

Large Scale Rails - Jim Schall

Summer landscaping seems to be fashionable this year; we now have two thirds of the layout roughed in with the remainder under serious consideration. Lance is in the process of reconfiguring the area around the truss bridge in hopes that it will be more inhabitable and less remote. Fred and Rick have made good progress on opposite side and will soon be putting on ground foam and details. I continue to putz around with the station and a joining tenement.

Convention Report

Cliff's View Larry requested that I make some comments to maybe motivate other KAMR members to attend the NMRA national conventions. Convention preparation starts many years earlier when cities bid their city to be a convention site. At each convention there are several booths set up for the upcoming conventions. For instance at the 2005 convention, there were booths for 2006 Philadelphia, 2007 Detroit, and 2008 Anaheim national conventions.

The advantage of visiting these booths is to get advance information. Also, signing up helps finance the next year's convention and gives you the first choice of tours and almost guarantees that you get into the convention hotel...which fills up fast toward the actual convention date. My wife enjoys the conventions especially the industrial tours.

The difficult task begins with the advance convention packet that goes to those signing up in advance. There are the following selections with several of each category scheduled at the same time: numerous clinics, layout tours (club and homes), prototype tours (viewing and/or riding on trains including steam), industrial tours, family fun tours, cultural tours, and usually dinner cruises and dinner shows. ...and at the end of the convention is the train show with vendors, club layouts, and manufacturer's advance and current products. Larry wanted me to comment on the clinics...there were too many to describe. They ran all through the day and early night. I didn't win anything this time, but usually I win a door prize provided by vendors.

Of course, the N-scale modeler ends up with a G-scale prize...

I have to use a spreadsheet for planning. My wife picks first...and if I am interested I'll sign up for same tour or event.

This year we went to the Strasburg museum and rode a steam train, toured the famous Pennsylvania Horseshoe Curve, visited the Altoona museum, rode on a SEPTA PCC streetcar with a SEPTA tour guide who had preprogrammed the trolley...then on return we got on an exact PCC restored car that required the host to get out and manually switch the layout. My wife was fascinated by the many row houses in Philadelphia.

We went to Atlantic City on the train and enjoyed walking on the boardwalk ...of course; the governor had shut down the casinos to force a tax increase. Because of this, our planned group divided into going to the zoo, one group to the Museum of Art, and we went to Atlantic City. I rode on the last car (a push

pull with controls) and talked to the lady conductor. The engine was in front for the return. This would be nice to model since you don't have to turn the engine. We selected the trip to the Museum of Art where they had a concert and Fourth of July fireworks. We went over into New Jersey to view several layouts.

Lastly, we have been to many industrial tours that the public doesn't have access. Some that I remember are sitting behind a FAA controller in Atlantic and asking questions, an N-S training school for welders, engineers, and maintenance. Twice I have been to engineer training facilities and watched engineers run simulators. We have been to salt mines, canning factories, malt brewing, glass container factories, tours of Queen Mary, various factories such as cement and fertilizer factories. Numerous yard tours and railroad repair facilities. Ore unloading in Duluth, Loading well cars with containers from cargo ships. I can't even remember them all. Some tours require hard hats and safety glasses but these are usually provided and are annotated in the tour packet.

Then there are the contests and auctions, receptions, and banquets.

Thanks for reading and hopefully, I'll see you at a future convention.

Jim's View Corky and I were originally set to go to Philadelphia on Wednesday, July 5, but I ended up with a couple of family commitments that would keep me away from the Convention a couple of days although I would be in the Philly area. We were both ambivalent about the Convention because the cost to attend this year seemed to be much more expensive than past conventions and Corky decided to hold out for the O scale Convention coming up.

Rooms, parking and tours were the big expense as described in the Convention flyer. (For example parking was quoted at \$25 per day and they recommended long term parking at the airport (at \$10 a day) and staying at the convention hotel at \$140 per night. All the tours were packaged and most ranged in price from \$25 (for three hour tour of South East PA Transportation center) to tours to both East Broad Top RR and the B&O Transportation Museum at \$95 for a "full" day (really!) And a whole lot in between.

I was able to check out the contest room shortly after the judging and if Phil's coaling tower had been there it would have been best of show again. I was quite disappointed in the variety of scales (of the hundred or so entries all were HO except for one On30 scratch built box car.) The Clinics I attended were interesting and informative. It seems that quite a bit of interest is developing in pre-1900 and Civil War railroading from the clinics that I attended. (The clinics also allowed one to sit out a lot marching around!!) I did go ride the SEPTA trolleys on my own and explored some of the nearby architecture (the slums).

I registered on Thursday and had badge 1254 so by Thursday there were 1254 of us marching around the Convention Center and I am certain that more followed me in. It was reported Sunday that 22,000 folks had come thru the Train Show doors so I would say that they had a pretty good turn out. The show

was so-so, about a third of the floor was layouts (including an even larger Lego layout than last year). It seemed like the usual cast of characters with Rebel Rails t-shirts, the Tool Man and Al Westerfield in attendance. The biggest crowds seemed to be accumulated around the DCC displays and the folks from Fast Tracks who demoed making scratch built switches from their jigs. Bargains, I was not there Sunday to see if the dealers were dealing or not, but the S scale folks apparently were holding off for the S scale convention in Pontiac, MI this week.

DIY Garden Layout Being Taped

Marty Sanders is taping all of the "Garden Railroad" shows on DIY network that were filmed last summer in front of our caboose. She's going to edit out the commercials after they've all aired. If anyone wants a copy, please bring a blank VCR tape with your name on it to the August KAMR meeting (1st Sunday in August) and Marty will make a copy for you. It will be delivered at the September meeting.

Lloyd Layout

The "World of Trains" Sponsor photos that Phil made and printed were framed and posted on the wall opposite of Lloydstown. Take a look next time you get a chance. Normal maintenance was performed on the layout. The Masonite track cleaning cars have been a Godsend.

Activities Calendar

In an effort to get more of us to use our web site the calendar has been moved to knoxmodelrailroaders.com. This should get more of us to the site and hopefully to participate in the exchange of ideas and info that is found there.