

COWTOWN MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

FORT WORTH TEXAS

CMRRC



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General Meeting

The March monthly meeting of the CMRRC will be on March 18th at 7:00 pm. The program for the evening will TBD. Hope to see you there.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Joe Pritchett



The North Texas Council has announced the show dates for the 2024/2025 Show Season. The Fall show will be September 28th & 29th 2024. The January show will be January 18th & 19th, 2025. Planning for the shows is getting started.

We have had a couple of run sessions of the last few weeks that uncovered some places that need track repair. A couple of those have already been repaired and we are working on the remaining. We are currently testing a new way to clean track using Mineral Spirits. Tom is working on the other St. Charles panel and George continues to make progress on the town. Dale and I have done some track/electrical repairs. The cold weather should be just about behind us, so the room will be

comfortable for a while. We have resumed Thursday night sessions. The Saturday morning sessions are unchanged. Watch your email for the next work/operating session. I encourage everyone to come out and participate.

Not much work was getting done on the layout over the last month due to the focus on operating sessions. Get with Dale or I if you would like to do program for one of the meetings, we are always looking for new topics.

Now that cars have been spotted on the layout make sure that if you need to move a car to work on something that you put it back where it was. When you are out working on the layout, please make the sure that nothing is left on the rails and remove any leftover materials that could interfere with the testing. If you know someone that might be interested in joining the club, be sure to invite them out since we are open to having new members. I want to thank Dale for all of work it takes to put together the newsletter each month.

The normal schedule of Thursday night sessions is from 6:30 – 8:30pm, 1st & 3rd Saturdays but watch your phone for changes. Saturday sessions will start at 9:00am and run until 12:00pm.



Joe Pritchett
President - Cowtown Model RR
Club



TREASURER'S REPORT

by Dale Schmidtbleicher

Membership stands at 8 active members.

The color ink cartridge on the club printer needs replacing. I have ordered a new high capacity cartridge from Amazon, \$32.48. We also have our annual liability insurance bill due by April 1st., \$890.00, which I will be sending in a check.

As always, a full treasurer's report will be made at the Club's monthly meeting.

Please mail your dues to the following address:

[Note the new address]

**CMRRC
4504 Quail Hollow Ct.
Fort Worth, TX 76133**

Make payable to: "Cowtown Model Railroad Club".



www.cmrrc.net

We are on occasion getting some requests/feedback from our **cmrrc.net** website and I will forward any information of interest to the membership. Each month I get an update on how many visitors we had visiting the club's site. We have a steady stream at least taking a look-see.



Operation

We continue to alternate layout work sessions and operation sessions. As always, track can stand to be cleaned during work sessions. We have been trying out using mineral spirits to clean track and will see if it does better than isopropyl alcohol.

Operating sessions will be announced to all members by text or e-mail. We hope to see more members attending in the future. With the cooler temperature we expect to run more sessions.

Update on Construction

by Dale Schmidtbleicher

What's new in the area of layout construction?



Tom has been working on the cleaning up the west end St. Charles Yard switch panel.

The lower level isn't up and functional yet and will probably need a lot of electrical drops added to get it operational. Plus, the track will need a major cleaning. The lower level encompasses the Gulf and Denver double ended yard as well as a single ended yard and wye for reversing coming out of the yard.

Gene has been added scenery to the hillside in the downtown St. Charles area.

Joe and I have been working some track issues. I have also reworked the tank train routing so that it now starts off in the opposite direction and can use the Mountain States refinery tracks switching out cars more easily.

George has spent a lot of time working on the townsite of Midway. He has populated the town with vehicles and has also added some backdrop structure flats to give the area depth. Soon figures

and other details will be added. It is beginning to look like a real town.



Doug had been cleaning track and has started dusting off freight cars with a small hand-held vacuum. He has also started adding basic ground (dirt) texture to the area around the Acme Company and Schoenberg Milling Co.

MONTHLY SCHEDULE

General Meeting:

The monthly Railroad Club meeting is held at 7:00 PM on the 3rd Monday of the month.



The meeting is held at the Handley Community Center in the first-floor room.

Normal Work/Operate Schedule:

With the cooler temperatures, we are back to our normal work/operations sessions.

The normal work schedule is as follows:
Thursday Nights 6:30 PM-9:00 PM

1st & 3rd Saturday 9:00 AM-12 Noon.

Operating sessions will be announced by text and e-mail prior to the scheduled event.

Make a Realistic Lake

Franz Rittig



With a little know-how and a little patience, realistic water scenes like this placid lake are within reach of any modeler.

Much has been written about modeling rivers and lakes, and model railroad suppliers make a variety of products that deliver excellent results. In spite of this, many of us find it difficult to model water

convincingly. But expert model builder Josef Brandl says that good results are within the reach of any modeler.

Josef is well known to readers of European model railroad magazines, and his realistic Alpine streams and seemingly bottomless mountain lakes are highlights of his work. The results of his labors are often the envy of his fellow modelers, but envy is the most honest form of recognition!

Josef is quick to admit that he didn't always succeed in his early attempts at modeling water. It took plenty of trial and error before his results became truly realistic. Josef recommends mastering still waters, such as the mountain lake shown here, before attempting more-challenging water effects like rapids or foaming water.

Most model water starts as a liquid that's poured into a prepared bed and allowed to harden. If mixing the chemicals and containing the liquid where it's needed seems too daunting, Josef notes that stained-glass supply companies offer slightly waved glass that looks like water moved by a gust of wind.

But if you're ready to tackle a commercial water product, Josef can offer some insights about his methods.

Have a plan



Fig. 1 Seal the surface. Most products sold for modeling water go on as a liquid, so it's important to not have any holes or cracks in the lake bed. Josef uses spackling compound to form a seal from the plywood base to the banks and then applies surface details like rocks, sand, and bits of driftwood.

Good results start with good planning. A water feature, whether a still pond or a roaring cascade, needs to be given thorough consideration early in the layout planning process. The projected course of rivers and creeks, as well as the position of lakes, require a seamless base of plywood. It's not a good idea to simply excavate extruded polystyrene insulation board and pour in a water preparation.

With his plywood base in place, Josef forms the shoreline using common techniques, such as plaster over a lattice of cardboard or insulation board carved to the desired shape, as shown in **fig. 1**. Then he applies a coat of spackling compound across the entire river or lake bed, carrying the compound up onto the banks. As a finishing touch, Josef carves and shapes the spackling. Other products, such as plaster joint compound, could be used as well.

The purpose of this base coat is to make a realistic transition between land and water. It also serves as a leak-proof lining when you pour in a two-part resin water compound.

The colors of nature



Fig. 2 Paint the lake bed. Varying shades of paint represent the different depths of the lake. Really deep water calls for really deep black!

When the base coat representing the bed of the lake has completely dried, Josef paints it, being careful to avoid uniform colors. In some places, Josef uses light green or blue tones, partly mixed with brown. Other water features are dominated by light blue, sometimes even dark green colors. It's a good idea, Josef notes, to have correctly exposed color photographs and to refer to them often. Remember that the color of real streams and lakes varies with

the season and with the time of day, clouds, and other lighting conditions.

Most of all, Josef says, it's important to remain patient and keep trying colors until you hit upon a suitable combination of tones.

A thick coat of resin by itself doesn't particularly look like deep water. Depth is best shown by painting the deeper parts of the lake in darker colors, black in **fig. 2**, with the color gradually becoming lighter toward the shore. It's also important to avoid abrupt transitions between different colors. [For tips on modeling streams, see the "Modeling rivers and creeks" sidebar, page 71. - *Ed.*]

To model the banks, Josef often uses coarse sand, even bits of quartz. He includes small pieces of wood to represent half-sunken trees and branches. While bigger stones must be glued separately, Josef applies the gravel and sand exactly as if he were ballasting railroad track, by soaking it thoroughly with "wet" water (water with a drop or two of added detergent), then dribbling on a coat of diluted white glue.

Modeling rivers and creeks



Creeks and small rivers often display a remarkably wide range of colors. Paying attention to the natural colors found in the area you model is a big step toward making realistic scenery.

Shallow clear-water creeks also need detailed streambeds. Josef feels that a variety of stone and gravel sizes, all from the same type of rock, is just as important as finding the correct colors.

Josef prefers to use rounded stones in his riverbeds and coarse sand or fine quartz on the banks. It's a nice touch, he adds, to include larger stones standing out of the resin water. These stones have to be glued individually, but sand and fine rocks can be glued using the same methods as ballasting track.

Everybody who has ever stood on the banks of a foaming river knows that moisture covers parts of the land. Stones or wood situated close to the water should glisten.

Depending on the river's current, you can model vegetation right down to the waterline. Again, take your cue from nature. A bed of reeds wouldn't grow alongside white-water rapids! - *F.R.*

Filling the basin



Fig. 3 Check level. Before pouring epoxy resin, Josef makes sure the water will form an even layer by making sure the future lake bed is level.

With the bed painted and the shore fully detailed, Josef is finally ready to pour on the epoxy resin. He uses a two-part resin because it looks very realistic when it has hardened. However, there's a downside. Liquid epoxy resin has a tendency to drain through even a tiny hole in the surface of the layout. So, Josef takes extra time to check every part of the bed before pouring the epoxy. After all, he can't correct details or colors once they've been covered by resin; nor can he easily undo a poorly made river or lake. He also uses a carpenter's level, shown in **fig. 3** on

page 69, to make sure the resin will form an even layer across the lake bed.



Fig. 4 Pour resin. Josef works slowly as he pours epoxy resin and watches for needed adjustments. Once the epoxy hardens, it'll be too late for changes.



Fig. 5 Place lakeside scenery. This calm lake has a bed of tall grass growing in the shallows. Most water scenery products start to set fairly quickly, so Joseph makes sure that his tools and scenic materials are close at hand.

When he's certain that he has a good base to work with, Josef mixes his water compound. Josef uses a German product, Vosschemie Glosscoat, a high-gloss two-part epoxy resin. But Josef says that knowing how to handle your chosen material properly is more important than specific brands. Many epoxy resin compounds produce a strong odor as they cure and need to be mixed and poured in a well-ventilated area. Woodland Scenics and Enviro-Tex offer products that produce similar results and are more friendly to use in a typical home environment.

Reading all the label directions and following all the

precautions is critical. Josef works slowly and deliberately when pouring the resin compound, shown in **fig. 4**. By watching the results take shape as he pours, he's able to add vegetation, as in **fig. 5**, and make last-minute corrections before the mixture sets. The tools he keeps handy include a wooden coffee stirrer, tweezers, and a mini spatula to model different kinds of moving water.

At the pouring stage, you have time to work with your material but not a lot of time to think about it. This is not the time to wonder what sort of eddies are found at the base of a bridge pier!



Fig. 6 Enjoy the lake. The careful attention to detail in the shallows and the resin's glossy surface combine to form a convincing mountain lake.

According to Josef, the correct mixture as well as the best moment to model waves is a matter of experience. Being familiar with your materials makes all the difference in the world at this point. For that reason, Josef adds, it's best to let the key scenes on your layout wait until you've built up some confidence in your techniques.

Remember, when you're dealing with resin, your first attempt is your *only* attempt, but with a little practice, Josef says, you'll soon be making enviable lakes like the one shown in **fig. 6**.

This article was originally published in the July 2006 issue of Model Railroader.