



Lake Erie "N" Scale Society

"L.E.N.S."

March, 2007



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and more!



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

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

March, 2007

- OK - so the cover photo is of a G scale unit. But it was such a nice day, with the sun shining, I had to take that picture. Spring is just around the corner!
 - If you have some time on Friday the 16th, please come out to help with the set up - this requires many hands and the "more the merrier".
-

I want to remind everyone who is bringing a module (or more) to Railfest, that it is very important to remember to clean the Cinch-Jones connectors before coming to set up on Friday. If you recall, the folks that attended the N scale convention in Chantilly, VA a couple of years ago, had to go through a rigorous electrical checklist to "approve" the module for entry.

What appeared to be a number of problem areas, were cleaned up by simply cleaning the connectors (and we found one small short). The lesson learned was the oxidation on the connecting pins, was enough to cause problems on the modules. Oddly enough, many of the small electrical problems we experienced disappeared after Chantilly!

Use a little contact cleaner in the female connector and then "scrub" the male pin in & out several times; then repeat the contact cleaner and "scrubbing". Once that is complete, use a Dremal Tool, a small round wire brush or some sandpaper to "scrub" the male pins. That's all it takes to ensure a good connection.

Last Month's Meeting

The February meeting of LENS was held in the home of a new member, Joe Y.

Joe and several members reviewed the module that he has under construction. Joe is an engineer and loves working with bridges. Just guess what he will have on his module? He promises to have the module complete enough to be able to bring it to Railfest.

The meeting was well attended and everyone joined into a lively discussion regarding the upcoming Railfest, the set up at a new venue (The Perry, OH library), and Joe's module. In addition we decided to table a possible set up in Burton again at the Antique Steam Show (it was to early to discuss) .

There is still some confusion regarding the new "Recommended Practices" & the electrical standards for the modules. Conversation revolved around how we are going to set up if not everyone is willing to convert to the Anderson Power Pole connectors. We could group like modules together, but that may not be practical. Denny L. suggested we convert old modules by simply adding a second set of track feeds and tie them to the #12 wire, thereby having both sets of connectors available. Of course conversion pigtails could be built but would they be ready for Railfest?

Thanks Joe for hosting the meeting. Everything went very well, and we didn't even burn the place to the ground!

Joe indicated he would be willing to host more meetings in the future - thanks again Joe. We can't wait to see your new module (and the new set from Matt K.) at Railfest.

This Month's Meeting

RAILFEST 2007

We have been invited to participate in the NMRA Division 5's Railfest, held at Lakeland Community College. Because of the amount of time spent at Railfest, we traditionally do not have a "monthly meeting" at anyone's house.

Instead, we have a 12' x 48' space to fill with our layout. As of "press" time, **there is still room** for modules. Again, we will have access to a "Sale Table", where you are welcome to bring your surplus items to offer for sale to the public.

If you intend to offer items for sale, also plan on spending some time sitting at the table to monitor those items; you are expected to contribute to the effort. Also, don't forget to fill out an Inventory Sheet for your items (available from Matt K. via e-mail or phone).

Make sure you get your name on the run time sign up sheet at set up on Friday night. **We will need all of the help we can muster for the set up and tear down efforts; please try to be available.**

Contact Denny L. if you intend to bring a module so we can include your module/s in the layout design.

If you have never been to a Railfest, it is the "Largest Model Railroad Show in Northeastern Ohio". There will be several operating layouts and over 100 vendors (>250 tables), "waiting to liberate your dollars"!

Learning From Prototype

Knock, knock; who's there?

It was common for car inspectors to tap parts with a hammer. The resulting tone of sound gave clues to the condition of those parts. Ergo, the "Car Knocker". Other terms for them are, "Car Peck", "Car Wacker", "Car Tink", "Car Tonk", "Car Inspector", "Car Toad", "Railcar Repairman", and have also been referred to by some angry Conductor's as, "that S.O.B. who, Bad Ordered half of my train". There are times, when they make a few Conductor's and Trainmaster's angry, but when it comes to the final say so on what cars were safe to run in a train, they usually have the final say so.

Here is one "Car Knocker's" description of his job: *"Opening and closing defective railcar doors requires dexterity, agility, knowledge, and experience, and is very often unsafe for any novice, to undertake. The Railroads know that, and fall back on their Carmen to deal with them. There are many types of railcar doors, none of which operate or function the same. There are several types of Flush Fitting Box Car Doors (Plug Doors) each with its own different characteristics and styles. There are Sliding Box car doors and some cars that have both a sliding and a plug doors. There are Auto racks with end doors that swing and slide at the same time. There are Hopper Cars with bottom doors and Hopper Cars with sliding gates on the bottom that have to be opened with a big heavy steel pry bar to turn the crank.*

Opening and closing defective railcar doors requires many varied tasks, such as prying with bars, hitting with big heavy

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sledge hammers, and pulling with ratcheting cable pullers (“Come-A-Long”).

For example; to pull a sliding door open with a “come-a-long”, you have to reach up and hook the cable on the door, hook the other end to somewhere on the car, then reach up and pull the handle of the “come-a-long” repeatedly back and forth which slowly pulls the door open in small increments (maybe an inch at a time) until you succeed in opening it; usually 8-10 feet. That is providing its not defective.

Usually there are underling causes why the customer couldn't open it in the first place which often requires reaching up and prying with a bar to free it from some stuck place, sometimes pulling with one hand on the come-a-long and prying with the other hand and some times putting all the pulls strain you can get on the cable, then taking a sledge hammer and whacking the tar out of the door somewhere way up above your head.

That is just one example of a sliding door problem; there are many. All of which require reaching up. I have yet to see a door that wasn't over my 6 ft high head. Just to latch the door requires reaching up to connect the hasp and often having to use a large hammer to drive it closed. Slide doors often get off their track, and often have to be retracked by prying the door back up on the track with a pry bar.”

Our “Annual Swap Meet”, is 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

“T.B.A.”



Stewart's Hobbies & Collector's 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

	RAILFEST '07	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Times</i>
Set up	Friday	03/16/07	7 p.m.
Event	Saturday	03/17/07	10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Event	Sunday	03/18/07	1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

	Perry, OH Library	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Times</i>
Set up	Friday	04/20/07	6:30 p.m.
Operate	Saturday	04/21/07	9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Operate	Sunday	04/22/07	12 p.m. - 4 p.m.

	RR In The Parks	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Times</i>
Set up	Friday	05/04/07	7 p.m.
Event	Saturday	05/05/07	T.B.A.
Event	Sunday	05/06/07	T.B.A.

	Louisville "N" Convention	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Times</i>
Set up	Wednesday	6/25/08	T.B.A.
Operate	(from) Thursday...	6/26/08	T.B.A.
Operate	...(thru) Sunday	6/29/08	T.B.A.

Looking for LENS apparel?



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



Ever wonder if our hobby is going to die off now that kids have video games & many other entertainment options?

REUTERS 

NEW YORK - Sales of model trains are picking up steam again thanks to deals linking them to the "Harry Potter" and "The Polar Express" movies, along with a new approach to marketing the old-fashioned toys. Lionel, one of the big names in model trains in the 1950s, has watched as its business had to focus less on selling toys to kids than serving an older but much smaller hobbyist market. Folk-rock singer Neil Young, 61, is so passionate about trains that he bought a fifth of the company in 1995.

Now, the company is bringing trains back to young people, and sales are up 40 percent in the last two years. Lionel is a resurgent brand based on nostalgic appeal.

Lionel signed deals to bring out "Harry Potter" and "The Polar Express" trains, and filled shelves at department stores such as Macy's and Target, instead of just hobby shops.

This sort of advertising is as much geared to children as it is to parents who remember Christmas train displays when they were young, said Andy Edleman, VP of marketing for MTH Electric Trains. "We almost make them feel guilty. People would prefer family participation and nostalgia" to things like Game Boys and PlayStations. MTH sells its trains with promotional DVDs and catalogs that portray parents and children enjoying trains together. Companies such as Lionel and MTH also showcase their

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products at events like the World's Greatest Hobby on Tour. At the show, children can play with Thomas the Tank Engine toys and ride giant trains.

"Our company and others are trying to infuse trains with as much technology as possible," Edleman said. Parents can run locomotives using wireless handheld devices. MTH starter sets include a single handheld throttle allowing users to command multiple engines and tracks. Users can control the amount of smoke coming out of a locomotive & track the number of scale miles (km) a train has traveled. There is downloadable software to program new sounds and features into trains.

Mark Guiffre, 34, W. Island Model RR Club - Long Island, N.Y., said that such technology had made model railroading better, partly because users can run trains and switch tracks just by punching a few buttons.

It's ideal for young people because they do not want to spend a lot of time assembling the train sets; they just like to run them," he said.

Baby boomer collectors fell in love with trains as children. But these hobbyists aren't getting any younger. They are up against trends in culture. Dick Christianson, managing editor of Model Railroader magazine, said the resurgence in trains would probably start up a whole new, younger generation of model railroaders.

Visit our web site at www.geocities.com/lensohio/

“F.R.E.D.”



See you at the next station!

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