

WHAT'S HAPPENING ?

When I last wrote in NCAT NEWS, I had recently retired from over 30 years of teaching in elementary and secondary schools. I was tired of coming up with enough print material every other month to fill a full issue of these pages. Some of you helped with that task, and I thank you once again for those submissions.

There didn't seem to be very many people actually modeling and building 'N' scale traction during those waning months of 2001. Perhaps the tragedy of 9-1-1 put a damper on some folks' enthusiasm, but even before that September it had been very difficult to root out unknown modelers working within our niche. Two years later, there still aren't a lot of people I know of doing what we do. Finding 'N' layouts with traction (that actually operates from live overhead) was and is like finding the proverbial needle in a haystack.

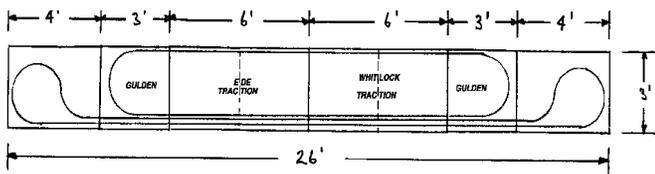
Larry Ede, Ray Gulden (both NCN subscribers,) and I were in the doldrums with our new portable layout, (At least Ray and I were,) and it was time to gear it up a bit and finish up our modules. The challenge to actually take care of business came from Kirk Reddie (NCN subscriber, and N Model Railroading publisher,) with a challenge for us to bring the layout out to Washington State (Monroe,) for a show in the spring of 2002.

We did rise to the challenge and made a leisurely trip to Monroe and back, engaging in much railfanning both directions, and displaying the layout at the Northwest Modelers show in April.



First Show : Rockford, IL March 2002

The original layout plan as shown below consisted of six pairs of 3x3 ft modules, (a pair for each of us) plus two large end modules with dogbones. We eventually gave up on the large dogbone modules and went with a pair of 18 inch x 3 ft ends with a simple half circle, and we added a rear track to each of the 3x3 modules. A train may now be operated over the full length of the modules.



Since that first big trip we've tried to schedule a "major" appearance each year in addition to a comfortable number of local shows. Last year (2003) found us in Philadelphia for the East Penn Traction Club's every other year meet, and this year (2004) we'll journey to Chantilly Virginia to display the layout at the N Scale East Convention.

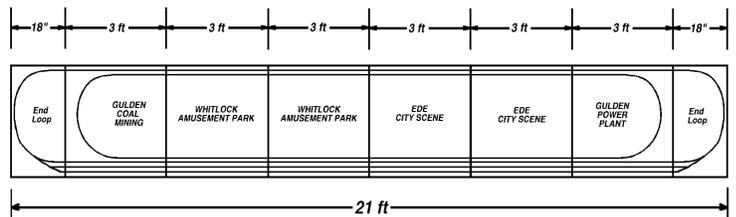
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Monroe, WA April 2002

The layout seems to evolve a bit with each new show, and each of us has added new elements to our respective modules. I am sometimes dissatisfied with the amount of modeling I accomplish, but many other activities tend to get in the way.

Below : revised Layout Plan



The main thing to keep in mind is that we're having a great time doing what we want to do. The local model railroad shows like to have us exhibit. We always have trains (and trolleys) in operation, and there's lots to see on the layout. Yes we get the same old question all the time: "Hey, are those trolleys actually drawing power from that overhead wire?"



Hal Riegger Breaks Hip

Larry Ede and I flew to Sacramento in early January of this year in order to spend some time with Hal Riegger. I found out about Hal breaking his hip from Jim Blattau (NCN subscriber when I received a Christmas card from Jim. The injury evidently happened when Hal returned home in September from a trip to Hawaii to visit Jim. Hal has been make slow, but sure recovery from the injury and is still not moving around too well. I'm sure he'd appreciate a card (however belated) from anyone who cares to write to him. Hal has some other health issues as well, and any support will be helpful. Hal Riegger, 522 Johnson Clan Ave, Gridley, California 95948

