



Model Railroading 101 First RRMA Workshop Planned

As part of our mission to encourage participation in the model railway hobby in general, the Regina Railway Modellers Association (RRMA) is planning on holding a "Model Railroading 101" workshop early in the spring of this year.

The presentation as planned will include a PowerPoint component that includes a look at the RRMA and five sections:

- Anything goes (how real railroading can impact model railways);
- A review of scales, focusing on HO, O and N scales;
- Things to consider;
- A basic comparison between DC and DCC systems; and

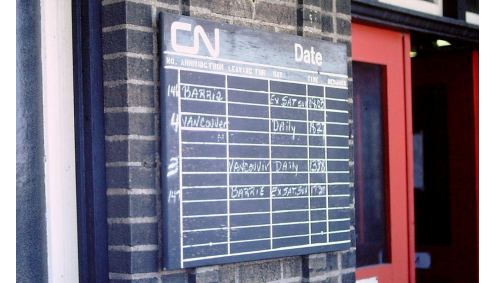
- The steps to planning a model railway layout.

We're still working out the final details including the date. Once determined, notice will be provided through our e-mail list and other places.

This workshop is designed for the novice model railroader - someone who may have a basic layout and wants to know a bit more or for anyone who would like to join the hobby.

If you of anyone who might be interested, please pass along the date and time once announced.

All aboard! ◀◀



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Display Layout Goes Into Winter Storage

Our display/test layout modules have grown since we had them on display at the Echo Valley Model Railway Show in October.

We plan to have the expanded version on display at the model railway show in Moose Jaw held at the Western Development Museum over the March 21-22 weekend.

The expanded modules take the existing straight and corner sections and add another corner and three straight sections that create a large U-shaped layout.

The new modules include a yard and several industrial and trackside buildings will be added to the modules. All track is wired for complete DCC operation.

Until then the layouts have been placed in storage as their temporary home in Tom's garage was needed for more "garage" purposes - i.e., car storage!

The RRMA group still meets most if not all Mondays. Be sure that you're on our e-mail list and our Secretary, Corie will let you know what's happening in advance each week. ◀◀



Using Track Planning Software

Thinking about building a new layout? Have lots of pieces of track but don't know what to build? One answer is to use track planning software to help.

In this edition of On Track, we take a look at one example of track planning software. This is a high level review of only one example of many programs that exist, but

hopefully it offers you a bit of insight into using software aids.

The example featured in this edition is known as Simple Computer Aided Railway Modeller or SCARM.

Other examples of track planning software include AnyRail™ and XTrackCAD. ◀◀



A look at one example of track planning software

If you're just starting the planning of your layout, you may find track planning software of some assistance. In this issue, we take a look at one example - Simple Computer Aided Railway Modeller or SCARM.

SCARM was returned as one of the top matches using a Google search for "model railroad track planning freeware". The site can be found at "www.scarm.info".

The software was easy to install and requires a little over 5 Mb of disk space to install.

SCARM was authored in Europe but includes a wide range of products including major North American suppliers.

SCARM is designed to allow you to piece together your planned layout using sections of track including straight sections, curved sections, flex track, switches, crossovers and other track pieces.

Creating a layout is relatively straight forward. Pieces of track "join up" end-to-end when the overlapping end arrows turn green of a section of track.

Flex track can be used to bridge sections where conventional pieces of fixed track do not seem to line up. The flex track can be "clipped" to the proper length and again will only connect when properly aligned.

SCARM also allows track to be elevated. By using the height feature, track is raised in increments of 1/10th of an inch. By clicking adjacent, connected sections of track, the line is gradually raised up and the gradient is automatically calculated so that you can ensure that the slope is manageable (i.e. less than two percent).

Signals, bridges, tunnels and tunnels can be added as well.

A 3D feature allows you to view your layout from just about any angle.

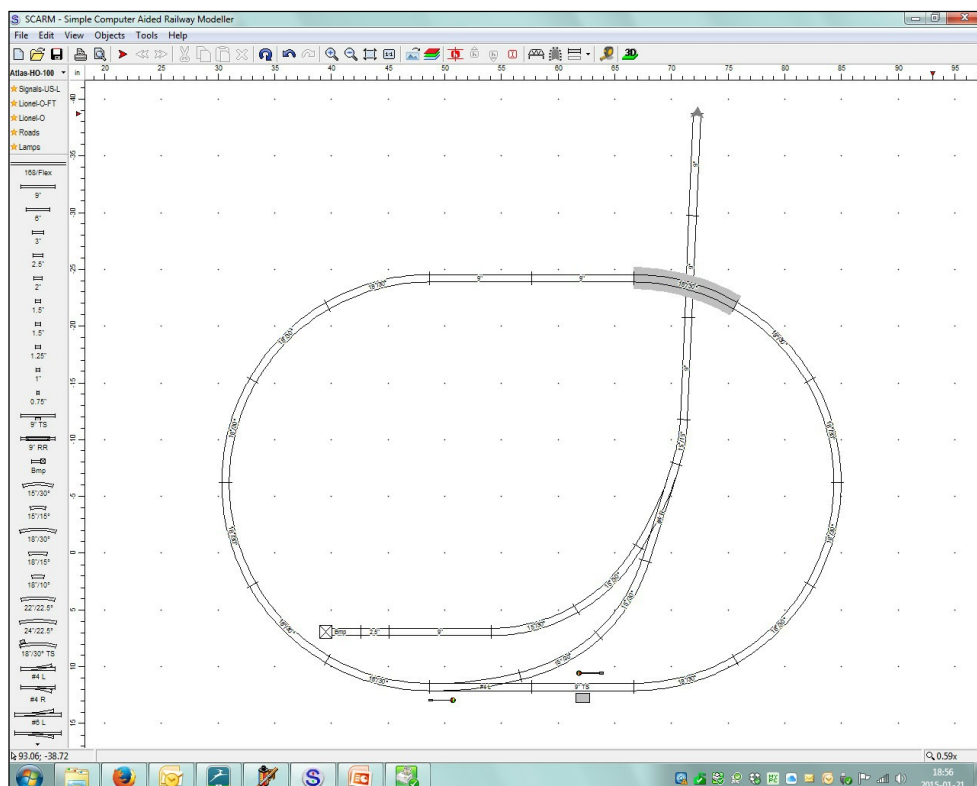
Once the layout is designed to your satisfaction, SCARM will create a shopping list of the track pieces and the other elements that the software used to build

your design. The list is displayed, albeit in small type, in a spreadsheet style display on the screen.

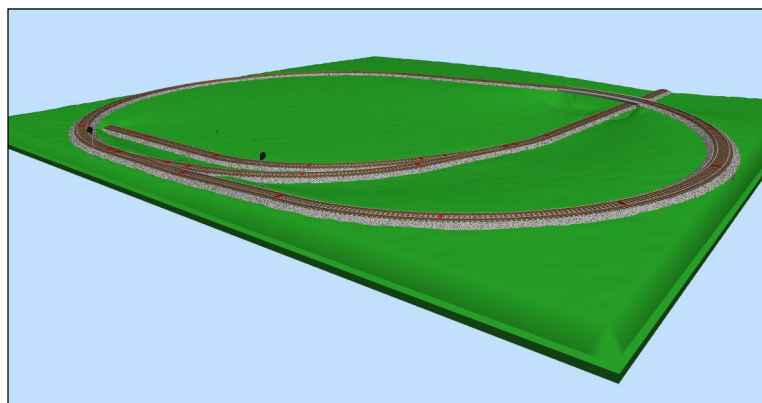
We found the software fairly easy to use but it did have its "buggy" moments that required a bit of trial and error. SCARM does provide some online help that is

limited in nature but was nevertheless useful.

Given that it's free, it certainly merits a look if you're interested in using track planning software to help design your layout. ◀◀



[Above] SCARM allows you to select pieces of track from various suppliers in a range of scales including HO, O, N, O-27, OO and others and plan your layout. In the example shown here, a loop and two spur tracks have been assembled using Atlas Code 100 Snap Track. The oval includes a bridge over the spur line, two signals near the main line track switch and terminal track for power adjacent to this switch.



[Left] This view shows a 3D view of the planned layout. While hard to see in this view, the track is shown including the vertical slopes. Signals are also shown in position.



The Prototype Page - Who is TTX? - Part 2

In the previous issue of On Track, we looked at TTX intermodal and automobile cars. In this issue, we look at a few other car types supplied by TTX.

TTX is a railcar pooling company that leases cars to railroads and others. ◀◀

Box cars

The TTX web site describes its box cars as, "... multi-purpose railcars useful for carrying anything that requires protection from the weather, such as paper, food products, and manufactured goods. TTX's boxcar fleet consists of three boxcar types: an older 50-foot, Plate-C, standard-capacity 70-ton boxcar, and two new, Plate-F, high-capacity 100-ton boxcars in 50-foot and 60-foot versions.

"The larger Plate-F, high-capacity boxcars come in two versions: a 50-foot high-cube boxcar for paper loading, initialled FBOX, and a 60-foot high-cube initialled TBOX with double-doors and a 16-foot wide door opening for lumber, canned goods, beer, wine, steel, and other manufactured and consumer products, such as appliances.

"Many of the 50-foot Plate-C cars are equipped with a 10-foot sliding door initialled RBOX, with about 10% initialled ABOX and equipped with a 6-foot plug door in addition to the 10-foot sliding door, facilitating the loading of lumber, container board and food products, the predominant commodities loaded in this car. "

Flat cars

TTX notes that while it has about 20,000 box cars and gondolas in its car fleet, flat cars make up the largest part of the TTX fleet - over 200,000 cars by their count!

Flat cars are divided into several types of units including chain tie-down flats, centre beam flats, bulkhead flats, heavy-duty flat cars, and other specialized flatcars.

The first car illustrated here is a 60-foot long chain tie-down flat car carrying the HTTX markings. (Continued on [page 4](#))



[Above] TBOX 663026 is 60-foot long, double door, excess height box car in the TTX railcar pool. It is designated as a type "XP" box car which is "specially equipped, designed, and/or structurally suitable for a specific commodity loading". The car has an inside length of 60 feet 9 inches, an inside height of 13 feet 1 inch, and an overall height of 17 feet 0 inches. It has a load limit of 205,700 pounds and weighs 81,300 pounds empty. The excess height of the car is noted by the white panels at the top of the car ends. The car could turn up on just about any railroad but is shown here in March 2013 on the BNSF in North Dakota. (David Onodera photo)



[Above] HTTX 92929 is a 60-foot, chain tie-down flat car used in general service used by shippers to carry large, bulky items such as farm implements, construction equipment, heavy machinery, vehicles of all types, and military traffic, as shown here. The car shown has a load limit of 155,500 pounds. It was seen in Regina in March 2013. (David Onodera photo)

[Below] HTTX 93950 is another example of a 60-foot flat car from the same train as shown above. Perhaps more notable is the passenger car Tioga Pass, leased from LA Rail and acting as an escort car for the military loads. The Tioga Pass was built in 1959 for Canadian National as one of 12 similar business cars and spent most of its 30 years of service in Canada based in Edmonton. Today, it has been fully restored and operates out of Los Angeles on a charter basis. See [page 6](#) for another photo. (David Onodera photo)





The Prototype Page - Who is TTX? - Part 2



[Above] TTX 81624 is a bulk head flat car with a load limit of 181,800 pounds. The car has short end bulk heads and stake sides that help prevent loads from shifting on the car while travelling. In this case, the car is carrying bundles of steel rods. There are three sets of rods, end to end, in five tiers vertically and an unknown number across the width of the car. In any event, the load will be heavy and can be subject to shifting if not properly secured. This shot was taken in October 2013 in Regina. (David Onodera photo)

[Below] LTTX 136334 is an 89-foot long specialty flat car designed to carry over length loads such as hydro poles and pipe. The six sets of side supports are fixed to the car and ratchet-type tie downs line the car. The length of the car is illustrated by the long overhang at each end of the car. This shot was taken in May 2012 in Regina. (David Onodera photo)



[Above] Unfortunately this shot is slightly out of focus (at least on the car) but it still illustrates one of TTX's heavy duty, depressed centre flat cars. This eight axle car is designed to carry over size, overweight loads such as this electrical transformer. The two trucks and four axles at each end of the car help to more evenly distribute the weight, making travel by rail possible. Usually such loads are restricted to lower speeds of travel. September 2014 in Regina. (David Onodera photo)

(Continued from [page 3](#)) The company notes that, "TTX owns a fleet of 60-foot and 89-foot chain tie-down cars used by shippers to carry large, bulky items such as farm implements, construction equipment, heavy machinery, vehicles of all types, and military traffic. The configurations of the cars vary, but all are equipped with either 1/2-inch or 3/8-inch chains, and use wood or steel decks, with capacity ranging between 140,000 - 170,000 lbs."

TTX bulk head flat cars are designed to carry a range of commodities. The bulk heads are designed to prevent loads from shifting.

A standard bulk head flat car has 11 foot high bulk heads. The TTX car shown on the left has shorter bulk heads.

The 89-foot LTTX flat car shown is an example of an over length car with no bulkheads but equipped with side supports. It would seem that almost any combination of equipment is possible.

TTX owns a wide variety of heavy-duty, flat deck and depressed deck flat cars specifically designed for extra heavy shipments. In the case of depressed centre cars, oversized loads can also be accommodated.

TTX states that it can offer 20 different types of cars with capacities from 100 to 370 tons.

The final type of flat car owned by TTX is a centre beam bulk head car commonly used for lumber and forest products. They can be used for other products and have a capacity of between 70 and 100 tons. A photo on page 6 shows this type of car in service.

That's about it for part two of our look at what rolling stock is owned by TTX. More in a future issue. ◀





Modeling Structures Some Thoughts on Kitbashing and Scratch Building

By David Onodera

If you know me at all, you know that I enjoy building gas stations from scratch or by kitbashing a model. It seems that ever since I was a child, I wanted to run or work at a service station. Although I never did that, I do pump my own gas (sometimes).

There are a few gas station kits available but I prefer to scratch build my own (or at a minimum, kitbash one to give it the look that I want it to have.

One of my two RRMA modules will have space for a gas station. I've decided to build four versions of an Esso station as it might have appeared in the late 1950's or early 60's, one in a 1970's version, one in a 1990's convenience store form and the fourth in a modern form as found today.

The buildings will all have the same footprint overall and will be designed to quickly change depending on the "date" of the module.

On the right, you can see the finished "modern" gas bar / convenience store / car wash combo in a photo taken in our backyard.

The lower view provides a closer look at some of the detailing. On this models, there are no working lights.

The other three versions will make use of LED's to provide lighting for night scenes.

I am using small LED's purchased for Evans Designs in Colorado. Most are nano (1 mm) sized LED's that provide plenty of light.

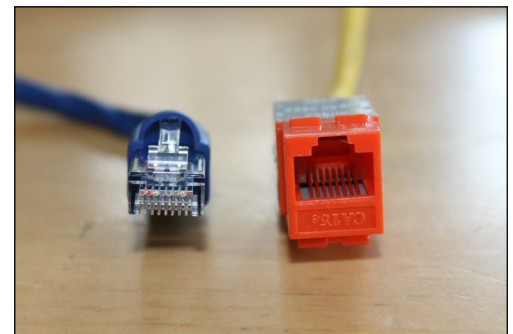
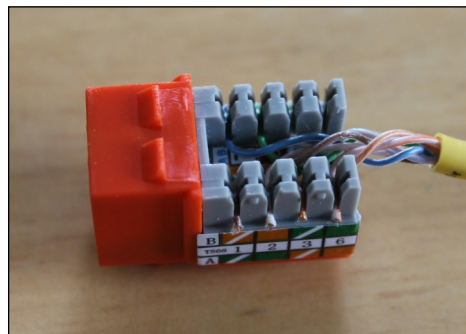
The lighting will be grouped by function (i.e. pump island lights, canopy lights, signs, building interior, etc.).

As the LED's are polarized and consume very little power, each circuit of LED's leads to a single positive wire lead and a common ground wire.

I decided to try Cat 5 computer cables to allow each version to be unplugged and removed easily. Each Cat 5e plug allows for



[Above & right] A scratch built HO scale model of a modern Esso station. The details make the scene but lighting was not added to this version. Backlighting 3D letters on the canopy would have been very difficult.



[Above] Cat 5e cables and plugs are common within the communications sector. I found these connectors and a Cat 5e cable at my local home improvement store. Each Cat 5e connector has eight connections that are numbered. You just have to be sure to keep track of what wire you've used for each circuit as well as for the negative ground connections. This is critical when you're using LED's as they are polarized. The connectors cost about four dollars each.

up to eight wires to be connected, meaning a maximum of seven circuits (seven positive wires and a common ground) can be connected through a single plug.

Each lit version of a station will have all LED leads terminate at a Cat 5e plug. A Cat 5e cable is then used to link to a common panel of switches that will control the lamps and provide a battery power supply.

In case you're wondering why I selected a battery-based system, I am speculating that the time the lights will actually be on will be minimal and the use of a battery eliminates the need for external power.

In a future issue, I'll share with you how this project turns out. Things will change as I build, so stay tuned and have a "bash" yourself! ◀◀



The Tioga Pass Business Car



[Above] The Tioga Pass business car brings up the rear of a special military equipment move passing through Regina in March 2013. The car was built in 1959 by CN in Point St. Charles, Quebec - one of 12 similar units. The car is now owned by LA Rail in Los Angeles and is available for lease.. Here the car is facing the opposite direction than it would have as a business car. We presume that the onboard personnel should be more interested in the cargo than the passing track! At any rate, the photo shows that you can still find "mixed trains" on occasion today! (David Onodera photo)

Centre Beam Flat Car



[Above] Although this car is owned by CP/SOO, it is an example of a centre beam bulkhead flat car being used to carry finished lumber products. The centre beam helps stabilized the load. Cars must loaded and unloaded from both sides evenly to prevent the car from tipping over! (David Onodera photo)



[Left] Here's a view of a CP Rail freight taken some years ago in Ontario. Behind the two SD40-2F units is an empty centre beam flat car similar to the car shown above. Without a load, the loading/unloading warnings can be seen on the end bulkhead. The lettering also notes that the distance between the end bulkheads is 73 feet. From this angle, the centre beam is quite evident and heavy. By lashing the cargo to the centre beam, the load is not likely to shift in transit. Also note the signals ahead of the train at the end of the double tracked section around the curve. (David Onodera photo)

New Look for RMC Magazine

Railroad Model Craftsman, recently taken over by White River Productions, has given the veteran publication a fresh, new look with the January 2015 issue.

The magazine is published monthly as seeks to position itself as a "craftsman" publication with articles focusing on builders showing off their own layouts and projects.



The cover story of the January 2015 issue features an HO scale SOO SD60M project as built by Efram Ellenbogen - a nice project with a Canadian connection.

The real prototype, veteran SOO unit was built in 1989 by General Motors Diesel Division in London, Ontario and is now CP 6260.

The magazine is a good companion to Model Railroader, loaded with interesting articles, tips, ideas, ads and inspiration. You can find it at Redline Hobby in Regina as well. ◀◀

**REGINA
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