



**Three Lakes Model Railroad Club**  
**Volume 3, Number 11**

**1<sup>st</sup> 100% Club in Wisconsin**  
**November 2012**

**Trains and Demmer Library: talk about a hobby** *by R.G. Blocks*

Gathered in the lower level of the Demmer Library on November 14<sup>th</sup> twenty-two folks and the writer reviewed the influence of toy trains under the tree had on three generations of my family. The time, place and introduction were, in NMRA terms a clinic supported with PowerPoint, handouts and magazines from my pile of excess. The assembly a 50:50 mix of existing railroad hobby locals and folks who while curious had yet to spend their resources on the sure thing called model railroading.



**The Demmer Library invites you to...**

**"Connect with Your Community  
@ the Demmer"**

**Wednesday, November 14th, 2012  
at 2:00 p.m. AND 6:30 p.m.  
In the Lower Level**



**ALL-ABOARD for an afternoon with the  
Three Lakes Model Railroad Club (TLMRC)  
Learn about model railroad building & meet  
others who share an interest in railroad models.  
Fun for all ages!**

No registration is required for this free event. For more information visit the Demmer Library at 6961 W. School St., Three Lakes, call us at 715-546-3391, find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/demmerlibrary.org> or visit us online at [www.demmerlibrary.org](http://www.demmerlibrary.org)

This talk portrayed my life's experience. We grew up playing with trains. Planning, building and wiring circuits from 'childhood' were discussed. Our two daughters were featured; both also enjoyed playing with trains. My grandkids have been contributing to our current layout. We've all learned something. It all starts under a Christmas Tree.

Our girls received toolboxes and basic carpentry hand tools as Christmas presents. Over the years, they and the grandkids became exposed to using tools to make train layouts, birdhouses, chicken coops, etc. The techniques helped them learn basic skills needed for home maintenance and working with others.

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The time spent conveying the notion that our model trains hobby was good fun for this writer and speaker. We'd like to thank Tracy Orr of the Demmer Memorial Library, 6961 W School Street, Three Lakes, WI. She arranged the program, added motivation and provided thanks to folks who attended. We hope we performed a service.

## **On the Road Again: in Union Grove**

*by R.G. Blocks*

Rolf Plachter, creator of 'The Midwest Lines Railroad' and I visited the Union Grove Model Railroad Club open house on Saturday morning December 1, 2012. We were invited to their 'open house' by fellow modeler, and expert tree maker, Greg Hoppert.



The Union Grove layout has several very convincing scenes. For example, the town of Union Grove, as it existed in the 1950's, certainly not after 1958, has been modeled quite convincingly by Bernie Backus, former co-owner of Hauer Pharmacy on Main Street, Union Grove, Wisconsin.

The Main Street Pharmacy

has an interior view that Bernie captured on film from across the street. Repetitive shrinking of that view and gluing into the front window make a level of detail possible that a visitor simply does not initially contemplate.

Bernie doesn't claim to be a big train buff. He joined the Union Grove Model Railroad Club about twenty years ago to provide



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three-dimensional, totally convincing background scenes for the club’s model railroad. The vehicles are from the 1930’s, 40’s and right up to 1958. The municipal building is under construction as it was in that period.

Bernie’s initial interest may have been due to a Lionel train he had as a kid. His involvement with the Union Grove Club began about 1990. The scenes we enjoyed today were all scratch built by Bernie during the last twenty years.



Cute ideas and anecdotes abound. The water-tower model was to be emblazoned with the name UNION GROVE. However, Bernie was missing the transfer letter E. Thus, the tower reads: UNION GROV and you’ll find a model person beginning an attempt to paint the

letter E.

The Sour Kraut Plant, one half mile west of downtown has loads of cabbage moving by truck and conveyor. Originally, raw cabbage was modeled by small round peas. However, a mouse literally gleaned the fall crop. Today’s cabbage are small round balls of green painted clay. Crop failure has not reoccurred.



The model of a local church was made using Bernie’s photographic techniques. He carefully photographed the building from a fixed distance; then, he scaled a number of dimensions to insure his scale image for all structural faces was 1:87. He’s a pharmacist; hence getting the ratio correct is ingrained.

We’ll provide a return visit report on another day. Lots to report from Union Grove.

## **Railroad Happenings: or Semi-local events...**

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Please see December 2012 issue... for an up to date list of what is happening!

### **Meets On the Main Line ...**

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**Central Wisconsin Model Railroaders**, Ltd, business 1<sup>st</sup> Wed, social 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, 7PM basement, Bancroft Depot, Portage County Historical Society, Heritage Park, Washington Ave, ex GB&W tracks, Plover, Wisconsin. <http://www.trainweb.org/cwmr/>

**Clipper City Model Railroad Club**, membership meeting 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday 7:30 PM, Iron Horse Barn, Manitowoc County Expo Fair Grounds, Manitowoc, Wisconsin (HO, N, O).

Questions? [jimchadek@charter.net](mailto:jimchadek@charter.net)

or see <http://www.clippercitymodelrailroadclub.org/>

**Paper Valley Model Railroad Club** (501 c 3) meets Thursday 7 – 9 PM and Sat 1 – 3 PM W2221 Block Road, Kaukauna, WI 54130.

See <http://www.papervalleymodelrailroad.com/>

**Wisconsin Valley Railroad Club**, meets Thursday 7:45PM at 403 McIndoe St (Yawkey House basement), Marathon County Historical Society, Wausau, WI (enter through rear door). Rod Beckman, Pres 715-842-7232

See <http://www.wld-nmra.com/Wausau-WiscValley.htm>

**Sheboygan Society of Scale Model Railroad Engineers, Ltd.** Meets / open Tuesday and Thursday evenings, at Sheboygan Railroad Museum, 1001 N 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Sheboygan, WI. See: [www.sssmre.org](http://www.sssmre.org)

**Northwoods Model Railroad Club**, business 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday 7 PM Minocqua Museum, Work sessions every Wednesday 7 – 9 PM / Eric Drochner, PO Box 799, Woodruff, WI 54568-0799.

See: [http://www.wld-nmra.com/northwoods\\_model\\_rr\\_club.htm](http://www.wld-nmra.com/northwoods_model_rr_club.htm)

**Rhineland Railroad Club**, business 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday, 7 PM at the Logging Museum Depot, operating / maintenance Wednesday 7 PM same location or 123 Brown Street, Rhineland, WI with modular layout. See [www.rrahome.org](http://www.rrahome.org)

**Three Lakes Model Railroad Club**, dates open, meet at members homes and / or with the Rhineland Railroad Association. See [www.tlmrc.org](http://www.tlmrc.org)

Questions, comments or problems: call Superintendent: Paul A Wussow 312-543-4989  
Praise, congratulatory or simple fun: call Editor: Roger G Blocks 262-989-4338

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## ***Stock built Atlas Signal Tower Kit in HO:***

*what I did to make it a better model*

*by P.A. Wussow*

I started the idea of the Kit-A-Long last year before a number of us found ourselves in need of medical care or as caregivers to members of our families.



A number of folks were able to work on and even finish the towers by this time and others are just getting started. About mid September I thought it would be fun to fill in some time down in Glen Ellyn by building the signal tower, not as a kit-bash or with major modifications, but rather enhance the kit with small additions and careful painting and weathering.

According to my photo data it was September 14, 2012 that with airbrush in hand I started to construct my signal tower.

This Kit originated by Atlas perhaps inspired Fine Scale Models (FSM) Signal Tower #30 by George Sellios. It was a craftsman kit using strip wood and thick fiberboard for the brick walls and the shingled roof. Atlas produced their kit in plastic and along with many other Atlas kits the tower has become a classic on many model railroads. Both the Atlas and FSM kits are superb.

Back in the early 1980s John Olson produced a series of articles for Model Railroader Magazine and later combined the articles into a book entitled: Building An HO Model Railroad With Personality. Keith and I saw his layout in person at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Model Railroader. John presented many ideas for building and detailing plastic kits while building his project layout. His efforts were a strong influence on my work.

### **Story of My Tower**

This Atlas tower would have started life as an “Armstrong” tower using levers to control the interlocking. (See my clinic on this topic). Later in life the tower would have been upgraded to a Union Switch and Signal Company relay controlled interlocking system. That conversion eliminated the “Armstrong” levers and replaced them with an electronic control panel and relay racks. In the last few years flat screen LCD panels capable of displaying an entire division have been added to

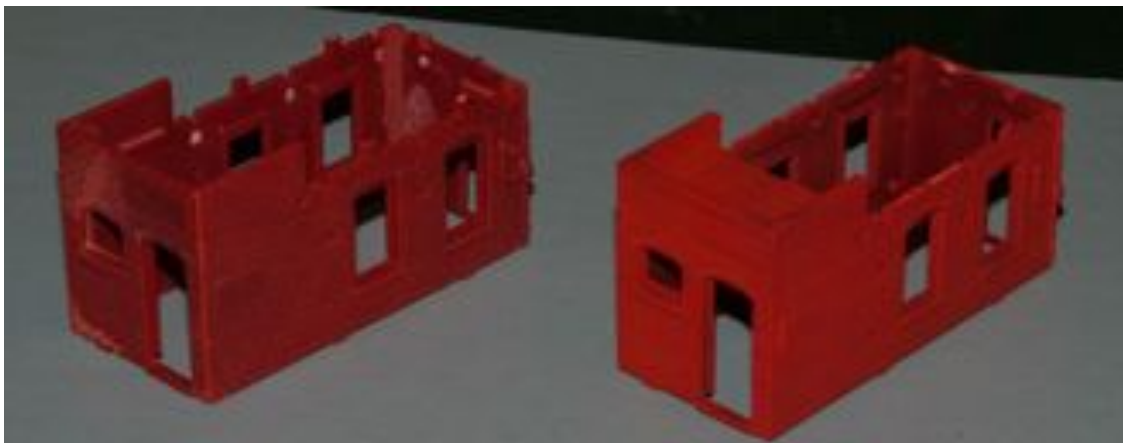
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the operator's desk. This photo (below) shows an actual Union Switch and Signal control panel in operation.



### **Brick Detail**

After cementing brick walls together I airbrushed one kit with Floquil caboose red as a base color to kill the plastic shine and provide a base for mortar and additional weathering. This photo shows the before and after of the brick section assembly.

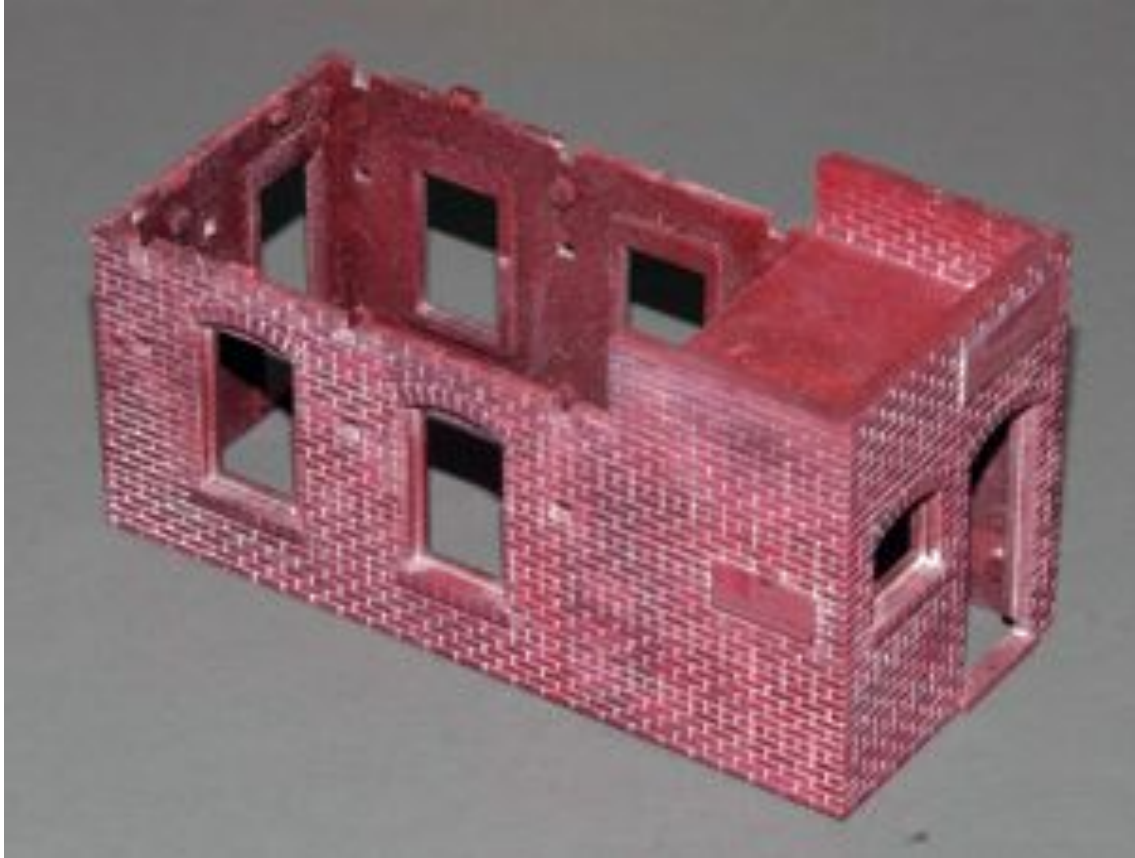


To provide mortar lines between the brick detail I used pastel chalk. Using a #11 blade, I scraped basic white and a small amount of black artist pastels onto a paper

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and mixed them to achieve the desired mortar color. I then used a stiff brush to work the chalk into the grout lines on the walls. A quick coat of Dulcoat showed I needed more chalk. I redid the last step but with a damp thumb cleared most of the chalk off the brick before recoating with Dulcoat.



### **Dealing with the woodwork**

I next concentrated on parts that represent wood but are made from plastic. Dividing up the parts by color to be painted I airbrushed base coats on to the walls, windows and doors. I followed John's color suggestions and attempted to get some faded paint effect on the wood.

You can see (below, next page) I failed to achieve the aging perfection sought and only was able to reproduce a small area of faded paint. This was due to having to take a time out from modeling and letting the yellow paint harden before soaking it with thinner to bring out the Roof Brown undercoat. I later went back and remixed a darker yellow by adding roof brown to paint the outside of the second floor.

What I saw as imperfection was actually the non-uniformity we find in life. My paint job was not what I'd sought; however, it provided an acceptable illusion.



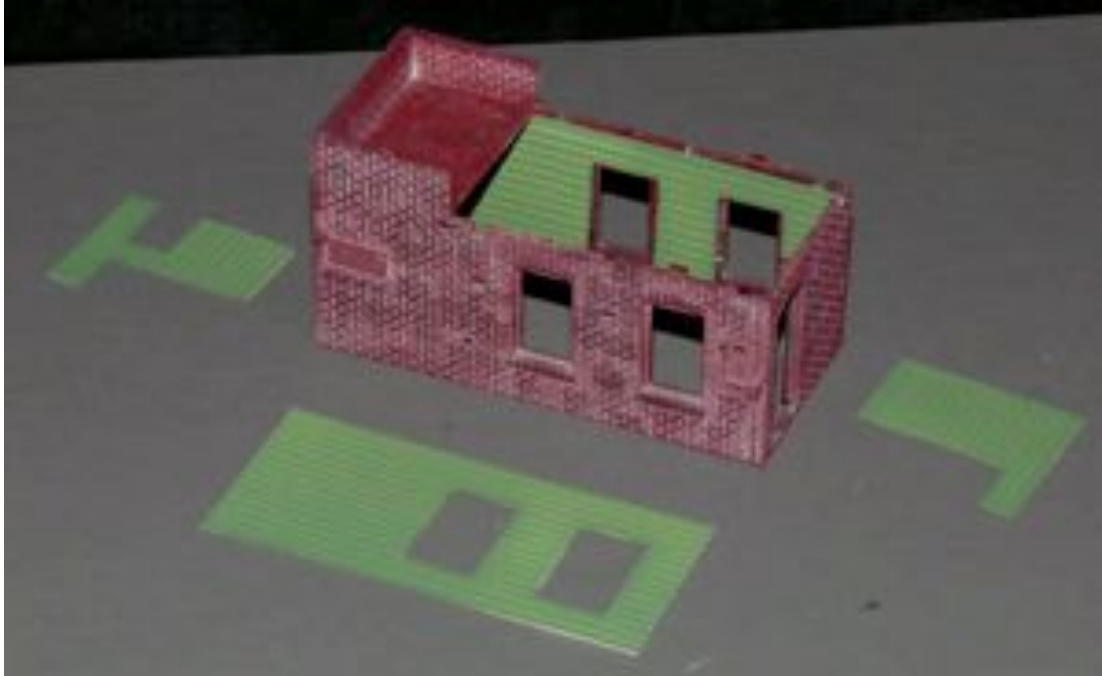
### **Adding Interior to the First and Second Floor**

Next, I started thinking about interior detail and lighting to add interest to the tower. When you look in the windows of a stock kit all you molding vents and backs of unpainted walls. The many window openings offered opportunity to provide ample interior detail with expectation that it would be seen and appreciated.

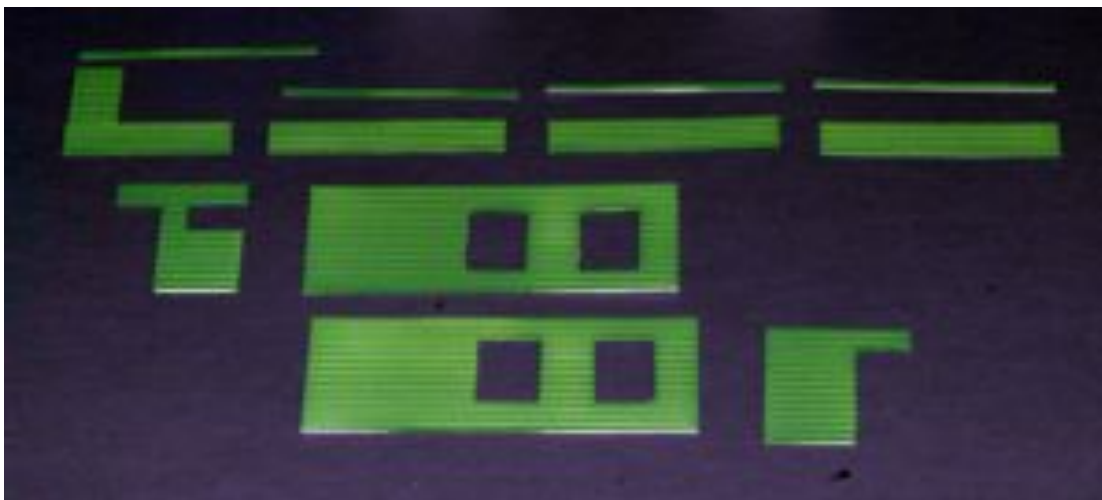
Having been working on a few scratch-building projects I have collected quite a bit of Evergreen plastic so I started by fitting interior walls within the tower. A light-green institutional wall color (made by tinting light green with white paint) for the interior seemed appropriate as you'll see in the photos on the next page.



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The photo above shows the interior walls cut out and some fit into the lower level. The lighter the interior paints the better the view when lights are added. Ejector pins when removed from the model still protrude about 4 scale inches high. Thus, you can put in 2 X4 studs to hold the walls into the space around the windows and doors. Additional details like relay cabinets and a desk fill the second floor space. File, grind or otherwise remove vents from the doors and windows or they will show when viewed close-up.



Here we see the upper level walls before installation.

## **Sub-assemblies and Test the final Assembly**

This kit has at least 2 complete sub-assemblies that allow you to work on each section on its own and then put it together and check to see how it is coming together. I did this many times. During a test fit of the building and with the placement of the windows I noticed that the white color of the windows on the ground floor drew attention to them and there was no reason for focus on these windows. My solution was to find a color that would prevent them from standing out while remaining a contrasting color so as not to be lost in the brick and weathering. My answer was CNW Dark Green. So it was back to the Airbrush and turning the windows green. I used the windows from a second kit as they were on a sprue and easier to paint. Compare the color effect in these 2 photos. The one on the left is aesthetically more pleasing.

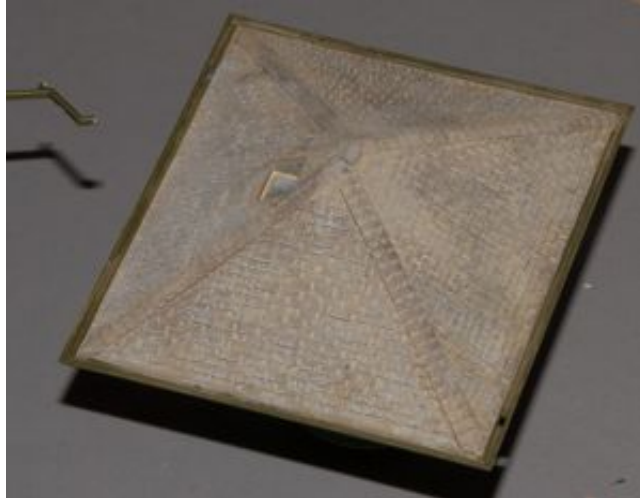


## **Roof**

I put the roof off to be the last major part to work on because it does top off the building and most of the time the people are looking down on the building's roof. I had used John Olson's technique on my Atlas station with great success some 30 years ago and was a little worried about how I would do this time around. Starting with the airbrushing of the roof with gray primer and letting it dry for a number of days, in my case weeks, I started to fill in the gaps between the shingles with a wash of Floquil Roof Brown and thinner. I was pleased that the longer drying time and the new formula of the thinner did not hurt the plastic. I remember the bottom edged of the station's roof starting to melt with the layers of Dio-Sol, not this time the new formula did not cause this problem. After a day or two of drying time I added the aged wood color using Floquil Mud (it falls between Earth and Depot Buff) giving the roof a mixture of aging shingles. The final touch before weathering was to dry brush the edges of shingles with gray primer to highlight the edges to make up for the sunlight we fail to have on our layouts.

## Ending Up in the Gutter

While I say I finished the roof most would agree that the gutters are part of the roof as well, but I might point out there other parts of the gutters, like down spouts and drains. These presented another problem as the normal gutter back then was galvanized which rusted over the years or if replaced would be a selected color of modern gutter. Traveling



about I found a building of a similar age with Copper gutters that weathered with a patina of dark greenish brown. Once again wanting to these elements to take somewhat of a back seat to the overall tower I chose the greenish brown over rusted silver. It took a few tests but with small HO scale 1

X 6 painted and rusted I could see how the darker color fell back while not being lost to the viewer. (By the way the 00000 sable brush used to paint the inside of the gutters costs 1.5 times the cost of the kit.)

At this point I will end my newsletter article on the kit as I have yet to detail the plastic base to look like wood. The base that comes with the kit is very helpful is gluing up the brick walls. I have also not addressed weathering nor explained construction of internal details on each floor or addition of the lights. I assure you there is more to come and I will be adding many photos of the process to the Kit-A-Long Web pages accessible from our home page.

See [www.tlmrc.org](http://www.tlmrc.org) and look for this project. Good luck on your version. Share your ideas and we'll all do a better job.