



Chuck Shell Gives In-Depth Talk About DCC at March Meeting



Chuck refers to his copy of the handout while giving a detailed explanation of the DCC set-up he uses on his own layout.

Our March clinic, led by Chuck Shell, was a detailed description of DCC for a complex layout. He used his own layout as an example. Chuck's layout has computer control, block detection, signalling, and all the other goodies you can imagine.

Chuck supported his talk with a handout containing pictures, data sheets, and resources. The pictures included close-up shots of the various Digitrax products he uses.

He offered many tips on keeping the layout wiring organized and maintainable. He mentioned that if he ran out of a particular wire insulation color, he stopped work until he got the right stuff. "Otherwise," he said, "I'll never be able to remember what wire was for what purpose a few months down the road when I need to."

Although he touched on a number of specific ideas, one in particular seemed to draw a lot of attention. It was about how to move the hidden short indication LEDs from a circuit board to the front of the layout. He called this the "Don Francis LED fix."

Mini Modules – 144 Square Inches of Fun

How much can you get in a square foot...or even less? Jim Laird talked about the mini-module competition at the RMR Convention this June and brought in an MR article about the concept.

Jack Getz's *Old Goat Diner*, named to reflect Al Johnson's interests and characteristics, is a fine example of the concept. Al,

who Jack claims is a friend, is known for modelling the Great Northern and for some very hot chilli. Of course, the logo for the GN was the mountain goat, and the two guys in Haz-Mat suits in the back represent the chilli.



The *Old Goat Diner* is painted in GN green. Not visible in the picture are two vats of chilli with old tires cooking in the pots. Jack Getz is going to model the "Dick Hunter Bar" next, setting it in the Capitol Hill neighborhood for some reason.

In This Issue

Chuck Shell Gives In-Depth Talk About DCC at March Meeting.....	1
Mini Modules – 144 Square Inches of Fun.....	1
Plows Were March Show & Tell Feature.....	2
Show & Tell Themes.....	2
RMR Convention Is Just Ahead.....	3
March Drawing.....	4
CAD Can Help Us Draw Our Best.....	4
Upcoming Events.....	4
April Meeting Location Changed.....	4
Registration Form.....	6



Above: Bill Johnson's rotary snow plow is a recent purchase and not yet painted or lettered. This HO-scale model is DCC-equipped, and from the photographer's own knowledge, weighs a ton. **Below:** Stewart Jone's Jordan Spreader is a beauty in HO-scale. **Bottom:** Stephen Schweighofer again showed his outstanding craftsmanship with an N-scale narrow gauge rotary.

Plows Were March Show & Tell Feature

The weather was great for the March meeting—not a snow flake in sight. Maybe that is the reason so many snow plows were available for display. At the top of the page is an HO-scale powered rotary owned by Bill Johnson. Bill was very particular about anyone touching this

Show & Tell Themes

April 1..... Reefers
 May 6 "Tanks" for the Memories
 July 1... Independence Day Special: Depots
 August 5..... Favorite Train
 September 2..... Labor Day Special: Shop
 Buildings
 October 7..... Oktoberfest: Beer Cars
 November 4..... A Piece of Railroadiana
 December 2..... Christmas Past: Your oldest
 locomotive or rolling stock or the one
 you've owned longest

Officers

Division Superintendent
 Gary Myers
Assistant Superintendent
 Don Francis
Treasurer
 William Johnson
Secretary
 Tom Frerichs



model: he didn't want the lettering rubbed off. The model features DCC operation, and I'm sure we will enjoy seeing it again when Bill makes that phantom lettering a bit more legible.

Stewart Jones brought a great Jordan spreader. Built from a Walthers kit, this HO-scale model is finely done. It is also a very bright yellow; there will be no visibility issues with this piece of rolling stock. Stewart brought in a *Railroad Model Craftsman* October 2006 article about Jordans as a bonus.

Continued on page 3



RMR Convention Is Just Ahead

Have you made your reservations for the Rocky Mountain Region Convention? It is just around the corner, and you do not want to miss out on the fun and friendship waiting in Alamosa this June.

There are clinics, contests, a Hobo Breakfast, and a ride on the Rio Grande Scenic Railroad from Alamosa to La Veta.

The schedule has Friday devoted to clinics. There are two tracks: model railroading and rail fanning.

Saturday is the day to travel to La Veta. Both coach and dome seating are available for the trip. There will be time in La Veta to eat and do a little shopping.

Do not forget the Hobo Breakfast scheduled for Sunday morning at the depot. You may have to take a break from eating...there are trains scheduled to depart during breakfast.



During the convention you can look around a fine railroad town, Alamosa, and enjoy a festival going on downtown.

Plans also include prototype tours of the yard and shop in Alamosa, and there will be both popular vote and NMRA-judged contests for you to enter.

The official convention hotel is the Inn of the Rio Grande, which is offering a special rate if you tell them you are part of the convention when you make your reservations. There are other hotels in walking distance. Alamosa in the summer is a

popular destination, so make your reservations now. There is also a \$10 break in convention price if you register before April 1.

The Convention Committee, chaired by Nate Bryant, is composed of members of your division, Sunrise, and South Suburban Division. They have been working hard to make this a special event for you.

Show & Tell - Continued from page 2

Based upon a Dimi Leslie Rotary snowplow kit, Stephen Schweighofer added a detailed interior. His one complaint? "It's hard to find pictures of rotaries with the outside removed," he said.



Above: Larry Buyck's HO-scale snow plow truck. **Right:** Russell snowplow in N-scale from Walthers was Glenn Sponholz's contribution. Glenn seems to model in every scale.



Glenn Sponholz offered an N-scale Russell snowplow from Walthers. He needed to keep a close eye on his model. A certain N-scaler was seen eyeing it very closely.

Although it is for a different kind of road, Larry Buyck's HO-scale snow plow truck is closer than the other models to the kind of equipment modern railroads use to keep their right of way clear.

March Drawing

Everyone who brings in something for Show & Tell is entered into a drawing for a \$10 gift certificate from Caboose Hobbies. Stewart Jones was the lucky recipient in March. Thank you, Caboose Hobbies, for supporting Sunrise Division.



April Meeting Location Changed

We do have a layout tour planned for our April meeting, so we will not be meeting at the Firehouse in Aurora.

Details are being worked out. Check your email for updates.

CAD Can Help Us Draw Our Best

Many model railroaders seem to be either planning their dream layout, designing an improved layout, or busy tearing down their current layout to start the next one. Even if their basement is filled with a well designed and operating model railroad, with fine attention to scenery and detail, there is something about doodling track plans that attracts a lot of us.

For layout designers, planning options ranged from napkins at Village Inn to carefully drawn designs done on a drafting board. The first choice lacked precision; the second took skills many of us do not have.

Model railroaders now have another choice: Computer Aided Drafting or CAD. CAD programs have been available for many years, but commercial CAD suites, such as AutoCAD, have traditionally had drawbacks: they were expensive in both cost and time to learn.

The past few years have seen the introduction of CAD programs specifically aimed at the model railroader. CadRail, 3rd Planit, and RightTrack are some of the commercial offerings. These programs are much

easier to learn, and they are reasonably priced. They also include such features as pre-built turnouts and track that match commercial products, built in calculations for grade, and other functions that make it easy to draw a great layout.

Possibly the best reason to use a CAD program is that you cannot cheat. We all tend to draw turnouts too close together or make a curve just a little too tight. A CAD program will not let you make these mistakes.

The commercial programs include many options to view and design your layout, including 3-D views. These features take some practice to learn.

If you want to get your feet wet without spending a lot of money, consider XtrkCAD. This is an open source (free) program that you can download from the Web. Although it doesn't do fancy 3-D, it has a large library of commercial track in all scales, does a great job replacing that napkin, and is a good way to get started. The current version, 4.0.3, can be downloaded from <http://www.xtrkcad.org/Wikka/HomePage>. A tutorial can be found there, too.

Upcoming Events

April 3, 2010.....TECO 5 Model Train Expo, Colorado Springs, CO
June 3-6, 2010Tracks To Alamosa - Rocky Mountain Region Convention, Alamosa, CO
June 12-13, 2010Limon Railroad Days, Limon Depot, CO
July 11-17, 2010.....NMRA Convention, 75th Anniversary - NMRA National Convention

Next Meeting for Sunrise Division, RMR, NMRA
Agenda to Be Determined – Check email for updates
April 1, 2010 – 7:15 PM — See Story Above



Tracks to Alamosa

The Rocky Mountain Region, NMRA,
2010 Convention

Alamosa, CO - Thursday through Sunday
June 3 through 6, 2010



www.TracksToAlamosa.org

Tracksalamosa@ecentral.com

Ride the Rio Grande Scenic Railroad Alamosa to La Veta and return.

Saturday is an all day roundtrip train ride from Alamosa to La Veta. This includes time in La Veta for lunch and looking around. Both coach and dome seating is available.

Clinics — A number of programs are in the works. We plan to have several clinics following a theme of "Railfanning in 2010". Clinics will run Friday morning and evening.

Contest — Both NMRA-judged and popular vote contests are included.

Layout Tours — We are planning to have several layouts open Sunday afternoon, on your way home from Alamosa.

Prototype Tours — We are setting up tours of the yard and shop in Alamosa.

Hobo Breakfast — The Sunday morning breakfast will be hosted at the Rio Grande Depot during morning train departures.

Local Transportation — Alamosa is easy to get around in. Maps and instructions will be provided for the locations we are using.

Non-rail Activities — The Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve just northeast of Alamosa. Inn of the Rio Grande Indoor Water Park (a small fee for those not staying at the hotel). Summerfest on the Rio, a local festival in Cole Park, Friday through Sunday, open free to the public. Information on other activities in Alamosa will be available.

Location — Our headquarters will be the Inn of the Rio Grande, 333 Santa Fe Ave., Alamosa, CO, 81101. This is along US 160, on the east end of Alamosa. They have offered us a rate of \$84+ tax per room. Reservations received after May 4, 2010 will be at the group rate on an availability basis only. Their reservation line is 719-589-5833 or 1-800-669-1658. Be sure to specify you are members of the Tracks to Alamosa Convention.

Tentative Schedule

- **Thursday evening** – Registration.
- **Friday morning** – Registration, clinics, contest entry.
- **Friday afternoon** – Open time, yard and shop tours.
- **Friday evening** – Registration, clinics, contest entry, Summerfest on the Rio (free, non-rail activity).
- **Saturday morning & afternoon** – Train trip: Alamosa to La Veta and return (extra fare), Summerfest.
- **Saturday evening** – Contest judging, videos, social center, Summerfest.
- **Sunday morning** – Model pick up, Hobo breakfast (extra fare), contest awards, RMR-BOD meeting, Summerfest.
- **Sunday afternoon** – Layout tours on the way home, Summerfest.

Judges are needed for the contest. If you would like to help out, please check the box on the registration form.

Want More Information?

US Mail

Send SSAE to:

Tracks to Alamosa
% Richard Hunter
832 Geneva Street
Aurora CO 80010-3941

Web Site

www.TracksToAlamosa.org

E-mail

Tracksalamosa@ecentral.com

Tracks to Alamosa Convention – June 3–6, 2010

Registration Form

Primary Registrant must be at least 18 years old.

Is primary a **current Member** of the NMRA? _____

If yes, NMRA # _____

If yes, the immediate family is considered to be members. Every registration must include at least one Primary Registrant. The Adult Limited allows family members, in or outside of the immediate household, to attend the breakfast and/or ride the train only.

Names of other immediate family members (residing in the same household) on this registration. Include age if under 12 at the time of the convention. Grandchildren may be included on grandparents registration as immediate family. _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Number	Item	Fare	Total
_____	Primary Registrant	\$ 35	\$ _____
_____	Spouse/Other Immediate Family Members	\$ 20	\$ _____
_____	Children under 12 (with registered adult) ¹	\$ 0	\$ _____
_____	Adult Limited	\$ 10	\$ _____
_____	Train – Coach Seating ²	\$ 40	\$ _____
_____	Train – Dome Seating ²	\$ 55	\$ _____
_____	Sunday morning awards breakfast	\$ 15	\$ _____
_____	Non-NMRA member surcharge	\$10 per person, \$20 family maximum	\$ _____
_____	Late Fee (After March 31)	\$10 per person, \$20 family maximum	\$ _____
Grand Total			\$ _____

Make check payable to: Tracks to Alamosa

Send registration form and check to:

832 Geneva Street, Aurora, CO 80010-3941

Cancellation Policy: Full refund prior to April 16. Full refund less \$10 /person, \$20/family after April 15 to May 15. No refunds after May 15.

I would like to serve as a contest judge: []

I-13-SNL

¹ Children under 12 must be with parent/guardian at all times.

² We may have a limit on the number of seats if the train fills up before we get enough registrations.