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Quarterly Insight into the Magic Valley Model Railroaders – April 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 Country 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 second 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.

If you would like further information, you can email us at mvmmodelrailroaders@gmail.com.

So, what do you do when someone asks if you want a layout?

"Oh, you guys are with the Magic Valley Model Railroaders? We have a layout in Canyon City, Oregon we could give you."

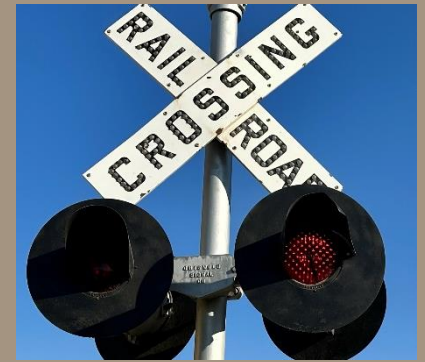
And that is exactly how it started back in February of 2022. Several members of our club were attending a model railroad show in Boise when Everett King, the surviving member of the OWL (Oregon Western Line) model railroading club in Canyon City, Oregon approached them. The club there had dwindled to nothing and the layout had been sitting idle for a period of time. Marvin, Connor, Kerley and Kathy departed for a visit in late February 2022 and returned with pictures and video of the layout. The OWL layout measured 18' x 43' which was probably three times the size of the then current N Scale here. Upon approval from the N Scale group, Marvin, Kathy and Kerley headed for Oregon City one Friday morning mid-March and on the following Monday Connor headed over with a 28-foot U-Haul truck. Coupled with the 17-foot trailer they took over on Friday, OWL was packed up and brought to the Magic Valley. After modifying the layout plans to fit our 23-foot by 35-foot space, work began in putting it all back together. The layout and new helixes were ready to run trains the middle of August in time for the 2022 Twin Falls County Fair.

We estimate that members put in over 1,500 hours putting it all back together. Members also donated over \$5,675 in materials and cash. We were blessed with donations from outside the club in the amount of \$825.00.

During the fair and the 2022 Christmas Show many people commented on the new N Scale and how great it looks. From the Helixes to the Perrine Bridge area and even the mountain with motel and campgrounds sitting at the base, it is coming together. For the Christmas Show we even had Santa's workshop and elf dorms on display.

Even if you are not an N Scale or even really into model railroads, come by and check out all the great work and effort put into moving the Oregon Western Line from Oregon to the Magic Valley.

So, what are all the sizes of model railroads?



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.



G Scale scenery building

History of the Railroad Building

Twin Falls County Railroad Building

Prior to the building we currently occupy, we were in a wooden building. It was determined the building was falling apart as the building was falling apart. The interesting part of our building is not the new but the history of the old wooden building. So, what if we were to tell you that during WWII, the mid 40's, the old wooden railroad building was a dining hall for German Prisoners of War

And that is exactly what it was. According to the History of the Twin Falls County Fair Grounds, approximately 150 German Prisoners of War were housed in a wooden building next door where the Ag Building now stands. They ate in a dining hall, our old building. Across the street on top of what now is the Rabbit Building was the lookout/gun tower. The men were transported daily by trucks to nearby farms to perform jobs that normally were done by the men of the farm who were off to war in Germany or other parts of Europe. The POWs were paid, fed and housed as opposed to being tortured or killed. The men came from Camp Rupert where thousands of POWs were housed. At it's peak, Camp Rupert housed 3,000 prisoners.



Camp Rupert dining hall for the German POWs. Approximately 150 were housed at the Twin Falls Country Fair Grounds.

So, when is the G scale going to run?

The problem with running the G scale is the weather and security. Even though the G scale is designed to run outside, it seems humans are not as resilient. Another problem is securing the layout. We have had vandalization that taught us to lock it up when we are not around. We are working on a solution that will allow it to be opened up in an easier fashion than is currently used and then you will see the "big" scale run more often.

Meet Connor Oslie, N Scale

If you heard Connor speaking at work it would be something like this: “November 3154, runway 26, cleared for takeoff, winds 270 at 12.” Not quite what an engineer would say huh. Fulltime, Connor is an air traffic controller at Joslin Field here in Twin. Off duty he is an avid N Scaler. His personal rolling stock count is above 700 units and 30 engines both steam and diesel. Connor was instrumental in the acquisition and rebuilding of the Oregon Western Lines layout we replaced our old N scale layout with. The entire helix idea and making it a reality was due to Connor. One thing that will tell you Connor is in the house is if you see a train that is long, very long. At one point on the old layout, he put together his “coal” train of 85 cars. We are yet to see that consist climb the helix but we know that won’t be far into the future. Connor continually shares his knowledge and talents with all club members no matter what scale they work. Thanks Connor, for joining our merry band of train buffs.



Connor and Maci as they “topped out” the east helix.

To join Connor as a member of the magic Valley Model Railroaders, you can go to our web site at www.mvmrr.com and click on “Application”.

The Club exists both for the enjoyment of the hobby of model railroading by its members as 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. Being part of the club would include an active involvement in one or more of the scale areas.

*Don't own a train?
Come on out.*

You don't have to own a train to be a member. 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, April 8 – Club Meeting at 11 and Open House from noon until 3, Fairgrounds

Saturday, May 13 – Club Meeting at 11 and Open House from noon until 3, Fairgrounds

Saturday, June 10 – Club Meeting at 11 and Open House from noon until 3, Fairgrounds

June 21 – 24 – Gordy's Hiway 30 Music Fest. Trains running from 11 until 3 each day.

Saturday, July 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.

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 at info@mvmmodelrailroaders.com 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.

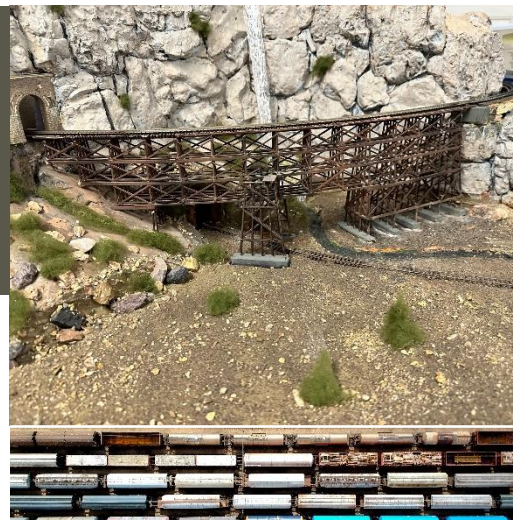


finalthoughts...

From Marvin Barnes, President, Magic Valley Model Railroaders

We are well into 2023. Changes are happening on all scales. G Scale is in the process of going to digital command and control. This means no more cords to tether the engineer as he or she runs the train. O Scale is struggling to find an operating system in distribution system. Prior to this Tom Upchurch has been loaning us his O Scale operating system. HO will be finishing up the upper run which will put the logging mountain in the loop so to say. Trains will be able to transfer between loops. In addition, the Allison Mill has been donated to the Twin Falls County Museum.

The N Scale will be rebuilding the northwest area known as the “elephant” due to its size when we brought it from Oregon. One of the grades was very steep for N Scale and a curve or two was almost impassable due to the new locomotives and rolling stock length. All of this is only possible due to the raffle at the fair and donations we have received from members and non-members. For those who have helped us, we say thank you. As a side note, the hours we are reporting in another article are only from April on when we started keeping track of hours.



coming up>>>

In The Next Issue

Meet Tom Upchurch, O Scale

Lionel's Trainmaster Command Control

How is the sound created in the trains?



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

Will 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.

