

SIERRA CENTRAL HERALD

Official Publication of the Sacramento Model Railroad Historical Society, Inc.

“Under The Hard Hat” by *President Bob Rohwer*

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all. It is hard to believe that we are starting a new year. 2006 has been a very busy year for the Society. The November events were very successful. Railfaire was its usual feeding frenzy. The dealers were lined up knee deep on Friday night buying everything in site. The open house was another big success. Attendance was up from last year and we all had a good time. The comments from our guests were great. Of particular notice was the quality of the track and how well trains ran. The signals were a real hit. You know you are doing things right when you are continually asked if we are going to sell them commercially. We had a rough start since most of us were a little rusty with DCC. For the first time in many years we had electrical problems that shut down both layouts. With quick actions by Don Butler and Ken Martin we were down for only a short period as they did work arounds to resolve the problems. Special thanks go to the mothers, wives and friends for helping out the Society with food and support. As a result we are forming a Ladies Auxiliary to the Society. More info to come.

If you were not there, you missed a great Christmas Party. For the first time it was held off site at the Taylor Street Elementary School. Special thanks need to go to Brian Zine’s mom, Penny Zine, for setting it up and doing so much of the work. We did not have a member raffle this year but we did provide prizes for the wives and significant others. This is something we really need to do for them for putting up with our passion for trains.

After open house we went into a period of open running until January 12th when we go back into construction. Many members have taken advantage of the opportunity. Last Friday we had as many as 10 trains operating on the layout. It was really a lot of fun. Be sure to come down and join us. Just to remind you, the Society is opening at 1 pm on Friday during this operating opportunity. With the conclusion of the operating period we will go back into construction until the midyear open house. During 2007 the Society will make a major effort in construction on both layouts. Some of the items being looked at are: (priority and approval will be made based on the construction manager’s presentation to the Board of Directors).

1. Completion of Haggin Yard (To be renamed to the correct name 12th street yard)
2. Completion of the Portola holding tracks at Reno
3. Four holding tracks on the Quincy branch.
4. The finals plans and mock up of the Sacramento 26 stall roundhouse and surrounding area.
5. Final plans for ‘R’ street which may become a reversing loop for the mainline.
6. Maintenance of the switches and tracks that we have already installed.
7. Continued installation of scenery up to the canyon and elsewhere.
8. Continued installation of more control blocks and signals.
9. A mockup of the CTC panels
10. Continued installation of the track and electrical on the narrow gauge layout.

Finally we will continue with the mentor program which will start the 3rd week of January with the beginning of training for the Board of Directors and designated trainers. The programs will include specific courses and a tracking sheet that reflects the progress of all members. We will also construct a reference book with step by step instructions on how to operate the layout. Some examples are how to consist locomotives under DCC, operate each turntable, turn on the layout, use the programming stations, etc. My goal is to have the reference book available electronically so you can have copies.

We certainly have a lot going on. There is an opportunity for everyone to participate. Please contact the construction managers, Dave Megeath, Don Butler or Dave Good for assignments.



Inside This Issue

The “Purist’s” Model Railroad
The Sacramento Valley Railroad-
The West’s First Railroad
The Poor Man’s Turntable

Look for these and other interesting articles inside this issue of The Herald.



Articles Under Development

DCC Tips and Tricks
Reverted Loops and Other End Games
The Bobber Caboose

This is a current list of articles being prepared for the Sierra Central Herald. If you have an idea for an article, please feel free to pull me aside and ask for help!

The Purist's Model Railroad by Karl Griffin

In the course of designing and planning your third, fourth or final layout you might consider constructing what I fondly call the 'Purist's Model Railroad'. On the other hand, after reading this article you might decide that this idea is not for you.

'Pure' normally means without compromise which in our case is a paradox because by its very nature each model railroad consists of restrictions, limitations and compromises. We don't have unlimited space, time or funds to work with. So, in essence what is this illusory purist idea? Notice the restrictions listed below:

1. It shall be based on a prototype-usually a branchline that allows for a faithful recreation of a specific railroad set in a specific time/season and in a specific place. No room for freelancers here. The purist is trying to eliminate the guess work of what might be acceptable/believable by researching the project and constructing what really exists or existed in the past or logically could have if it no longer exists.

2. It shall be a true point to point railroad interchanging with another railroad at one end and dead ending at the other end. No turn around loops or continuous running. Loops take up lots of space, they don't exist on the prototype and their use means that your trains will go back through the same scene twice even if it is at a different level. The 'Purist' uses loop space and narrower multiple shelves to extend his mainline run.

3. It shall not have two of anything. One servicing facility with a turntable for steam locomotives at one end and a Y turning facility at the other end if necessary. Typically you would have the interchange, staging, engine service (with a turntable if required) and passenger station at one end of the line and a passenger depot, steam engine Y track (if required or a runaround track for a diesel), drill and team tracks would service several end of the line industries.

4. It shall be a long single track mainline with scenery as a focal point rather than an afterthought. A long mainline usually requires a narrow (18-24") shelf or multilevel shelf design as discussed in previous articles. It is a natural for walk around operations and really enhances the feeling of going from one place to another.

5. Staging tracks shall be hidden. A perpendicular view block at the interchange end allows you to mentally terminate the railroad at this end. A switcher locomotive pushes out a block of cars to an empty

staging track and pulls in the next block. Another really neat trick is to have the track leading to the hidden staging area go down grade behind the passenger terminal to a switchback/switching stub and retrieve the next block of cars from under the interchange terminal and push them up to the departure track. A real space saver this is-and most of it can be hidden!

This is what a real interchange between railroads represents (a block of cars out and a new block in). While this operation is being performed the road engine has gone to the servicing facility and a replacement is sent to take out the next assignment of cars. Setting things up this way dramatically reduces the time required between the arrival and departure of the next train. This is important because one of the chief complaints about a point to point setup is that it takes a lot of time to makeup and breakdown individual cars to form up the next train. Staging takes care of this problem. At the other end of the line something similar can be arranged. The road engine is uncoupled, turned if necessary and couples up to an already setup block of cars on a predetermined departure track and proceeds back to the other end of the end. In the meantime a local switcher rearranges the setouts and pickups as required and clears out the arrival track. A partially hidden (in the side of a hill or behind a large set of buildings) sub interchange set of trackage can assist in speeding up this process.

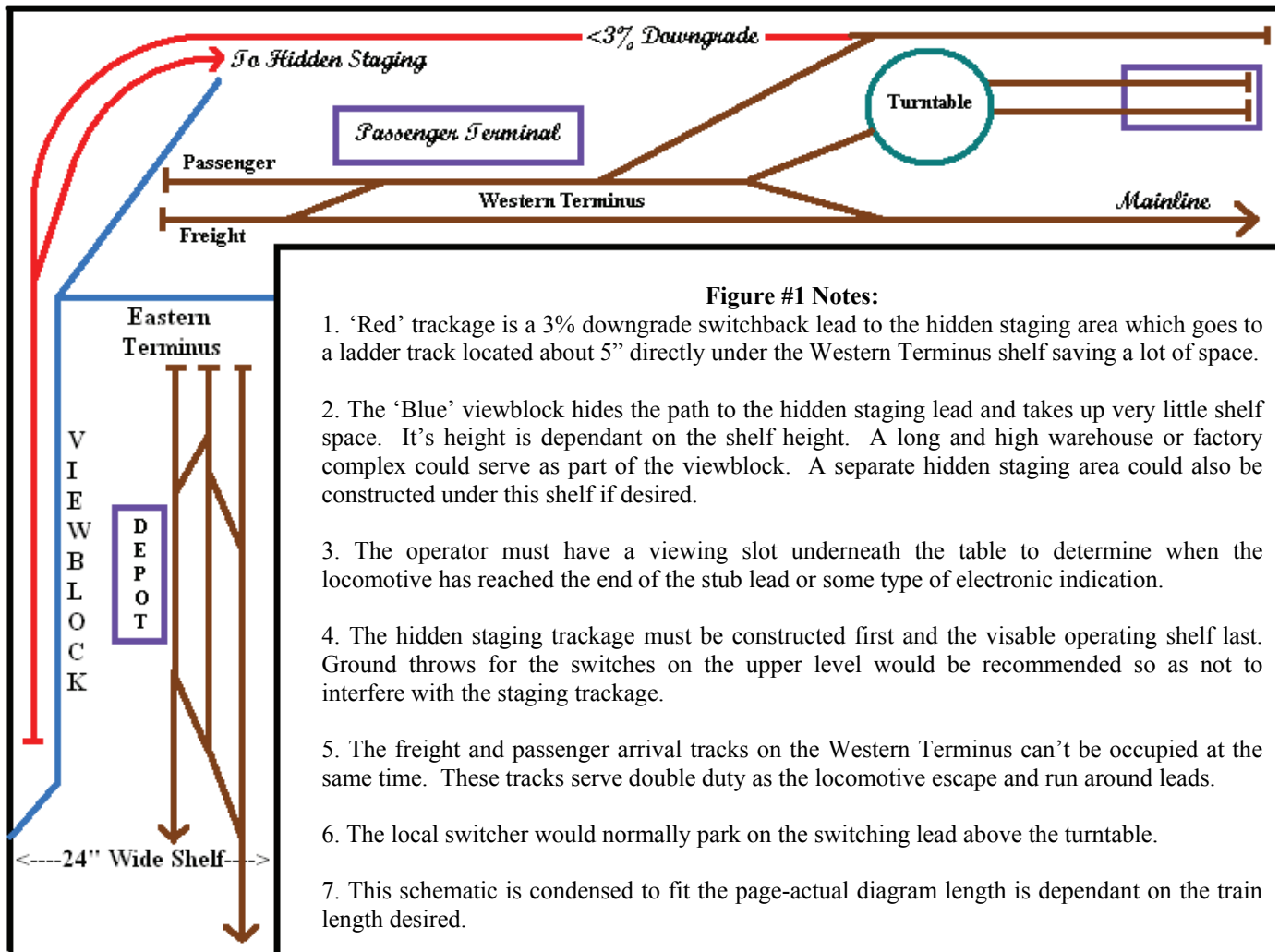
Imagination and creativity are what you need to solve space problems-make trackage do double duty, hide and stack where feasible. Play test your design thoroughly-this will show you what is practicable and what is wasted duplication.

6. There shall be no freight yards. Not needed-the staging tracks perform this function and keep the mainline as long as possible. Freight classification yards are only found at division points on Class I railroads, not on branchlines. They are expensive, maintenance intensive and take up lots of space.

On the next page I've included a sketch of some ideas that should help you visualize some of the ideas that have been presented.

Looking at the above limitations, restrictions, compromises and specifics-most folks will opt out for this type of model railroad. Too bad, because in the back of your mind is a part that says 'this is the way it really should be' but I can't bring myself to really get this serious...and that's OK because this is your layout that we're talking about. Just think about it.

The 'Purist' Model Railroad *continued by Karl Griffin*



Comments: I had a lot fun figuring this one out. There are always any numbers of solutions to a particular challenge and it would seem that for the railroad modeler the number one problem is how to fit everything that he wants in a finite amount of space. Have you ever looked inside a modern motor home and seen how they solve their space problems? I think we could learn a few tricks from them...and yes I have a few ideas that I've been kicking around for a while. When I come up with an original solution I'll be happy to share it with you. Fun things like slideouts, more hidden storage tricks, staging ideas and that sort of thing.

The interesting thing is that there are very few new problems for the model railroader-what I want to find are original solutions. If you have one of these but have difficulty putting the idea down on paper let me know. I've been doing this for ten years now and I'm always asked (especially by my wife) when I

plan on putting all these ideas to use. Short answer-when we build our dream house and I can really start with the proverbial clean sheet of paper or CAD/CAM!

You may have also noticed that our hobby is getting more and more technically oriented...scary for some folks. A prime example being DCC. But if you want 'sound' and true independant control of your trains this is the only way to go. Rather than trying to figure it out all by yourself latch onto a specialist-it's a lot easier.

One final thought-it would seem that the latest ideas on solving the space problem involve thinking out in the 3rd dimension. This is where the solutions have to be, up or down, hidden or visible and while this involves much more planning and construction difficulties it probably is the answer.

What's next...It always starts out with the need to find a solution doesn't it?

The Sacramento Valley Railroad-The West's First RR by Karl Griffin

Photos from the California State Railroad Museum collection

At the end of the Mexican-American War (1846-8) one William Leidesdorff received a Spanish land grant of 35,000 acres called the Rancho Rio de Los Americanos with the center called Granite City which was renamed Folsom in 1856). Upon his death in late 1848 mining interests purchased the land for \$75,000 and prospectors set up camps in Negro Bar and Morman Island. In

January, 1848 James Marshall discovered gold while building Sutter's Mill on the American River in Coloma thus causing the great Gold Rush of 1849. At this time the Sacramento and the Feather Rivers were the main transportation arteries. But shipping conditions were becoming dire. Sacramento's problem was one of rain; in winter the roads were

rivers of mud as no dams or levees existed at the time. To solve this problem, businessmen formed the Sacramento Valley Railroad in 1852. By 1855, this area had grown to 239,000 people and was purchasing an average of 162,700 tons of supplies a year. The company chose Charles Lincoln Wilson as their first president. He set out

for New York to raise capital and find a civil engineer. He found Theodore D. Judah who plunged wholeheartedly into his work-his ultimate goal being to be involved with the first transcontinental railroad. With a route as his first consideration he

spent the next few months surveying and inspecting the area. He estimated the cost to be \$1.8M to which Wilson pointed out to the stockholders was a mere nothing compared to future profits to be made. Captain Folsom became the second President (US Army Quartermaster Spanish-American War and West Point classmate of then Capt. Sherman).

By June, 1955 material was arriving in Sacramento so rapidly that the construction of a temporary building

on Front Street just below R to place the rolling stock of the company as it arrived (including the first locomotive, the 'Sacramento') was required. During the last days of July and early August 2250 tons of iron rails (60 lbs per yard) and 55,000 railroad ties arrived so that track laying could commence. The company suffered a sudden loss in mid-July when

Captain Folsom died. He was succeeded by Cornelius K. Garrison and W. P. Sherman (later General Sherman of Civil War fame) was elected vice-president. The directors took this occasion (the election of officers) to publish, with the general reports, all other data and information gathered by them since 1852. This report summed up the company's progress and proudly announced that,

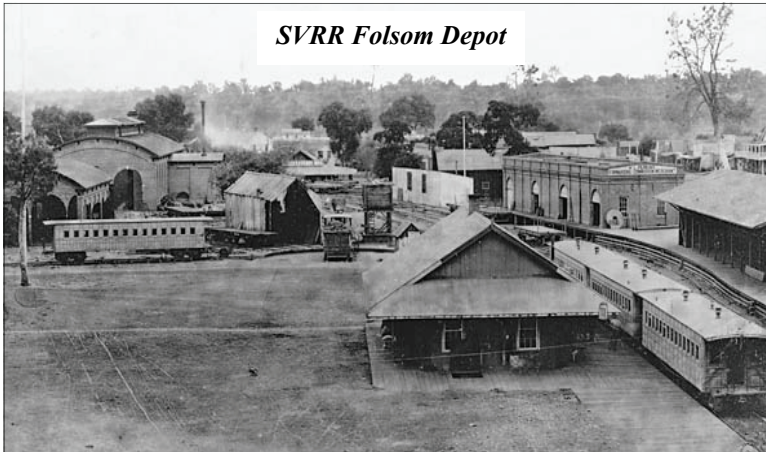
after seven months of preparation (grading, construction of embankments and trestles), the actual laying of track could begin. Workmen began distributing ties along the first two miles of roadbed on August 8, 1855 (beginning at the Sacramento River levee at Front and 'L' Street in present-day Old

Sacramento, and so successful was this operation, that the next day the first rail was laid. The gauge of the road had been fixed at five feet. The rails were of English iron and weighed sixty pounds to the yard. They were set in wrought iron chairs weighing seven pounds and fastened with spikes

weighing half a pound each. The track laying crews, though still unfamiliar with the work, were making rapid progress. Mastering the techniques of track laying, and spike driving, they soon were putting down six hundred feet of track daily. The first train was clocked at thirty miles per hour as it crossed 10th Street. The company completed the building of the 23 mile railroad to Folsom on February 22, 1856 at a total cost of \$60,000 per mile. At this time 21 stage lines moved from Sacramento to Folsom and



SVRR Crossing American River



SVRR Folsom Depot

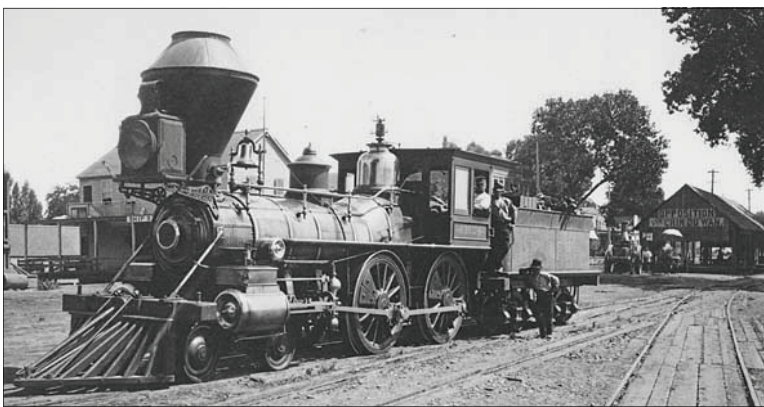
The Sacramento Valley Railroad *continued by Karl Griffin*

telegraph service began. In 1861 a branch to Lincoln and in 1864 a branch to Latrobe were completed. Folsom became the hub for commerce between Sacramento and the foothill mining camps. Because of its accessibility to the railhead, Folsom became the western terminus for the Pony Express in 1860. The trail from Placerville to Sacramento was rerouted through Rescue to Folsom, where dispatches were transferred by train to Sacramento. The SVRR was acquired by the CPRR in August, 1865, which reorganized and consolidated the line with the Folsom and Placerville railroads (which ran from Folsom to Shingle Springs 49 miles total) in 1877. In 1888 it was absorbed into the Northern Railway and in 1898 it was further consolidated into the Southern Pacific RR which 100 years later was acquired by the Union Pacific RR. Today much of the original route still exists and is used by the Union Pacific Railroad and extends to the Aerojet facility just west of Folsom. The Sacramento Regional Transit light rail "Gold Line" also parallels the route and uses the original right of way between Sacramento and Folsom.

the pit were reinforced with bricks made locally. The table was used to turn the locomotives for approximately eleven years when it was replaced with a longer "A" frame or gallows style of table. The new table was fifty-six feet long. It is the gallows style turntable of 1867 that the FEDSHRA and the community have replicated on the old Folsom railroad block.

the pit were reinforced with bricks made locally. The table was used to turn the locomotives for approximately eleven years when it was replaced with a longer "A" frame or gallows style of table. The new table was fifty-six feet long. It is the gallows style turntable of 1867 that the FEDSHRA and the community have replicated on the old Folsom railroad block.

The Folsom, El Dorado & Sacramento Historical



Railroad Association (FEDSHRA) was officially incorporated on January 1, 1995 and hopes to one day resurrect the line from Folsom to Latrobe.

Back in 1856, the newly completed Sacramento Valley Railroad brought railroad shops, a roundhouse, a depot and the turntable, to Folsom. The turntable was used to turn locomotives around for return trips to Sacramento. The turntable's platform, or deck type table, was forty feet long in a five to six foot deep pit. The walls of



BRUCE'S TRAIN SHOP

Northern California's Largest Source of
Model Railroad Supplies

Phone Orders Gladly Accepted

(916)485-5288

2752 Marconi Avenue

Sacramento, CA 95821

www.brucestrainshop.com

The Poor Man's Turntable by Karl Griffin

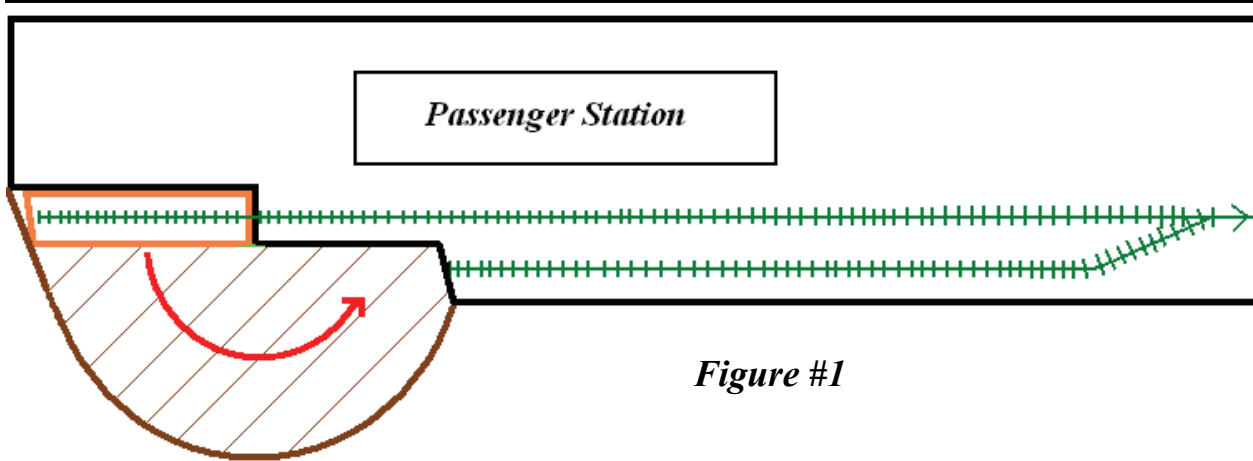


Figure #1

Have you ever wondered how many ways there are to turn a steam locomotive around on your layout and which one is best for your particular situation?

The 15-18" turntable is one solution but it is expensive, difficult to install and maintain. It is almost always connected to a large roundhouse complex which consumes a lot of space. (Prototypical)

A second solution is to construct a 'Y' track. It is relatively cheap (3 turnouts, 3 switch machines and 1 reversing switch) compared to a turntable but it also

uses up a lot of space. (Prototypical)

A third solution is the loop. This will turn your locomotive around for sure but is a grotesque misuse of space just for this purpose. It is much better suited for other requirements like turning an entire train around for continuous running as in a loop to loop layout configuration. (Non Prototypical)

A fourth solution (my idea). Examine **Figure #1** above. If you want cheap, reliable and takes up very little space-then this is the answer for you! Here you have a stub end passenger terminal at the end of a two foot wide shelf. A 4" x 18" rectangular separate shelf

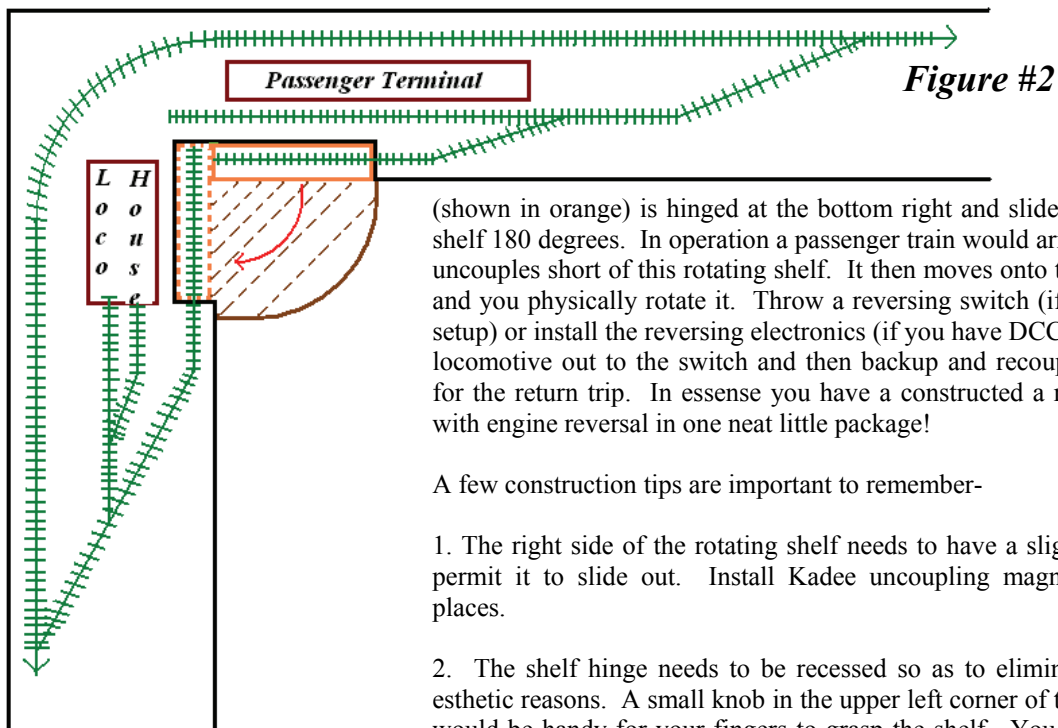


Figure #2

(shown in orange) is hinged at the bottom right and slides across a lower shelf 180 degrees. In operation a passenger train would arrive and the loco uncouples short of this rotating shelf. It then moves onto the moving shelf and you physically rotate it. Throw a reversing switch (if you have a DC setup) or install the reversing electronics (if you have DCC) and drive your locomotive out to the switch and then backup and recouple to your train for the return trip. In essence you have a constructed a run around track with engine reversal in one neat little package!

A few construction tips are important to remember-

1. The right side of the rotating shelf needs to have a slight angle to it to permit it to slide out. Install Kadee uncoupling magnets in the right places.
2. The shelf hinge needs to be recessed so as to eliminate any gap for esthetic reasons. A small knob in the upper left corner of the rotating shelf would be handy for your fingers to grasp the shelf. You should consider installing a locking pin that will hold the rotating shelf in either of its two

The Poor Man's Turntable *continued by Karl Griffin*

positions to insure perfect alignment of the tracks.

Now let's look at Figure #2. This is a more sophisticated version. It is located along the mainline rather than as a terminus for the line. If you are running from East to West you would exit the mainline and drive into the passenger station area. Uncouple the locomotive, swing the shelf 90 degrees and go to the engine house. A replacement locomotive would then come out and couple onto the train oriented in the proper direction. The replacement can either go on the shelf or out on the mainline to achieve this orientation.

As a bonus, a switcher engine could come out onto the mainline, back in and couple onto the observation car, drop it off on the rotating shelf, come around drop it off properly oriented on the mainline short of the upper right switch and the new passenger train would tack it onto the end on the way out. Sounds complicated but play test this idea out. Makes for some interesting switching!

Construction Notes on Figure #2:

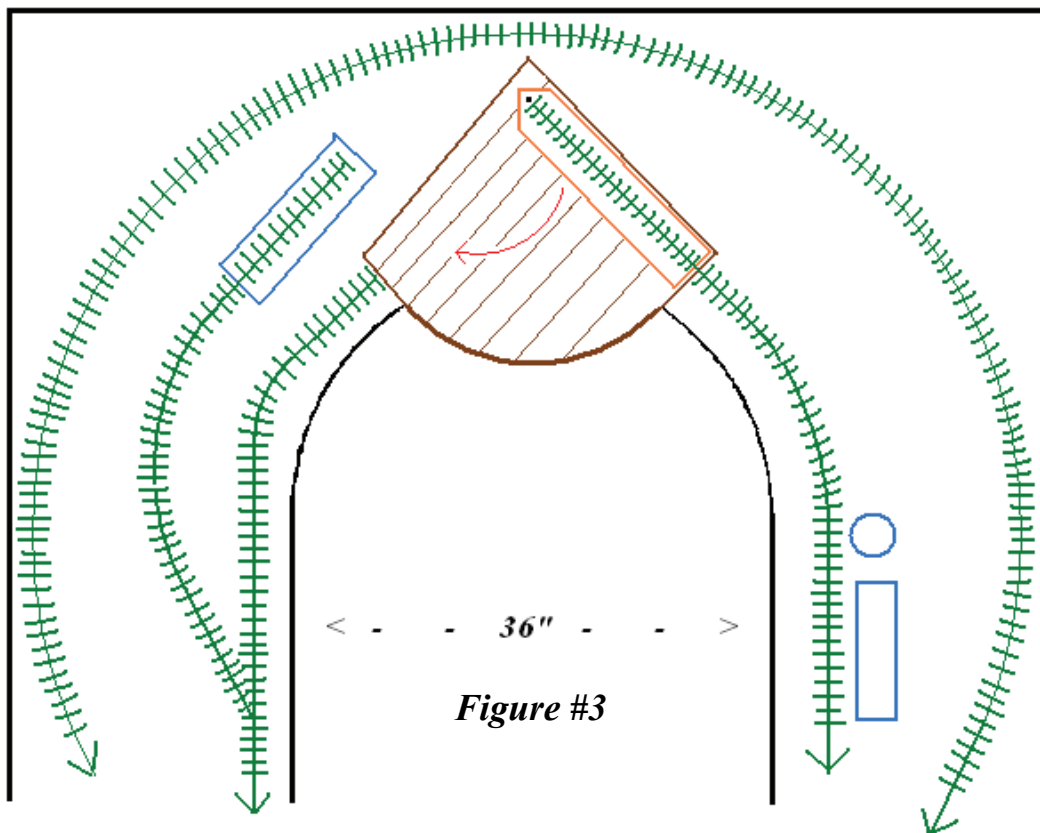
1. The end of this shelf will have to rounded slightly so it will clear the fixed shelf areas as it rotates 90 degrees.

2. All of these rotating shelves can be dressed up to look like a real turntable with the installation of a gallows framework and the lower shelf can be painted to look like a turntable pit if desired (why not?).

3. As in Figure #1 install a recessed hinge, Kadee uncoupling magnets in the right places and install locking pins for the rotating shelf.

4. Installing wiring for the shelf trackage-think this out carefully. You have the option of hiding the two wires or if you have constructed a 'gallows' the wiring can go from the top of the gallows to a telephone pole. Thin transformer wire painted black works great!

Figure #3 Represents a turnback (not a loop) for the mainline. A two foot wide shelf tabletop that does a 180 degree turn with a generous three foot aisle width to work in gives a mainline radius of over 36". The 90 degree rotating shelf allows you to turn your road engines and observation passenger cars. A yard or interchange area can be constructed on either side or both sides to give this configuration a reason for its existence. Or you could construct an inner 180 degree track so the mainline won't ever be tied up while you do the switching moves. Get creative!



Editors' Comments by Karl Griffin

As I enter my 10th year as your editor/publisher and primary author for our club's newsletter I am once again reminded that I am entrusted to produce the best possible product that I am capable of for the benefit of all of us as well as for our worldwide Internet audience. And so I endeavor to bring ideas to help solve once in a while a Fallen Flag. In need your input on most enjoyable and what you can talking over your you? Do you want more history or less technical schematic drawings? I'll never know if you don't give me some feedback. I spend countless unpaid hours in the production of this newsletter...and love every minute of it. Well, a deadline does get to me every once in while but that pressure is what really gets the creative juices going!



to all of you new old problems and look back on a doing this I really what you find and informative do without. Am I head or down to

**Articles for inclusion in the
March / April issue are due NLT
the second Friday of February!**

Sacramento Model Railroad Historical Society, Inc.
1990 Grand Ave.
Sacramento, CA 95838

The **Sacramento Model Railroad Historical Society, Inc.** is located at 1990 Grand Ave., Sacramento, CA 95838 and is open every Tuesday and Friday night at 7:30 p.m. It is the home of the **Sierra Central Railroad** which is modeled in both HO Standard and Narrow Gauge. Telephone (916) 927-3618 for info and directions. Visitors are always welcome!

Our Internet Club Website: www.smrhs.com

Our 2006/2007 Officers:

President	Bob Rohwer
Vice Pres	Scott Inman
Secretary	Mike Knoles
Treasurer	Don Butler

Board Members	Dave Megeath	3 yrs
	D Launderville	2 yrs
	Dave Good	1 yr

Newsletter Editor/Publisher/Author
Karl Griffin E-Mail KGri264641@aol.com

**Next General Meeting is the last Friday of
February, 2007**



2007 SMRHS Publications