

# QSME NEWSLETTER

## Quincy Society of Model Engineers Volume 2007 Issue 2 Mar-Apr

First we are trying something new with this edition. As the result of a couple of suggestions I am creating this Newsletter in a full page design instead of two columns. I would really like your input on whether you like it this way or the column design.

### **What's In this issue!**

#### **A summary of the March & April business meetings**

#### **Presidents Project Proposal**

#### **A most N Gauging Hobby**

#### **Vandalism hits the BJRY**

#### **And this n' that, and sadness!**

#### At the March 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 business meeting two changes were initiated.

The committee studying changes in the Constitution and By-Laws proposed doing away with the separate board of directors and making the officers, President, Secretary and Treasurer the Board. Under Illinois non-profit law this is acceptable. In the past the board has not always adhered to the suggestion that it is to meet quarterly, mostly because there has been very little for the board to do. The membership voiced agreement with the proposal at the meeting. That change and any others will still have to be officially proposed, posted for two months in the club room and then voted on at business meeting.

The other major change approved was to dispense with a specified work night (the Friday of the week following the business meeting) and return to three operating sessions instead of only two. A motion made and approved to try it for three months, March, April and May, and then discuss it again at the June meeting.

There was one other development from the meeting. Gary Roe has accepted the chairmanship of the Narrow Gauge committee and proposed some changes needed on the narrow gauge portion of the layout, His first proposal was a light hearted suggestion that the track be torn up and it changed to a walking trail.

Gary says the track needs serious work including re-gauging of all track, securing switches and adjustment of switch throws. After this is accomplished he will begin working on improving motor power and rolling stock. The final step will be to improve and restore the scenery and buildings.

At the April 5<sup>th</sup> Business meeting, election of officers was held with Mac Fisher, Mary Turek and Fred Stephan accepting second terms as president, secretary and treasurer. Jeff Heine was elected to the board.

The Constitution and Bylaws committee will make a final report at the May meeting, along with the committee studying a permanent memorial to deceased members. This is one outgrowth of the Don Meyer Memorial Fund which has become sizeable. A consensus of the membership agreed to place the names of all deceased members on the plaque

#### **President Mac's Project Proposal.**

At the April Meeting Mac presented the first portion of a proposal to handle work projects on the C&LE. Mac and yours truly went through the club room and made notes on a number of projects that need to be done. They range from adding minor amounts of scenery, HO size figures, some painting, and some lighting to major projects such as replacing and painting new backdrops.

The decision was made to have the scenery committee composed of; Barb S, Gary Roe, Dave Scharnhorst, and Bob Turek, meet and determine some parameters for the projects. They

would then be placed on the bulletin board for anyone who would like to adopt one. Part of the project would include creating a budget for it.

Mac stressed that the projects would be the sole responsibility of the person taking it. No one is going to look over their shoulder and criticize, not that you can't ask for help or suggestions. Often we hear someone say they are afraid to tackle a project because someone else may not like what they do. The only way to learn is to actually do the work.

The list with guidelines should be posted by the May Meeting.

### **One foot equals 160 feet, one inch is 160 inches!**

That measurement is not exactly one-half the size of HO, but its close. I can't believe how much you really can build in N scale. Suppose we had decided to build N scale instead of HO, we could have built a full steel mill, the yards would have double the number of tracks, the distance between towns would double, and all of us with bad eyesight would switch to G.

But Jeff and Liz Unser are turning an 8 by 12 foot room into an N Scale empire.



### **Jeff Unser's West Central Railroad under construction**

First a little background on Jeff and Liz. They met at an apartment building on Long Island NY. They became good friends. Liz was in the navy at the time and was alerted for Desert Storm. Jeff decided to move into her apartment and they were married in 1991. He has been in the hobby on and off for a number of years. He had a 4 by 4 foot N scale layout back in the 80s. Jeff suffered a back injury at work and they decided to retire, He had studied music at Quincy University in the 60s, and they decided to move to Quincy in the year 2000. Five years later he came to a QSME open house and decided to join us.

Room size constraints made him choose N scale plus he had some prior tries at working with it. He also has had a lot of experience in building models, and I'll explain why. He also is a very accomplished air brush artist. Some of his work is already on the club layout, just check out the coke plant at Emporium.



They decided they did not need a nursery room, so it became a railroad room. Basically the layout is a loop at each end with a lower level for staging. The main line is code 55 with a minimum radius of 14 inches. Switches are #7s on the main and #5s in yards and powered on the main with hand throws where reachable. He figures at scale speed it will take 12 minutes to run the main. He has built a full freight yard and coach yard. The layout will be dated in the mid 50s to mid 60s. It is neat to hear an E unit with sound in that small a package. I didn't see any steam.

Off the turntable are the roundhouse tracks visible now because the roundhouse has not been finished. The side of the round house is visible in the first picture; he is buying all train power in pairs. Jeff thinks the grade will require double-heading for lengthier freights.

You will find single units for yard switching and there is an RDC for lighter passenger lines.

This is still early in the construction and there is no ballasting and little scenery, but you get the idea of how well this layout will be built and operate. He did have one problem with the turntable bridge. While all track is code 55 the bridge was code 80, thus the slightly raised lip around the edge of the pit.



The engine and car repair facility at left currently is housing a set of passenger cars for the Great Northern. The E unit shown earlier on the turntable will head the train and an observation car will bring up the markers.

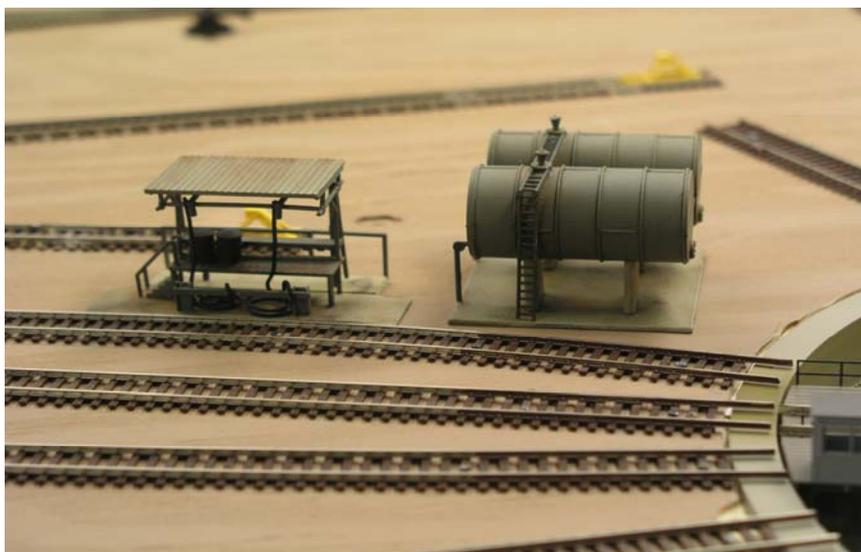
Note the natural gas tank at the rear. Try comparing it with the pair of them already built for the steel mill complex at Benezett.

Jeff was smart and placed the pre-printed backgrounds behind everything before constructing the rest of the layout.



Like the town of Keating on the Chesapeake and Lake Erie Railroad, the main town on the Unser's West Central Railroad is above the yard by about six inches. The buildings are not in their final location but it gives you an idea of the future arrangement. Note the autos are 1 ¼ inches long.

Jeff not only takes great care with the exterior of his buildings, he likes to detail the interiors. This is the inside of his station. At the bottom is an office; on the opposite wall are ticket windows. At the left are his and hers potties. In the center you will note he has installed benches such as would have been in stations like this. If he updates his layout to more current times, this beautiful station will have to become an Amshack.



Jeff likes to kit-bash, so this engine fueling facility started out as something different. It originally was part of the Interstate Fuel Company by Walthers. Just a couple of changes and it fits perfectly to fill his diesel engines.

This shot gives you a better view of how he has raised the code 55 track to the level of the code 80 rails on the turntable bridge.

This N scale icing facility will be put to good use on his fleet of reefers.

I'm sorry I could not get a close enough shot of the weathering he does on all of freight cars. It is done with a very light touch and looks extremely good.

Still to be put on the platform are blocks of ice and workers.



I said I didn't see any steam power on the railroad, but that doesn't mean there won't be some. Look at the detail in this coaling tower.

It is very good example of the weathering I was telling you about and look at the details. Remember the coal chutes and the wires along with the ladders and railings are all 160<sup>th</sup> scale. That is a real challenge which Jeff has handled very well. Of course it also creates another spot to handle traffic.



I noted earlier that Jeff's expertise is not limited to model railroads. Here is an American tank created for a display at the All Wars Museum at the Illinois veterans Home in Quincy. Both Jeff and Liz volunteer there to help create some excellent displays.

I want to thank Jeff and Liz for letting us look at their layout and I am anxiously looking forward to see the rest of the West Central Railroad when it is complete.

Good Job Unsers you make a great addition to the QSME.



Burlington Junction's GP 11 #8352 sits with its flanges buried six inches deep in gravel along Front Street adjacent to a siding for ADM's soy oil plant.

On the evening of March 26<sup>th</sup> a vandal pulled the safety pin holding a switch closed. The conductor spotted the switch stand handle fly up and the engineer dumped the air. Four cars lengths later it stopped with only the engine and two cars off the track.

No one was hurt. However the fuel tank on the geep was punctured and about 1100 gallons of diesel fuel leaked out. Luckily Dave Frederick and crew dug a pit to stop the fuel from heading to the river and Hoener Equipment recovered all but about one gallon. Here you see it still takes manpower to straighten out and relay the bent track. It took about three days to put everything back in shape.



Here is a rare sight. It is ADM's Paducah Rebuild #8401 off company property. David was able to borrow the motor to pull the cars south from the wreck site. It is always easy to spot a Paducah GP 10 rebuild by the breather at the top rear of the cab and the frog-eye lights on the short hood.

While this was not a really bad wreck it did cost a lot in BJRY crew time to get the engine and cars back on the track and the time they lost handling the "city" traffic. City traffic is the spots and pulls from the front street and south bottoms plants.

Blickhan Construction's big crane was also required to lift the engine back after the tracks were straightened.



### **4-8-2 #127 Little Q Railway. 15" gauge live steam**

Once upon a time many years ago this engine was the property of the Quincy Park District. It operated from All America Park at Front street (now called Bonansinga Drive) and Cedar across the upper bay and south to the tip of Quinsippi Island. It was a fine running engine and was built by the Sandley Light Railway Company of Wisconsin Dells WI. The only thing I didn't like was that it had a high pitched English type whistle.

The park district had good plans for developing the island. They included an Arial tram ride from a parking lot at Third and Jersey to the south tip of the island. They had built picnic shelters with plenty of tables and developed a Log Cabin Village. It did draw people, at least local people, but needed more draw than that. Added to the attractions at All-America Park was a Merry-go-Round, a gift and soda shop, and they convinced the antique auto people to keep their museum open more than just on Sunday afternoons. The one other great item for railfans was the CB&Q engine #3007 which was installed on the island courtesy of the CB&Q and then president Louis Menk. At first it was open to everyone, and that led to serious vandalism. Then It was placed behind a chain link fence that kept it safe, but also restricted access for those wanting to see in the cab or climb over it.

As I recall three major things led to the downfall of the project. One of course was the mighty muddy Mississippi, the second was Mississippi Mosquitoes, and the third was a failure to properly fund the entire project. There was only a minimal budget for advertising. The receipts began steadily dropping and finally the people who put money into bonds for the project wanted their money back and the entire thing was sold off.

Quincyan Don Weinberg purchased all the track, the two Armstrong turntables, the steam engine and tender, a 15" gasoline engine modeled after a GP 7, and all the cars. The cars ended up getting seriously damaged by the weather and they finally went to the Riverside & Great Northern a 15" railroad just north of Wisconsin Dells. I wrote a piece about the restored cars three years ago after Mary, Julie and I went to Wisconsin to visit Van McCullough and rode the R&GN.

At that time they wanted the Little Q engine, but Mr. Weinberg would not sell it.



The backhead of #127 looks a lot worse for the wear from standing in the basement and now in the open weather. David Frederick, who has been involved in restoration at the Monticello IL museum, says the backhead can be restored. I checked and all the gauges including the water level tube are still there. It would take a lot of work and would be worth it, but according to a couple of reliable sources it just will not happen.

The second engine sitting in the open is this gasoline powered unit modeled after a GP 7 or 9 (I'm not sure which). It is sitting on one of the two Armstrong turntables that were installed at each end of the railroad. It allowed the power to run in a forward position each way. To the left is the tender for #127. It stored sufficient coal and water for a full day's operation.

They won't be trashed but at this point they can't be bought. Anyone with any ideas how to save these, please let me know I am in contact with the R&GN people



This came via Larry S from the lowrails e-mail. Dated April 7, 2007.

Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc. has acquired a 10.9 percent stake in Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corp., according to U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission filings, making the billionaire's company the largest holder in the railroad.

Berkshire owned 39 million shares of the second-largest U.S. railroad as of April 5, after reporting a holding of 37.4 million on April 3, the filings show. Buffett reported to shareholders on Feb. 28 all the company's holdings with a market value of more than \$700 million at the end of 2006.

Buffett's stock purchases make him the largest shareholder, ahead of Marsico Capital Management LLC, which owned 32 million shares for an 8.9 percent stake in December, according to Bloomberg data. Buffett paid \$81.18 to \$81.80 in three stock transactions on April 4 and April 5, according to the filings. The shares rose \$1.03 or 1.3 percent, to \$82.72, on April 5.



One of the most difficult spots to take pictures is the Fort Madison IA station due to the sun angle. But Jeff Heine got a couple of great shots in March.

The right side of these trains is lost in the shadow, but the sun was just right to light the nose of #s 7744 and 7710.

If the Amtrak depot is moved to the downtown SF depot, we may not be able to use this site, since technically it will private property. We'll have to check that out.

I believe this is a Plasser made unit. Jeff found it sitting in the yard north of the depot.

The lettering on the side reads; "Dynamic Tamping Express" followed by four numbers. There is a second unit behind it hidden by the rear of a BNSF GE motor.

Thanks Jeff.

If anyone of you have any pictures pertaining to the hobby or of one to one scale trains, please e-mail them to me at [rrbob9@adams.net](mailto:rrbob9@adams.net).



Please let me know how you like this format. I still have much to learn about using it since I spent so many years using the two-column format. Please excuse the mistakes I have trouble with the spacing. And remember I am not the best at computers so don't suggest anything too complicated.

I would certainly like to have any suggestions you may have for items in the newsletter. Remember it is yours; I just assemble what I have on hand, so help me out.

Remember we are now operating more Friday nights than before, at least three each month and sometimes even four. If you live close enough there are still projects that can be worked on and we will put up the list as soon as we can get it assembled.

And remember, **Model Railroading Is Fun!**