



NTRAKage Writes

The New Mexico Rail RunNers Club Newsletter

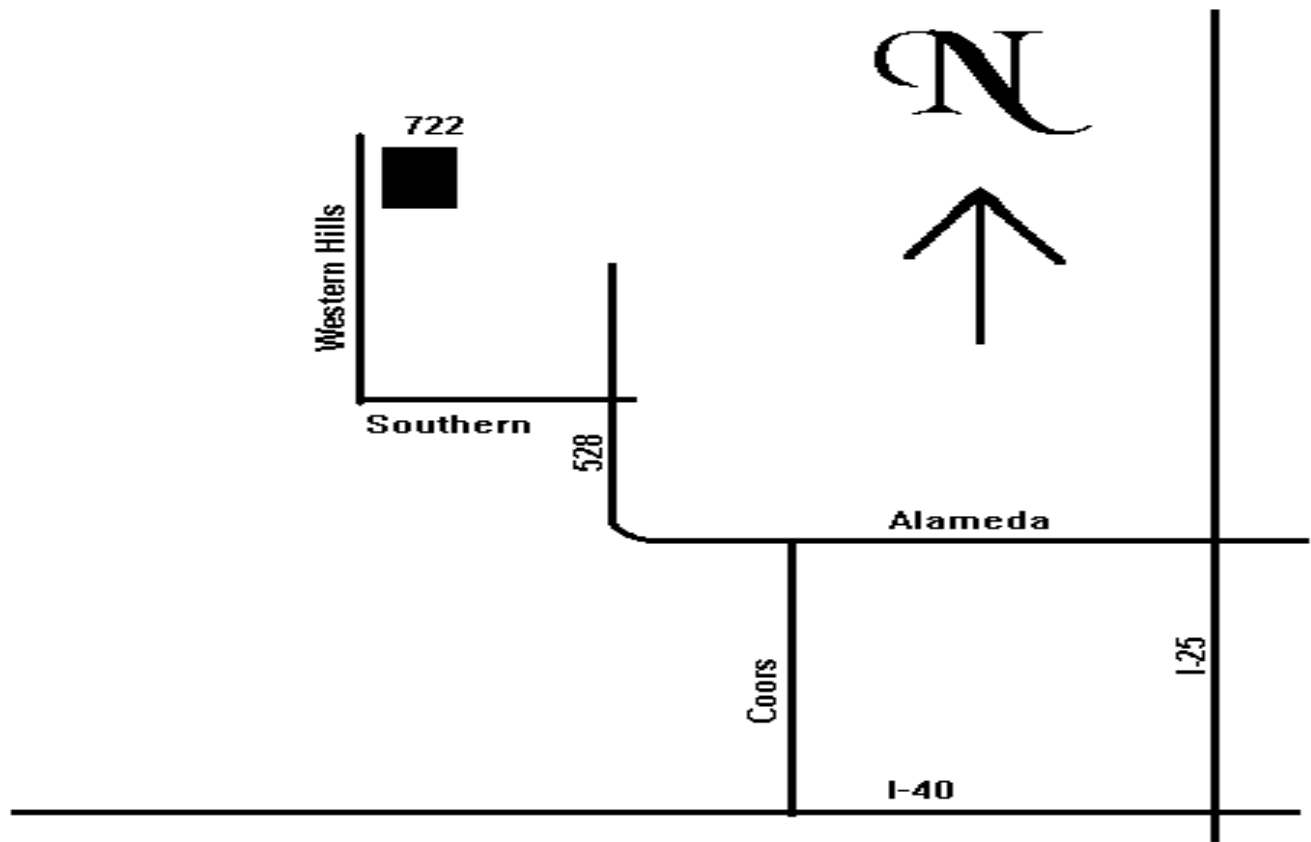
Issue #121

May 2000



M A Y M E E T I N G

The May Business Meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 25th at the home of Richard Henry 722 Western Hills, Rio Rancho (see map below). If you need further directions please call Richard at 891-1936. Blaine will present a clinic on close-up photography.



Officer's Meeting

by Randy Howard

Held 5/13/00 at the home of Dayton Molzen.

Attendees: Dayton, Bud, Randy, Phyllis, Eugene, Jay, Steve Stein.

Agenda for May Meeting:
State Fair show.

Raffle layout.

Club module storage.

Motion: officers endorse Tucumcari show for club approval.

For additional information about NMRR, contact:

President	Dayton Molzen	243-2672
Secretary	Randy Howard	281-7680
Director	Eugene Cline	242-0590
Internet web page: http://www.nmia.com/~djenson/nmrr		

President's Report

by Dayton Molzen



I believe the "1st Annual Rocky Mountain N-scale Meet" at Denver, CO was a great success. Some of the clubs who attended with layouts were from Dodge City, KS; Oklahoma, OK; Loveland, CO; Boulder, CO; Colorado Springs, CO; Denver, CO; and several others from Colorado and of course, ours.

Those from our club who attended were: Doug Gary with Tyler and Chris, Jay Norman, Margaret Tolbert, Tom Willers, Randy and Phyllis, Carl and Diane Sowell, and myself. It was held in the Lakeside Mall, the second oldest mall in Denver.

(Acually the mall is in Wheatridge an adjacent suburb). Unfortunately, the mall is less than half occupied, so attendance was not too good. Also the air-conditioning was not working in our setup area and Denver was experiencing some of its hottest weather this year. We suffered from the heat to say the least, but it was fun. At least that's what they told us.

Doug's DisneyWorld was again the hit of the show. He was able to keep most of the moving equipment running, but it was really a full-time job. He did take a break now and then to let it rest. Doug took 1st place for individual modules and the club took 1st place for layouts. Ours was certainly the most popular as far as the crowd was concerned.

I believe the host club is already planning next year's event. Oklahoma City, OK and Dodge City, KS invited us to come to their shows. Something to think about.

I have arranged for Leba Freed, founder and president of the Wheels Museum board, to speak at our June meeting. She

will bring us up to date on the progress and status of the Wheels Museum. She is a great speaker and I hope we will honor her with a good turnout. Due to her tight schedule, we will have her speak at 7pm and conduct the business meeting following the talk. I believe this is called waiving formality, or at least executive privilege.

At the May meeting, Blaine Bachman will be giving a clinic talk on close-up photography. This is a very specialized type of photography to be used when photographing modules. The close-up procedures are necessary to obtain the good details of the module while still maintaining good depth-of-field. Perhaps Blaine will write a short article for our club "How We Do It" manual on this.

Don't forget to write a short article for the newsletter on how YOU got started in n-scale modelling and send it to Dave Jenson. See you at the meeting!!!

P.S. After each meeting, Bud Bechdel will do a very short clinic on a different MicroTrain coupler installation problem.

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Board of Directors

President	Dayton Molzen
Secretary	Randy Howard
Director	Eugene Cline

Officers

Treasurer	Jay Norman
Editor	Dave Jenson
Assistant-Editor	Judy Jenson

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Secretary Report

by Eugene Cline

The April business meeting was held at 7 pm Thursday, April 27th at the home of Dayton Molzen.

Treasurer's report accepted as presented.

Secretary's report accepted as published.

Motion, seconded and passed: Dave and Blaine coordinate Albuquerque Show.

Motion, second and passed to table Tucumcari and Alamogordo shows.

Chair appointed Kathy, Margaret, and Anita as a standing committee to coordinate parties.

Adjourned.

Attendance: Jay, Richard, Eugene, Margaret, Don, Anita, Kathy, Kurt, Dave, Mike J, Mike A, Randy, Phyllis, Steve, Ted, Blaine, Tom, Norman, Sean.

1st Annual Rocky Mountain N-Scale Meet

by Doug Gary



Date: May 6,7 2000

Place: Denver, CO

Coordinator: Doug Gary

Layout Size: 24 X 54

To start with, we had a small crew, but overall things went very well. The crew consisted of myself, Chris, Tyler, Randy, Phyllis, Carl and his wife Diana, Tom, Jay, Margaret, and Dayton our fearless president.

Dayton, myself and Randy (hauling some of the Club stuff) all left on Thursday to cut down on the driving time. Tom had left earlier that week and met us there. Jay left early Friday morning. Margaret left late Friday afternoon. My thanks to Margaret and Bud for helping Jay load the trailer Thursday evening and for the effort that Dayton put forth in trying to get help loading the trailer.

Carl, Randy and I all met at the Mecca of the train world (Caboose Hobbies) and helped

ourselves to a feeding frenzy of good n-scale stuff. We then headed over to our posh accommodations at La Casa De Motel 6. Arriving at the Lakeside Mall, we started setup of the personal modules until Jay showed up about 2:30 pm. Due to some mis-communications, we had to re-design the layout. But that only took about 15 minutes. We were still the largest layout there and by 8 pm setup was almost complete.

At the show there were nine layouts from the Denver area, Kansas, Oklahoma, Southern Colorado and of course New Mexico. Not a lot of dealers this year due to scheduling problems, but Roger Otto, the show coordinator, said that next year they plan on holding the show a week earlier.

There were some outstanding modules at the show and some good ideas for reverse loops and single line operation. Every person in the show got a door prize, from a pile of n-scale wood to Kato engines. Each club also received photos of some SD70MAC engines used by the manufacturer for advertising.

One of the highlights of the show was to go to the new Mecca N-SCALE SUPPLY, located on Kipling just north of the hotel. Scott is the owner and it seemed that his entire store

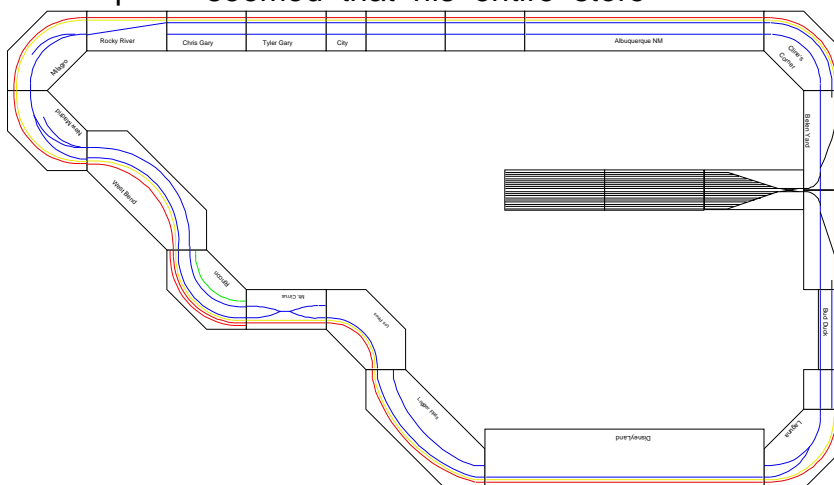
was marked down 20-25%. He sold nothing but n-scale. At the show, he had four boxes full of used MicroTrain freight cars marked down to \$5 each or \$4 each for four or more. FEEDING FRENZY!!

There was a contest for the best layout. Everyone at the show and all the paying public got to vote. There was a small problem. The New Mexico Rail RunNers were not listed! After pointing this problem out, it was corrected. We did take 1ST PLACE. The prize was a set of line drawings of some diesel engines which should look good on the SIG layout walls. Also included in the prize was a cap, which was given to Dayton.

Tear-down was at 5 pm on Sunday. We were out of there by 6:45 pm. with the help of some other club members.

Again my thanks to Jay for bringing back the trailer that night. Due to the fact that he had to be in Farmington on Monday. We both got home about 2:45 am on Monday, which makes for a long weekend and an even longer weekday!

All in all, it was a good show and being an all n-scale meet, it made it easier to talk with other attendees about the problems and positive things about n-scale.



Selecting a Camera and Accessories for Photographing Scale Models

by Blaine Bachman



(Editor's Note: On our email list (NMRR@egroups.com), Ken Martinez recently asked a question about what kind of camera setup he should buy to do model photography. Blaine's model photographs have appeared in the Walthers Catalog and NTRAK Newsletter as well as on his web site at www.members.aol.com/blbachman/bachmans.html.)

For many years, the most useful type of camera for photographing models and model railroads has been the 35mm SLR (single lens reflex) camera with interchangeable lenses.

Here's the combo I use:

Pentax ME Super Program
28mm wide angle lens 2x doubler tripod cable release

Model Photography's Unique Problem

The typical SLR camera, when focused close in, suffers from a lack of depth of field (meaning the span of area that is in focus). This is not necessarily a problem if you are photographing something "flat" like the side of an engine to illustrate a paint and decal project, but will drive you batty if you're trying for a realistic, low level shot of your most-excellent module while keeping both that painstakingly detailed 1940 Ford in the foreground and the distant city skyline in focus. Macro-foc-

using lenses and close-up diopters (corrective lenses you attach to the front of the lens) will not correct this problem - save your money!

The Small-Aperture Solution

The depth-of-field problem is best solved by setting the lens to the smallest aperture (opening) which is represented by the largest f-stop number (f/22 is a much smaller aperture than f/2 - think of it as the denominator of a fraction). Another way to overcome the problem is with a pinhole lens - several articles have demonstrated how to make a pinhole fixture to install inside a regular camera lens (scary unless you have a lot of free lenses lying about); you can also buy a simple pinhole lens from Fricko.

Turning your regular lens into a pinhole lens will probably reduce its versatility in non-model photography. The biggest problem with a fixed pinhole like the Fricko product is that it is almost impossible to compose the scene through the viewfinder because so little light is getting in - the light given off by a thermonuclear device within 5 miles is usually sufficient, though.

The easiest way to get good enough depth of field and avoid messing up an otherwise good lens is to expand on the results you get when you "stop down" the lens. This can be done with a 28mm wide angle lens with a doubler (2x multiplier).

The Doubler or 2X Multiplier

The "normal" lens for a 35mm camera has a 50mm focal length, and the typical purpose of a doubler is to make an equivalent 100mm (mild telephoto) lens out of the 50mm lens that usually comes with the camera (or double the focal

length of any other lens) - in other words, a poor man's telephoto. However, since there is "no free lunch," you do have to give up something in the trade - that something is aperture (keep reading to find out how this is a good tradeoff for us model photogs).

While a doubler will double your focal length, it will halve the amount of light getting to the film - with the doubler, your maximum aperture f/2, 50mm lens becomes an f/4, 100mm telephoto. Normally, this would be a liability in photography (slower shutter speeds, more chances to blur the photo, etc.), but for the modeler (equipped with a tripod) it is a plus.

Light Loss Works in our Favor

We can make use of this loss of light by using the doubler with a 28mm wide angle lens to get a 56mm lens (almost normal focal length, therefore a normal-looking perspective in the resulting photo) with a potential smallest aperture twice as small as the lens gives by itself - so if the smallest setting on the lens is f/22, we end up with the equivalent of an f/44 lens. This very small aperture will give us a very "wide" depth of field, and in my experience will allow us to get almost everything on a typical module in focus.

If you're far-sighted like I am, you can show yourself how this works by squinting to see something that is normally out of focus - "stopping down" the aperture - in this case the eyelids. And ever notice how you can read something in bright light that you can't focus on in low light? That's because your iris closes up which helps focus the light through your eye's imperfect lens.

(continued next page)

In order to compensate for the trade-off on the amount of light that enters through the smallest aperture, you will have to increase the exposure time (or use "faster" film) or increase the amount of light. You probably will need to use the tripod and cable release too (although I have shot outdoors in direct sunlight and been able to use 1/8 second shutter speeds - usually within the realm of practiced hand-held capability).

A note about faster film: I've been away from the technical aspects of film for some time now. Used to be that faster films were more grainy, especially under low light conditions. If you believe what Kodak and others are saying about their new films, this may no longer be a problem - but old habits and old advice die hard!

Composing the Shot

To compose your photograph, it helps if your camera has a stop-down preview button. Most SLR's leave the lens aperture fully open until you press the shutter release. This

gives you the maximum amount of light with which to compose your photo. At the moment you press the shutter release, the aperture closes to match the setting on the dial and the photograph is taken; afterwards, the aperture reopens fully.

The problem is that with the aperture fully open (say f/2) you will not see the dramatic depth-of-field increase that stopping the lens down to f/22 is going to give (and be able to dial it in perfectly). By pressing the preview button, the aperture is allowed to close to the setting you selected so you can see the photo as the film will "see" it.

Nailing the Exposure

Fortunately, your through-the-lens light meter will usually still give accurate readings (but turn off any auto-focus capability) and if you have auto-exposure circuitry, that should still work too. Since you have gone to all this trouble, don't forget to "bracket" your shots - shoot one at a slower shutter speed than the camera says, and one at a faster speed.

Final Words

Finally, I suggest that when looking for a camera for model photography, shy away from the latest gizmos unless you're sure they will work (or at least not get in the way). Fully automated cameras are designed to do what most people want them to do most often: take photographs of full-scale people and scenery with the best results possible.

In order to take photographs of 1/160 scale people and scenery with the best results possible, you have to fool the camera into working beyond its everyday parameters; that means you need to be able to manually control the aperture, focus, and sometimes the shutter speed.

Fortunately, you can often get a good, modeler-friendly SLR for a very friendly price from the people who are buying the latest gizmos. And with the opening up of the market place via the Internet, good used cameras are easier than ever to find (try Ebay).

NOTES FROM THE PROFESSOR

by Steve Stein

Yo Geeks! At Dayton's request I've put together a list of upcoming clinics and presenters for the rest of the year. At the April meeting there was considerable interest for the "experts" to share their knowledge of model railroading topics. A note to the presenters; please give me two weeks notice if you cannot do your clinic at the appointed time so I can make arrangements to fill in for you or trade with another presenter.

Clinic Schedule

- May 26, Blaine Bachman -- Close-up Photography
- June 22, Buzz Lenander -- Track Laying and Ballasting
- July 27, Dave Jenson -- DCC Operations
- August 24, Buzz Lenander -- Decaling
- September 28, Doug Gary -- Wiring Modules
- October 26, Blaine Bachman -- Trans-Europe Express Operations
- November 16, Bud Bechdel -- Engine Maintenance
- December Party, Randy Howard -- Light Weight Scenicing
- January 25, Steve Stein -- Realistic Trees





CALENDAR



⊗ NMRR layout setup

⊗ NMRR involved

Ⓜ For information only

⊗ May 25 7:00 pm
Activity: Monthly Business Meeting
Location: Richard Henry's

Ⓜ July 22-23
Activity: Tucumcari Train Show

Ⓜ August 12,13, 2000
Activity: GATS
Albuquerque Convention Center
Coordinator: Buzz Lenander

Ⓜ June 3, 10am -3pm
Activity: Swap Meet
Location: Hobbies N Stuff

⊗ July 27 7:00 pm
Activity: Monthly Business Meeting
Location: TBA

⊗ August 24 7:00 pm
Activity: Monthly Business Meeting
Location: TBA

Ⓜ June 3, 5-8pm
Activity: Annual BBQ and sale
Location: MJB Lock and Hobbies
20-40% discounts

Ⓜ July 30 thru August 6, 2000
Activity: "21st Century Limited"
NMRA National Convention
San Jose, CA

⊗ September 14-18
Activity: NM State Fair
Coordinator: TBA (volunteers?)

⊗ June 22 7:00 pm
Activity: Monthly Business Meeting
Location: Kathy Steplowski's

Ⓜ August 3-6
Activity: N2K in San Jose
The Ntrak West 2000 Convention
Location: San Jose Convention Ctr

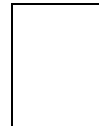
⊗ September 28 7:00 pm
Activity: Monthly Business Meeting
Location: TBA

Ⓜ June 28 - July 2, 2000
Activity: "Reno Y2K!!"
N Scale Collector Convention
Reno, NV

Ⓜ August 10-13
Activity: NORTHEAST 2000
NTrak East Convention
St. Louis, MO

Ⓜ July 2001
Activity: "Gateway 2001"
NMRA National Convention
St. Louis, MO

New Mexico Rail RunNers
P.O. Box 20507
Albuquerque, NM 87154-0507



Forwarding and return address requested.

