

## **DCC at Greenberg by Bob Pawlak**

Although only about 9 people brought modules needed to make the oval-with-peninsula-shaped layout, about another 18 club members (that I can remember) showed up to help out, run trains, or just visit the show. The Red Line was converted from DC to DCC operation about 11:00 AM on Saturday. This longer route off the junction module around the Black Hole corner and then around the end loop with return to the main rectangle via the Blue Line and junction module usually had at least 2 and as many as 4 DCC trains running on it using the club's 4 radio throttles. Procedurally, people seemed to hop on and off the DCC Red Line without much regard for the sign up sheet because it didn't much matter what other trains were running, there was always room for one more as long as one of the throttles was available.

The Rand Hoven/Dennis Rockwell 12' corner module provided a second passing siding about half way around the Red Line loop from the passing siding in the yard. This made it possible to run two DCC trains in opposite directions with meets at the passing sidings. The peninsula kept another operator busy switching the end loop sidings and running from the Yellow Line up the grade and around the end loop onto the Green Line (Mountain Division), around the reversing loop at Black Hole and then back down again. This action was accomplished using DC power because I haven't figured out how to wire the reversing loop of Black Hole for DCC operation as yet another alternative for the corner.

I was pleased that at least 4 club members programmed and then ran their recently acquired decoder equipped locos for the first time during the show. It seems easiest to run consists using the same address for all locos and just change CV29 to 07 for other than elephant style running. I would say that at least 12 different club members (out of 27 show participants/visitors) ran DCC at sometime during the 2-day show. In addition, I estimate that at least another eighteen youngsters got a turn at running a DCC train using a radio throttle. Overall, I would say that DCC usage is definitely "up" considerably since the Greenburg Show of just a year ago.

As another minor point of interest, I had some trouble hauling my 60 car unit coal train through the "double wiggles" of the

Pawling module and then starting into the "S" curve at the start of the end loop using 3 locos on the head end. The train would sometimes derail toward the front of the train with the extra drag of these turns. I took one of the 3 locos and put it about mid train and had no more problems.

Meanwhile, there was plenty of DC running time available on the Yellow and Blue Line ovals for use by the rest of the club members.

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layouts of different gauges. It was good to see Valley NTrak there with a 20 x 20 (I estimate) set-up which included Rich Marko's animated logging modules and Bill Pontin's town and deep gorge modules. Both modules were prizewinners at Winterfest 2003. Another eye-catcher was a how-to-make-scenery demonstration module built on a sheet of clear "glass." Part of the glass was left clear so that one could see the wiring and the basic construction of the module. Then from left to right in successive steps on the rest of the module the process of building a scene was shown: from a raw stack of foam sheets contour-cut to form a slope to some shaping of the foam to plaster cloth to paint and then ground cover and some trees. A road sub-grade was cut into the foam, a finished surface applied along with an eighteen-wheeler. The module was part of the overall layout and it sure was strange to see trains running over the clear glass! A visitor saw the module and exclaimed, "Hey, I can do that!" Purpose served and nicely! And we hope that he does.

I went to Carlstadt via NJ Transit bus. The club has a one-story, 5,000 square foot masonry building. Visitors can walk around the HO set-up, while O-gauge forms an "L" against two walls of the building. The O-operators booth is elevated in the corner. A large yard on the short leg of the "L" is filled with steam and diesel power and plenty of freight, and modern and vintage passenger cars. This is a two-rail operation and much of the rolling stock is handcrafted. There seemed to be two loops operating for show purposes (how about an O-gauge cab forward? It must weigh a ton!), and in a separate urban section, two trolleys under catenaries ran in a timed stop-and-go routine.

The HO layout at Carlstadt is divided visually into three sections. A floor to ceiling wall separates about 20% of the layout from the rest. The main part of the layout is divided by a "hill" which runs perpendicular to the elevated operators booth. The folks in the booth overlook two yards and some mainline action. The hump yard occupies a large amount of space, has its own operator who uses air



pressure retarders to reduce the speed of cars coming off the hump. A lot of track is hidden, including a sub-surface staging yard and all the trackage beyond the floor to ceiling wall; occupancy detectors are used in those "blind" situations. Two other yards with their own operators elsewhere on the layout added to the excitement. There was a lot of action on what appeared to be three loops, at least two of which were folded over with tracks returning at a different level. One mainline was double-tracked. Because this was a show, all kinds of trains were run -- freight and passenger; steam and diesel; modern and old...and, of course, Thomas. The kids loved him and followed his travel around the layout. The month promised to be busy, and it was, even with only two shows visited.



*Rich Marko, Valley Ntrak at the Housatonic Model railway Club's show in Fairfield, CT 3/9/03. Rich is overseeing operations on his award winning logging camp module.*

*Bill Pontin's award winning modules -- "the gorge" in the foreground, the town beyond. Bill behind the skyboard. Alst at the Hosatonic Model Railway show.*



*Photo's by Dan Pawling, Sr.*