

## in this issue >>>

- >> *Difference Between Scale and Gauge*
- >> *Member Highlight - Reid Wenger*
- >> *How are the Trains Controlled*
- >> *Club Calendar*
- >> *Christmas Train Show*
- >> *President's Message*



Issue  
**ONE**

Quarterly Insight into the Magic Valley Model Railroaders

January 2023 Edition

# On The Rails



## Who We Are

### Magic Valley Model Railroaders

The Magic Valley Model Railroaders is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization housed in the Railroad Building on the Twin Falls County Fairgrounds. The club officially moved from a house-to-house model railroaders club to the fairgrounds in 1989 at the request of the then fair manager Cindy Demoney. We have grown into four active model railroads, G, O, HO and N scales. The club is comprised of volunteers who put in hours of work and funds to keep the trains moving.

Drop by the third Saturday of the month at noon to enjoy the trains, scenery and realism of the model railroads. And if you have a train you would like to run on one of our layouts, bring it out and give it a run on the rails.

Information about how we operate and an application can be found on our website at [www.mvmrr.com](http://www.mvmrr.com).

If you would like further information, you can email us at [mvmmodelrailroaders@gmail.com](mailto:mvmmodelrailroaders@gmail.com).

## Difference Between Scale and Gauge

A railroad "gauge" usually denotes the track size whereas "scale," on the other hand, measures the size relationship between a model train and its real-world train prototype.

**G Scale - 1:24-1:32, Gauge 1.75"**. G has recently emigrated from Europe, this scale is often used in gardens. G scale was introduced by the German company, Ernst Paul Lehmann Patentwerk, under the brand, Lehmann Gross Bahn (LGB) in 1968.

**N Scale - 1:148-1:160, Gauge - 0.354"**. The "N" is the short form of 9-millimeter. In N scale 2mm is approximately 1 foot. N scale is the second most popular scale worldwide. Many modelers select N scale because it allows more complex layouts to be built in a very small area.

**O Scale - 1:48, Gauge 1.25"**. Marklin originated the O scale around 1900, O scale was called Zero scale in its starting phase, as it was a step down from 1 scale. From the 1920s until after World War II, O scale dominated the model train market. As model trains became more affordable for the common people, the space required to set up the tracks became a major consideration in purchasing model railroad trains.

**HO Scale - 1:87, Gauge - 0.649"**. HO scale first appeared after WWI to respond to the need for a scale smaller than O scale and more suitable for home layouts. As interest in toy trains declined in the 1950's, manufacturers responded to the hobbyist demand for accuracy and realism in model trains. HO scale is by nature more delicate than O scale, its smaller size allows modelers to fit more details and more scale miles into a comparable area.

So, what makes them run?

# How the Trains are Controlled

One of the means by which we control some of the trains is DCC or Digital Command Control. When equipped with Digital Command Control, locomotives on the same electrical section of track can be independently controlled. The digital command control system was developed (under contract by Lenz Elektronik GmbH of Germany) in the 1980s for two German model railway manufacturers, Märklin and Arnold.

A DCC system consists of power supplies, command stations, boosters, throttles and decoders.

The DCC command station creates the digital packet using data from a throttle. The digital packet contains the decoder's address, instructions and an error byte to check the validity of the packet.

Many command stations are integrated with an amplifier (booster) which, in combination with its power supply, modulates the voltage on the track to encode digital messages while providing electric power. For large systems additional boosters may be employed to provide extra power.

Each locomotive is equipped with an individually addressed multifunction DCC decoder that takes the signal from the track, processes and acts on the instructions. Decoders can also control functions such as lights, smoke generators, and sound generators.

In our next newsletter we will look at the Lionel O Scale Trainmaster Command Control (TMCC).



## When the Crossing Lights are Flashing....

When the crossing light by the caboose are flashing, someone is in the building running trains. Come on in and see what is going on. There is never an admission charge to watch the trains. We are here for the enjoyment of the Magic Valley communities. Who knows, you might find something interesting.



## Hidden Railroad

*There is another layout that is rarely seen. That's the one on the east side of the building behind the grey tarp wall. Due to its size, G Scale is outside the building. Someday we hope to be able to change that to where we can remove the wall to share the largest train scale we have running anytime not just during the fair. In order to do that we must revamp the canvas wall to allow for it to be removed easier. As funds are available, rollup doors will be installed.*

## Events >>>

# 2022 Christmas Train Show

*Saturday, December 10, 2022 was a beautiful day for a train show. All the layouts inside were up and running, well almost.*

Unbeknownst to the attendees, the N Scale was in complete shutdown just two hours prior to the start. A frantic search of the layout found two display locomotives depicting the Golden Spike to be the culprits and had shorted the entire N Scale layout.

We were blessed with between 700 and 800 attendees. Santa found his way to the club and visited with everyone handing out candy canes.

Thanks to all for coming out and visiting with us. To see more pictures of the Train Show, go to our web site.



# Meet Reid Wenger, O Scale

One of the 16 members of our club is Reid Wenger. Even though he never runs any of his own trains at the club, Reid is a great example of what members can do. If you come by on a work day, you will always find a hot pot of coffee ready due to Reid taking care of the members. And after the coffee is ready, you may find Reid cleaning the floors of the black marks and whatever else has been tracked in from the outside. Warmer weather will find him outside declaring war on all weeds by pulling them out to keep the area looking good. But yet, when it is time to “show off the trains”, you will find him throttle in hand working with another O Scale volunteer making sure the trains arrive or depart on cue from the conductor as the kids and brave adults announcing trains at the O Scale depot. Reid is the perfect example that you don't have to run your own train to be part of the greatest model train show in the Magic Valley. Thanks, Reid, for being part of the Train Team.



Reid, on the right, with Tom working on the O Scale layout.

To join Reid as a member of the Magic Valley Model Railroaders, you can go to our web site at [www.mvmrr.com](http://www.mvmrr.com) and click on “Application”.

The Club exists both for the enjoyment of the hobby of model railroading by its members a place to run trains and for providing service to the community by presenting the concepts of railroad history and operations in an educational and entertaining manner.

Magic Valley Model Railroaders is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is governed by by-laws. A copy of the by-laws is available on our web site. The building is appropriately located next to the railroad caboose. There are four model train scale layouts. Inside of the building is N, HO and O. Outside is the G scale.

Membership is based on the desire to be a part of the club.

**Want a special train visit? >>>**

*If you are a school, club or other organization and would like a special visit, please email us or call us.*

If your group would like to come out at a time other than when we are normally open, please let us know. We will do our best to accommodate you. Send us an email telling us who you are, the date and time you would like to visit, how many would be visiting. In the case of youth groups, we expect the group to have sufficient adults to monitor the youth. Due to some of the volunteers living away, we ask at least ten people in a group and three days' notice for a visit.



## Do I have to own a train to join?

*The straight answer for that is NO. Our club has a limited number of trains you can run. Besides, not everyone who is a member runs trains. Some may build scenery or provide electronics support.*



## What's coming up?

Below is our calendar as of the day this newsletter was published.

**Saturday, January 21 – Club Meeting at 11 and Open House from noon until 3, Fairgrounds**

**Saturday, February 11 – Club Meeting at 11 and Open House from noon until 3, Fairgrounds**

**Saturday, March 11 – Club Meeting at 11 and Open House from noon until 3, Fairgrounds**

**Saturday, April 8 – Club Meeting at 11 and Open House from noon until 3, Fairgrounds**

We are attempting to open the doors to the public more often. Working with the fair staff, we will track activities going on at the fairgrounds and try to have volunteers available to run trains on the day of the event.

To get updates as the calendar changes, email us that you would like to be added to our email list.



# finalthoughts...

*From Marvin Barnes, President, Magic Valley Model Railroaders*

We who volunteer at the Railroad building get asked many times during the county fair, how long does it take for us to set up the trains? The truth is nothing is ever taken down. Maybe I should clarify that. Most of the actual trains that run are owned by club members so they may take them home if they aren't planning on running them for a while. But about the only layout setup is cleaning the track and scenery, moving parts of the layouts around, finishing up a mountain or maybe creating another scene on one of the layouts.

Visitors are surprised how much time is spent working on the layouts. For example, the large mountain on the HO layout with the fire took about a month by a retired member to complete. Some of us still work at regular jobs and some are retired or semi-retired so we get an hour here and an hour there. No matter our job status, we seem to find time to come out and "play" with the trains. If you have an interest to run trains or maybe just work on scenery, come out and "play" with us and the trains.



coming up>>>

## *In The Next Issue*

*The N Scale Move from Oregon*

*Meet Connor Oslie, N Scale*

*German Prisoners of War in the Railroad Building*

*How is the sound created in the trains?*



**Magic Valley Model Railroaders**  
**215 Fair Avenue, Filer, ID 83328**  
**www.mvmrr.com**  
**208-934-7787**

## **Can You Help Us?**

We are asking you to help us keep model railroading alive and running in the Magic Valley. We are very blessed to have the Railroad Building to build layouts and run trains thanks to the Twin Falls County Fair Board. Financial support comes primarily from our members who have contributed over \$8,100 this year alone. They have also put in over 4,300 hours of their time building and maintaining layouts and keeping the trains running.

This is where we could use your help. Several of the locomotives are old and need replacing. The average new G Scale locomotive costs over five hundred dollars. In addition, as we upgrade the layout with the great mountains, city-scenes, etc., we attempt to use materials we find locally; dirt, sand, dead weeds for trees, wire sheathing for culverts and the list goes on but on occasion we must purchase items. If you or your organization is able to help us, please visit our donation page at: [www.mvmrr.com/donate](http://www.mvmrr.com/donate).

**When the crossing lights are flashing, trains are running. Come on in!!**

