footwear. I had the set that I wanted at a deep discount, and I didn't have to pay any shipping or customs fees.

What could possibly go wrong? The transformer didn't work - that's what went wrong! This was by no means the retailer's fault. Perhaps there was a manufacturing mistake, or maybe the transformer got seasick during the slow boat ride from China. It was just my luck that I got a bum unit - and I was now 700 miles away from where I purchased it! It was under warranty, so I brought it down to Winnipeg's sole Lionel service station, the Model Railroad Centre. Ed Read, the owner, has operated the shop for over 30 years out of his basement. He has long since retired, but he still keeps the shop open for repairs and selling parts.

The first thing I found out when I got there was that his shop was no longer an authorized Lionel service

station. Four years ago, Lionel offered upgrading courses in Ohio to all of its service stations. If you didn't attend, you lost your certification. Ed's business volume didn't justify the expense. But Lionel never removed his shop from their list of authorized Lionel service stations from their website.

Ed, whom I've known for over 30 years and can fix anything but a broken heart and a rainy day, graciously offered to try to fix it. Much to his surprise, he couldn't even open the unit! I took the unit home and e-mailed the other Lionel service stations in Canada. I got three identical responses back—the transformer was a sealed unit. It would have to be returned to Lionel for replacement. It weighed almost seven pounds, and I wasn't anxious to pay the postage.

I called Lionel customer service. To my relief, they didn't want the transformer back - but they did want the cord and the handle! That was definitely a lot cheaper to mail, but I now had a seven pound paperweight on my hands. I mailed the package two days after the Canadian government enacted back-to-work legislation on the Canada Post striking workers. Bearing that in mind, I thought it would be best to pay for a tracking number on the package. The handle and the cord were worthless, but the transformer retailed for 150 bucks. If the handle and the cord were lost in the mail by some disgruntled postal employee forced back to work by his government, there'd be no replacement. A week later, I received confirmation from Lionel they received my package.

A week later, the postman rang the doorbell, carrying a small but very heavy package. "What's in this, anyway?" he asked, as I signed for the package. "It's a toy train transformer," I replied. "So that's why it's so heavy!" he said. Thankfully, Lionel paid the shipping,—over 30 bucks. As this was a replacement unit, there were no customs, duty or tax. I took the transformer downstairs and tried it out. To my relief, everything worked. Anybody want a paperweight?

**SIOUX VALLEY MODEL ENGINEERS SOCIETY**  
PRESENTS  
**TRAINS AT CHRISTMAS 2011**  
SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA  
WH LYON FAIRGROUNDS  
EXPO BUILDING  
Saturday November 19 - 10am - 5pm  
Sunday November 20 - 11am - 4pm  
Come see this premier model railroad event in South Dakota. We will have traveling layouts from the regional area. We will also have vendors on hand selling model and toy trains, as well as railroad videos, clothing and memorabilia.  
Contact Wayne at 605-373-0222 or svmes@sio.midco.net  
<http://www.svmes.net>

# Ties 'N Track

by Fred Heaton, MMR  
story and drawing by the author

Tyrone ("Tye") Plate and Sam ("Spike") Mall are two, local modelers who also enjoy railfanning the prototype in the Winnipeg area. Like so many other railfans, they prowl the main and branch lines for full sized rail action.

Additionally, they search out those prototype situations that could serve as the basis for modeling ideas. They have kindly consented to share some of their findings with the members of the Thousand Lakes Region. Each upcoming issue, they hope to illustrate local cases just begging to be modeled.

The most common format that Tye and Spike will use should include a

brief written description and a simple map. The trackage itself, buildings served, adjacent major streets that offer access, "public" or non-railway land for seeing the situation, and even the bus routes that serve the area will be shown. With this information, anyone who wishes to consider modeling any particular example can go to the site, observe the activity and conditions, develop as detailed a plan as they need to be ready to model. This will allow the modeller to be better equipped to recreate in their favorite scale, a real-life example of the lifeblood of the railways—customers.

For those Thousand Lakes Region members in the planning stages for their model railways, or those contemplating changes or additions to existing layouts, our two contributors will offer useful ideas based on

real railroading. Even if TLR people only railfan these sites, each of us could probably learn more about how the prototype goes about its tasks.

## Next Fusee issue previews "Rails to the Rocks" 2012

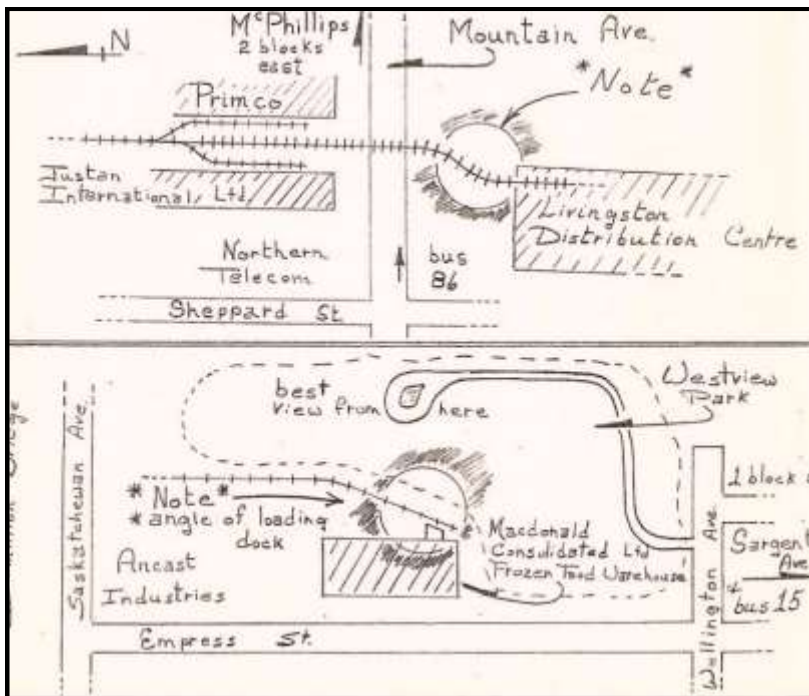
Special guests NMRA President Mike Brestel and Cody Grivno from Model Railroader magazine

Caboose and cab rides on the Dakota and Iowa Railroad across Sioux Falls falls

No extra cost tours of Sioux Falls quarry, engine house, transloading facility, and Midwest Railcar Repair

Also, a Chinese auction, clinics, model judging and awards banquet

Loads of non-rail tours too!



**Offering terrifically tantalizing "ties and track" to tempt the tepid modeler into tackling the terrifying task ahead.**

A very simple tactic is available to modellers to readily add interest to their industrial sidings. This is to avoid parallel lines with both track and benchwork edges being considered. This is a well known axiom in **track planning, and is often referred to as a "rule."** These are examples of how the prototype "bends the iron" to fit the customer.

## Two More GN Sets This Year

Our last new HO & N Brass Car Sides sets for 2011 will be the 1947 Empire Builder and 1951 Western Star PS 60-seat coach (GN 1110-1114) and PS diner (GN 1150-55). Reserve now. See our website for current Bulletin, illustrated catalog, photos of models from our customers, closeout items and reservation form. Also check website for sale list of magazines, books, videos, calendars and other items.

Our brass sides are for GN, NP, SP&S, CB&Q, BN, MILW, UP, PRR, NYC, SP, C&NW, IC, RI, B&O, C&E, L&N, KCS, ERIE, ATSF, MP, CN, VIA & Amtrak. Use HO sides with TSP, Rivarossi, Con-Cor, ECW, Bachmann, Kato, Walthers, our HO Basic Body Kit, or in N the ALM core kits or plastic dome car overlays. Send 644 SSAFE for catalog and Bulletin. Available through hobby shops or direct from us. Also check website for recently updated modeling information sheets and Two-DVD "Indiana, Minnesota and Early Amtrak Railroad Memories:1964-72". Shipping \$4.50, plus \$0.50 per body kit. Add 6.875% sales tax for MN orders.

www.brasscarsides.com 507-931-2784

**Brass Car Sides, 715 S. 7th St.  
St. Peter, MN 56082-1435**

## Building A Test Track by Jeremy Dummler story and photos by the author

I don't currently have a permanent workspace for my modeling projects. Things tend to "float" to wherever I have room in our house to work. Because of that, I don't have a permanent place for a test track for my rolling stock and locomotives, so I decided to build a portable one.

To build the test track I collected the materials and tools (see the list below) to be able to build a two-track unit. One track is intended to be

### Materials List:

Plywood (mine is 1/2-inch thick, and **6" by 24"**)  
Flextrack (mine is Micro Engineering code 70. I used 2 pieces)  
Masking or duct tape (optional)  
Kadee 408 coupler test gauge  
1 Kadee #58 coupler  
**1 #4 Wood screw, 1" long**  
4 Washers and 1/4-inch round head wood screws  
Scale ruler (optional)  
6 Felt furniture feet

### Tools:

**Saw to cut the plywood (if you're cutting your own)**  
Phillips screwdriver  
Rail nippers  
Sandpaper  
Tape measure or ruler

used as a coupler test track and to test how wheels roll in trucks after maintenance. The second track is there for additional uses that may come up, and I could wire it as a programming track for my locomotives permanently or by attaching alligator clips to a pair of leads and clipping those to the track. Note: the coupler track doesn't work as a programming or electrical test track because of the metal coupler height gauge that will be installed.

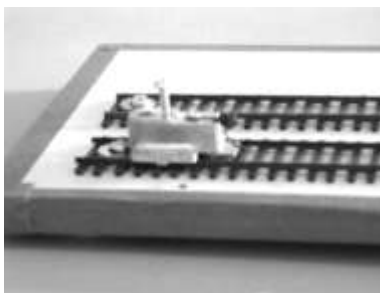
I started by cutting a piece of 1/2-inch plywood to a manageable size. The piece I used turned out to be 6"

wide and 24" long. This is wide enough to give me room for the two tracks, and long enough that my longest equipment will fit on either track with room to spare. If you're building one of these, and you have longer equipment, you will need to take that **into consideration**. **You also don't** have to use the same finished grade of plywood that I used. A piece of scrap that is long and wide enough to attach the track to would suffice.

After briefly sanding the edges of the plywood, I wrapped them in tape. The tape prevents me from getting splinters or snags on clothing or other things. If you wanted to skip this step you could, or if you were handy with tools and wanted to round over the edges, that would make a nice addition.

The flex track I used to build my test tracks is left over from a layout project. It is code 70 Micro Engineering track. You could use another manufacturer or another rail height. I happened to have two pieces of track left over that were not going to be used elsewhere so they found a use here. I measured and cut the track to the right lengths, leaving about an inch on either end of the plywood and cutting the rail to 22" long each.

Using the short wood screws and washers, I screwed the track in place, leaving room between tracks for easy access to be able to manipulate two pieces of rolling stock. I could have glued the track, or nailed the track, but the wood screws and washers make fastening it quick since I'm not concerned about appearances. I added the small nails near the ends of the track to help keep equipment from rolling off the track if the assembly is bumped while I'm working.



On the track I designated for coupler height testing, I first assembled a Kadee 408 Coupler Height Gauge. I replaced the #5 coupler that came with the gauge with a #58. I'm using all 58 or 158 couplers these days and want to match heights with the gauge precisely as the 5's and 158's are a little touchy when matched to a #5. Then I used a 1" #4 brass screw to go down through the mounting hole on the gauge and into the plywood as I held the gauge in place. I chose not to use a power drill for either attaching the track or the coupler height gauge to the track because I didn't want to deform any of the materials.



As a finishing touch, I added felt furniture feet to the bottom of the assembly. These help me to keep the unit somewhat elevated from any furniture it is on, allow me to slide it if necessary, and not scratch any tabletops.

There is enough room to add a scale ruler next to the second or electrical testing track if desired. I find that being able to measure my equipment helps when I'm doing entry in my operation software and having something like that ready when I'm testing and doing maintenance can be useful as well.

Similar test track units can be built in other scales as well. You could improve this design by adding a carrying handle or other tools you might find useful. I hope you'll experiment and find something that meets your needs.



# Think layout before storage

by Lester "Les" Breuer, MMR  
story and photos by the author

I finished planting the final elm trees I needed along the Minneapolis backdrop on my Minneapolis & Northland Railroad. I had enough Sedum, the flower garden plant I use to make the elm trees, left to make one more elm tree. I could put the Sedum material in storage. "No," I told myself. "You need to think layout before storage." So I made the last elm tree so I would not have to get the materials out in the future to make one tree. If you are interested in making some Sedum elm trees I suggest you look back at the article, "Foreground Trees Help Improve Backdrop" I wrote that was published in a previous issue of [The Crossing Gate](#).

Now what to do with the elm tree, since I did not need it in Minneapolis? Should I get a zip-lock bag to hold the elm tree and put it in storage? "No," I told myself. "You need to think layout before storage." So where on the railroad was another elm tree needed?

Upon looking around I decided the woods on the bluff over looking the Minneapolis & Northland tracks in Little Chicago could use another elm tree, as I had already planted elms there years ago. So I moved to the bluff location to find a place to plant the last elm tree. As soon as I began looking I noticed two Life-Like trees I had planted years ago that were to be temporary until better trees were made to replace them. If you are not familiar with the Life-Like tree you should know it is a small tree, about four inches high, with a plastic truck with a wire armature embedded in it with lichen for foliage. Not the most attractive looking tree.

It was time to replace the Life-Like trees. An easy decision since I already had one replacement tree made. I quickly removed the Life-Like trees leaving two holes in the landscape to fill. In one of the two holes I planted the elm I had made earlier.

I took the two Like-Like trees to my workbench and removed the lichen. I went to my tree storage box and found a tree trunk, a dried Azalea flower stem. I like the Azalea flower plant for a tree trunk can be used as is, that is "ready to use – no painting required". To the Azalea tree trunk I added Woodland Scenics green poly fiber for a foliage base, some of the lichen from the Like-Like trees for additional foliage on top of the green poly fiber and finally some Woodland Scenics dark and medium green foliage material to cover the lichen. I used a little white glue to hold the foliage to the tree trunk and hair spray to hold the foliage layers together. After the foliage was sprayed with the final coat of hair spray the tree was complete and ready to plant. I took the tree to the Little Chicago bluff where I planted the new tree in the remaining hole. The new trees added new life to the old bluff woods.



Now back to the workbench for cleanup. I had no use for the plastic tree trunks due to the glue after lichen removal, so I trashed them. Now for the left over lichen. Should I get a zip-lock bag to hold the lichen



and put it in storage? "No," I told myself. "You need to think layout before storage." The lichen could be used for bushes on the railroad. So where on the railroad was another lichen bush needed? It took only minutes to use some of the lichen to add a bush at the end of a spur track in Little Chicago.

Another large bush was created near the woods on the bluff in Little Chicago. There still was enough lichen to make two more small bushes to fill a bare spot near one leg of the wye in Minneapolis.



The Minneapolis & Northland Railroad now had scenery improvements that gave the railroad a more completed look when viewed by regular operators and visitors. The scenery improvements were made possible by telling myself to "think layout before



storage." The method, will not only work with a scenery project--it will work with other railroad projects too. I encourage you to try this method to make your railroad rather than your storage area grow.

**editor's note:** Les' landscape upgrades add realism and improve the appearance on his layout. Since authoring this article, he has moved to a new home, with much of his layout intact and being installed this fall.

**Scratchbuilding Potato Sacks**  
*by Tracy McKibben*  
**story and photos by the author**

My first-ever scratchbuilt structure, recently completed, is a rural produce warehouse. Local farmers sell their goods to the warehouse owner who, in turn, ships them (by rail) to larger cities (and a larger price). In the area that I am modeling, potatoes are a common item grown by the local farmers. To accurately detail my model warehouse, I needed to model sacks of potatoes, ready for shipment.

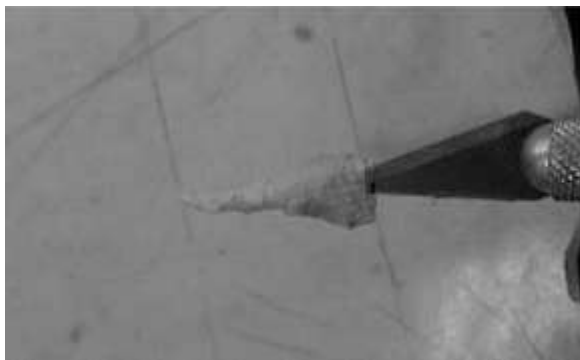
To start, I purchased a roadside vegetable stand kit, manufactured by Busch, so that I could use the HO



scale vegetables included in the kit. Also included were some plastic potato sacks. One look at these, and I knew I needed to find a way to scratchbuild the potato sacks for my warehouse.

I tried a variety of methods, all failing miserably, before finally settling on aluminum foil, rolled into a shape like that of a **Hershey's Kiss** (lower left).

This forms the basic **shape of the sack o' potatoes**. Potato sacks are typically made of burlap. In order to give my lump of aluminum foil the look of burlap, I dipped the foil into white glue, and then wrapped a small piece of paper towel around it, twisting the top closed. After the glue was completely dried, I snipped off the excess **"tail,"** painted the sack with



Railroad Tie Brown (any dark brown will work), and finished with a light dry-brushing of tan. The finished product looks exactly like dirty burlap. Above (center) is the scratchbuilt sack next to one of the plastics ones from the Busch kit.

To complete the illusion, eliminating any doubt as to what might be in those burlap sacks, I modeled one that has tipped over and spilled, using potatoes from the Busch kit that I purchased (above). More photos of the potato sacks, and the rest of the produce warehouse and my layout can be found at <http://dmirhillcitysub.blogspot.com/>.

**FAGAN'S HOBBIES**  
**Trains**  
**Models**  
**Paint & Supplies**  
**R/C cars**  
**& airplanes**  
*For all your hobby needs*



2327 Central Ave., Dubuque, Iowa • 563-588-0846  
 Visit us online at [www.fagansonline.com](http://www.fagansonline.com)



## Region Roundup

Current activities and events around the TLR

Number One Northern Division reports their first annual general meeting of the division's newly formed modular club. The event took place July 18. The club intends to follow the Free-Mo concept. Bylaws and standards were also accepted at the meeting.

The group plans to display a layout during the Winnipeg Model Railroad Club spring show next April. In the meantime, there are a number of interested individuals in the area who may be interested in joining, thereby increasing membership. (courtesy Dennis Rietze, superintendent.)



Prairie Village Days, an annual event held in Madison, South Dakota, attracted rail fans to the roundhouse where they were treated to prototype passenger cars and the Dakota Southeastern Division modular layout. Over half a dozen division members staffed the layout during the two day event July 10-11. (photo by Jay Manning)

## TrainToons

by Paul Ullrich



**Sept. 24, 2011**

**Luce Line RR Club Train Show**

McLeod Co. Fairgrounds  
Hutchinson, MN  
10am to 4pm  
**Admission: \$4.00!**  
Under 12 Free

Lots of Operating Layouts  
Large Flea Market &  
Popular Vote Model Contest

Tables \$18.00 320-587-2279 Mark  
mkhrzou@hutchtel.net

Layouts wanted 320-587-8641 Zach  
zachmeyer@mac.com

**Subscribe to The Fusee**

If you're an NMRA member residing within the boundaries of the Thousand Lakes Region, you're automatically a TLR member. So why not keep up with what's happening in the Region? Use this form to subscribe to The Fusee. If your subscription has lapsed, use this form to renew.

I'm enclosing payment for:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$10 for one year \_\_\_\_\_ New subscription  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 for two years \_\_\_\_\_ Subscription renewal  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Returning member

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Scale(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ NMRA #: \_\_\_\_\_

State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Jim Krekelberg, Treasurer  
 6305 W. Westminster Dr. Sioux Falls, SD 57106

*(continued from page 1)*

of Mod Podge Gloss Medium, a craft product, over the painted riverbed. The stuff goes on white, like white glue, but is crystal clear when dried, with a nice glossy finish. It looks just like water! While the gloss medium was still wet, I put the bridge piers into place. The gloss medium would hold them there like glue. It takes a few days for the gloss medium to completely dry. I waited, patiently, checking every half hour, to see if it was done. Eventually, it dried, and I finished assembling the bridge.

**What's the point of all this? I dunno.** Lots of people have built bridges, painted rivers— **there's nothing new** here in that regard. What IS new, at least to me, and maybe somebody reading this, is the concept of the road/rail bridge. Until encountering this "problem", I didn't know they existed. I'm glad that I found out, however, because I love the result. **My original plan was good, but this, "it is a far, far better thing."**



**HAVE 50 MODEL RAILROADING CLINICS  
 RIGHT IN YOUR LIVING ROOM.**

Just because you can't make it to a national convention doesn't mean you have to miss out. Right now the NMRA's Kalmbach Memorial Library has over 50 DVDs of clinics presented at national conventions from 2002 to 2010. Each is available for NMRA members to borrow for the cost of processing and postage.

So you can see clinics on everything from decoders to design, tools to techniques, helixes to highways, and research to resin casting.

All from the comfort of your very own couch.

Visit [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org) and go to the Kalmbach Memorial Library page for a complete listing. Or call the Library at 423-894-8144.



**We make it even more fun.**  
[www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org)

Then, get that popcorn ready.



**The Fusee wants you!**

Actually, The Fusee wants your photos (of model train stuff), ideas, stories, drawings, and other material to share with fellow subscribers. See how many different authors and photographers contributed to this issue—their names are listed on page 11. You could be next! Contact the editor with your questions.

# The Thousand Lakes Region of the NMRA

<u>Board of Directors</u>	<u>Department Chairs</u>	<u>Division Supers</u>
<p><i>President</i> Gerry Miller 1040 Hawkeye Dr. Dubuque, Iowa, 52001 563-557-9646 millerg20@gmail.com</p>	<p><i>Membership &amp; Handbook</i> Jim Krekelberg 6305 W. Westminster Sioux Falls, SD 57106 605-595-2634 mzz64@yahoo.com</p>	<p><i>Dakota Southeastern</i> Alan Saatkamp 902 Chestnut St. Harrisburg, SD 57032 605-767-9743 saatkamp@iw.net</p>
<p><i>Vice President</i> Paul Ullrich 3 Gimli Place Winnipeg, MB R2R 2B8 204-694-1061 pullrich@mymts.net</p>	<p><i>Achievement Program</i> John Hotvet, MMR 5100 Nicollet Ave. S. Minneapolis, MN 55419 612-822-5788 johntrain@aol.com</p>	<p><i>Minnesota River Valley</i> Brian Wordes 78103 200th St. Sacred Heart, MN 56285 320-329-3869 brigayle@rswb.coop</p>
<p><i>Secretary</i> Paul Gerry 522 Luci Court Thunder Bay, ON Canada P7E 1H1 pgerry@gmail.com</p>	<p><i>Historian</i> Thomas Mauszycki, DDS, MMR 1671 Valley View Dr. Winona, MN 55987 507-454-3800 tmauszycki@charter.net</p>	<p><i>No. 1 Northern</i> Dennis Rietze 39 Shelagh Crescent Winnipeg MB Canada R2G 1Z6 ritzkraks@mymts.net</p>
<p><i>Treasurer</i> Jim Krekelberg 6305 W. Westminster Dr. Sioux Falls, SD 57106 605-595-2634 jkrekelberg@sio.midco.net</p>	<p><i>Webmaster</i> Dave Hamilton 18015 33rd Pl. N. Plymouth, MN 763-274-9120 mzz64@yahoo.com</p>	<p><i>Prairie Lakes</i> Doug Clarke 207 27th St. Spirit Lake, IA 51360 712-236-1759 dcrails@hotmail.com</p>
<p><i>Convention Director</i> Jay Manning 7100 W. Stoney Creek St. Sioux Falls, SD 56106 605-332-5337 chessie@mindspring.com</p>	<p><i>Fusee Editor</i> Alan Saatkamp 902 Chestnut St. Harrisburg, SD 57032 605-767-9743 saatkamp@iw.net</p>	<p><i>South Red River Valley</i> Jim Moore 453 Oakland Ave. South Fargo, ND 58103 701-293-7834 jimraemoore@msn.com</p>
<p><i>Public Relations</i> Tracy McKibben 10925 Hyland Terrace Eden Prairie, MN 55331 952-294-0830 tracy.mckibben@gmail.com</p>		<p><i>Southeastern</i> Tom Ford 3971 Cora Dr. Dubuque, IA 52002 563-557-3860 trjr47@msn.com</p>
<p><i>Contest Director</i> John Hotvet, MMR 5100 Nicollet Ave. S. Minneapolis, MN 55419 612-822-5788 Johntrain@aol.com</p>		<p><i>Twin Cities</i> Ron Bodin 763-755-8408 super@tcdnmra.org</p>

The FUSEE is a quarterly publication of the Thousand Lakes Region of the National Model Railroad Association and is mailed to all subscribers. A subscription runs for one year and costs \$10.00. See subscription form on page 10.

Permission is granted to reproduce any portion of The FUSEE for use in other non-profit publications as long as credit is given to both the author and the THOUSAND LAKES REGION FUSEE, and a copy is sent to the editor.

ARTICLES: All contributions except advertising are considered donations. Authors retain all rights to their articles and photos and may submit their material for publication elsewhere. Submission, including photos, can be made by floppy disk, email, CD-ROM, DVD, or hard copy. Handwritten or typed manuscripts are fine, too. (Photo prints will be returned.) Send materials or questions to: [saatkamp@iw.net](mailto:saatkamp@iw.net). Put "FUSEE in the subject line, or send it to me at Alan Saatkamp, 902 Chestnut Street., Harrisburg, SD 57032.

**My appreciation to this issue's Fusee contributors, including: MMR Lester "Les" Breuer, Jeremy Dummler, MMR Fred Headon, Tracy McKibben, Jay Manning, Gerry Miller, Dennis Rietze, and Paul Ullrich. This issue wouldn't be complete without your input!**

All advertising should be mailed to THE FUSEE editor as camera-ready artwork or electronic files (jpeg, tiff, gif, or EPS with outlined fonts). Payment must be enclosed and should be in U.S. funds, international money order, or by check drawn on U.S. banks. Questions? Contact the editor.

**Fusee Advertising**  
Commercial advertising from hobby shops, manufacturers, and businesses associated with a model railroading interest are accepted. Pike ads are for individual layouts, model railroad clubs, or other non-commercial groups. All ads can be run in a single issue at the rate of 35% of the annual rate.

<u>Ad size (HxW)</u>	<u>Annual commercial rate</u>	<u>One time commercial rate</u>	<u>Annual pike ad rate</u>
<b>Full pg 9 5/8 x 7 1/8"</b>	<b>\$145.00</b>	<b>\$50.75</b>	<b>\$90.00</b>
<b>1/2 pg 4 3/4 x 7 1/8"</b>	<b>90.00</b>	<b>31.50</b>	<b>45.00</b>
<b>1/4 pg 4 3/4 x 3 1/2"</b>	<b>45.00</b>	<b>15.75</b>	<b>25.00</b>
<b>1/6 pg 4 3/4 x 2 1/4"</b>	<b>35.00</b>	<b>12.25</b>	<b>18.50</b>
<b>1/8 pg 3 3/4 x 2 1/4"</b>	<b>25.00</b>	<b>8.75</b>	<b>15.00</b>
<b>1/12 pg 2 3/8 x 2 1/4"</b>	<b>18.50</b>	<b>6.48</b>	<b>10.00</b>



Fall 2011  
The Fusee  
6305 W. Westminster  
Sioux Falls, SD 57106

#### What's Inside? Lots!

A tale of two bridges

Upgrade rolling stock coupler pockets

Adventures in retailing

#### Ties n' track

Build a test track

Think layout before storage

Scratchbuilding potato sacks

Check your expiration date!

**And... if you have questions (or a change of address) email Jim Krekelberg at:**  
jkrekelberg@sio.mido.net

#### Upcoming train shows and events in and near the region

Saturday 9/10 Dakota Southeastern Division fourth annual library clinics 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Ronning Library 3100 E. 49th Street Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Free. Check our website [www.dsed.svmes.net](http://www.dsed.svmes.net).

Saturday 9/24 Luce Line RR Club train show 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at McLeod County Fairgrounds in Hutchinson, Minnesota. Lots of operating layouts, large flea market, and popular vote model contest. Admission \$4.00, under 12 free. Tables \$18.00. Contact Mark Brown at 320-587-2279 or [mkbraun@hutchtel.net](mailto:mkbraun@hutchtel.net). Layouts wanted. Contact Zach Meyer at 320-587-8641 or [zachmeyer@hutchtel.net](mailto:zachmeyer@hutchtel.net).

**Friday 9/30 Thousand Lakes Region fall board of directors' meeting 10:00 a.m. at Cooper's Pub, St. Louis Park, Minnesota. See president's column.**

Saturday 10/1 Prairie Lakes Division 25th anniversary fall meet 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Cherokee, Iowa, community center, 530 Bluff Street. Admission \$3. There will be a steak fry dinner at 5:00 followed by a railroad historian and author describing the railroad history of Iowa. If interested in dinner, send a check for \$16 per person made out to Depot Renovation. Mail checks for dinner to Ron Peterson, 604 W. Willow, Cherokee, IA 51012, by September 9.

Saturday 10/8 Dakota Southeastern Division sixth annual model train open house layout tour from noon to 5:00 p.m. Visit five homes and the Sioux Valley Model Railroad Engineers club layout at the Sioux Empire Fairgrounds. HO, N, and Z layouts included. Railpasses for \$5 (\$10 family) available beginning September 10, at Hobbytown, 1007 W. 41st Street, Sioux Falls.

Saturday and Sunday 10/15-16 Winnipeg Model Railroad Club Great Winnipeg annual train show and flea market from 10:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m. Saturday and 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Sunday at the Mennonite Brethren Collegiate, 180 Riverton Ave. Admission \$3 per person or \$5 per family. Refreshments on sale. Tables \$20 Canadian per table payable to the WMRC, Ken Epp, 15 Pinecrest Bay, Winnipeg, MB R2G 1W2. Proceeds benefit the Autism Society.

Sunday 10/16 33rd Annual Spud Valley hobby show from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Ramada Plaza Suites Crystal Ballroom, 1635 42nd St. S., Fargo, ND. **Seventeenth annual "Plastics on the Prairie" model contest, large and small operating model railroads, vendors, door prizes,** and Valley RC Flyers display of planes. Admission: \$5.00 (under 12 free with paid adult). For information, call Don, 701-234-9351.

Saturday 11/12 Granite City Train Show **from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the National Guard Armory, 1710 Veteran's Drive, St. Cloud, Minnesota.** Admission \$5.00, kids 12 and under free. Call 320-255-0033 or visit [www.granitecitytrainshow.com](http://www.granitecitytrainshow.com). Email [edwardolson@cloudnet.com](mailto:edwardolson@cloudnet.com).

Saturday and Sunday 11/19-20 Trains at Christmas at the W.H. Lyons Fairgrounds Expo Building, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Sponsored by the Sioux Valley Model Engineers Society. Saturday 10-5, Sunday 11-4. Admission \$4. Children 12 and under with an adult free. Contact Wayne at 605-373-0222 or [svmes@sio.midco.net](mailto:svmes@sio.midco.net). Visit <http://www.svmes.net>.