

The CRM&HA Newsletter

September/October 2002

Dennis Moriarty/Editor

Volume 11 Number 5

Meetings are held at 7:30 PM on the 1st Thursday of the month at the Central SC Library

Editorial By Dennis Moriarty

I want to thank **Bob Folsom** and --- for providing their home for our picnic. We had a great time eating and there was a lot of activity running trains on Bob's large lay out. Those of you that couldn't go missed a great time.

Inside/Out. I am going to include synopsis's from some previous newsletter articles again this month for the benefit of the new members. The electrical series will continue in a future newsletter.

Please support the newsletter by submitting articles, news and or information. If you don't wish to write please give me a phone call. E-Mail, copy on disk and written contributions are most appreciated. My address is Dennis Moriarty, 519 Beacon Shores Drive, Seneca, SC 29672. Phone 864-888-2332. E-Mail MQK @ carol.net.

If you received a snail mail issue of the newsletter and have an E-Mail address, please send your E-Mail address to me.

Thank you! --- for your newsletter contributions this month.

Club Layout Needs a New Home

The layout was moved to an outdoor storage facility. If anyone has room in their basement or other part of their house for all or part of the layout, and would be willing to have the layout set up or stored there between uses please let Bob Folsom know. (654-8244)



CEO's Corner PRESIDENT'S REPORT By Bob Folsom (also HO Division Super)

HO DIVISION REPORT By Bob Folsom

CRM&HA Minutes

CRM&HA Minutes

CRM&HA Minutes – August 1, 2002

Call to Order
Mac McMillan, substituting for CEO **Bob Folsom**, called the meeting to order at 7:33 PM at the Central Library. *Twelve* members were in attendance. No new members or guests were at this meeting.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from last meeting were approved with the following corrections:

The club **does not** own a rail car. Reference at the previous meeting was probably either to Mac McMillan's car or the one owned by the Greenville NMRA Chapter. Also, requirements for use of railcars on railroad right-of-ways are extensive and large roads such as the NS rarely allow the use of such cars.

Treasurer's Report

Same as last month's. Amount in Treasury remains \$7404.35.

Newsletter and Website

Dennis would like information for next newsletter by August 12; August 15 at the latest.

Business in Progress

Michael Childress said he would look into taking responsibility for updating the Website. The following are assigned upcoming programs:

September – Richard Nichols

October – Rodney Cowen

November – Clark Reed

The 2003 train show is now scheduled for March 15, 2003. Location will be the Seneca armory. The Secretary will contact Bob Hanson about making arrangements.

Some discussion ensued over the use of former mobile classrooms for a future club headquarters. Richard will investigate the cost and feasibility. In discussion of the possible future purchase of real estate, Howard noted that the organization is set up as two entities: the IRS recognizes the one organization as non-profit; the other is incorporated.

Howard will have an open house to display his layout on December 7. Richard indicated that would like to have an open house sometime early next year.

New Business

None

Division Reports

N Gauge

Rob Seel is beginning a 3' x 6'8" layout with an Appalachian theme. The layout will be portable.

HO Gauge

No report.

Railfan Reports

Some discussion ensued over the recent Amtrak train derailment in Kensington, MD. Comments indicated that the problem occurs as the result of large temperature changes. More ballast may be needed on curves to prevent rail movement. Amtrak seems to have had an unusually large number of this type of incident particularly on CSX track. Amtrak does not have enough money to repair the damaged cars.

Some theories were presented over the justification for track upgrading on the Seneca to West Union NS branch. It might be driven by the future needs of Duke Power. Or perhaps, as an accounting method to justify future abandonment.

Mac mentioned that the Bryson City, NC Railfest is coming up on September 13, 14 and 15. Among other activities, motor cars will be on display and a demonstration of the installation and alignment of track will be given.

Hobby News

Howard mentioned that he has twenty-six box cars under construction along with 7 powered locomotives.

Adjournment

The formal part of this meeting adjourned at approximately 7:25 PM. The next meeting will be September 5, 2003 at the Central Library. After a five minute break a video provided by Bob Folsom on the story of America's railroads was presented. Also on display was an HO scenic module display built by Michael Childress.

Don Rumer

Secretary/Stationmaster

Why I model the Virginia & Truckee Railroad

By Michael Childress

The Virginia & Truckee Railroad is arguably the most famous of all western short lines and one of the most common themes of model railroads. So why would I want to model the V&T? Is it because it was one of the most glamorous railroads during the most glamorous railroad era? Is it because it traversed the rugged and starkly beautiful terrain of the Great Basin Desert? Is it because it lives on today in the great railroad museums of North America and as a revived tourist attraction running from Gold Hill to Virginia City. No, the reason is that I am fundamentally lazy.

I like having dozens of books with hundreds of pictures of every detail from harp switch stands to square water towers with dual spouts. I like being able to buy factory lettered motive power and rolling stock right off the shelf.

I like seeing yet another article on yet another model of the V&T in every model railroad magazine. I like having access to entire web pages and discussion groups of dedicated V&T fans. It makes learning about, researching and understanding the motivation for my railroad very easy.

Doesn't it bother me that everyone else is modeling the V&T and doing it much better than I could ever hope to? Not at all. I love seeing how someone has tackled the problem of recreating something so well known while constrained by the limitations of space. As I said before, I'm fundamentally lazy, so I don't mind borrowing someone's idea for how to selectively compress the 11-engine Great Stone Fort down to something that will actually fit on my layout. Besides I'm much more into proto-freelanceing anyway so if it's not exactly like the prototype, who cares. If it captures that time period, that location and that feeling of grandeur, what more could I hope for.

Name:	Virginia & Truckee Railroad
Scale:	HO
Size:	12' X 16' (100' of mainline)
Prototype:	Proto-freelance
Locale:	Eastern Sierras to the Great Basin
Era:	1870-1885
Style:	Walk-in, folded dogbone loop
Track height:	40" to 48"
Benchwork:	Open grid, free standing, sectional
Roadbed:	Cork
Track:	Code 100 sectional and flex track
Min turnout:	no. 4
Min curve radius:	18"
Max grade:	3%
Scenery:	Plaster cloth over newspaper and foam
Control:	DC block, dual cab control

So where do I start? Here is a basic track plan that I have developed for a small home layout 12' X 16'. My layout constraints, like everyone else's, are (1) money, (2) space and (3) time. I have to rely on using a lot of materials left over from home improvement projects and yesterday's toys trains. This includes a lot of sectional code 100 track, cork roadbed, Atlas automated snap switches and ready-to-run analog motive power. My layout needs to be sectional, portable and free-standing in order to move from the two-car garage of our current rental home to a future home of our own.

48"

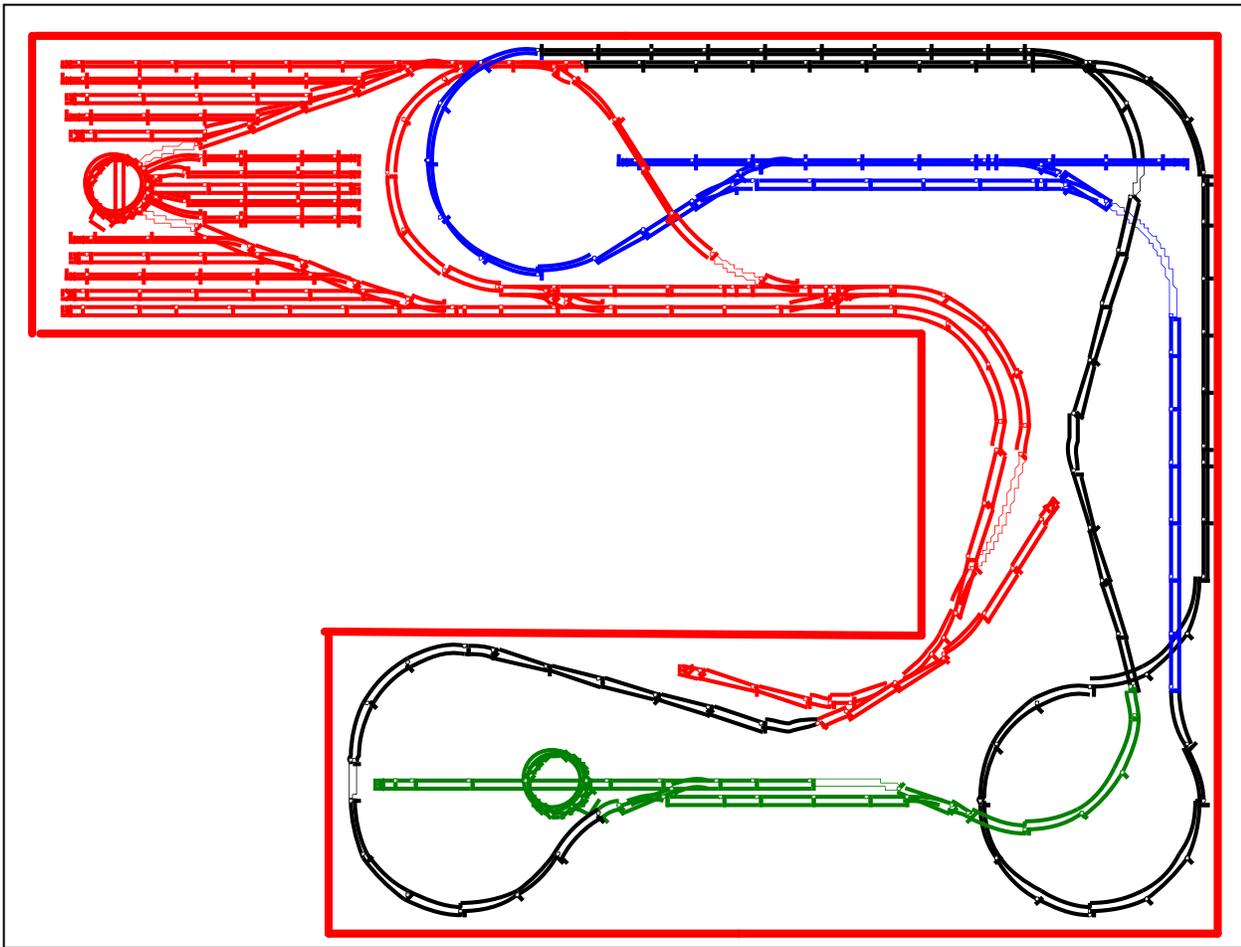
3

40"

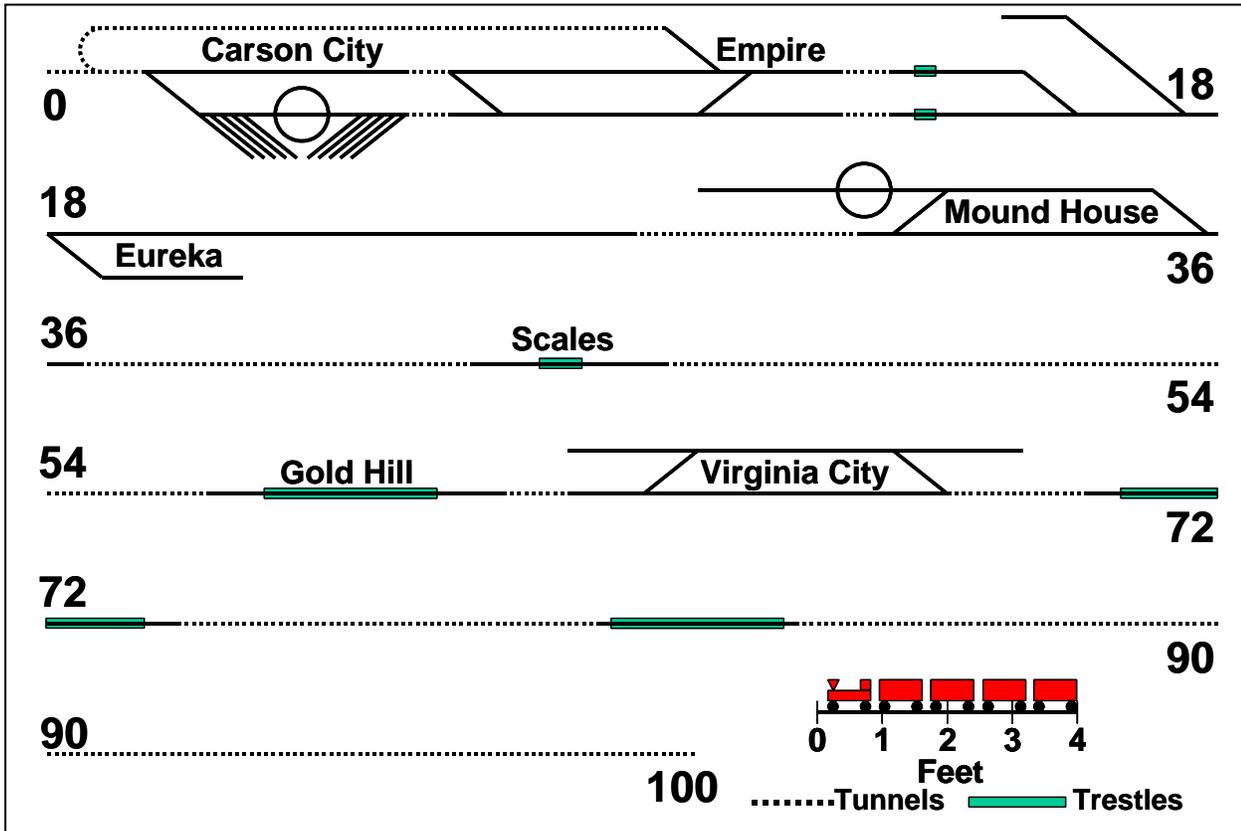
Gold Hill

48"

Virginia City



My operational goals are a modest 12 trains per day (2 trains at a time), eight freight and four passenger. Ore will move from the mines of Virginia City to the Mills of Empire. Timber will move by flume to Eureka and by flatcar to Virginia City. Gondolas, box, cattle and tank cars will shuttle supplies, equipment and livestock between Carson City, Mound House, Gold Hill and Virginia City. The presence of turntables allows for point-to-point operation in addition to the continuous loop and the reversing loop allows an entire train to be turned.



My scenery goals include (1) the dramatic transition from the sagebrush steppe to juniper and limber pine forest (2) tunnels, (3) trestles and (4) curves. Trains will operate on two levels (40" and 48") with a steep canyon slope between the levels. Structures should include mines, mills, sawmills, corrals, timber flume, engine house, depots, water tanks, stores, taverns, bank, firehouse, schoolhouse and opera house. The layout will be populated with miners, cowboys, teamsters, bankers and shopkeepers, as well as ore carts, stagecoaches, wagons, horses, mules and dogs.

The layout was developed using the *Atlas Right Track Freeware 5.0* CAD program. (It's FREE and you download it off the web). The layout design violates about every recommended minimum HO standard in John Armstrong's *Track Planning for Realistic Operation*. The small minimum radius (18") should be no problem for the early steam locos and rolling stock less than 45'. The 3% grade and 3" minimum height at track crossings are necessary evils of the small layout, but are quite prototypical. It is essential to leave the outside perimeter open for access given the extensive lengths of hidden track. However, the evil S-curves may be too much and could benefit from any suggestions you have about how to eliminate them. I am sure there are other design flaws that I have missed and would like to hear about.

I view this project as an advanced beginner's layout that I can complete in about 12 months. It's a giant leap up from my original oval loop toy train, but it's not going to be in the next issue of *Great Model Railroads* either. The entire layout is an opportunity for me to practice my modeling skills; soldering rails, detailing cars, scratch building structures; and learning some basics about train operation, wiring, lighting and scenery. I expect to make a lot of mistakes for that's the only way I know how to become a better modeler. Someday, when I do build that big basement empire maybe I can avoid some of the most severe ones. So that's why I model the Virginia & Truckee. It's the fastest, easiest, cheapest way to build my proto-freelance dream layout without having to give up being lazy.

Inside/Out
Some More Information from Past Articles
By Dennis Moriarty

9. Flat Mountains: When making the transition from the mountains to the foothills on my layout, the width of the top of the layout went from five feet

wide to 30 inches wide. The five feet width made for great mountains, almost as high as the room, but if I wanted to use the space in front of the foothills for buildings etc., the 30-inch width seemed hopeless except for painting the foothill mountains on the background. I held up some pieces of Hydrocal mountainside from an old layout against the wall and thought it looked much better than painting the wall. Some uprights of various heights were screwed to the layout along the back wall. A wide sheet of blue board with an irregular shaped top was screwed to the uprights. Several of the old pieces of mountainside were then hot glued up against the blue board. The spaces in between were filled with dry wall compound and some rock castings were added. This made a high realistic looking cliff from 1 to 6 inches thick. At the top paper was stuffed in the gaps and Hydrocal soaked paper towels was applied to blend the cliff to the irregular shaped blue board. Above this, background mountains were painted on the wall to give the cliff the optical illusion of depth. I am well pleased with the result, as the larger mountain does not stop abruptly as the scenery blends around the room.

I think it would have been easier to start from scratch in the workshop. In the future I will use a piece of 3/8 plywood cut to the shape of the back of the mountain. It will be about 6 feet or more wide and about 18 inches high. The top will be cut to represent mountain peaks. At the bottom I will screw a 1x6 at right angles to the plywood so when I set it on the layout I can screw it down to the frame and it will hold the plywood up against the wall. I will add a few stiffeners at the bottom to be sure the plywood remains vertical. I think a few short pieces of 2x4 screwed up from the bottom and through the back should work fine. The bottom support would not be necessary except that it is difficult to put vertical uprights against the wall now that the layout frame is in place. After this is made I will staple wadded up packing paper or newspaper to the piece of plywood making it thicker at the bottom than at the top. While it is still lying flat in the workroom, it will be covered with Hydrocal soaked paper towels. Rocks and small cliffs will be applied and after painting, dry brushing, and soaking with diluted ink, different colors of ground cover will be applied. The whole finished scene will then be carried to the layout and screwed in place.

10. **Cleaning Train Engine Wheels:** A simple but effect way to clean train engine wheels is to lay a piece of paper towel over the track. Soak the towel at the track with liquid track cleaner using a small paintbrush to apply the cleaner. Place the front half of the engine on the wet towel and the back half on the track for electrical contact.

With the power on, let the front wheels rotate and move back and forth on the towel. The cleaning fluid will make the wheels sparkle. Turn the engine around, move the paper towel to a clean area, reapply-cleaning fluid and do the other half. You can do it on the layout or use a board with about two feet of track attached at the workbench for this purpose. I use a toy train transformer with alligator clips attached to power the track. It really works.

11. **Quarries:** Sometimes it is desired to have a river canyon have the step look of a quarry. Many years ago rock walls were quarried along riverbanks so that the blocks of rock could be slid down the bank to the river. There they were loaded on barges or boats and taken to an unloading site near a road or railroad track. To achieve that look I laid up layers of blue board the saw has a drill bit on its end it can be used for cutting and shaping irregular sized holes as well as for regular sawing. After the riverbank steps were in place I covered the foam and ceiling tiles steps with drywall compound using rubber gloves and a brush. I am well pleased with the results. I also found that the backsides of ceiling tiles are very dense and flat. The tiles can be used for building platforms and sidewalls etc. where flat wood might also be used.

12. **Colors:** For me one of the most perplexing problems is selecting the color that I need for a part of the layout. What color should the buildings and houses be, the stations, sky, roads, grass, and even leaves. After deciding on the basic concept such as concrete or asphalt, summer/fall or winter colors, sky etc., the colors must be mixed to give the representation that is anticipated. This often takes much experimentation or requires the purchase of premixed paints or ground covers etc. I tend to use all of the above, but the majority of my painting projects start with flat white house paint. To this acrylic colors are added to blend the color that is wanted. If a large quantity of paint is required, such as a mountain scenery base coat, I have it mixed at the store. It takes a lot of experimenting. Wet paint that is mixed is usually lighter in color than when it is dry on the layout. Asphalt is not black, concrete is not white so it is fun to try to find a mixture that works properly. Experimentation is the only answer. I find that a little black and a little brown is needed for concrete and asphalt can be realistically represented with a black base coat rubbed with chalk powder to lighten it. "Dry brushing paint" can usually be mixed by adding white paint to the base coat paint. Working a layout is not a science but an

art. Everyone's layout is an expression of him or herself and color makes it even more difficult. For another example, I was trying to paint a mountain extension up on the wall. My walls are drywall and prepainted in shades of blue, darker at the top and lighter at the bottom to represent sky. The clouds were painted over the blue of course. I thought that I could use the same paint that I used for the base coat of my mountains painted over the blue to make the mountain appear larger. My base coat is a dark gray and when I painted the dark gray mountain on the dry blue sky it turned brown. I guess you have to be a trained artist to get the paint color correct the first time. Anyway don't be afraid to experiment. That is half the fun.

13. Bridge Abutments: Most layouts have several bridges crossing canyons, streams, lakes and over track and roads. I am modeling a more modern era where most of the bridge abutments (the support for the bridge structure) are made of concrete or stone. Many times the sides of the abutments are extended and flanged back on the sides with concrete walls to hold the earth from falling under the bridge. I looked back through several years of Model Railroader magazines to find ideas for these bridge supports. What I found was a surprise to me. Bridge supports are modeled in every way you can imagine. If you have a prototype to follow there will be no problem with selecting the design but if you are free lancing you can take your choice of about anything that works. Most of the abutments that I found are a single block of concrete about four feet thick. The sides are usually tapered from the about 1-foot from the side of the bridge to about 2 feet from the side at the ground level. The top is stepped. The front is lowered by the thickness of the bridge below the track and the bridge support expansion slides. The back half goes up to the bottom of the RR ties to keep the dirt from falling in. The side wings are about 1 to 2 feet thick and taper back from the support block. But each one is different depending on the situation or conditions of the bank. I found that the easiest way for me to model the abutments was to make them out of a piece of 2x4 lumber. It is about the right width for HO scale when the grain is up and down. The taper can be cut with a chop saw and the notch at the top can be cut with a band or hand saw. After painting with it flat gray latex house paint and weathering, it has the appearance of concrete. Plastic abutments can be purchased with block or stone facing. They can be cast in plaster and carved for a stone look. The point is there is no steadfast rule; on real railroads almost all of the abutments are different so design one that fits your layout.

14. High Speed Cut Off Wheels: High speed cut off disks are useful to use when cutting off track sections as the cut does not crimp or bend the end of the track. This allows the track connectors to slide on the end of the track without any filing. The cut off disk is also useful for cutting off plastic ties.

Most high speed cut off motors such as Dermal do not allow the cut off disk to cut straight up and down because the diameter of the motor is wider than the cut off disk. Always remember to cut the track with the motor on the side of the cut that is going to be on the layout. This makes the slight bevel to have the long side on top of the track so it will meet the next section of track. If you do it backwards there will be a Vee cut in the top of the track.

Electrical isolation gaps can be added to existing track by cutting through the track with the disk. The disks make a cut so thin that the train wheels cross with no problem. Some modelers like to fill the gap with plastic and glue but I don't find that it is necessary because the disks are so thin. When using flex or other commercial track always make the electrical isolation cut where there is a solid plastic connector from tie to tie under the track, this helps keep the track aligned. In this case the slight angle of the cut does not matter because both sides of the cut are at the same angle. If an electrical isolation joint is installed while laying the track, plastic track connectors can be purchased instead of the NS connectors.

For track work you want thin cuts so only use one cut off disk on the motor at a time. For other work around the shop it is helpful to use two disks stacked together because the cut off disks are very fragile and break easily. Using two at a time makes them stronger so they are not as easily broken.

Please remember to use your safety glasses while using high-speed tools.

15. Using Some Natural Materials on the Layout:

Trees

Using Crape-myrtle branches to make trees.

- A. Wait until February after the crape-myrtle branches and seedpods are dry. Some varieties and some different aged crape-myrtle make better trees so try to get some from your neighbors as well.
- B. Save the seedpod ends.
- C. Cut the ends apart to make miniature tree branches and trunks in one piece and save the small pieces for bushes.
- D. Hold the seed pods over a waste container and crush off with fingers or use scissors to cut the pods off.
- E. You can save the best ones for dead or winter trees with no leaves on them.

- F. Pull small amounts of polyfiber apart and spread over each miniature tree branch. A very small amount; the fiber should be thin and wispy.
- G. Spray with hair spray.
- H. While rotating the trunk with your fingers, sprinkle on blended or green turf grass.
- I. Highlight with a small amount of yellow grass on branch tips.
- J. For a more natural look use some fine iron ore and some lighter colored grass on parts of the tree.
- K. Drill a small hole and stick in the layout. Extra work can be done on the trunk with a little clay to fatten it up and makes roots for up front show trees. But this will probably not be necessary.

Using Nandena for tree trunk and branch material.

- A. Wait until spring to harvest the berry clumps off the Nandena bushes. The berries are now dry and are easy to pull off the branches. Discard the berries.
- B. Cut pieces off the clumps that look like little dead trees. You can get several off one berry clump.
- C. Spray the branches with hair spray and hold over a container of ground foam and sprinkle the ground foam over the branches.
- D. Spray again and apply a coat of grass particles which are available at the Hallmark Card Stores.
- E. Spray again and apply another layer of ground foam.
- F. The tree is finished and ready to plant.

Other

Many stores (like the Pottery in Commerce GA.) sell **treated** dried plant material, which can be used for trees and bushes. Suitable plant material can also be found in fields or along the road. However, neighborhood materials may have to be soaked with a glycerin solution to keep them from getting brittle when they dry out. See Below.

- A. The large wheat stalks can be cut to make small pine trees.
- B. A can of green spray paint can help the look.
- C. Other dried plant material can be cut bundled and sprayed with hair spray and turf.
- D. Natural sponges can be torn apart and sprayed green for bushes etc.

Moss and lichen

- A. Natural moss can be found in sunny spots that are covered with pine needles. You see a lot along side of the roads. And another form is found in the tops of trees. It can be obtained when a branch falls or a high wind and rain tears it loose. Keep your eyes open.
- B. Lichen is sold to hobbyists. This is usually treated and colored in the factory with various natural colors.

- C. Locally picked Moss will dry out and turn to dust if touched. Soaking the moss in a solution of glycerin and hand lotion can stop this problem. I use about 1 pint of glycerin and one to two bottles of hand lotion to a gallon of water. Glycerin can be obtained from the drug store. Use the cheapest hand lotion you can find. Most contain glycerin, aloe, lanolin and/or other like materials.
- D. Clean your moss in a 5-gallon bucket of water to get the dirt and pine needles out. Drain then soak in the glycerin/lotion solution a little while and set out on plastic to dry. The moss will hold a lot of the solution after you take the moss out, so you do not have to soak to long. Do a large quantity, as the glycerin/lotion solution does not keep well.
- E. After it dries you can spray paint it with a light touch of green paint and other natural colors.
- F. I passed around a piece of moss at the meeting that is over 4 years old to show that it is still soft.
- G. The moss looks nice as bushes and other plants but do not over do it. Pieces of weed and sticks etc. can be stuck in to make it look more like the real thing. You can attach moss with glue or double sticky tape.

Materials needed:

Woodland Scenics

Green Grass T45 Yellow Grass T43
 Green Blend T49 Ballast Iron Ore Fine B70
 Polyfiber Green FP178 Unscented Aqua Net
In addition to Grape-myrtle, Howard Garner suggested the use of Oak Leaf Hydrangea and Nandena. I have used a lot of Nandena since the first article was written and have included the procedure that I use with it in this article.

Trivia

There were 1,334 train wrecks in South Carolina from 1990 through 2001 including 184 derailments and 61 collisions.

Future Meeting Programs

- September:** Richard Nichols
- October:** Volunteer needed.
- November:** Clark Reed
- December:** Christmas Party

CMR&HA TRAIN CREW

Engineer and CEO: Bob Folsom
General Division Super: Mac McMillin
Stationmaster: Don Rumer
Paymaster: Richard Nichols
HO Division Super: Bob Folsom
Large Scale Division Super: Bob Hanson
N Scale Division Super: Bill Hughes

Membership Roster April 16, 2002

Name	Address	Mem#	Scale	Telephone
-- Address removed for web publication --				

Cartoon from WWW.toytrunkrailroad.com

Central Railway Model & Historical Association Membership Application

Name: _____ Member # _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ State: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

1. Declared Interest Group: HO N General (Circle one)
2. Other Railroad Interests: Modeling Collecting Railfanning History
Other? _____
3. Modeling Scale: Z N HO S SN3 O G (Circle yours)
- 4 Railroad Memberships: NMRA NRHS Other? _____
5. Do you have a home lay-out? Y N Open to Visitors? Y N
6. I can help the Association by:
 - Working on one of the modular projects
 - Helping with set-up and operation of lay-outs at shows.
 - Organizing an excursion to a show or museum.
 - Serving on a committee (i.e. Audit, Publicity, etc.)
 - Serving as Officer or Director.
 - Preparing a short program for monthly meeting.
 - Other: _____

7. Please record my membership in the Association for 2000. Enclosed is my (check) or (cash) in the amount of \$20.00, Send to: Treasurer, CRM&HA, 301 Kingston Way, Anderson, SC, 29625. Phone (864) 261- 3496

Signature _____

C.R.M.&H.A.
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

