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The Villages Railroad Historical Society – Chuck Tremblay

This winter, now that Sue and I are both retired, we decided to head south for the winter. As we have several friends here, and more importantly it is warm, we decided to spend January – April in The Villages in Florida.

While often referred to as “a drinking community with a golf problem”, there are in fact over 2000 clubs and special interest groups. Soon after I arrived, I looked up the train related organizations, of which I found one primary group.

The Villages Railroad Historical Society covers all railroad related interests, both prototype and model. The club has 150+ members and meets twice a month. The meetings start with a presentation or video for the first hour, then they have a business meeting. This is followed by “breakout sessions” where the different scales, or Divisions, meet to discuss their projects and upcoming activities. The club has 4 shows per year, February, July, August, and December, and takes trips to visit prototype facilities.

Because the clubs in The Villages don't have permanent homes, the club rents units in a local storage facility. Each Division (currently HO, N, O, and Standard Gauge) has a smaller unit to store their materials in. There is a larger unit (about 10'x35') which is a workspace the Divisions share on a rotating basis where they can set up all or part of their layouts for work parties. The N-Scale Division has about 45 -50 members. The resources of the club (funds and use of the work space) are allocated to the Divisions based on the number of members in each one. For 2019 the N Scale Division will have 3 months dedicated use of the workspace, and 3 months where they share it with the O Scale Division.

Around 2014 the N-Scale Division started on a project to construct a portable layout depicting the neighboring town of Wildwood, FL as it appeared in 1959. At that time Wildwood was a stop on the Seaboard Air Line, with a medium sized yard, engine service facilities, ice house, passenger station and other railroad related facilities. The layout is 32 feet long. Except for the turning loops at each end, the middle 20 feet of the layout quite accurately depict route 301 through town, which parallels the railroad. The front edge of the layout is the middle of the road, the buildings to the west of Rt 301 are scratch built to, as close as possible, portray the town and railroad facilities

as they appeared in 1959. There was a lot of research in order to meet this goal with help from the local historical societies and CSX, which provided copies of aerial photos of their facilities from the era. Along the front of the layout some of these pictures are displayed along with descriptions of the scenes. A personal thought, I really like this as the shelves this is displayed on also helps keep visitors back from the layout without standards, ropes, etc.

The control system is an NCE DCC system. Turnouts are remotely operated at 2 control panels through the NCE system. The 2 end lops were recently rebuilt with wider radius to accommodate longer passenger equipment. The interfaces with the end loops have 3 tracks which appear to be very close to the N-Trak standard, and the electrical connections use power pole connectors, very interesting, but I don't know if they could mate up! There are no connector tracks between the layout sections, and trains run quite smoothly across the interfaces. Current projects include adding as much lighting as possible to the layout. Considering that up to this point the Division only has the workspace 2-3 months a year, the layout is amazingly complete for essentially a year's worth of construction.

In addition to the 4 regular shows, the N-Scale Division was invited to set up in the new Leesburg, FL library at their Railroad History Show on Monday and Tuesday, January 28th and 29th, of this year. The Saturday before, we met at the storage facility in the large unit to prep the layout for transportation the Library and loaded everything into a rental truck. Sunday morning at 10:00 we met at the Library to setup the layout in their large meeting room where it can be secured after hours. The pictures were taken 2 ½ hours after we arrived, and the layout was ready to go.

This is a nice group of guys with a nice layout. If you are in the area, visitors are welcome at the meetings, so check them out!

For more information on the club, their web sites are:
<http://www.thevillagesmodeltrainclub.com/index.html> or
<http://villagerailclubs.blogspot.com/>

Their Facebook Page is:
<https://www.facebook.com/The.Villages.Model.Train.Club/>

Pictures on page 4.

T-TRAK Train Show Schedule 2018 & 2019

If you wish to be part of the T-Trak layout contact
Fay Chin Show Coordinator at e-mail
nttrak@gmail.com

**January 25-27, 2019, Amherst Railway Society Railroad
Hobby Show, Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds,
West Springfield MA**

Show Sat 9:00 am to 5:00 pm - Sun 10:00am to 5:00pm

**February 16-17, 2019, Greenberg's Train and Toy
Show, Swansea Mall, Swansea, MA**

Show Sat & Sun 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

**March 10-11, 2019, Southshore, 19 Fort Hill St.,
Hingham, MA**

Show 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

**March 16-17, 2019, Greenberg's Train and Toy Show,
Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington MA**

Show Sat & Sun 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

**April 21, 2019, Hooksett Lions Model Train Show,
Crawley Middle School, Hooksett NH**

Show 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

2018-2019 NENtrak SHOW PARTICIPATION SCHEDULE

**Jan 25-27, 2019 Winterfest, Springfield, MA Amherst
Railway Society - Big Railroad Hobby Show**

Big "E" Exposition Center, West Springfield, MA

Set-up: Fri noon to 5:00pm & Sat 7:00am to 9:00am

Show Sat 9:00am to 5:00pm - Sun 10:00am to 5:00pm

Layout Coordinator: Dan Pawling Jr., 617-244-5261

Winterfest Chairman: Bob Fallier - 603-465-3785

**March 16-17, 2019 Great Train Expo, Shriners
Auditorium, Wilmington, MA**

Set-up: Fri 1:00pm to 5:00 pm - Sat 7:30am

Show Sat 10:00am to 4:00pm - Sun 10:00am to 4:00pm

Coordinator: Frank Dignan - 508-866-9660

**April 21, 2019 Hooksett Lions Club, Crawley Middle
School, Hooksett, NH**

Set-up: 8:00am - Show 10:00am to 4:00pm

Coordinator: Russell Putnam - 603-835-6952

Show Dates **Subject to Change**...Check Newsletters for Updates. Please check
schedule for errors and send up dates to Roland at: northeastntrak@msn.com Thanks for
your help.

New Member

Charles Morschauser
104 Court Land Circle
Leominster, MA 01453

978-537-9527 Email: cmorschauser3@gmail.com

Member of the Pepperell Siding Club. Has a 4'x7'
Nscale transition era layout.



Picture from the past.



See we do get together for just fun

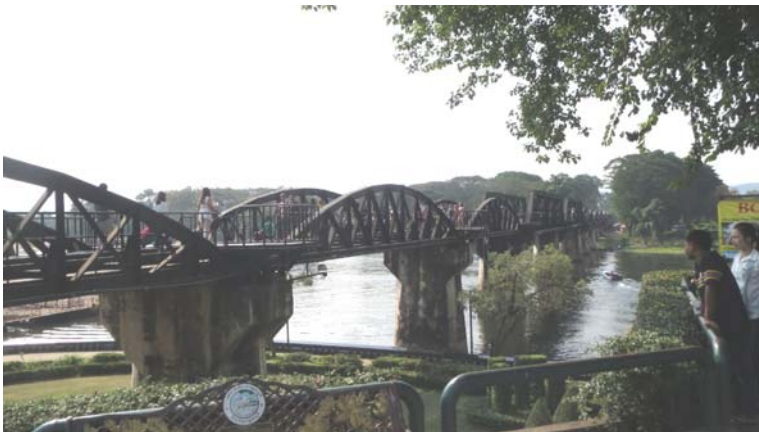


The Bridge over the River Kwai by Roland Kelley

At the end of December i went to Thailand. While there I took a tour of the railroad bridge over the River Kwai. Work started in October 1942 to meet the August 1943 deadline. The completion date was later extended to November 1943. The more than 250 miles of track, much of it through the jungle, was finally completed at the end of October 1943. More than 16,000 prisoners of war and 100,000 laborers, including Chinese, South Indians, Malays, Burmese, Japanese and Dutch, Indonesian Eurasians died building the railway. Most of the deaths were from disease, malnutrition and exhaustion.



Above is the engine that will take us across the bridge. From what we were told on weekends it is just this one train for tourists but during the week 5 trains go each way.



Although a careful aerial survey of the railroad route preceded the construction due to poor engineering and inferior materials, the track was in constant need of repair. Prisoners used the worst wood they could find for building the bridges. The unseasoned timber usually rotted after three months.

With the Japanese decision to complete the railroad, more than 61,000 prisoners taken during campaigns in Southeast Asia and the Pacific were brought to Thailand and Burma, between 1942 and 1945, 30,000 British, 18,000 Dutch, 13,000 Australian and 700 American prisoners were moved in from Indonesia, Singapore and Hong Kong, Coolies were brought from Malaya and Indonesia. Others were conscripted in Thailand and Burma. This labor force was divided into two groups, one in Burma and one in Thailand, to work from opposites ends of the track toward the center.

The picture below is getting off the train to visit Kanchanaburi War Cemetery and The JEATH War Museum. (See picture below) The bottom picture is part of the Cemetery.





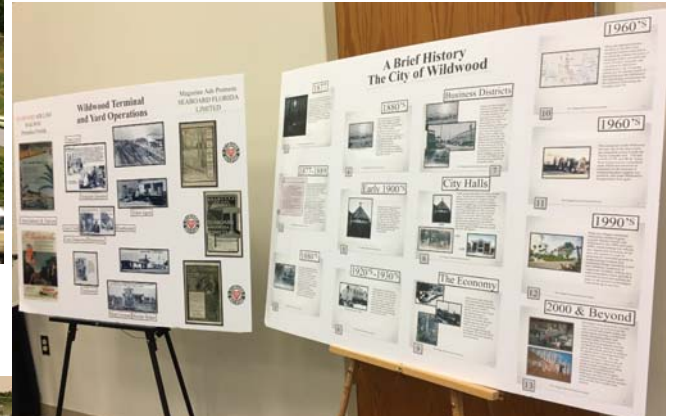
An overview of the layout



Story boards explain the history of Wildwood and the layout.



Looking at Wildwood, to the south from the Rt 301 overpass



Another view of downtown Wildwood



South end of town with the engine service facility



Closeup of downtown Wildwood with the ice house in the background.