

From: Douglas Bennett
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2017 6:52 PM
To: dorcie farkash <dfarkash@twdesign.com>
Cc: Mike Reagan <mreagan@twtrainworx.com>
Subject: Layout Assessment Recap

Dorcie,

Words cannot express how pleased I am with what I gained from the visit of your Mike Reagan to my layout. It jump started my knowledge, confidence and abilities by several years compared to learning on the go by trial and error and expanded the enjoyment of working on and operating my layout. What Mike knows and brings to your organization and more importantly to your customers is unique and extremely valuable. The following is a partial list of some of the things big and small that we accomplished during the two days he was here. Except for meals and sleep we worked or talked trains the entire time.

- 1) Gave me a hands-on tutorial on weathering buildings. I weathered the roof of my passenger station
- 2) Found a direct short in my Lionel E7 Diesel powered A unit and got it up and running again
- 3) Repaired a Lionel 2 truck shay in a matter of minutes that had been unsuccessfully repaired by one of Lionel's top East Coast dealers.
- 4) Determined cause for loss of communication between DCS remote and multiple TIUs that allowed me to re-install a second TIU, thus gaining the designed functionality originally planned. Prior to Mike's visit I had resolved myself to the fact that I could only use one TIU by grouping multiple zones (loops) together.
- 5) Updated all my DCS and TMCC/Legacy remotes and bases.
- 6) I have a mountain loop designed for exhibit operation with an empty train climbing up the mountain to a hidden passing siding where a fully loaded identical train waits to travel down the grade and back into the mountains hidden passing siding. This illusion needs to run unattended in exhibit mode using photo sensors and control circuitry to alternate each train. Since my engines are Legacy Mike showed how this can be accomplished using the Legacy record function. Mike showed me how to record and demonstrated by actually recording a full logging train returning from the mountain forest and an empty logging train climbing back up the mountain grade to the forest.
- 7) Showed how he cleans track and recommended what, through his experience, the best track cleaning liquid is.
- 8) Through his access to top experts in the industry he was able within an evening to determine why post war whistles sound continuously when running on a track controlled through an MTH TIU Variable output and powered by a Lionel ZW-L transformer. The chopped sin wave of the ZW-L was the culprit. Swapping out the ZW-L with an MTH smooth sin wave Z-4000 eliminated the problem of running my stable of post war engines through the MTH hand held controller in variable output mode.
- 9) Showed me the fix for the occasional rear coupler opening of my Neil Young Texas Special F3 Dummy A unit.
- 10) Showed me how to disable TMCC/Legacy command control so these engines can be run in conventional mode on track containing the TMCC/Legacy signal so they can run in exhibit mode on my logging loop.
- 11) Gave a recommendation for alternate mountain construction material to modify and/or enhance my existing carved blown foam mountains.

12) I have a 3' x 4' opening in the center of my layout designed for viewing and operation and also for lift out/drop in panels to permit utilizing my extensive collection of operating accessories through "themed" lift outs such as logging/lumber, coal, or oil. Mike made a material suggestion for the panels that was far superior to the 2" house insulation foam I had planned to use.

13) Showed me how to use command control cars from both Lionel and MTH.

14) Gained comfort and confidence using DCS and Lionel command control by shadowing Mike's every move and asking loads of questions.

15) Introduced me to a source for parts for postwar trains and a source for upgrade kits for postwar smoking units of which I have many that I wanted to use with modern smoke fluids rather than smoke pellets.

16) Left instructions on how to add TMCC and DCS to my bench test stand and thus utilizing some excess command control equipment I have.

What a great opportunity this was for me to gain valuable confidence and add to my own abilities. Mike is so open and giving. He has responded to my recent text messages relative to a coupler issue I was having and without his input I would have had to send it out for repair. As it turned out I made the repair myself, but only through his texting assistance.

I would have attended your festival this April in a heartbeat were it not for the fact it occurs while we are on vacation. When you know the date for next year let me know so I can save the date and not commit to something else. I do look forward to visiting your facility in Dallas someday.

You have created a unique service to the hobby, one I trust many others like myself will take advantage of. The two days went well beyond my expectations. It was not only money well spent but money well invested. My congratulations to you and your organization for taking advantage of the opportunity that Mike's availability presented. From my perspective it was a perfect fit for both.

With greatest appreciation,
Doug Bennett