

Call Board

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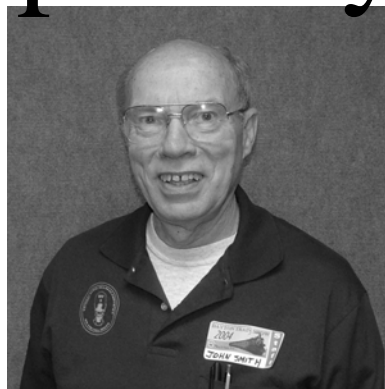
March 2005

Super Saying

Cincinnati Limited (www.CL2005.com) appears to be shaping up as an excellent NMRA National Convention. The number of planned layout tours, rail tours, general tours, and other activities is astounding. And, of course, there will be the National Train Show, which you don't want to miss. There is none like it. If you haven't yet attended a National convention, you should seriously consider this one, especially if you live within commuting distance of Cincinnati, as do many readers of this paper. Phyllis and I plan to attend every day, and return home each night. Not having to pay hotel bills will make this one cost much, much less than most nationals we've attended.

Convention attendance is open to NMRA members only, but the NMRA's Railpass program for new members is for six months membership for only \$9.95. That includes six months of Scale Rails, too. Regular membership is \$45 per year, so Rail Pass is a great bargain for someone who just wants membership for the convention. However, we hope that many people like it enough to stay on.

We just registered for the 2005 MCR convention, too. Divi-



sion 5 is presenting it May 12th-15th at the Comfort Inn in Austinburg (almost as close to the northeast corner of Ohio as you can get, and not be in PA or Lake Erie). Cochairmen Dale Smith and Matt Kross have lined up eight prototype tours that look very interesting. Two tours include two different industries, and three other tours include an industry and other interesting sites, like local railroad historic sites. One tour is a caboose ride-along on a normal switching run on the AC&J shortline railroad. That tour may fill up fast! Dale and Matt also have lined up a very good selection of non-rail tours. See www.mrc5.org/5N5 for the convention brochure, or call Dale at 440-286-4932.

At the February meeting we held our annual auction. Thank you, Ray Persing, for being Auctioneer for us. Bill

Benysh sold a hobby shop's worth of stuff, to avoid having to move it when he relocates to Maine. Steve Hood rescued an antique DC power pack, probably built in the 1940s. I sold an undecorated Stewart F7 A-B set and some books, and bought, among other things, an old Silver Streak caboose kit that I almost certainly don't have the skill to build. But I'd like to do it. Help!

Butch Orr, Nick Folger, and Jack Poirier helped me construct a lift-out to span a layout gap that provides access to a closet. Jack provided some interesting pin-and-socket hardware that is normally used to hold the two halves of casting forms in alignment. We used them to ensure accurate alignment of the lift-out with the existing benchwork.

Recently I completed building my first curved turnout, and I'm not entirely satisfied with it. It's for a spot for which no commercial turnout has the correct radii. Freight trucks roll through smoothly enough, but in the diverging route something isn't quite right at the frog. A test truck makes a slight extra turning motion right after passing through the frog. If all the rele-

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vant locomotives pass through reliably, I may go ahead and install it, at least for now. But it bugs me.

At the March meeting John Santel will present a program on painting rolling stock. See you there.

John

Layouts Needed

We have run out of layouts to visit after our meetings. The layouts can be any size, scale, and stage of completion. Contact Bruce Albright for more information.

NOTE: The following travelogue appeared in the newsletter of the Mini-Bunch, a group of narrow-gauge modelers generally based in Ohio. It was written by Division 3 member Jim Foster, the Mini-Bunch's King Snipe (being King Snipe is not really considered an honor, nor is the office usually sought. The activities reported occurred last October in northeastern Ohio, starting in New Philadelphia.

This article appears in the CALL BOARD with permission of the Mini-Bunch.

Narrow and Standard Gauge in Northeast Ohio

I have been asked by your editors to supply a report on the Fall Meet, a joint meeting with our friends in the Three Rivers Narrow Gauge Historical Society, so such a report will take the place of my column for this issue. I don't know if the editors had that purpose in mind. . .

. . . Our after-dinner speaker was a special treat: I knew Michael Connor, Executive Vice President of the Ohio Central Railroad System, from a previous Three Rivers convention, and he graciously agreed to talk about his railroad (which includes the former Conotton Valley narrow gauge, the former Pennsy Panhandle and what seems to be most of the remaining trackage in Eastern Ohio), and also Sunday visits to an industrial site in Newcomerstown, a second site at the former Coshocton, Otsego & Eastern, and finally his railroad's Morgan Run shops. For someone (me) in government service that finds most railroad management short-sighted, arrogant and socially irresponsible, Mr. Connor once again reaffirms my faith that railroads can do useful work if people running them are interested in providing customer service. The success of the Ohio Central Railroad System, financially and otherwise, illustrates this better than I could ever articulate it. . .

. . . After much proselytizing over several months, your King Snipe was able to get us into the Stone Creek Brick Co. plant on Sunday, October 3rd, for our first prototype visit. This plant has probably never had anyone tour it before or even request such a thing, even though Ed Cass had an article on their clay railroad in the CRAFTSMAN a few years ago. What we did *not* expect was a complete tour of not only the clay railroad (they did not let us go down in the mine, the only underground clay mine in Ohio) but also the entire brick making process. Boys and girls, this brick plant has railroads and trams of six[!] different gauges: 20½ inches, 24 inches, 36 inches (the locomotive-hauled clay railroad), 44 inches, 48 inches and standard gauge! This visit was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, as a new mine shaft is being drilled parallel to the old one in preparation for phasing out the clay railroad and its four critters. The foreman told us parts for the cars were too expensive as they had to be specially made, and one of the critters was being cannibalized to keep its buddies going [At the time of publication of the CALL BOARD, the entire Stone Creek Brick Co. is scheduled for sale or closure].

To give all of you an idea of what it sometimes takes to set this stuff up, we had to fund \$200 in overtime pay for the foreman and a locomotive engineer, but the Stone Creek Brick Co. was well worth it.

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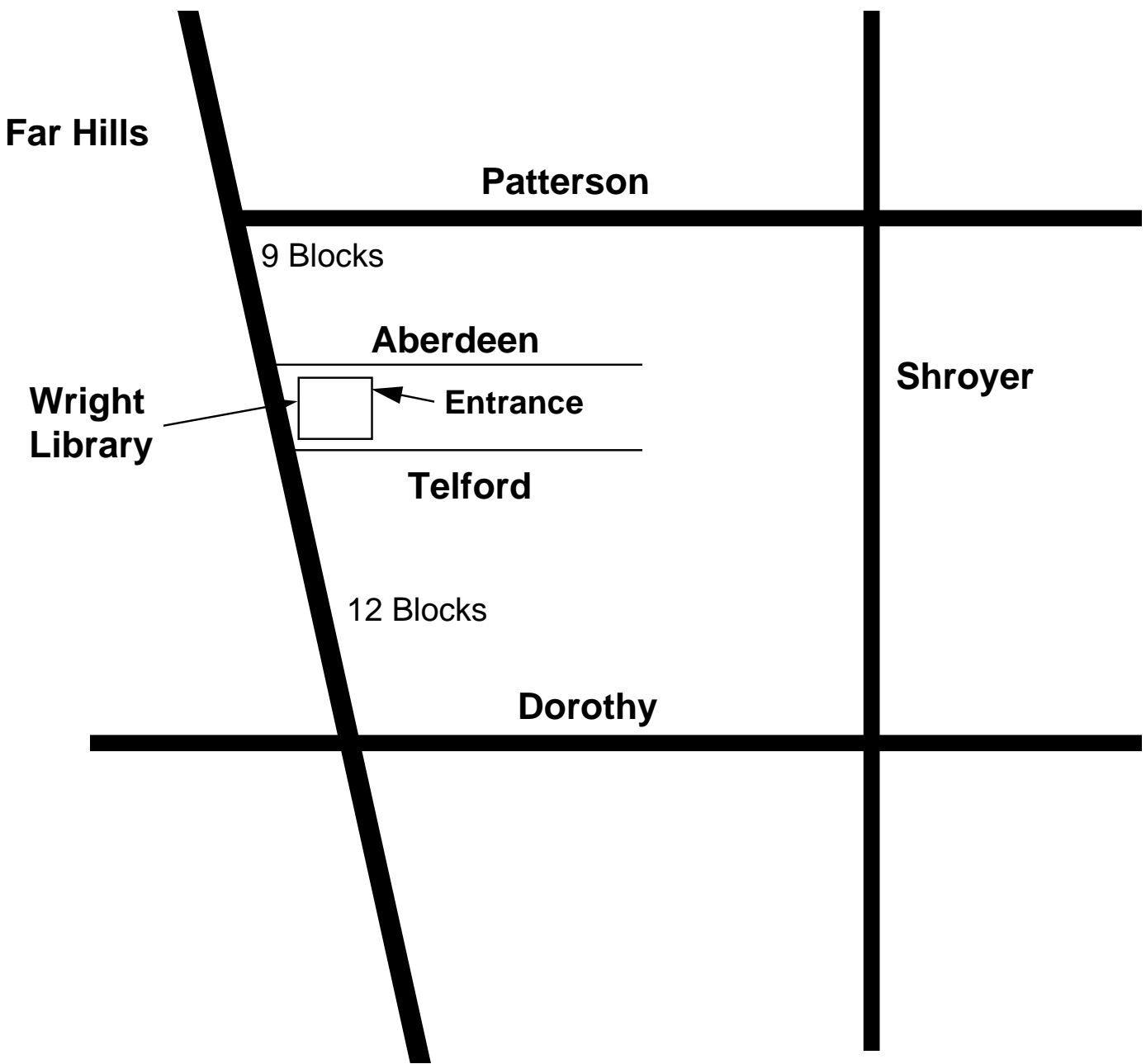
Our next stop was the former James B. Clow & Sons plant in Newcomerstown. Mr. Connor had unearthed a map showing three at-grade crossings of the narrow-gauge plant railroad and Pennsy sidings. Unbelievably, there was still narrow gauge track in three locations, although the Pennsy line that served this place is now gone.

Mr. Connor had further arranged a visit to the Coshocton, Otsego & Eastern, later a coal-hauling branch of the W&LE/NKP until 1962, and currently being rebuilt by John Uher. Mr. Uher has relaid and refurbished approximately a mile of track and operates it with a critter and a speeder. To those of you who say “I scoff at pitiful standard gauge locomotives,” this particular critter was originally 42” gauge and had a nifty close-clearance cab. Mr. Connor and Mr. Uher had even arranged a fine lunch prepared by an adjacent carryout and bait shop (it’s not what you think; the lunch was hamburgers and hot dogs).

Mr. Connor’s final triumph was to allow us to tour his railroad’s Morgan Run shops, located east of Coshocton where the Conotton Valley crossed the Pennsy Panhandle. Not only does the Ohio Central operate an eclectic mix of vintage and modern diesels in revenue service, it has a steam fleet for excursion service. That fleet will not be detailed here, but it includes a Consolidation, a Ten Wheeler, a Northern and a Pacific, that last one being in steam during our visit. Mr. Connor would not let us run it. . .

. . . To arrange such a meeting in New Philadelphia while living in Dayton, I relied on the Tuscarawas County Convention & Visitors Bureau to recommend hotels and meeting facilities, after I described what our group needed. All other arrangements with the host hotel and the conference center, including banquet choices, were done by telephone, e-mail or letter. The Stone Creek Brick Co. tour required several letters and telephone calls, and finally a commitment to pay two of their employees to come in on a Sunday morning. The Convention & Visitors Bureau further put me in touch with Michael Connor, although I had met him previously 14 years ago. Mr. Connor went beyond anyone’s expectations in making our visit enjoyable and productive, and his contributions are the only part of our Fall Meet that any one of us could not easily duplicate. The rest could be done by any of us, in any town.

Date	Location	Contest	Program	Layout
20 March	Wright Memorial Library	Narrow Gauge	Weathering With Chalk By Wil Davis	Gordon Carlson
17 April	Wright Memorial Library	Thumbz	Airbrush Painting By John Santel	
15 May	Joint Meeting with Division 7		Sam Swanson	Allen McClelland
16 June	?	No Contest		
17 July	?	Scene (Any Size)		



**You are invited to the March meeting on
Sunday the 20th at 2pm at the
Wright Memorial Library
1776 Far Hills
Oakwood, Ohio
Visitors and Guests Always Welcome**