



A Publication of the Railroad Model and Historical Society of Southeastern Ohio, Inc.

PO Box 1, Albany, Ohio, 45710

October 2014

**Upcoming Events:**

**October 11-12, 2014**  
Cincinnati Model Railroad Show  
West Chester, Ohio  
Admission: \$7  
All Scales, Operating Layouts,  
Displays, Locomotive Tune-Ups,  
How-To Sessions, 250+ Dealer  
Tables, Hourly Door Prizes

**October 14, 2014**  
Club Meeting  
7:00pm  
Kenny Shank's Garage  
7 4th Street, Jacksonsville  
Bring something for  
show and tell!

**November 9, 2014**  
Greater Wayne County Train &  
Toy Show  
Dalton, Ohio  
Admission: \$5  
All Scales, Operating Layouts,  
170+ Dealers, Die-cast Models

**November 23, 2014**  
Christmas Train and Toy Show  
at Lakeland  
Kirtland, Ohio  
Admission: \$6  
All Scales, Operating Layouts,  
Dioramas, 200+ Dealers

**November 29, 2014**  
Train Collectors Association  
Holiday Train Show  
Parma, Ohio,  
Admission: \$6  
All Scales, Operating Layouts,  
New & Old, Buy/Sell/Trade,  
Model Supplies, Books

**December 13-14, 2014**  
Railfair 2014  
Sat. 10am - 9pm  
Sun. 12pm - 5pm  
The Market on State,  
Athens, Ohio  
Admission: FREE  
Operating Layouts, Raffle

# Anatomy of a Club Layout

Continued from September 2014 Edition

By: Kirk DePeel

## Club approval needed

I was a new president (elected in January) trying to run a club that was divided squarely down the middle on one issue. To buy land and erect a pole barn with the money we had saved, or wait until we could buy a building outright. The former meant members would be doing the work themselves while leaving us with an empty coffer. The latter meant it would be years before we could start looking. What it came down to was that no one wanted to spend money on anything. So the idea of investing in a traveling layout was going to be a tough sell. In March I approached the members about the layout and got mix results.

My first proposal was that the club would be responsible for purchasing wood for the bench work, around 18 switches, and at least six engines among other things. Since you get what you pay for in N-scale, I didn't want to go with the cheapest stuff out there. I had decided on Peco switches since they were the most reliable on the market. I also wanted Atlas engines, at least two per main, because they ran well and were far superior to any brand out there. Additionally they were less likely

to quit running after a few shows. Then there was track, scenery material, glue, and other items left to purchase. The price tag came to \$700.

Almost everyone liked the idea of having a layout they could use for events. However, most thought the layout was way too expensive; and one member accused me of trying to build myself a layout using club money. It was clear if this project was to be approved I was going to have to scale things back. I decided that it was more important to have good switches than engines. Hindsight being 20/20, it should have been the other way around. So to cut cost, I would only buy 3 Atlas engines and purchase some cheap Bachman engines to swap out. That brought the price tag down to \$500, still too high for many members. And back to the drawing board I went.

Atlas engines were selling between \$70 and \$80 back then. There was no way I could buy one engine and keep it under \$300; a price I figured the club could live with. That meant either buying a bunch of unreliable engines or purchasing them myself. In the end I decided

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# Anatomy of a Club Layout

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to do both. I would use the club money to buy some Bachman engines and over time purchase the Atlas engines with my own money. Based on the final price the club finally gave me their blessing and work started on the layout sometime in November 95.

## **Building and then a setback.**

Like any new layout there was a lot of excitement in getting started. Or there should have been. The truth was I was very sick. I was suffering from Sleep Apnea and Heart problems although the doctors didn't figure any of this until the following year. I was constantly weak, tired, and couldn't concentrate on what I was doing. It only got worse as time went on.

Fortunately I had help. Eric McFadden, Dirk, and Mike Hansgen volunteered their time and more important, their experience, in building the layout. Jeff White was also helpful but was usually busy running his hobby shop and couldn't be there as often. It was decided to build the layout

in my basement since I had the space to keep it set up.

Usually the four (sometimes five) of us got together twice a month (if the weather allowed) to lay track and work on the wiring. While there wasn't a rush to complete the layout, we did want to have all three mains and yard in operation by summer.

On March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1996, work came to a screeching halt. The morning started with me experiencing severe chest pain. I drove myself to the hospital but by the time I got there the pain was gone and I felt fine, just shaken. After talking it over with my wife, she drove me to another doctor I had seen earlier. While in her office I started experiencing chest pains again. However, unlike before the pain never went away. The doctor deduced it was indigestion and mostly in my head (I kid you not). I was sent home and told to rest.

That evening Mike, Dirk, and Eric showed up to work on the layout. I remember sitting on the basement steps, my chest hurting, feeling like I hadn't slept in a week, and being

unable to stand and help them. The next day I went my primary doctor who was smart enough to order an EKG and discovered I had had a bad heart attack, called a 'widow maker' because only about 20% of the people who suffer this type of heart attack survive. As a result, all work on the layout stopped for a good month and a half while I recovered. The upside was that once they unplugged my artery I felt so much better than I had in years.

Once my doctor cleared me on the steps, I was able to work on the layout between our sessions. Mostly I finished the ballast and built roads and laid down grass. I wish we could have built a tunnel but there was a height restriction \*(for moving) and foam wasn't used like it is today. The completed layout turned out well and the best part was one person could unload, assemble, and get trains running in under an hour if they knew what they were doing.

**Part 4 will be featured in the November issue!**

## **“You know you're a Railfan if...”**

[http://www.mswphoto.com/IdiotRailfan/you\\_know.html](http://www.mswphoto.com/IdiotRailfan/you_know.html)

You've considered contacting the police to obtain permission for using flashing red lights and siren during a train chase.

## **“Hobo Humor”**

[http://www.spikesys.com/Trains/rr\\_jokes.html](http://www.spikesys.com/Trains/rr_jokes.html)

What is the difference between a school teacher and a steam locomotive?

The school teacher tells you to spit out your gum, while the locomotive says "Choo Choo Choo!"

# Why Bill Gates And Warren Buffett Are Railroad Rival

Matthew Debord, BusinessInsider.com, September 3, 2014

Bill Gates is the richest person in the world. Warren Buffett is number three.

But as Bloomberg's Frederic Tomesco and Thomas Black report, even though both billionaires are philanthropically entwined, when it comes to the old-school realm of investing in North America's railroads, Gates and Buffett part ways.

Tomesco and Black write:

“Canadian National Railway Co. (CNR) is beating benchmark stock

indexes as profits and shipments surge, a boost for Gates, the largest shareholder....”

“BNSF Railway Co., owned by Buffett’s Berkshire Hathaway Inc. (BRK/B), is struggling. North America’s biggest railroad by sales is grappling with slow traffic and is being scrutinized by U.S. regulators for poor service, spurring concern that it risks a permanent loss of some customers.”

It seems perfectly logical for Buffett to own a railroad company. His

much-lauded investment philosophy hinges on putting money only into businesses he can understand — in terms of operations, products, and, crucially, *opportunities*.

The Oracle of Omaha bought BNSF as the U.S. economic recovery was picking up steam. Buffett saw the railway as an idea way to play the bounce-back at a core level: resurgent demand for

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## Interested in Membership?

Interested in becoming a member? Join today! Membership dues are as follows:

- \$60 for a single membership for 1 year
- \$80 for a family membership for 1 year

Benefits of becoming a member:

- Voting
- Several great trips throughout the year
- Friends who share a common hobby

# Why Bill Gates And Warren Buffett Are Railroad Rival

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goods meant that those goods would need to be moved in greater numbers from point A to point B.

For Gates, on the other hand, being a latter-day railway tycoon seems far less in-character. A tech titan owning a big chunk of a business that runs on mid-20th century technology? Well, maybe Gates and his advisors just asked themselves "What Would Warren Do?"

Justin Sullivan/Getty Images  
What Would Warren Do? He'd buy some of these.

In Gates' case, his railroad

stake can be viewed as simply an investment — evidently a timely one — but nothing more than that. Gates isn't running CN.

But Buffett, because Berkshire Hathaway *owns* BNSF, is effectively running the railroad. He's also responsible for promoting its story, which since he took over the company, has been an uplifting and compelling one — a tale of American comeback, cast in terms that excite the little kid in everyone.

Trains! Who doesn't get a thrill witnessing a long

freight train, loaded with America goods bound for American markets and ultimately American customers, rolling through the America landscape?

So Buffett has a bit of a problem here. A harsh winter was unkind to BNSF, and as Reuters reported in August, the railway is in something of a rebuilding phase. That doesn't mean Berkshire Hathaway is backing down, however. Bloomberg and others have noted that Buffett is planning to put \$5 billion into BNSF to improve the railroads operations.

## Our Mission

*To Teach...*

*Those who want to know more.*

*To Educate...*

*Those who want to learn the history.*

*To Promote...*

*The hobby with enthusiasm.*

*And to share and enjoy the pleasure of all that is Railroading.*



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