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profitable for us all. We will publish the best of them in Newsletter or some other way so that all will have your ideas.

Now so far Geoff hasn't been overwhelmed with responses yet I know many of you have heaps of ideas. So please get in touch, especially those planning layouts. Here, you can put some of your theories in practice without having the commitment yourself!

MAY 2008 OUR CONVENTION YEAR

**Coming Meetings**

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**3/4/5<sup>th</sup> May – AMRA Train Show at Exhibition Grounds, Brisbane.**

**14/15<sup>th</sup> June – Toowoomba Train Show at Showgrounds.**

**12<sup>th</sup> July – Laurie Mclean, Timberwah, 10.00am.**

**12/13/14<sup>th</sup> September, Australasian Regional Convention, Brisbane.**

**8<sup>th</sup> November, Colin Upton, Jimboomba.**

All meeting start at 1.30pm unless otherwise stated.

**Convention Extra**

We have missed out on our hoped for US guest speaker as while he is ready to come, his wife is still working and unable to make the trip at that time. We will keep him in mind for the future as he would be someone of great interest for us. We are now looking for another guest speaker and we hope to get a particularly good one locally.

**Ideas Wanted!**

Geoff Aldridge has recently shifted house and the layout room is as yet vacant, needing his ideal railroad. He is still looking for ideas, druthers, do's and don'ts. These could be

**Exhibition Layout**

Work still proceeding with particular attention being paid to track connections over module joins. Rail joining segments have been made to go between each module. The aim is of course, to ensure reliability, ease of erection and good appearance. The yard points have been further re-worked and re-designed. We hope to have the layout at the Toowoomba Train Show in an easy to erect, far more reliable condition with better scenery.

**The May AMRA Show**

As usual the annual AMRA May show will be held on the long May weekend, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> May. Besides the large number of layouts on display there will be many trade stands, society stands, etc. This is also a wonderful place to meet up with modelling colleagues and in particular those you don't often see.

**Snippets**

I've said it before but it is worth repeating, The NMRA's Scale Rails magazine is a top class information source in MR and better than some of the commercial ones we've grown up with. Look at the February 2008 issue. A great article to improve reliability of DCC with simple filters and a seminal article on hand made turnouts for those using or intending to use the Fast Track jigs or any other method of hand laid turnouts.

### **Comment**

I was recently a leg in an NMRA e-mail, asking "What's on you bench at the moment". Although this was an informal questionnaire and perhaps no one kept records, it did reveal some interesting things.

Firstly, it seems that we all have workbenches. That seems to say that we all need to do some manual work at some time in our hobby. Thank God, with all of the fantastic gear out there we still can't build a decent MR straight out of the boxes. A lot of items still requires some work on our part.

Locos need weathering, freight cars don't necessarily come with the couplers we like nor the right sort of door, structures need a roof gutter, bridges need shortening, etc. I hope it is always like this so that we all can have the thrill of putting our own stamp on items. Besides, there are many of us who just like using our hands. From this questionnaire, it seems we all do.

Diesel modifications to suit our particular RR models featured highly in this survey. These were things like small details such as horns, winterisation hatches, sunshades, etc. I didn't notice anyone saying they were installing rerailers. Yet these are pretty obvious details hanging below most diesel running boards. Even more so in the modern era where most are bright orange in colour!

One frightening thing was the number of us having things on our workbenches but unable to work on them because of an injury or illness. There were so many of these, self included, that it almost seemed that bad health was a requirement to belong to the NMRA! Perhaps what it was really saying was, we are getting old – many of us.

This really did sound like a plea for us to quickly get new, younger members. Guys that will have things on their workbenches and doing something with them! We need two thrusts here; a plan to get the young teenager, sick of the amusement cul-de-sac that computer games lead us to. And secondly, a plan to get the late 30's to 40's who are wondering how are they going to use their time

after years of sideline football shouting and being a student taxi.

Then we should nurture them so that they'll be writing interesting articles in journals for us and taking the reins of our various NMRA management committees. We oldies can sit back and read their stuff! Luckily for us in Division 1, we have some young members but we need some more. If every Division went out and got one extra young member per year right throughout the NMRA, think what a team of experts we would have in a few years.

How about a different approach? If every Division found a single keen young modeller, we could pay for his or her membership for the first year. Now that wouldn't be too much out of the budget. A few might drop through the cracks but I am sure we would have a surge in young membership that we would all gain from in years to come.

When I first joined the NMRA a long time ago, there was a "Bulletin" which had in it, an article about the advantages of NMRA membership. I keep meaning to do a hunt for this but never get around to it. Can anyone remember it? If so please dig it out because it should be published at least once a year.

We do need to have a better public front. That recent article in the Brisbane Courier Mail and many other publications about Rod Stewart's layout could trigger off a rise in membership. I'm not into pop or rock and roll but I'm sure their must be fans out there that are thinking about following their idol. Maybe we need more high profile people in our hobby press but add to those articles, reasons why we model and why this is the best hobby in the world.

### **Daniel Calvert's Portland and Western RR**

Daniel's RR is based on the contemporary Portland & Western RR (PNWR), a shortline with over 500 miles of trackage in Oregon, USA. The PNWR runs on ex-SP trackage and interchanges with the UP. The PNWR is owned by the Genesee & Wyoming (G&W), a company that owns shortlines in several states in USA, Mexico, Canada and even Australia.

G&W amalgamated two Oregon RR's under its control, the Willamette Pacific (WP) and the PNWR. Although PNWR is now officially the sole entity, the corporate herald on quite a lot of equipment is lettered for the WP!

From the modelling perspective, the PNWR offers rich potential. Oregon is a very green state and a layout portraying it can legitimately make ample use of wooden trestles, tree-clad hillsides and plenty of industries. The loco fleet is a fascinating and colourful mix of pre-owned diesels, some painted in the PNWR orange and black, many in other liveries including original SP, St.Lawrence & Atlantic, Utah Belt Railway, ex-ATSF war bonnet yellow and even the last remaining SDP40F still decorated in ex-Maersk colours applied by ATSF!

Recently a GP 40-2 in full Alaska RR colours has arrived on the scene. There is also a GP9 in 'black widow' colours. Motive power includes GP40's, GP39-2's, SD9's SD45's and SW 1500's. A privately owned F7 painted in GN colours and an RSD5 in Nickel Plate colours have also been used when motive power is short. Up to 7 locos can be allocated to a train although many consists have 3 or 4 engines up front.

There is a very active Yahoo discussion group devoted to the PNWR hence it is easy to keep up to date with events, rumours and development on the prototype. A dedicated group of enthusiasts keep a regular stream of images coming onto sites such as Railroad Picture Archives. I visited Oregon in 2006 and took advantage of the contacts I had made to explore some of the PNWR system and facilities and take as many photos as possible!

Layout construction commenced about fourteen months ago; as the track is handlaid progress is best described as leisurely, however a circle of track now navigates the 26 x 14 foot room complete with passing loops. The objective will be a yard loosely based on Albany, Oregon which allows for interchange with the UP and a route to a second yard with customer industries and trackage running through typical Oregon scenery. The intention is to impart a feel of the prototype without being overly specific about exact location, particularly of specific industries and towns. However other aspects such as motive power will be very close to prototype. A project currently underway is the conversion of an

Atlas GP38's (early model) into a GP39-2's which requires heavy kitbashing and detailing.

Now that the NMRA visit is over several sections of track have already been pulled out for implementing a revised track scheme. I have a strong interest in detailing and weathering freight cars, detailing locomotives, building structures and scenery yet have limited time, so in the next twelve months I need to keep things fun as they should be. I will attempt to balance my modelling interests by introducing some finished motive power, some detailed centrebeam lumber cars, some structures and scenery plus aim for completion of the track work.

Below are listed some references you might find useful for handlaying track and points as well as the availability of scenic material.

**For handlaying turnouts Model Railroader December 1989, p104-113, by Tony Koester.**

**Model Railroad Craftsman May 1998, p86-93 and June 1998, p82-89, both by rich Fortin.**

**Good advice available by Iain Rice in Model Railroader January 2004, p144-147.**

**Building points at the bench then shifting them to the layout by Tom Piccirillo in Model Railroader December 2007, p82-87.**

**More handlaying ideas in Model Railroader August 1985, p66-69 by Jim Mansfield and Model Railroader May 1991, p96-99 by Lee Vande Visse.**

To answer some queries, 10 kilo lots of plaster bandages may be purchased from:

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The current price on the site for the 10 kilos carton is \$79.95+GST \$7.99 Total \$87.94.

Daniel Calvert.