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President's Message Bob Fallier

From the President's Chair - December 2020

Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah to one and all!

The stockings were hung by the chimney with care the smell of fresh coal smoke floats through the air. "On Baldwin and Lima" he called the jolly old elf was just having such fun. Round and around the tall tree they ran, with whistles and bells all through the night. Imagine what a surprise to find tiny train cars stuffed in each stocking. And there on the sofa, remote still in his hand, Santa lay sleeping, a great smile on his face. The elves were all frantic, reindeer in a panic. Santa was late, very late to be sure.

The sleigh still filled with dolls and bicycles, and boxes with labels and teddy bears, too. The children were first to arrive jumping three steps with every long stride. At the sound of their voices, all shrill and quite loud, Santa awoke with a snort and a chuckle.

Another wild story these two will tell, How Santa fell fully under the spell. Whistles and bells, and smoke that was pluming
"Happy Rails" did he call To one and to all.

Ok... you don't need to razz me about my poor lyrics, but it was fun to write. And just imagine if you were still small and there in your living room Santa sat there.

Well it has been a heck of a year. We've had one show, nearly a year ago now, and who knows how long until the next?
Meanwhile I hope you've all taken the time to play. To work on your modules or home layouts and have fun. I was paying my bill at the dentist's office yesterday and the accounts person said quite out of the blue: "I can't believe you're seventy!" My reply: I don't act my age. I play.

I enjoy things that I can and don't worry much about the things I can't change, like the weather or train shows.

I'm very happy and appreciative that Jim Nolan took up the lead and has been organizing the monthly Zoom meetings. Everyone really should attend. I'm happy that hobby shops have remained open for business and I'm glad that I can help Roland move some of his toys to new homes as well as helping my friend from which a good amount of my garden railroad things has come, and sold other G scale things to support him. After 6 strokes he's wheel chair bound

for the rest of his life.

I have a friend in Florida dealing with chemo therapy and a friend of 45 years who just had his lower spine rebuilt last week. Prayers for recovery for them, if you would please. And we've lost some friends and family this year. A prayer for them and their families left behind.

I'm still working, part time when I wish, to help pay for my RR toys, and I gladly give to Toys for Tots, both toys and funds. I think we all have a lot to be thankful for this year and certainly for the things we take for granted.

My transgender friend nearly got killed in Belarus last spring, and sends warm greetings to all from somewhere in the middle east, though she can't say from where. She has asked if she would be allowed to join us at one of our shows and if that time comes, I hope you will welcome her, just don't ask her about her job.

The Trains... not much happening outside on the garden railroad. I've brought in and stored most of the buildings and the top of the treehouse. The large engine shed is almost buried under the snow. If the weather permits, on Christmas Day I will be out there running my wife's nice little mogul.

Downstairs I've finally jumped into a bunch of projects. A passenger staging yard that I planned 4 years ago finally has been laid down and connects to the 4th track on my large station module. In the engine service area I've removed one of the Walther's backshops that never seemed to be occupied and the tracks therein unused, not sure what I'll rebuild that into. And a siding that saw little use was also removed from the same area.

A small yard near the Japanese section was partially rewired so that it fully functions on DCC. That exercise also got me thinking about operating rather than just running and the track plan there is a little more complex than meets the eye.

The past few weeks have seen the Disney fireworks project get underway, now waiting for another 60 feet of fiber to arrive so that I can finish it and I have several buildings to put together during the Christmas week work break. My nephew Xavrian will also be putting in the final details on his 4 foot module.

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Pawlak's Pandemic Project By Bob Pawlak

During the normal "off season" of shows for the last 16 years or so, I have parked my Bridges Canyon module in about the same spot in one corner of my cellar. I have often thought about building four, 3' Ntrak corners and a 12' bridge module so I could run mainline trains in a loop around and behind Bridges Canyon. But the position of the walls, lally column, and pool table plus the daunting task of building the 4 corners made this seem highly unlikely.

Because the pandemic has caused cancellation of show after show, the "itch" to run long trains caused me to rethink a possible loop around and behind Bridges Canyon. Once the mental block of thinking only in terms of Ntrak standard radii for the curves was broken, a workable plan quickly evolved. Instead of Ntrak 3' corners, all I had to do was "squeeze" these on paper to become right and left hand semicircular non-standard "modules" that fit the constraints of the space. Hopefully, the resulting radii will be large enough to allow running long trains.

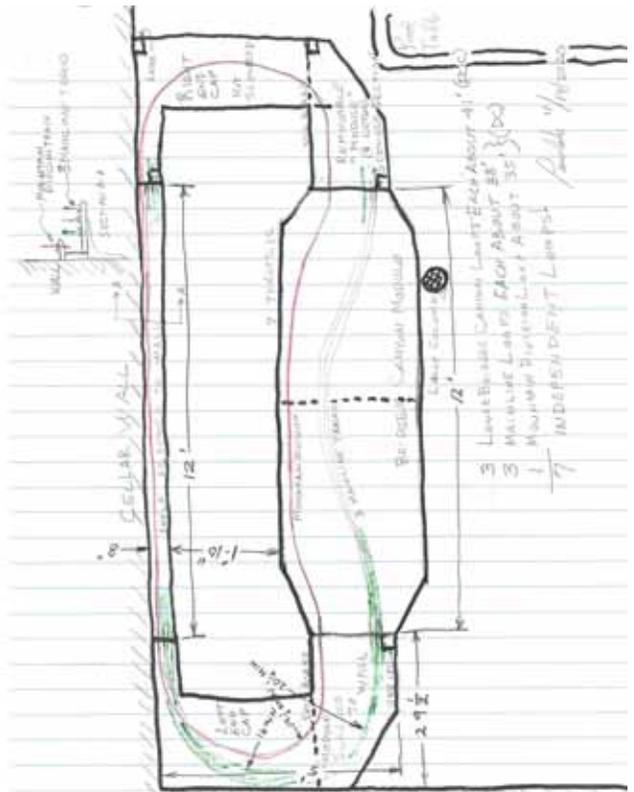
The attached sketch shows the resulting design. The left semicircular "module" and 12'x 8" shelf will be permanently attached to the walls. One leg should be sufficient to support the left semicircle when Bridges Canyon is not plugged into it. Shelf brackets should hold up the shelf. The right semicircular non-standard "module" will be stand-alone on 4 legs and can be disconnected so I can remove Bridges Canyon for a show.

The overall weakest part of the design is its interference with the pool table. But the right semicircular module can be moved out of the way when the grandchildren decide they want to play pool. By adding skyboards where shown I can minimize the amount of scened area planned to about 9 square feet. I do not plan to scenic the rest of the semicircles behind the skyboards or the shelf which means no ballast on all that track – thank God! I hate to ballast track.

I bought a 4' x 8' x 3/8" sheet of 7 ply marine plywood, my favorite material (at Bolter Brothers) for use as the surface of the semicircular modules and the skyboards. I also bought 1" x 3" clear pine for edging and stiffening the modules, two 1" x 8" x 6' pieces of clear pine for the lower deck of the shelf, and a piece of 1" x 6" x 6' clear pine that I will rip in half for the upper deck of the shelf.

The surfaces of the two semicircular pieces have been cut out of the plywood and the track centerlines and easements for the curves have been drawn on them. I had a piece of scrap 3/8" plywood that I used to cut out the elevated Mountain Division curves to be fastened to the semicircular pieces. I bought two old MRC dual power-packs from Carl Mesrobian to run DC trains on the four new loops. Do I have enough track and wire? I need to buy some shelf brackets, power pole connectors, maybe some track and wire, etc. At this moment, the project has been put on a low priority temporarily to prepare for Thanksgiving and Christmas but hopefully, before March 15, 2021, I might have trains running

on the four new loops. Can I keep 7 trains running at once, all going nowhere? Wish me luck!



Change of Address for Jim Whitehead

It is scheduled to happen on January 26 as follows:

140 Gordon Drive

Willow Street, PA 17584

Landline and email will remain the same:

717-517-3740 ejwhitehead@verizon.net

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In January Don't Miss the grand Zoom Show that Jim is pulling together. It will be part Mini-Show and well worth joining in.

That's about all I have for you this month.

Happy Holidays! Bob



Rubble

Out with the Old