

The

Whistle



Post

Official Newsletter of the

Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club

1615 Old Louisburg Rd Raleigh, NC 27604

Phone: 919-400-5570

“All Aboard”

Can you feel it? It's all around us! No not the pollen, the warmth and beauty of Spring. It is so great to see the new life springing up everywhere. The flowers, the shrubs, the trees are all bursting out with new life. And so are we. Our Club is growing by leaps and bounds, with new members joining every month. What a wonderful way to celebrate Spring.

And speaking of growing things, have you seen what's springing up in all the layout rooms? The O gauge boys have built a carnival and a working wind farm – very impressive. The HO guys have made amazing strides on their mountain project and have added a large amount of new scenic detailing. The N gauge group (now 7 strong) has added new things and is planning a major overhaul to support operations. And, our S gauge has been relocated for better accessibility, and a really nice New York Central set has been brought back to working order. The progress is amazing, rewarding, and greatly appreciated.

We have also had really good financial success with our participation in two one-day train shows: Thomasville in February and Mebane recently in March. The Club owes a real debt of gratitude to those who took their time and efforts to secure that these events were successful and profitable for the Club as a whole. It is through efforts like this that we are able to continue to pay our rent, keep the lights on, and keep the trains running. Thank you all! And to everyone else, remember our annual Spring Show is coming. Be prepared to do your share of the work required to make this a financial success for the Club. Bob Witwer is developing a sign-up chart to coordinate and maximize our resources. Please get with him, so we can make sure we have coverage in all areas and at all times.

It's great to know that we have programs planned for our membership meetings through the end of the year. John Wallis and Randy Foulke are doing a great job with this and organizing our other social events. Thanks guys for a job well done

OK enough from me for now. Train departing on Track 26 - - All Aboard!!

John Spach, President

New Wi-Fi Connections to HO and N Scale Layouts

By John Wallis

An improved method of accessing the HO and N scale layouts with your smartphones or tablets has been installed on both layouts. No longer will operators connect using either the Digitrax LNWI or the laptop computer with router. These devices have been replaced with a new access point using a Raspberry Pi computer, one on each layout.

The [Raspberry Pi](#) is an inexpensive single-board computer, measuring 3.5 x 2.3 x 0.76 inches and weighing 0.1 pounds. It costs around \$62.00 (at Amazon). The Pi chosen for the access point to our layouts is the Model 4B with 4GB RAM, as shown below:



Of course, the Pi must be mounted in a case to be useful, and it requires a microSD card for its storage. The completed Pi for the layouts is shown below (HO shown, N identical). The overall size is 3.75 x 2.75 x 1.25 inches.



To operate on the layouts, simply turn on the power strip, which will also turn on the Pi Access Point. It will boot in less than a minute. Then select the appropriate network (“HO-Layout” or “N-Layout”, as appropriate) under “connections” on your phone/tablet. Enter the WiThrottle logon 192.168.6.1, Port 12080. You should only need to do this the first time. Then select your loco and run your train.

Some members have asked about securing a JMRI Raspberry Pi Access Point for themselves. You will need to order the parts yourself, but I will be happy to help with assembly, and loading, and personalizing the software. Following is the parts list, which can be sourced at Amazon:

- Raspberry Pi 4 Model B 2019 Quad Core 64-Bit Wi-Fi Bluetooth (4GB)
- Miuzei Raspberry Pi 4B Case with Fan Cooling, 5V 3A Power Supply, 4pc Aluminum Heat Sinks
- SanDisk Ultra SDSQUNS-0 16G-GN3MN 16GB 80MB/s UHS- Class 10 micro SDHC
- USB-A Male to USB-B Male Cable of required length.

The above is all the hardware you need if your Digitrax Command Station is a DCS-52, DCS-240, DCS-240+ or a DCS-210, which have the USB port. If you have any other Digitrax Command Station, you will need a USB to LocoNet interface such as the Digitrax PR3 or PR4 or the RR-Circuits LocoBuffer.

As to software, the Pi uses a preconfigured software image developed by Steve Todd, who lives in Easley, SC, and is also the developer of the Engine Driver app for Android phones and tablets. The image file contains all software and configuration information needed to autostart JMRI PanelPro on the RPi, as an access point with WiThrottle Server, Web Server, and LocoNetOverTCP server included. Etcher software is used to write the image to the microSD card. Once the RPi is initially setup and personalized, it will operate headless — without a keyboard, mouse, and monitor.

Note: If you use your primary smartphone to operate your trains it is highly recommended you put your phone in airplane mode and then turn Wi-Fi back on.

Brookdale Senior Living Solutions Visit

February 20, 2024

The Club entertained a group of senior citizens from Brookdale Senior Living Solutions in Chapel Hill. Nine seniors and two staff members received guided tours of the Clubhouse and each of the layouts. Thanks to all the Club members who came out in the morning make the visit fun for all involved: Richard Calfee, Peter Donofrio, Mike Keelean, John Kuchnia, and John Wallis. The folks were enthusiastic and had a good tour and some cookies to boot. Thanks to Barbara Tate of Brookdale for bringing her seniors to enjoy the trains and the memories.

Sandhills Central Model Railroad Club Visit

March 2, 2024

Members turned out in large number to assure that our visitors from Aberdeen, NC had a good tour of the Clubhouse and our layouts. Thanks to the nameless members who helped to clean up in preparation and to those who brought donuts and other goodies for all to enjoy.

Members who participated in supporting the tour included: Alan Bradley, Liam Bryant, Richard Calfee, Bernie Dawson, Peter Donofrio, Jake Forbes, Randy Foulke, Tom Garren, Hayden Harrison, Ken Howard, Mike Keelean, Clif Kelly, Ted Kunstling, Paul Lebiezdinski, George List, Collin Martinko, Don McPherson, Phil Michaud, Richard Nyce, Shaefer O’Neil, Milo Poulin, Jack Rouviere, George Sawyer, Adam Servas, Alan Servas, John Spach, Alec Urban, John Wallis, Don Weaver, Brandt “Squiggie” Wilkus, and Bob Witwer, Thanks to all!



Sandhills Central Guests – Left to right: Elmer Pearsol (vice president), Tom (honorary member), and David Spencer (president).. (photo by Bob Witwer)



Left to right: Don McPherson, Elmer Person, Haydon Harrison, Tom, Mike Keelean, and Clif Kelly. (photo by Bob Witwer)



Left to right: Milo Poulin, Peter Donofrio, Ken Howard, Richard Calfee, Alan Bradley, Randy Foulke, and Jack Rouviere. (photo by Bob Witwer)



Left to right: Alan Bradley, Clif Kelly, Tom Garren, Haydon Harrison, Phil Michaud, and John Wallis. (photo by Ken Howard)

Mebane Train Show March 9, 2024

Tom Garren, Ken Howard, Mike Keelean, Joe Scales, John Spach, and Don Weaver hauled merchandise to Mebane to earn money through Club sales. The group manned six tables of HO, O, and S gauge merchandise. Sales were brisk for the first four hours, but then tumbled as the crowd thinned out on a very rainy afternoon.

Special thanks go to Daphne Garren who is an expert at packing a pickup bed with boxes and tubs full of trains. Thanks also to Mike Keelean and Tom Garren for using their vehicles to haul the Club's merchandise to Mebane.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to a successful outing and good sales.



John Spach and Ken Howard. (photo by T. Garren)



Joe Scales and Don Weaver. (photo by Tom Garren)



Mike Keelean. (photo by Tom Garren)



Daphne Garren unloading Tom's truck. (photo by Ken Howard)

Member Layouts

At the February Membership Meeting, **Jake Forbes** gave a presentation on the “Evolution of N&W Steam Locomotives.” **George Lasley** contributed to the discussion by displaying six of his O-scale locomotives representing different classes of N&W steam power. The locomotives are shown in the photo below. Jake’s presentation will be available on the Club website at a later date.



Locomotives shown from left to right: class Y-3, 2-8-8-2, Lionel; class A, 2-6-6-4, Lionel; class K-2, 4-8-2, Sunset/3rd Rail; class J, 4-8-4, Lionel; class M, 4-8-0, Sunset/3rd Rail; and USRA, Light 2-8-2, Sunset.
(photo by Ken Howard)

Year-End Charitable Giving

George Lasley presented the Club’s donation check to the Helping Hand Mission in Raleigh. We received a letter of thanks, quoted in part below:

“Words fail me! When you sent this very generous donation! We are working on a project to support babies and small children that does not receive nutritious food. This donation would take care of kids asking for needed things we could not give.....Your support of Helping Hand Mission is helping us do great things for those in need throughout our community.”

Thanks to all the members who contributed to make this contribution possible.

An Orphan Gets Adopted

A 4 x 8 foot, donated HO layout has been languishing in the storage locker at the Clubhouse for a long time (offered to members in November 2023 Whistle Post) has finally found a new home

with Jeff Neubert. Tom Garren, Ken Howard, John Kuchnia, and Jeff Neubert loaded the layout into a pickup on February 21, 2024.



The orphan HO layout. (photo by Ken Howard)



Jeff Neubert and Ken pose with the loaded pickup. (photo by Tom Garren)



John Kuchnia cleaning up in the store room. (photo by Tom Garren)

Real Railroads

Larry Pearlman contributed the following photos taken during his local and international travels.



Carolina Coastal's new GP15r in NS Heritage Colors

Don't forget that Larry will be giving a presentation on photography following the April 2024 Membership Meeting.



Jerusalem's Light Rail by the Old City in December 2023.

Upcoming Events

Keep your calendars open for the following events. Club members help will be required for some of these events.

March 16-17, 2024: North Raleigh Model Railroad Club, Train Show including NTRAK and T-TRAK layouts, Herbert C. Young Community Center, 101 Wilkinson Avenue, Cary, NC. Hours are 9am to 8pm on Saturday and 1pm to 4pm on Sunday. Admission is Free.

March 23-24, 2024: Carolina Model Railroaders 16th Annual Train Show and Sale, Lewis Recreation Center, Greensboro, NC. Contact ronaddidonato195@gmail.com for further info.

March 25, 2024: CSRRC Membership Meeting, Monday, 5:00 pm – 7:30 pm, at Southbound Sandwich Works, 3328 S. Church Street, Burlington, NC 27215. A presentation will follow dinner.

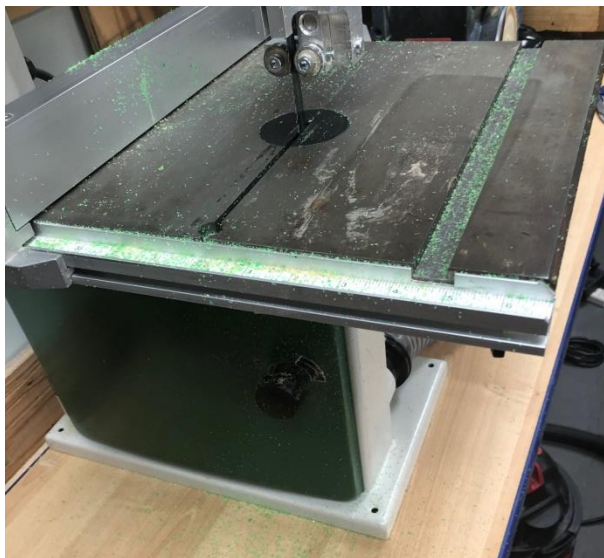
April 20, 2024: Hold this date open for the Club's spring Open House.

May 4-5, 2024: NRVNRC "Spring into Trains Show" at Expo Building.

June 28-30, 2024: Brick Universe, LEGO displays at Raleigh Convention Center.

Beating a Dead Horse

Time to remind everyone again that it is essential to clean up your messes, replace tools and supplies in the space where you got them, and make sure the Club is closed down properly. We continue to have issues with unlocked doors, lights burning, tools and rolling stock left on layouts, and power strips left on.



Vacuuming needed after use. (photo by Ralph James)

N Scale Layout Committee

Seven Club members have formed a committee (headed by Bernie Dawson) to oversee the operation and development of the N-scale layout. If you haven't noticed the changes, you should go take a look at the new scenery, staging track, plexiglass shield, and lighting installations in buildings and vehicles. Lot's going on. Minutes of N-scale meeting are posted on the website.



In case you haven't been watching, here's some of the upgrading that the N-scale crew has been working on for your edification. (photo by Bernie Dawson)

Spring into Trains Show

George Lasley reports that all the vendor tables have been sold. A schedule of manpower needs to staff the show is in preparation by Bob Witwer. Remember that we are moving to the EXPO Center for this year's "Spring into Trains Show," a much larger facility than the Scott Building. We will need more help for set up and teardown this year because vehicle access is limited in the Expo Building. The Club intends to provide assistance to our vendors to help overcome this logistical issue.

HO Layout Committee Activities in February/March

February 24, 2024: Track Cleaning Workday: You knew that once all the rolling stock had clean metal wheels, that the track couldn't be far behind. Brite-boys, Ronsonol, isopropyl alcohol, and elbow grease were applied to the tracks. Where track issues were found they were fixed or logged in the Green Book for later attention. Where it was removed during overenthusiastic cleaning, "frog snot" was reapplied to switches. Thanks to all who participated.



Track cleaning crew: Alec Urban, Ken Howard, Randy Foulke, Don McPherson, Dan Egy, and Richard Calfee (photo by Tom Garren)



Bob Witwer got the hard job of cleaning Mains 1, 2, and 4 on the extension. (photo by Tom Garren)

Plans are in preparation for extending the interior staging yard toward the Crew Lounge to improve its functionality. The existing yard will be extended behind Module 4 and a direct connection to allow trains onto Main 4 will be constructed. The improvements will allow for make-up of longer trains with direct access to the mains on the legacy layout, removing the current bottleneck from Main 4 on Module 3.

Work is also in progress to realign Main 4 and construct a yard to handle loads coming to town from the mountain extension's industries.



Jake Forbes and Collin Martinko working on Main 4 realignment and a new yard to improve operational capability. (photo by Adam Servas)



First train over the realigned Main 4 on Module 9 of the legacy layout. (photo by Adam Servas)

Neat Links

Dutch Tubman provided the link below to Company Shops RR Club's February presentation on the 'Greensboro Depot' by Kevin Von der Lippe. The presentation runs about an hour.

<https://youtu.be/QWibgWeCrZk>

Upcoming Club Meetings and Activities

March Membership Meeting: The next meeting is on Thursday, March 21st at 7:00 pm at the Clubhouse. Alan Bradley will present the program titled "JMRI." Attendance via Zoom is optional.

March HO Committee Meeting: The March meeting will be held at the Clubhouse at 1 pm on Sunday, March 17th. All interested parties are welcome to attend.

April Board of Governors Meeting: The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 1st at 7:00 pm at the Clubhouse. Attendance via Zoom is optional.

Open House: Keep April 20th open for your participation in our Spring Open House. This is a chance to put our best foot forward to the public and help draw folks to the Spring into Trains show.

Breakfast Social: Join us for the breakfast social every Wednesday, 9:00 am at Barry's Café, Raleigh, NC.

Notes from the Editor and Webmaster

Please send recent photos of Club activities to nrvwebmaster@gmail.com, so he can maintain and update our website. Also, don't forget to send your material to Ted Kunstling at trkunstling@aol.com so that he can keep our Facebook site current.

Please send articles, photos of real trains and Club activities, book reviews, product reviews, photographs of your home layouts, and interesting links to Ken Howard, Whistle Post Editor, at klhowardjr@aol.com.

Minutes of Membership, Board, HO, and N Committee's Meetings

Minutes of Board of Governors, Membership, and HO and N Committee meetings are available on the Club website. The link below takes you directly to the Minutes page:

<https://nrvcclub.net/meeting-minutes/>

NRV Whistle Post
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First Class

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