

County Lines

The Newsletter of the Queens County Model Railroad Association
Empire Valley Lines – Established 1945

Fall 2005

Volume 4, Number 1

In this Issue:

Page 1: Car card holder by John McCluskey

Page 2: Dunham's Station by William Bryk

Page 2: New station for New Paltz by John McCluskey

Page 3: Outside the Club Room guest Mark Conca

Page 4: Calendar of events

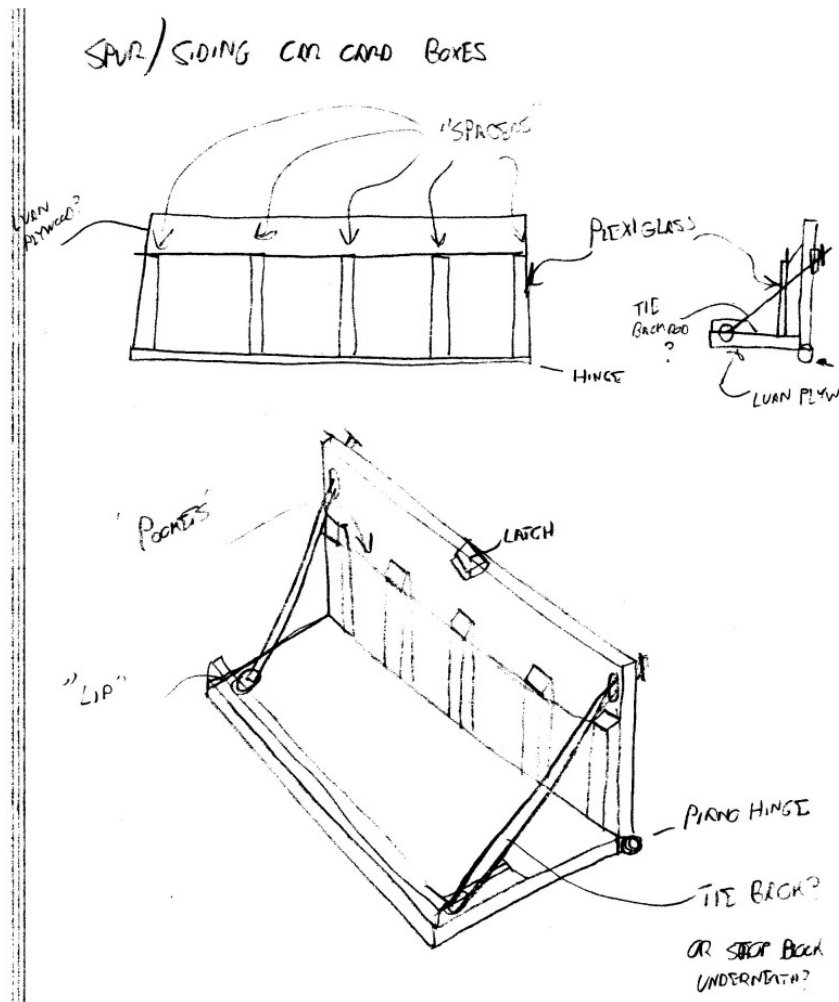
Editor Note: Newsletter is now just three issues per
volume/Year. Please contribute!
It's your Newsletter! – Thanks JM
#####

Proposal for a car card Holder by John McCluskey

At a recent monthly meeting, the topic of some sort of shelf and car card/waybill holder for the layout came up. While the traditional "row of boxes" seems fit for the staging yards, the recent recessed turnout controls and "streamlining" of the fascia boards makes this type of car card holder for these areas unflattering.

An answer might have made itself present while looking at photos of the fabulous "Federal Street Modular Railroad". This layout uses a folding shelf that has an area to hold car cards and a small shelf for the "paper work" associated with model railroad operations. My idea would have the shelf fold flush into the layout's fascia boards. A magnetic catch would hopefully be enough to keep the shelf in the "upright" position.

Here's a sketch of my idea for the car card holder:



Dunham's Station by William Bryk

A toy train circling beneath a tree is an American Christmas icon: its logical extension has long been an operating public model railroad. One of the most famous will shortly make its 18th annual appearance in Manhattan: Broadway set designer Clarke Dunham's Station in the Atrium at Citigroup Center, 153 East 53rd Street.

Dunham is not the first set designers/model railroader. Back in the 1940s, Frank Ellison, bored by running toy trains around and around a loop, envisioned a literal model railroad – a scale replica of a system for transporting goods and passengers. The tracks, buildings, and signals were the stage, trains were actors, and an operating schedule was an unfolding drama. In building his layout, Ellison used stagecraft to create illusions of distance and space. He published numerous articles, based on his experiences, arguing that model railroading was an art, to be practiced with care and integrity, as well as a hobby.

Today, Ellison's French admirers hail him as a genius. They claim the traditional Seven Arts have been joined by the Eighth Art, cinema; the Ninth Art, animation; and, though Frank Ellison's imagination, the Tenth Art: model railroading. Being an American, Ellison would have laughed at this: after all, it was still just playing with trains.

Clarke Dunham, a repeat Tony Award nominee for set and lighting design, has been a model railroader since 1951. He was buying a model locomotive when a hobby shop clerk handed him a Citicorp flier requesting proposals to build a model-railroad layout for a one-time holiday display. Dunham and his wife Barbara bid for the job. "Everybody else came in with small designs," Dunham later said. "I came in with a three-story station house." In 1987, his display opened in the Atrium. Bank flacks estimated 25,000 people might come; they were off by 116,000. A year later, 200,000 came. The year after that, 240,000. The Station became an institution.

Now, every November the Station travels to New York from the Dunhams' Adirondack studio in two 53-foot trailers. "Everything comes apart and travels the way a show would travel," Dunham says. Then, all he has to do is assemble 12,000 feet of wire, 1,000 feet of track, 200 buildings, 17 viaducts and bridges, 1,000 human figures, 200 automobiles, and more than 5,000 trees and shrubs inside his 27-foot-high Victorian railway station, complete with, clock tower and gingerbread carpentry.

Like most model railroads designed as public entertainment, it provides a constant succession of colorful freight and passenger trains—here, some 25 trains operating simultaneously on 18 tracks on three levels—rolling through scenes dominated by elaborate backdrops up to 12 feet high. The sense of depth is exaggerated by the use of forced perspective with massive Lionel O scale trains at the front of the layout, then the smaller American Flyer S scale, and finally the delicate HO scale in the background. Four sets—the New York City midtown skyline in 1940, as seen from the West Shore Railroad's Weehawken terminal; an upstate Hudson River port; a Catskill Mountain logging town; and a wintry countryside, each containing numerous vignettes—create an immediate sense of time and place largely by what Dunham calls "selective compression": using only the essential elements of an object to convey whatever it is and discarding everything else.

Dunham further raises the Station beyond loop-the-loop outfits by using modern electronic stagecraft. A glance overhead revealed computer-controlled Fresnels that create the illusion of passing time by constantly changing intensities, slowly shifting from dawn through twilight over five minutes. Animated scenes—a five-story mill, a carnival with turning Ferris wheel and merry-go-round, skaters circling a frozen pond—create their own worlds. Elsewhere, too, the layout is alive with light and sound: street and house lights, chaser lights on a movie house, neon signs that wink on and off. Welding torches blaze from a construction site. Dingy switch engines shove boxcars back and forth amidst cacophonies of hissing steam and clanging bells; trolley cars grind down city streets; express trains roar past as their lonesome whistles blow.

Stage sets, Christmas window displays, and model railroads work by creating the illusion of a larger world: a sense that their reality extends far beyond the edge of the curtain, the frame of the window, the train vanishing around the bend. Dunham's Station evokes the innocence of childhood and, for those of us who listened when our grandparents talked about the good old days, the sweetness we hope those times possessed. And perhaps it's all a mystery. As Dunham has said, "If anyone can identify the synapse triggered by funny things running around on tracks, I'd be happy to know the answer."

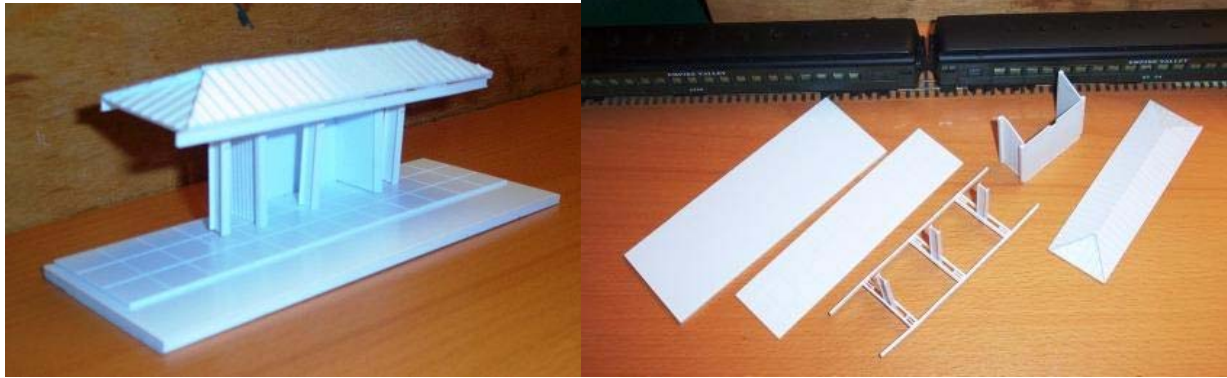
A New Station for New Paltz by John McCluskey

The area around New Paltz has been under development for quite some time. It was to be home to the Tropicana plant of former President Bill Hendricks.

Currently the Industrial Secondary branches off the main line and goes to the Upper Hudson float bridge and the New Paltz Intermodal Facility. A pipe yard is currently being constructed by Fintan and the Tropicana Plant property will become a scrap yard and shampoo factory.

With all this industry, it is only fitting that some sort of passenger station serves the area. However property does not exist for another medium sized station, and there is a good sized station down the road at Wilbur, NY and one planned for Highland, NY.

Being an industrial area, a small commuter station would be fitting for this area. A small platform and shelter would work out nicely. Parts and ideas have been floating around my workbench for a few months, heck even a year now. Then an article by Victor Roseman on small railroad shelters and stations in the October issue of Railmodel Journal got this project going. During a Thursday evening (while watching CSI on CBS) and with my trusty Chopper and polystyrene supply, a station was born.



As can be seen it is quite a simple structure. Composed of a piece of Evergreen 0.080 for the base, a section of 0.040 sidewalk material, board and batten siding for the shelter (still need to put in the benches) SD-2 channel for the roof supports, 1/4" "I" beams for the columns and some "sheet metal" roofing.

Not too bad for a little over an hour's worth of work. It still needs to be painted, and cinders placed for the platform area. Being a smaller station on the Empire Valley, New Paltz is an important stop. For that reason a copper roof seems fitting for this structure. Once a copper patina color is found it should add a nice touch to this small structure.

Outside the Club Room:

Mark Conca, President of the Sunrise Trail Model Railroad Club of Farmingdale and former Queens County member, was kind enough to send this along. He's proposed a joint newsletter. (Get back to the Editor and see what you think of this. If it generates more articles and more interest, it might be a good thing). These are Mark's words:

On September 30, 2005 the Sunrise Trail Model Railroad Club of Farmingdale finished the track work to the engine terminal. Mark Waladyka has finished wiring the turntable spit ring and track. The turntable now turns, very smoothly 360 degrees in both directions. The track still needs to be wired and some sections still need to be insulated. But the overall scene looks very good.



Fred Hassal also finished adding about another 6 DCC plugs around the layout. (They use the LENZ system -JM) These plugs will provide more flexibility during our run nights. Thanks Fred.

John and Bill have one of two mountain isles is moving right along with scenery. They usually are down on Sundays working on this project. There is a narrow gauge right of way along here that John is trying to make look abandoned. Bill I think has other plans.



Jim Caramore has started the raised platform for access to the top small staging yard on the club room side of the layout. It stands about 21" tall and provides easy access to the switches and track work of both the standard and narrow gauge.

Our next run night will be October 21st starting at 8:00pm. Stop down and run trains.

Calendar of Events

Please let us know of any upcoming events that the Club might be interested in.

Club:

- Fri, 10/7/05 Visitors night
- Fri, 10/14/05 Club meeting & op. session
- Fri, 10/28/05 Op. Session
- Fri, 11/4/05 Visitors night & Club meeting
- Fri, 11/11/05 Op. session
- Fri, 11/25/05 Op. session
- Fri, 12/2/05 Visitors night & Club meeting

12/2/05 – Deadline for material for next newsletter.

Train Shows & Outings:

- [Farewell to the FL9](#) New York, 10/23
- [St. Vincent de Paul's Model Train and Toy Show](#) Elmont, 10/30
- [Kingston Model Railroad Club Open House](#) Kingston, 11/05
- [Sunrise Trail Division NMRA](#), 11/5-Baldwin, NY
- [Model Railroading Museum Holiday Show](#) New Hyde Park 11/26
- [Greenberg Show](#), 11/26 & 27 – Edison NJ
- [Community Reform Temple Train Show](#) Westbury 12/04
- [St. Vincent de Paul's Model Train and Toy Show](#) Elmont 12/04
- [Station at Citigroup](#), Manhattan 11/25 thru 12/31

Guess where this is?



Answer: Oak Point Yard Lead, Bronx, NY J McCluskey photo



Liscartan ore train passing the ol' swimming hole
Photo by J. McCluskey