

## The Passing Track

March 2013

Newsletter of the Rogue Valley Model Railroad Club

PO Box 1362—Medford, OR 97501

Home page is <http://rvmrc.net>

### Protocol for Sunday Open House Operations

We have had comments from visitors to our Sunday open houses that we need to think about. It seems that we may not be the most talkative and friendly group at times. While not all of us are naturally outgoing, we want to eliminate the perception that we are a bunch of grumpy old men playing with trains and uninterested in our visitors. We need to make more of an effort to engage our visitors and show that we are glad they came in to see what we are doing. Also we have had far too many people behind the ropes and this could get us in trouble with the fire marshal as well as interrupting operations and damaging equipment and scenery. The board discussed this at the last meeting and came up with some things to consider when you are hosting an open house. This is not a new issue and we have to keep trying to make it a pleasant experience for our visitors and ourselves. Things to keep in mind:

- 1) Engage the public when they come in. Smile and inquire if they have any questions or comments.
- 2) To limit the number of people behind the ropes, only one group may be escorted at a time. Preferably, these should be people who have a serious interest in the layout.
- 3) Each group must be escorted by a RVMRC member who is responsible for the actions of the group. The escort should not be operating a train during the time he or she is leading the tour. If we have a bunch of people wandering behind the layout without an escort, the other visitors will expect to be allowed to do that as well. It becomes a real problem which can get out of hand very quickly.
- 4) If a group wants to go behind the ropes just because they saw other people doing it, try to politely defer them to a time when we are less busy, or when we have more free

members to guide them. Explain that the fire marshal requires us to limit the number of people in the narrow portions of the layout for safety reasons.

- 5) In the past we have had older children following trains behind the ropes for long periods of time who were not being supervised by a member. This is no longer permitted.
- 6) Supervised operation by a young 'guest engineer' is still permitted; but the host member must focus on the operating train and may not lead a separate group at the same time.

Another area of frustration for members and guests, as well, is the malfunctioning of trains during a session. The trains stop, the operators are distracted and the public gets the impression that we don't have a very reliable system, which is not the case (most of the time). Typically, the problems are due to a new piece of equipment or a different consist which has not been previously run on the P&E. It can be as simple as two cars with slightly offset couplers which work with other cars, but when put together, create an offset big enough to cause them to decouple. In many cases, the offending units may be brand new and the owner can't wait to try them out or a friend wants to see how the unit runs.

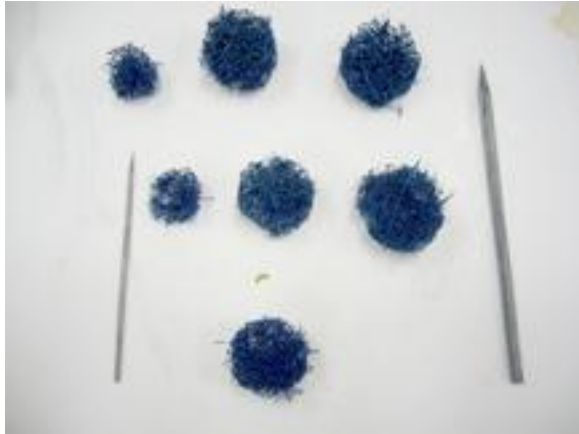
- 7) To insure smooth operation of the trains during a session, all locomotives and rolling stock must be test run and approved by the standard's group (E. Don) prior to the Sunday operations. This should take place on a preceding Saturday or at some mutually agreed to date. Remember that E. Don is usually involved with the parking lot detail and will likely not be available before we open for the public. Of particular concern are the wheel gauge, coupler height, intermittent shorts (couplers, hoses, etc.)
- 8) Consists should also be checked out prior to operation since it is possible that a particular combination of cars and/or locomotives can cause a problem. They should be run at least two times around the layout without any problems, before they are 'good to go'. Members who are putting together new consists should pre-run them before 10:00 on an operating Sunday. (If you can't do it early on Sunday then you can test run the consist earlier in the week.)
- 9) Any previously approved, locomotive or car, which has since been modified or worked on, must be 're-certified' or checked out prior to operating on the layout.
- 10) If you do have a problem, pull the train off the main line and troubleshoot the problem after the session is over.
- 11) The goal of the open houses is to promote the hobby and the club. Our goal is to make our Sunday runs a fun experience for all involved.

## **Making Trees on the P&E**

Trees, Trees, We need lots and lots of trees. The P&E has a large lumber operation and that means trees. There are thousands of trees on the RVMRC layout and we still need thousands more. (gotta keep those sawmills busy!) While we do have some commercial trees, most of the forest has been made by members of the club. The club has had several training sessions which show our members how to make trees. It is a fairly straight forward process and, with a little practice, one can make a good looking tree fairly quickly. This article discusses how our miniature arborists fashion trees from a surprising variety of materials.

Lets start with the Conifers. Most of the trees on the layout are in the Cascade mountain areas and this means Fir, Pine and Cedar. They are made in a similar manner, the main differences are how they are 'trimmed' and the color of the final foliage materials.

We start with pieces of furnace filter cut into squares  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches on a side . The smaller pieces are used near the top of the tree. These are trimmed into circular shapes (Figure 1).then they are placed on a round dowel, skewer or tooth pick which has been painted grey brown (Figure 2).



Next each of the pieces is carefully pulled apart to form a stretched version. You want to achieve an open arrangement of branches and the stretched pieces should merge into a single arrangement of 'branches' (Figure 3). You do not want the branches to be too uniform. Some clumping should be visible. At this point you should glue the filter material to the 'trunk' using a thick formula superglue.

After the glue has dried, its time to cut out chunks of the filter material to make the branches less regular. Typically one would make cuts towards the center, taking out small "v"s" of material. Depending on the species, the top must also be trimmed to match the typical profile for the desired species. Firs and Cedars are more pointed on top. Pines are slightly rounded.

Take pictures of the trees you are attempting to model and let them be your guide. The next step is to paint the filter

material; grey for firs and pines, brown for cedars. After the material has been painted (and the paint is still wet), sprinkle ground foam material on the branches. The color of foam used depends on the tree type. In most cases, several different shades of foam on used on the same tree to get the correct mix. Before each subsequent layer of foam, the tree is sprayed with a spray adhesive or clear coating. Figure 4 shows a typical fir.





Figure 5 shows a fir and a cedar. The cedar has 5 different layers of colored foam. The key is to look at the real trees and try to match the different shades. The time of day and the season will also affect how the trees look. Trees on a north facing slope will typically be in a cooler wetter environment which will affect their colors. Experiment with different colors of ground foam. It will take several layers to get some depth in the coloring. You can always cover up a color you don't like. Having a good set of pictures to guide your tree building will be a big help.

Figures 6 & 7 show scenes on the RVMRC near Butte Falls which contains many trees made using the same techniques; but look quite different.

Give it a try. With a little practice you'll be able to make a forest. Those first attempts, which may not be as good as your later examples, can be used as background trees. A little distance hides a multitude of sins.





## Members of the Salem Club Come to Operate on the P&E

Six members of the Salem Model Railroad Club, (Rod Loderr, Gene Neville, Jerry Boudreaux, Mike Yoakum, Bob Sanchez & Chuck Clark) visited the P&E on Feb 28 and March 1. Thursday night was an orientation and introduction to the layout and Friday was a 'Op till you drop' session. Bruce Petty and John Signore joined the fun on Friday. Our



visitors quickly got into the challenges of the layout and were moving freight under the watchful eye of the P&E dispatcher. The brave souls who signed up for the yards at Medford and Klamath Falls had their hands full, but they kept the mains open and the traffic flowing. The RVMRC members acted as coaches and guides.



Our dispatcher was very busy.



There's a train up there, somewhere



Just like old times



Did you see that bus move!!

## RAILROAD TIME CARDS 2013

**Mar 8<sup>th</sup>** – “*Shasta Division Railroading*”, Bruce Petty. Second Friday Ashland Historic Railroad Museum program at the Ashland Public Library’s Gresham Room. Program starts at 6:30 pm.

**Mar 9<sup>th</sup>** – Willamette Model Railroad Club Swap Meet, Kleiver Armory, 1000 NE 33<sup>rd</sup> Drive, Portland, Oregon. 10 AM – 3 PM. Info: 503-723-7323 or [wmrswapmeet@yahoo.com](mailto:wmrswapmeet@yahoo.com)

**Mar 9<sup>th</sup>** – Winterail 2013, Stockton, Calif. Saturday, 9 AM – 10 PM. Info: [http://www.winterail.com/Winterail\\_News.html](http://www.winterail.com/Winterail_News.html)

**Mar 23<sup>rd</sup>** – 1<sup>st</sup> Division PNR Mini-Meet, 2555 Lansdown Road, Eugene, Oregon. Meet starting at 9 AM, clinics on tree building techniques, model contest and layout tours. For more details, check in on 1<sup>st</sup> Division web site at <http://pnr.nmra.org/1div/> or call Rich Pitter 541-636-3833 [richpitter@aol.com](mailto:richpitter@aol.com)

**Apr 12<sup>th</sup>** – “*Honored Rest: When Young Boys go to War*”, by Bill Miller. Second Friday Ashland Historic Railroad Museum program at the Ashland Public Library’s Gresham Room. Program starts at 6:30 pm.

**Apr 13 - 14** – 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Model Railroad Swap Meet & Train Show, Willamette Cascade Model RR Club, Lane County Fairgrounds, Eugene, Ore. Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4. Info: Lee & Diane Temple, 541-954-4917 or 541-225-7394, [ttanddt@ram-mail.com](mailto:ttanddt@ram-mail.com)

**May 10<sup>th</sup>** – “*Pedaling History: Women & Bicycles in Jackson*” by Amy Drake, SOHS. Second Friday Ashland Historic Railroad Museum program at the Ashland Public Library’s Gresham Room. Program starts at 6:30 pm.

**May 11<sup>th</sup>** – National Train Day, Ashland Historic Railroad Museum events TBA. Info:

<http://www.nationaltrainday.com/>

*National Train Day marks the 143<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the creation of the nation's first transcontinental railroad. On May 10, 1869, in Promontory Summit, Utah, the 'golden spike' was driven into the final tie that joined 1,776 miles of the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railways, forever transforming the face and character of America.*

**June ?** – ESPEE in Oregon Annual Convention, in an Oregon city. In early planning stages - check in on <http://espee-in-oregon.com/cinformation.html>

**June 7 - 8** – Dunsmuir Railroad Days 2013 – Info: <http://www.dunsmuirrailroaddays.org/>

**Jun 26 – 30** – Snake River Special, PNR/NMRA Regional Convention, THE BOISE HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER, Boise, Idaho. Info: <http://pnr.nmra.org/3div/2013.html>

Looking ahead:

**Aug 23-29, 2015** – 2015 NMRA National Convention, Portland, Oregon. Double Tree by Hilton Hotel Portland. More info at <http://www.nmra2015portland.org/>

**Aug 28–30, 2015** - National Train Show, held in conjunction with the convention, held at the Portland Expo Center.

(03/03/2013 mar PT)