



# CENTRAL CROSSINGS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE  
CENTRAL RAILWAY MODEL & HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

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## FROM THE EDITORS:

Here we are, mid October. The month that wraps with a night of Tricks and Treats, costumes, scary stories and plenty of goodies.

In this issue of Central Crossings, we are going to flow with the season, but we are going to focus on a treat for our readers.

Join us as we pay a visit to long time member Bob Folsom and his wonderful home layout. Many members of the CRM know this layout well, as many have helped with the various aspects of construction over the years, and of course we can't leave out the many operating sessions Bob has opened his home for over the years.

Earlier this month, I had the chance to get over to Bob's for an operating session to see the layout in action and ask Bob some questions about it and his history in the hobby.

Imagine my surprise when I arrived, and Bob wasn't even there. He was at the CRM working on the Museum's projects. The nerve right? I come all the way over to see him and he felt it was more important to be at the Club. That just shows his dedication to the CRM and its visitors.

However, thanks to fill in engineer, Brandon Langston, I was able to get a lot of great shots of the layout and some modern equipment that was running that afternoon.

I hope that you all enjoy reading and seeing the photos as much as I have enjoyed putting this issue together.

~Wayne

15 Questions with Bob Folsom

1: What scale do you model and why did you choose it?

**HO – got started in it as a pre-teen and continued because there was more N&W equipment available.**

2: How big is your layout?

**Has a footprint of 23'x35' with a 2' aisle in the middle (approximately 750 sq. ft.). There are approximately 2000' of track. The mainline is an 1800' continuous run in a folded dogbone configuration. There are 145 powered switches and 68 manual switches. Included are 4 double-slips and 1 single-slip switches.**

3: What is the era or theme of your layout and why did you choose it?

**The theme of the layout is the Norfolk & Western Railway circa 1954. I picked that location because of the scenery, the railroad because of its locomotives, and the era because of type of equipment being operated at that time.**

4: What started you in the hobby of Model Railroading?

**My father had built an O-gauge layout around 3 walls of my bedroom when I was a child, and later started an HO layout.**

5: How many layouts or major design changes have you constructed over the years?

**I started with a simple oval on a 4x8 sheet of plywood when I was 12, then expanded several times. In my 20's I tore down what I had before and started over with an around –the-basement-walls layout with hand-laid track and scratch-built switches. Then I got married and tore that layout down, and was not active in the hobby for the next 20 years. I then found time to start a new layout which occupied a large part of the basement around the walls. When I moved to the South in 1993, I started a new layout designed especially for the house I moved into. It occupied a basement 30'x60', mostly around the walls. After my wife passed, I moved to my present location and built essentially the same track plan, but free-standing instead of around the walls. This is the best layout I have ever had.**

6: Rumor has it you were a band director, what level and where at?

**I started my teaching career as a band director, at first implementing entire programs grades 4-12. Later, I had just a high school program, altogether 21 years in band directing. Later I taught high school algebra and geometry. I was a semi-professional musician, playing the oboe in community and college bands and orchestras, and occasionally as a soloist.**

15 Questions with Bob Folsom (Continued)

7: What is your favorite aspect of model railroading?

**Building track**

8: What is your least favorite?

**Scenery!**

9: What has been your favorite railfanning trip?

**Riding behind the 611 in the 1980's on the Nickle Plate between Chicago and Fort Wayne**

10: What is your favorite thing to do when not railroading?

**Lately, it has been watching Netflix! I do enjoy taking short trips occasionally.**

11: What led you to join and stay active in the CRM?

**I joined in 1993 just after the club was formed because I had worn some N&W apparel to the Central Railroad Festival that year. Ed Painter saw me and invited me to join**

12: What has been the toughest challenge of having a home layout?

**THE SCENERY!**

13: What has been the easiest challenge or nicest part?

**Easiest part was building the benchwork. The nicest part was kit-bashing models of unique N&W passenger equipment.**

14: If you had to do one thing over on your layout, what would it be and why?

**I might have opted for some better electrical components such as toggles if I had better information about quality. I think I need to improve the layout lighting. I did what seemed the best at the time. In fact, most of the layout has exceeded my expectations!**

15: Do you have any advice for other model railroaders?

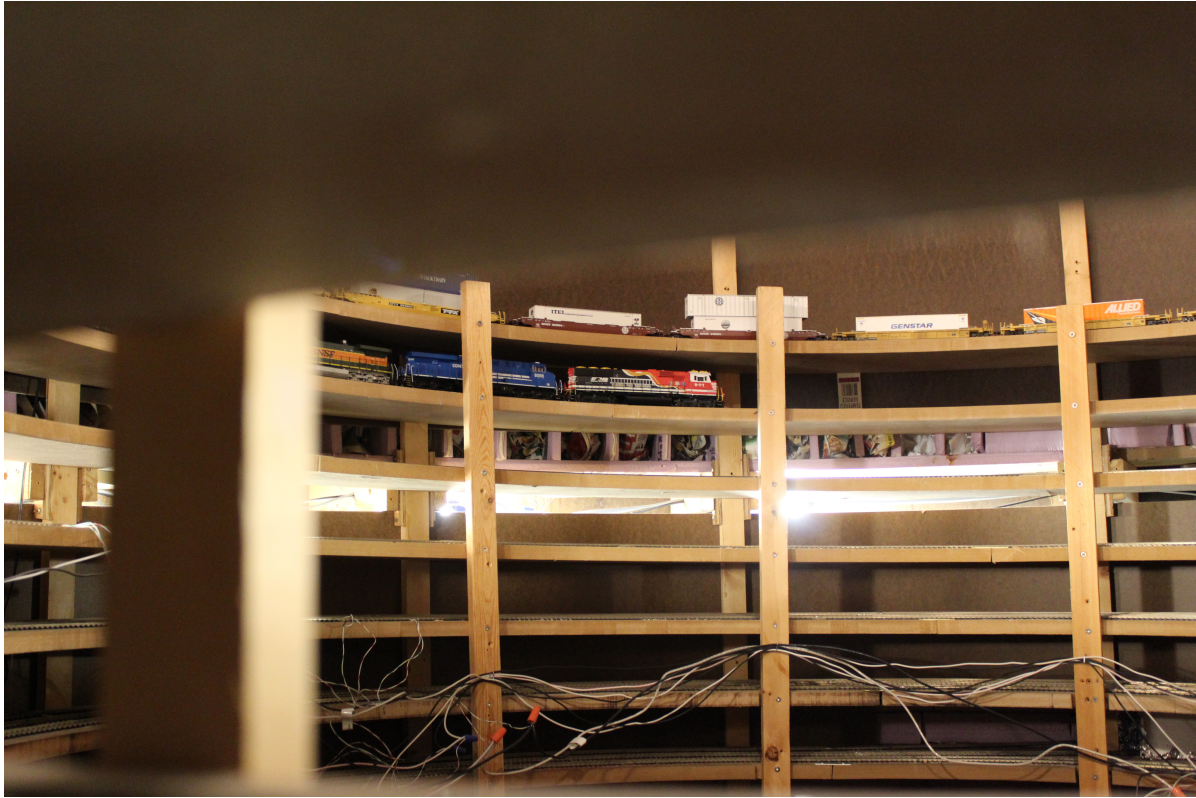
**KISS! A project this size needs plenty of maintenance, probably because I am next to some railroad tracks. I'm quite sure the vibration of passing trains causes soldered joints to break, not to mention the contraction and expansion of such large stretches of track and supporting materials.**



This is probably my favorite location on the layout. The scenery is amazing, but let's face it, that bridge and the shots taken with it are mind blowing.



Catching NS 9-1-1 as well as 2 NS Heritage units in the same lash up is pretty much impossible in the real world, but in our miniature worlds, anything is possible.



In the 15 questions section, Bob gave us the low down on the amount of trackage that he has, but he didn't mention the 2 helix's that are built into the ends of the loops. These things are huge and cover a lot of vertical height.



A shot of the second helix, although, this is the top half of the helix. This side leads into the second level, as well as over head staging yards.



Above the over head staging, with about 24 inches of clearance.



An over head shot of the first helix, the big bridge area and the branch line leading to the mine.



Many of the scenes that are on Bob's layout  
Have been built by members of the CRM,  
as well as other friends.



Bob has a beautiful collection of period steam locomotives  
that he uses to pull various freight and passenger trains.  
However, he does let equipment from various owners and  
periods run on the layout. His main thing is fun during  
operating sessions.

Even though the layout is set in 1954, it is possible to  
catch a time traveler or two and see some modern  
locomotives pulling a inter-modal train or pulling a long  
string of freight cars to some far off destination.



I really hope that you all have enjoyed this brief look at Bob Folsom's personal layout and the interview with him. When I say brief, I mean it. I have so many photos that it was really tough to pick a limited amount for this issue. Who knows, maybe I will post some of them in a follow up some day.

Bob's layout is a work in progress, as are most layouts. I have never seen a model railroad that the owner said they were finished with it. With scenery to work on, and new track that he is planning to install, I am sure this will give him and all the others that help out on it years of enjoyment.

One last photo, and this issue will be a wrap.

Wayne...



Soon, we will all be wishing we were by the beach.....