



Monthly publication of the

# Lake Erie “N” Scale Society

October, 2005



News and Opinions  
Monthly Meeting Info  
Web Sites of Interest  
Learning from Prototypes  
Show Schedules  
and more!

Special Double Issue

**N-TRAK**  
N SCALE MODULAR RAILROADING

## Welcome!

LENS is a group of people with a common interest in modeling N scale railroads using the "NTRAK" modular concept.

Any time we meet and/or display our work and promote this hobby, we would love to have you join us.

This means that ALL of us have chances to participate in the hobby by helping with any or all of the following:

**Setting up / tearing down**  
**Running trains**  
**Sharing your knowledge**  
**Learning something new**  
**Answering questions**  
**Hosting a meeting**

Notice that NONE of the above requires a module. We need your help... so bring yourself, your enthusiasm, your interest and your trains.

Thanks in advance for helping! Hopefully, we will continue to see you at the meetings and display events.

***Come and join in the fun!***

[www.geocities.com/lensohio/](http://www.geocities.com/lensohio/)

The Lake Erie N Scale Society newsletter is published monthly for the sole use of its members by a crew of volunteers.

Opinions published here are solely those of the editor and/or the members of the Lake Erie N Scale Society.

This publication is intended to be a monthly newsletter describing the business, events and the common interest in N scale model railroading enjoyed by the members of the Lake Erie N Scale Society.

**For information or questions regarding our Society, you may contact Dennis Lloyd at 440-352-7081 - or - (dennis.lloyd@comcast.net)**

Meetings normally start at 8:00 p.m., the fourth Friday of each month.

# Lake Erie N Scale Society

**October, 2005**

During September, several members of our club embarked on a Railfan tour of southwestern Pennsylvania. The tour was the brain child of Ken S., who provided us with a map of an area along the Beaver River from Newcastle, to Beaver Falls (at the Ohio River).

We traveled in three vehicles, each equipped with radios so we could stay in touch during the trip in case of an emergency or wrong turn. Ken provided an extensive map with about 11 stops suggested for viewing trains. More than 15 trains were spotted and photographed as we made our way south .

Of interest was the UN Tower which is a 150 year old structure that has been restored and will soon serve as a “mini museum” in Newcastle. Also visited was an old passenger station at Beaver Junction where a local club was holding a car show to raise money to restore the station. At Big Rock Park, an abandoned main line yielded several spikes for the souvenir hunters.

The weather was almost perfect, and the box lunch provided by the proprietor of the Fallston Flagstop B&B was delicious. It’s quite unusual to be able to stand at the edge of the ballast and photograph trains “up close and personal”.

I believe everyone had a great time and look forward to another adventure in the future. Thanks Ken!

## Annual Family Picnic

**Saturday, August 27, 2005**



We tried something a little different this year. Our annual picnic started earlier in the day to provide games for the families, followed by the “usual” cookout / pot luck format. People “came and went” as their schedules permitted during the day.

The venue this year was the pavilion at Big Creek Park (a more detailed map will be provided in the

future) which was tough to find. There was plenty of space for everyone to play catch, Frisbee, horseshoes, etc.

Coals were ready to go at 6:30 p.m. and the meal was under way .



A special dessert was prepared by Bonnie L. (cover photo) that not only was a “work of art, but tasted good too!



Past picnics have always been enjoyed by those in attendance and has become the traditional social event for LENS members and their guests.

## Last Month's Meeting

We met at Dan P's home for the September meeting. There was discussion reviewing the Annual Picnic and the Western PA Railfan trip.

A potential new member (Steve D.) visited our group to see if we represent the type of club he would like to join. Our condolences... (grin)

After discussing upcoming running sessions and trading, buying, show & tell, etc., we adjourned to the kitchen for refreshments, then to the basement to operate some trains.

## This Month's Meeting

Our October meeting will be held at the home of Perry P. on the 4th Friday starting at 8 p.m. as is customary. A map will be provided attached to the meeting announcement.

A main topic of discussion will be our next several set ups to determine how many members will be participating. Please contact Denny L., Matt K., or Lou D. with your availability for the "season". <<< **Very important!**

Wayne L. wrote to tell me he found a great web site that describes "Bend Track", which is one of the newer iterations of the "N scale Modular" concept. These modules were set up at Edison & Chantilly within the last 3 years. More info is available at: <http://home.alltel.net/ah50902/index.htm>



## Learning From Others

### **Ballasting** **Bob Gilmore of Ogden, UT**

I've ballasted MILES of code 55 and 40 track in N scale and have come up with some methods that seem to work well for me.

First off, NEVER use Woodland Scenics ballast...it's not real rock. Anything that isn't real rock will float, no matter how much "wet water" you slobber onto it first. I also went out and actually measured the size of rocks on the UP mainline near where I live, and shopped around till I found real rock ballast that was the scaled-down size of the real ballast I measured. I did this because most of the "fine" and "N-scale" ballast that I was looking at appeared to be WAY big...and it was. HOWEVER Highball Products Ballast in "N" size is just right. Comes in seven different styles/colors, which is good because when I looked at the real stuff, I found out it was about four or five different colors, so I mix my ballast to get a close approximation of the real color. I'm sure there are a couple of other manufacturers (Arizona Rock and Mineral to name one) who also offer real-rock properly-sized ballast.

If you continue to have problems with your ballast not sticking to the sides of your cork, an easy solution is to go to Wal-Mart with a rock you like, get them to mix up a couple of pints of ULTRA FLAT Latex paint to match it...take it home, brush it on the sides of your cork and

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## LENS Western PA Railfan Trip

### LENS Railfan Trip - 2005 Newcastle to Beaver Falls, PA



## LENS Western PA Railfan Trip





## LENS Western PA Railfan Trip



## LENS Western PA Railfan Trip



"We made the web!", says Ken S.  
Railfan Trip - 9/10/05 - Fallston Flagstop B&B

<http://www.forcomm.net/flagstop/os.html>



## LENS Western PA Railfan Trip

| <u>Time</u> | <u>Pennsylvania</u> | <u>Consist</u>                           |
|-------------|---------------------|--|
| 10:54       | Homewood            | EB NS 5440, 9386, 9449 Stack             |
| 11:28       | Beaver Falls        | EB NS 9327 Empty Coke Train              |
| 11:52       | New Brighton        | WB NS 9662/9131 Gondola                  |
| 12:19       | New Brighton        | WB NS 3061 & Caboose                     |
| 12:22       | New Brighton        | WB NS 2600/GCFX3085/FURX3038 Stack       |
| 12:35       | Fallston            | EB HLCX 6129/CSX8883 Stack               |
| 13:51       | Fallston            | WB UP9432/WC6593/CSX744/GCFX3070 Freight |
| 14:58       | Rochester           | NS9278/UP9241/NS6753 Stack               |
| 15:05       | Rochester           | EB NS5401/5403 Helper Set                |
| 15:15       | Monaca              | EB HLCX6236, HLCX?, CSX9301 Auto         |
| 15:33       | Monaca              | WB BNSF 5329, BNSF 6874 Coke             |
| 15:33       | Monaca              | EB CSX 728 CSX 4815, Coke                |
| 15:57       | Rochester           | WB NS9129/9098 Freight                   |
| 16:10       | Rochester           | WB NS2609/9695 Freight                   |

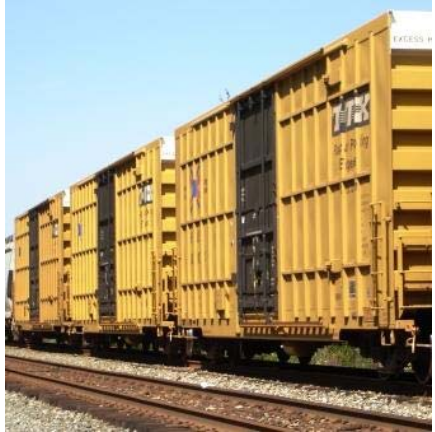
...and more!

## LENS Western PA Railfan Trip





## LENS Western PA Railfan Trip



— "UN" TOWER —  
THIS 105 YR OLD BUILDING USED TO STAND  
GUARD OVER THE RR TRACKS IN W.PCH. PA. IN 1998 IT  
WAS MOVED HERE IN 2-PIECES BY RAILROAD CAR.  
THE BEAVER VLY JCT. CHPT. 78 OF THE NATIONAL  
RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS REBUILDING IT AND PLANS  
TO OPEN IT TO THE PUBLIC AS A SMALL WORKING  
MUSEUM — RR-OBSERVATION SITE. VOLUNTEERS ARE  
WELCOME. FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON THE TOWER  
AND NEARBY RR EQPT. PLEASE TAKE A NEWSLETTER  
OR CALL: 724-654-7904 or 724-867-5033. THANK YOU FOR STOPPING





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sprinkle on some ballast while it's still wet. Let it dry overnight, brush off the excess ballast (save it) and continue on...

Okay, now that you have the proper size and color of ballast mixed up, you might also find that branch lines and sidings have a different color of ballast...or in some cases...hardly ANY ballast at all...or what looks like just dirt and weeds. Railroads usually keep up their mainlines and well-used sidings the best. If you're modeling a modern, major railroad like UP or BNSF or even the recent SP or Conrail etc. (you get the picture) they keep their mainlines really well maintained in the ballast dept. So, it might be a good idea to mix up a few different textures and colors to be able to readily apply them.

OH YES, did I mention that BEFORE you ballast you need to do a couple of things to your track. The first thing is to fill in all the spaces where there needs to be ties (mostly where you've used rail joiners). Make sure you don't just stick regular ties underneath the rail joiner spots...grind off a bit of the tie so that it clears the rail joiner underneath or your track will hump along with the tracks gaining a few thousandths every place there's a regular tie stuck under a rail joiner. The SECOND thing you should do is profile and rough-sand any sharp edges on your cork roadbed, ESPECIALLY the edge between the top and the angles on the sides. THEN, paint your rail. I use Krylon Flat Black and spray the track from both the inside and outside to make sure I cover both the inside and outsides of the rail. I

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then scrape off the tops of the rail before the paint dries completely and use my rail burnisher to polish the tops. I then paint the ties using the appropriate dark brown color by spraying directly down (vertically) onto the ties. A little overspray will get on the sides of the rails (which is good), but try to keep your spray can straight up from what you're spraying...then clean and burnish the tops again. By the way, keep your paint on the rails as thin, but covering as possible...don't glob it on. I then go through the foreground scenes and pick out some ties and make them different colors using various Floquil paints to represent new or old ties or just different colored ones. AND if your turnouts pick power up just by the points, you need to mask them before painting. If you use switch machines and DPDT routing relays/switches underneath your benchwork, then don't worry about it. Next, make sure all your holes are filled in your subroadbed. Be especially careful where your electrical feeders come up. I use a little modeling clay (brown) to do this...it's easy, cheap and readily available.

You'll need to prepare some solutions and their applicators before you start socking down your ballast. Before you apply your adhesive you **MUST** pre-wet your ballast (as well as your ground cover) I use a fine atomizer to do this using "wet water"...just water with a little detergent in it. Liquitex also makes a surface tension breaker as well as

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***Our "Annual Swap Meet", is now available at every meeting!***

If you have surplus engines, buildings, rolling stock, modules, etc., bring them to any of the meetings to offer great deals to your fellow members.

## Next Month's Meeting

The "Search Committee" (below) is hard at work looking for a location for the future meetings.

Burton - November

FarmPark - December

*January, 2006???*



Area N scaler looking for someone (not Dennis L.) to paint, detail, and decal engines and cars. Contact [dennis.loyd@comcast.net](mailto:dennis.loyd@comcast.net) if interested.

### **Stewart's Hobbies & Collectors' Toys**

38033 Euclid Ave.

**440-942-6632**

Microtrains Dealer

*You've seen Rob & Sandy at Railfest — why not visit their store in Willoughby when you get a chance*

## Event Planner

| Venue          | <i>Burton Library</i> | <i>Dates</i> | <i>Times</i>  |
|----------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| <b>Set up</b>  | Friday                | 11/25/05     | 1:00 p.m.     |
| <b>Operate</b> | Saturday              | 11/26/05     | 9 a.m.—5 p.m. |
| <b>Operate</b> | Sunday                | 11/27/05     | 1 p.m.—5 p.m. |

| Venue          | <i>FarmPark</i>     | <i>Dates</i> | <i>Times</i> |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Set up</b>  | Saturday (day time) | 12/17/05     | TBA          |
| <b>Operate</b> | Saturday...         | 12/17/05     | TBA          |
| <b>Operate</b> | ...through Friday   | 12/23/05     | TBA          |

| Venue          | <i>Willowick Library</i> | <i>Dates</i> | <i>Times</i>  |
|----------------|--------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| <b>Set up</b>  | Friday                   | 2/11/06      | 6:00 p.m.     |
| <b>Operate</b> | Saturday                 | 2/12/06      | 9 a.m.—5 p.m. |
| <b>Operate</b> | Sunday                   | 2/13/06      | 1 p.m.—5 p.m. |

### Looking for LENS “gear”?



Contact Karen (440-347-0938) to order your favorite items. Quality, prices & selection to fit every budget!



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Kodak (Photoflo) that also works well. Some people use a water/methanol combination...and it works well too. I prefer the "atomizer" (a very fine spray). I don't like to use a dose-dropper for pre-wetting my ground cover OR my ballast, as the dose-dropper will wash away your contours if you're not careful. I found a good, really fine sprayer is the one that comes with ACC glue Accelerant in it. After the accelerant is gone, I fill it full of wet water and use it to spray on my scenery and ballasting before applying my glue/water solution, but you can buy them empty. NEVER use an empty 409 sprayer or Windex sprayer or even the sprayers that Woodland Scenics sells...their spray is MUCH to COARSE and the water-bombs they produce will dimply your dry scenery if you use them to pre-wet it.

I used to use Matte-Medium/water to glue down my ballast, but I had a couple of bad experience with it leaving an ugly white residue, so now I use just plain old Elmer's white glue. Mix up a good portion of glue and water in a 60/40 solution (60 water/40 white glue and some detergent). Don't add a whole lot of detergent to it...you don't want it to foam and bubble...you just want it to break the surface tension of the glue/water solution so it'll soak down into your ballast. Get a big "dose-dropper" from your pharmacy...get a few of 'em. You'll be using them to apply  
y o u r     p r e - m i x e d     a d h e s i v e .

Another thing: If you're ballasting around turnouts, soak the closure points, throw rods and flexible rail joints with Labelle Oil...before you start ballasting...the ballast glue won't stick to them and you'll be able to break them loose very easily

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a f t e r   t h e   g l u e   h a s   d r i e d .

SO, just brushing on your ballast isn't really optimal although some brushing will have to be done to get almost all the rocks off the tops of the ties and not stuck up against the sides of the rails. Mainline trackage has a "contour"...which is an actual specification laid down by the railroad you're modeling to provide drainage to the roadbed. Most likely you haven't gone to the trouble at this point to provide the proper contours to the terrain around your rails, but it's a good idea to make up some "ballast contouring" tools out of styrene to drag along the track before you sock your ballast down. This will do about eighty-five percent of the contouring of the ballast. You'll have to approximate it at turnouts, crossovers and anywhere there's a frog, crossing or diverging rails...but for the long stretches of mainlines, sidings and branch lines, your little contouring tools will make for really nice looking ballast. I've posted some pictures of the ballast contouring tools I made, along with pictures of ballasted track on my module in the Files section under Bob Gilmore's Stuff.

***“Tune in next month for exciting conclusion...”  
to this article on Ballasting, by Bob Gilmore of  
Ogden, UT***

Visit our web site at [www.geocities.com/lensohio/](http://www.geocities.com/lensohio/)

**“F.R.E.D.”**



*See you at the next station!*