



N. Michigan Railroad Club

All Gauge/All Scale

June Newsletter 2004



AMTRAK at bay



CP Steam

Next Meeting:

Next Meeting is Saturday June 5 at 9 AM at Bill Parrish's home at 618 East Orchard Drive, Traverse City . The time change is due Bill's insatiable need to make my morning's as painful as possible (jus kidding). It should be great fun to see another layout and to point out all the mistakes Bill has made- YEAH! While I'm on Bill's case – what a great job he has done to keep us not merely alive and well but thriving like no other RR group I have ever seen. Fair warning - this could mean another year or two of leadership. Please join us on Saturday.

The BIG News:

Most, if not all of you, know what I'm talking about – the closing of T.C. Trains. Reggie did a great service to us by bringing us together including the youngsters coming into NMRRC. I think we understand how difficult it is to raise a young family as a small businessman without benefits such as assisted health care, retirement, and vacation plans. My understanding is that the business was going well – just not well enough. We will all miss the shop and the bull sessions held within. Let's keep these sessions going at our meetings And there's no reason we can't keep hassling Reggie either. Reggie has now made clear that he is

still operating a business in different format which includes train repair (when his garage is prepped) and some selling, principally on eBay In addition he remains interested in “buying” and “selling” as before.

A Railroad Friend:

I'd like to say a few words about someone some of us met at T.C. Trains. His name is Ray Ruckel and he is 92 years old. He remembers an old standard gauge train he had as a very young kid but doesn't remember being a model RR devotee in any form or manner. In fact, he said he really didn't catch on big until 2 years ago when a friend brought him into T.C. Trains. He got interested at the age of 90 and with the help of a few others including Reggie, he got a board built and then he designed a layout on his own. Fantastic as it seems, he was intrigued by the NEW electronic stuff and included much of it in his purchases. This included the TMCC/Cab-1 Lionel system and some slick running stock including the Cab-1 controllable Bucyrus “Big Hook” that Lionel marketed several years ago (see below). In addition, he ran his turnout operation with the Cab-1 as well. As it turns out, Ray recently lost his wife and has decided to sell his house near Grand Traverse Resort and to terminate his railroad. All the materials of his pike (except the board) have now been sold and he is on his way to a retirement home. The photos below were taken by Reg and proves Ray's impressive and successful effort in O-gauge. May we all have this level of drive and skill at the age of 90.



Pennsy “Big Hook”



Ray and “Schnoz”



Ray's Yard

Another friend of note is Rich Milbert whose wife also recently passed away. Rich was a beginner and joined us from time-to-time. He is in his 70's and built a small layout (with a little help) to enjoy a hobby. He is now moving to Florida and has sold his layout but his stock, track, and accessories will likely be on eBay. He was a big mustachioed friendly guy whom some of you may remember. Neither Rich nor Ray became club members but nobody can say I didn't try.

New stuff, old stuff, and dollars:

The Model RR industry remains very active developing new products and marketing many engines and electronics that many of us never expected to see. God bless the feud between Mike of MTH and Lionel – it seems to have driven something we used to call competition. Several beautiful engines introduced by Lionel last year (did anyone buy one?) are the retooled Berkshire and the Pennsy M1a.; remarkable engines that do just about anything you might want in a steam locomotive including flickering firebox, variable ashpan glow, and (finally for Lionel) enhanced smoke production with fan. This completes the justification for an exit fan in the window. The M1a is supposed to have a light and brakeman in the tender “doghouse”. It also has two speakers. The price of these high-end engines is not for everyone; \$1200. for the M1a; \$1100. for the Berk. (see photos next page). Has anyone got one to bring to our meeting(s)? Boy would I like to see them! One of these days a new term will be coined to describe “toy trains” that are not toys! --how about “neofauxO-scale with enhanced couplers”. By the way, did you know that traditional Kadee style O-scale couplers can make effective pulling contact with “toy” style knuckle couplers?



Lionel P.M. Berkshire



Lionel Pennsy M1a

You will never get an HO scale model railroader to admit it but the HO model industry is being overrun by Lionel/MTH/K-Line/Weaver ideas. The new HO engines also have new sound systems and lighting details and high prices. Once, not long ago, these engines could be purchased for \$20-60. Today, the high-end costs from companies such as Broadway Limited or ER run from \$250 - \$400. and you won't get one unless you order it unseen except for promo literature or the web. Athearn's Genesis line is taking orders on UP, D&RGW, or Clinchfield Challengers for \$570.00. I wonder how much a Korean, Chinese, or Phillipino earns per hour? Watch out, Dick Hein, for new N-scale engines with smoke, variably programmable sound systems, and hoppers that can shout obscenities.

June Meeting Agenda: (Repeat from Bill Parrish)

- Train yard plans - Dave Crouse
Cost & Approval
Construction of the yard time schedule
- FOT 2004 Financial budget - Reggie Horning
- Treasury Report - Michele Horning
- Members module sections for the "O" gauge.
Who plans to build or present their module for the 2004 show. We encourage all members to build a module or assist with one or more of the 6 club corner modules or assist with any of the gauges. All help is most welcome.
- Layout leadership
 - "N" gauge layout - Dick Hein
 - "S" gauge layout - John Sprenger
 - "G" gauge layout - Reggie Horning
 - Childrens Layout - (old winter layout) -?
- October train show & swap meet - Bill Shannon/Boss
- **RUNNING TIME ON BILL'S LAYOUT (jr. members are most welcome)**

*DIRECTIONS -

Eastern Ave by Central High School in TC/Turn north on Eastwood (across from Eastern Elem & tennis courts)/Turn right onto East Orchard and second house on your right.
618 East Orchard / phone number 932-0243

This is a repeat request from a previous newsletter. So far, no one has responded. Please take a look at this series of questions to use as a guide if you want to share your interests. I justify this effort by pointing out that although many people know each other, there are many whom we can know even better to share the fellowship of model railroading.

1. When and how did you start your RR hobby?
2. What gauges/scales do you work (or play?) with?
3. What are your favorite railroads or what are the railroads you model or "run".
4. Do You have a layout at home?
5. What is your favorite part of the hobby? (e.g. electrical, design, painting, etc.)
6. Are you interested in presenting to our club?

Finally, I would like to open an opportunity for you to share an interest in modeling, operating, or a general railroading story that you feel others would like to read; several paragraphs of short story to keep us working on the railroad. Please – no politics or foul language – silliness is OK! We've got to laugh a bit.

That's all for now – Two toots and pull onto the main.

Lou Glatzer (LG)
Editor