THE MYAKKA VALLEY EXPRESS

The Voice of The Railroad Education and Learning Center of Florida, Inc.

VOLUME 46, ISSUE NUMBER 12 DECEMBER 2021

Photo furnished by Geoff Haines

"Our Conductor"

"Our Conductor", **Geoff Haines,** all costumed up to greet children as they come to our Open Houses on Saturdays at the club. Complete with pocket watch and authentic ticket punch to punch the tickets we provide, so they have a souvenir to take home with them after their visit. We also provide certificates suitable for framing should a member instruct them as to how to operate a train on either layout (just the O gauge for now) certifying them as "Junior Engineers."

All Aboard!

By Chip Newberger

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday. Betty and I had our Thanksgiving at my son's home in Palmetto along with my sister and her boyfriend and other family members of my daughter-in-law. It felt good to get back more into the holiday seasons of the past. We had a wonderful time, and the weather was gorgeous.

Speaking of parties, we are having our RealRail Holiday Party again this year at **George Borsari's** home on Upper Manatee River Road. Be sure to read the notice on page 9 for more information and sign up at the club.

I had my surgery on November 3rd at the Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa. After 7 days in the hospital, I was able to go home.

The good news is the doctors got all the cancer. The bad news is that it will come back. This was not a cure; we are just buying time. I meet again with the doctors to discuss options concerning chemotherapy on December 15th. Please keep Betty and me in your prayers.

I met RealRail member, **Elizabeth Raphael,** online and on the telephone. She is **Benjamin Estrada's** mother She has agreed to help me with the newsletter. She doesn't want to take over the job as Editor at this time but has agreed to help me. I agreed to stay on as Editor for now and she is very knowledgeable of MS Word. She helped me with this issue. Thank you, Elizabeth.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this month's newsletter
Until next month, **ALL ABOARD!!**

RealRail Notes from the Board
November 2021
By Alex Quesen, Secretary

To our members.

Here are the Highlights from this month's board meeting:

We had a productive meeting this month. The changes to the by-laws have passed in a 22 to 5 vote. The changes reduce the number of board members and convert certain club functions to committees. The new changes will be posted on the website soon. A new computer has been approved for purchase and should be installed in the library in the coming weeks. **David Fontaine** will be setting it up and along with **Warren Walter** establishing what software/data will be allowed to be installed on it. The urinal in the men's room has broken. It has been decided that it is not worth fixing and will be wrapped up to prevent future use. The club store had a record month of sales along with a stellar year. Please thank **Allan Novak**, **Geoff Haines** and the whole store team on a great job earning the club over $16,000 so far this year. **Stan DeViney** will be heading up this year's Christmas Party efforts. So please reach out to him with any help or ideas. **Chip Newberger** is stepping down as editor of our fantastic newsletter. He has offered to train his replacement. **Minton Dings** has volunteered to help.

THE 2022 SHOW:

David Fontaine reports that the show is on track for February 18-20, 2022. 28+ tables have already been sold and things are progressing well as we are still ahead of past years in sales. **Pierre Vautravers** has already started our advertising efforts across multiple magazines and papers.

UPCOMING CLINIC

Minton Dings has volunteered to offer a clinic in December. The clinic will be presented on **Tuesday, December 7 at 6pm**

Upgrading a Blue Box Kit &
Constructing Telltales (time permitting)

Mark your calendar and plan to be there.

Thoughts of a Long Time Ferroequinologist:

SCRATCHBUILDING A COVERED BRIDGE

by Minton Dings, MMR

Inspiration for a Project

I grew up in New Hampshire, a land of covered bridges. The covered bridge with the longest spans in the United States is located ten miles from my boyhood home between Cornish, NH and Windsor, VT, built in 1866. It is still in use today. It is a Town truss supported 449.5-foot roadway bridge in two spans. Ithiel Town (1784 – 1844) was the inventor and patent holder of this truss design. The Town truss construction is the plan for the bridge in this article, except my bridge is only 70 feet long for what might be obvious reasons. I also wanted it to be constructed in my magnetic squaring jib which limited its length. An exact copy of the prototype would be 5 feet, 3 inches in HO scale and very expensive using commercial scale lumber. Most of the materials for this bridge came from my wood supply.

Wherein the Cornish-Windsor bridge has small windows on the exterior, the bridge in this article has one open exterior window on each side, exposing the inner truss work for most of the length of the bridge. This exterior design is familiar to me as the bridge over the Saco River outside Conway, NH, near a swimming hole in which I often swam as a youth while visiting my great uncle and aunt in the summers. After all, with the great amount of work which went into building the truss, there should be a means of exposing the truss walls to viewer.

The Conway bridge has an arch design which will be another project which I will figure out later.

List of Materials

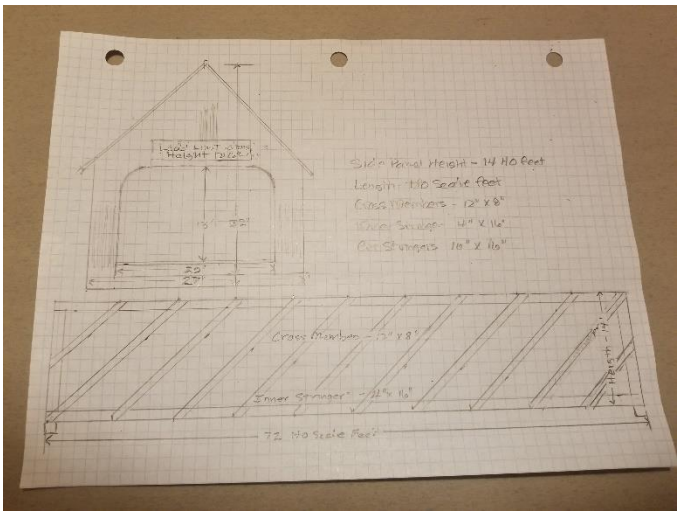
Scale lumber

- 16” x 16,” (outer stringers, floor supports, wall frames, upper wall supports)
- 4” x 16,” (inner stringers)
- 8” x 12,” (cross members, upper wall supports)
- 8” x 16,” (floorboards, roof trusses)
- 8” x 8,” (roof trusses)
- 1/32 (or 1/16) scribed sheet lumber
- Roof shingles or simulated rolled roofing

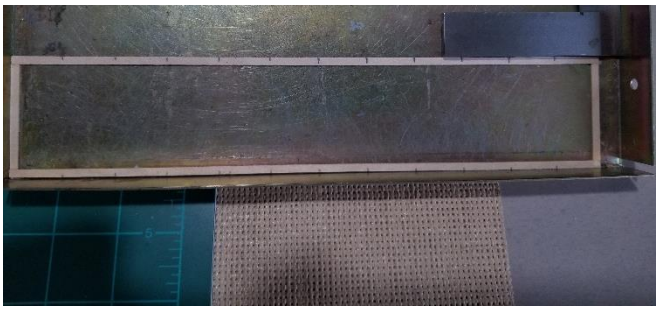
Paint and weathering powders, wood glue

Building the Side Walls

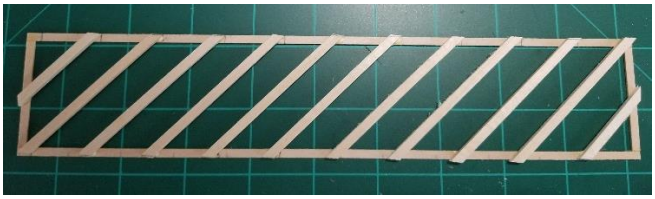
Since this was a scratchbuilding project, I needed to draw a design and pattern, in this case in HO scale. The drawing does not need to be commercial quality, but accurate enough to be reliable. This illustration works well because it will allow the modeler to be able to leave the project and be able to return knowing the plan. This is the simple drawing I used for this bridge.



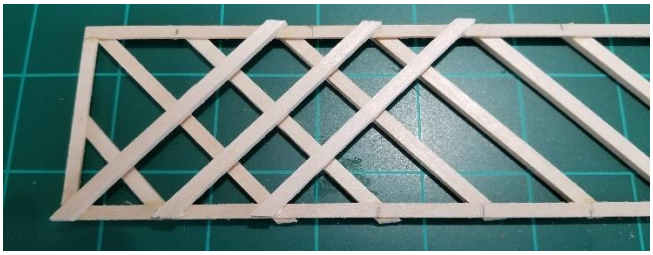
The core of the side walls is a frame of scale 4” x 16,” 70’ long by 14’ high. Each center frame was assembled in my magnetic squaring jig.



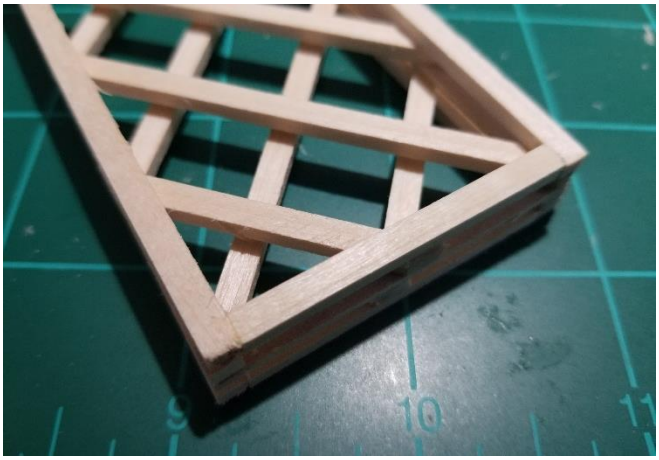
Mark every 7 scale feet along the stringers to location the cross members as shown below.



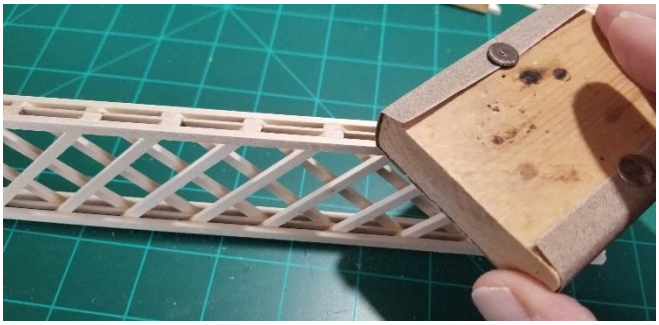
When complete, turn it over and repeat the process on both walls.



When cross members are installed, frame both sides of both walls with 16” x 16” scale lumber,

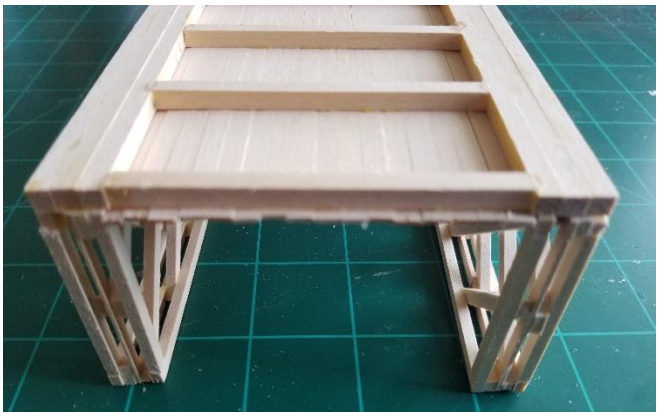


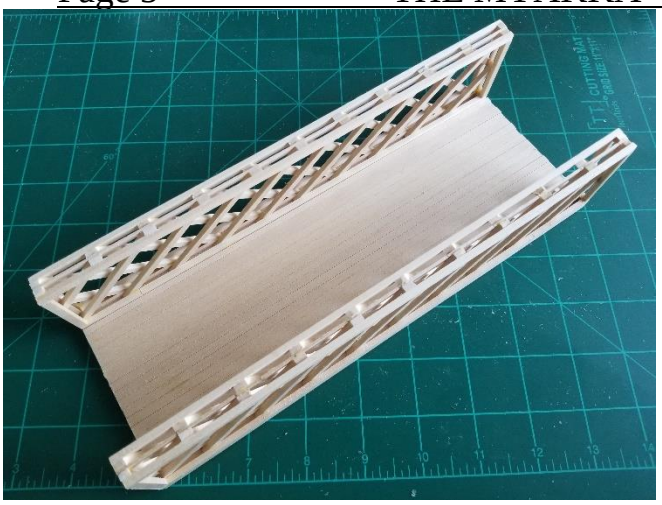
then sand both the bottom and top level. It is important to check it with a square.



Building the Floor

Cut six lengths of 16” x 16” scale lumber 70’ long. Glue three together side by side into two sets. These are the support stringers for the walls and edge of the floor. Cut nine 16” x 16” support members 19” long as the floor supports. Glue them equidistant between the support stringers. Be sure all is square. Glue a set of support stringers against one edge of each wall at a 90-degree angle which will support the walls and the edge of the bridge floor. When dry, lay 70 feet of 8” x 16” floorboards. Check for squareness. The result will look as shown on the next page.

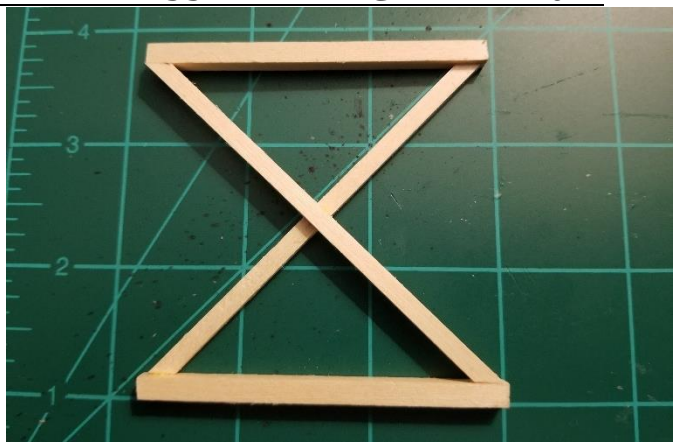




Thus far the work has been with unpainted, unweathered lumber for the sake of ease of following the instructions. The modeler might wish paint or weather the lumber in the process of assembly.

Upper Wall Support

To stabilize the wall structure to loads, the walls are supported by cross braces to prevent collapse inward or movement laterally. For this bridge, 8" x 12" scale lumber was measured slightly longer than the length necessary to cross the span of the inner edge of the bridge walls. The cross members were glued at the center, being sure they are square to each other. The lateral cross members are 16" x 16" scale lumber. Trim these cross pieces to size as shown in the illustration in the top next column.



The cross braces are shown installed below. The center brace was elongated to fit the need. I am not certain this was the right decision, but rather using another cross brace in the middle of the bridge like the end cross braces. I was not able to find information to confirm either choice.

At this point I decided to weather the bridge with India ink and 91% alcohol. Although the right thing to do, I regretted covering the nice clean looking wood.

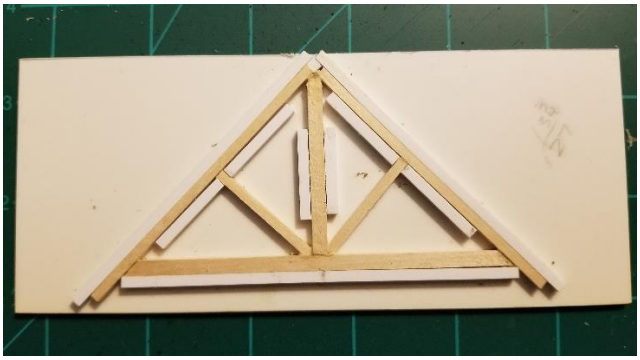
Roof Trusses

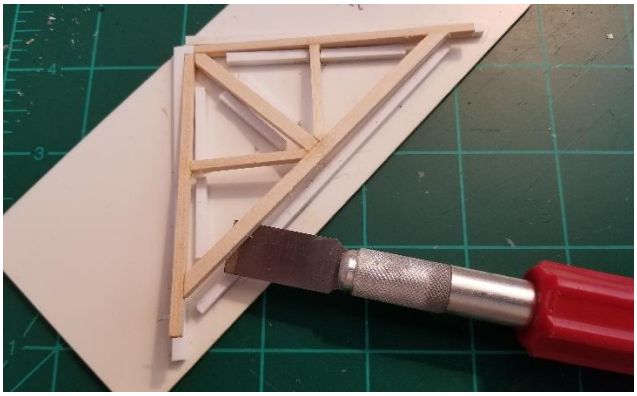
There are to be eleven roof trusses which will sit atop the meeting of the wall cross braces. The first truss was fabricated making sure it had equal measurements on both ends. The horizontal board was 8" x 16" as shown. All other parts of the truss were 8" x 8" stock. Once I was satisfied with the truss, I assembled a jig to build ten more identical trusses.

The jig was made from styrene. The idea here is that jigs for wood be made of styrene since wood glue does not make a permanent bond with styrene. Wood glue does slightly tack to the styrene, but the wood can easily be pried from the styrene. The

opposite is true for making styrene parts. Plastic glues will not bond to wood, making wood a good choice for a jig for styrene. I used "plastic weld" cement to assemble the jig around the first truss. Ten additional trusses were built, allowing enough time for the wood glue to dry sufficient to hold the truss together when removed from the jig.

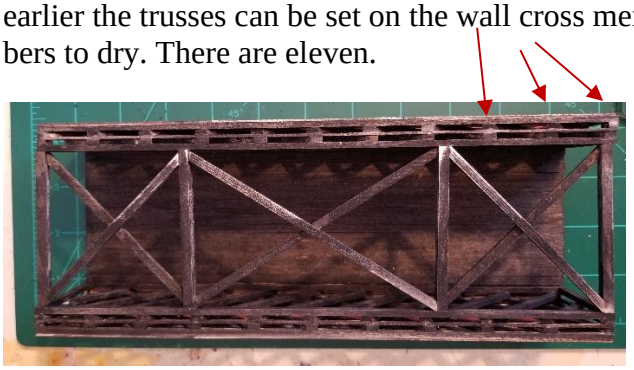
Notice that there is a notch built into the apex of the jig to allow for the center beam of the peak of the roof to be laid in later.





Carefully prying the completed dried truss from the jig.

Since the tops of the walls were sanded square earlier the trusses can be set on the wall cross members to dry. There are eleven.



Exterior Side Walls

The exterior side walls of the bridge of which this model is based, the Cornish/Windsor bridge, had small square windows. Deviating from that example, I used the window pattern from the Conway bridge with the cross members exposed the length of the span except for the end five feet. After all, if the modeler has gone to all the work of building the cross members, shouldn't it be exposed for the viewers to see?

The exterior walls were cut from 1/32" scribed sheet basswood. A strip of 4" x 16" strip lumber was cut to attach to the cross members, giving the scribed wall pieces stability. There was no wall covering for the interior walls as is prototypical for most covered bridges.

The Roof

After the trusses were dried in place and the center beam placed, roof was attached. Be sure to cut the center beam so that it extends a bit beyond the end trusses.

I used 1/32 scribed sheet with the board scribing on the inside of the roof which was a mistake. Due to the water-based wood glue used for the simulated rolled roof material, the roof warped and became very evident when painted. I should have used 1/16 sheet.

The rolled roof was strips of 20# white typing paper, which normally works well. I was not happy with the result but realized that removing the roof might destroy the model beyond repair. So, what to do??

It was obvious that the warped roof was a permanent part of the model. Best now was to hide it from the casual viewer. I applied Bar Mills Scale Models shake shingle roofing as shown below. It too also is applied with wood glues.

When applying strips of shingles, it is helpful to draw parallel lines across the roof surface to keep the strips of shingles aligned.

When aligning the rows of shingles, it is easy to keep the edge from which the strip is started aligned with the edge of the roof. The other edge will always be ragged. Once the strips are dry, the strips can be cut square with a #11 blade, nipping scissors or even rail nippers.

The warp in the roof is still visible to the person who knows the warp is there, but not so much so to the viewer's first look as shown in the following picture.

Considering how this highway bridge might be included in a scene on a model railroad, I purchased two bridge piers and cut them to the

The warp is still obvious to those of us who know it is there, but not so much to the unsuspecting viewer.

height needed. It became obvious to me to add an additional "16 x 16" timber to each end under the leading edges. These timbers might sit directly on the piers but might also sit on bridge shoes which would protect the timber from a more rapid deterioration.

I found this to be quite a learning experience. It has obvious flaws in the construction. I admit to this to encourage you, the reader, to not be shy about attempting to scratch build a project which interests you. We all are still learning.

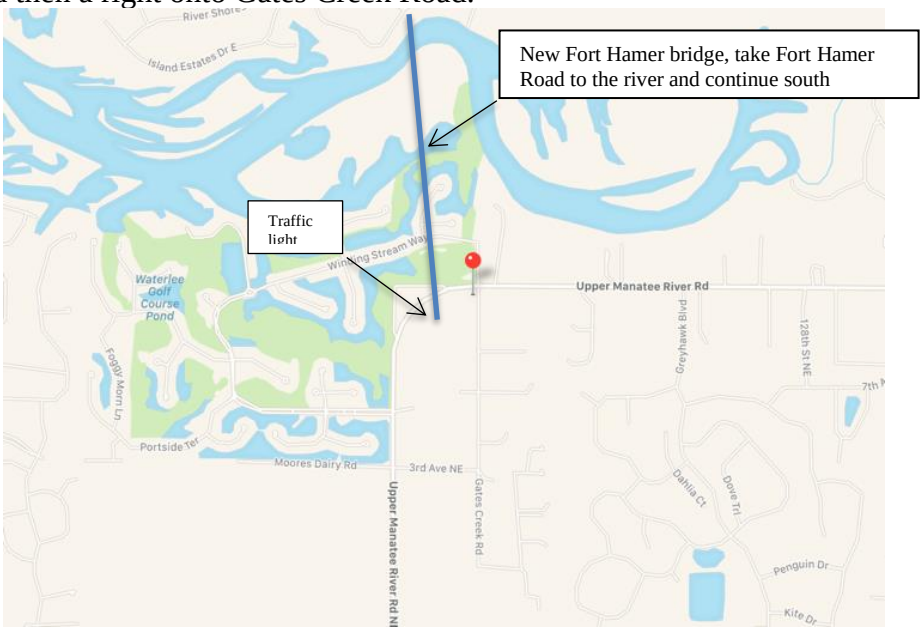
Now if there was only a way to show the interior.

Happy Holidays!

RealRail Holiday Party - December 18th

Our annual Holiday Party will be held this year on **December 18th, Saturday, at 6 PM**. Entertainment will include music (no Chipmunks), silent auction (donations needed), trivia quiz, 50-50 raffle, top-level conversation and non-denominational merry making. All RealRail members and their spouses, partners or friends are invited. The signup sheet is posted in RealRail center on the bulletin board.

- The cost is $5.00 per person. Payment to Stan DeViney
- Bring a dish, appetizer, salad, or desert (serving about 7-8 persons, no nuts or peanut oil).
- RealRail will provide sliced turkey and ham, coffee, and soda (bring your own adult beverages), and tableware.
- Directions: The location of the party is **George Borsari's** home, Thank you George. You can put 11208 Upper Manatee River Rd, Bradenton, in your GPS for general directions. However, **the entrance and parking are just around the corner on Gates Creek Road**. If driving north, after the bend in Upper Manatee River Rd. make a right onto Gates Creek Road. The entrance and parking are immediately on the right. If coming from the north across the new Fort Hamer Bridge, make a left and then a right onto Gates Creek Road.



If you have any questions, contact **Stan DeViney** (sdeviney@gmail.com) Please sign up by December 11th. Thank you.

MR December 21

T K R A M O R C I M F D L N N K
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