

Conrail's NCR Line In York

An N scale operations oriented layout set in December of 1985

- Background
- Why The NCR In York in December of 1985?
- About The Layout
- About Winter Modeling
- Operations
- Documentation
- Lessons & Takeaways



Who Am I?

- I've been a modeler since birth.
- My first NTRAK show was before I was born.
- Laid track when I was two.
- Worked at MB Klein in the early 2000s.
- Sat on the Board of The Conrail Historical Society.
- I've been immersed in this stuff for a long time.



What Am I Doing?

- Modeling Conrail's NCR Line (Northern Central) in December of 1985



What is the NCR?

- Former PRR line from Baltimore to Harrisburg (and beyond)
- It's a very modelagenic stretch of railroad.
 - Well scaled toward modeling - Pennsy flavor without the four tracks and flyovers
 - Scenic rural running
 - Urban area along 83 in Baltimore
 - Pershing Ave street running in York
- It died with Hurricane Agnes in 1972





Wago Junction





Wago Junction



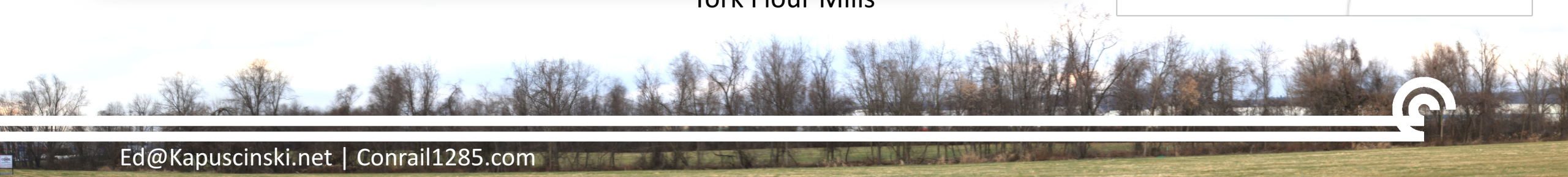


NS At "FLOUR" Block Station





York Flour Mills



P. R. R. Black Bridge, York, Pa.



Black Bridge In York





Windsor St Yard (George Slonaker Photo, Ryan Thoman Collection)





Windsor St Yard (George Slonaker Photo, Ryan Thoman Collection)





York Engine Terminal (George Slonaker Photo, Ryan Thoman Collection)

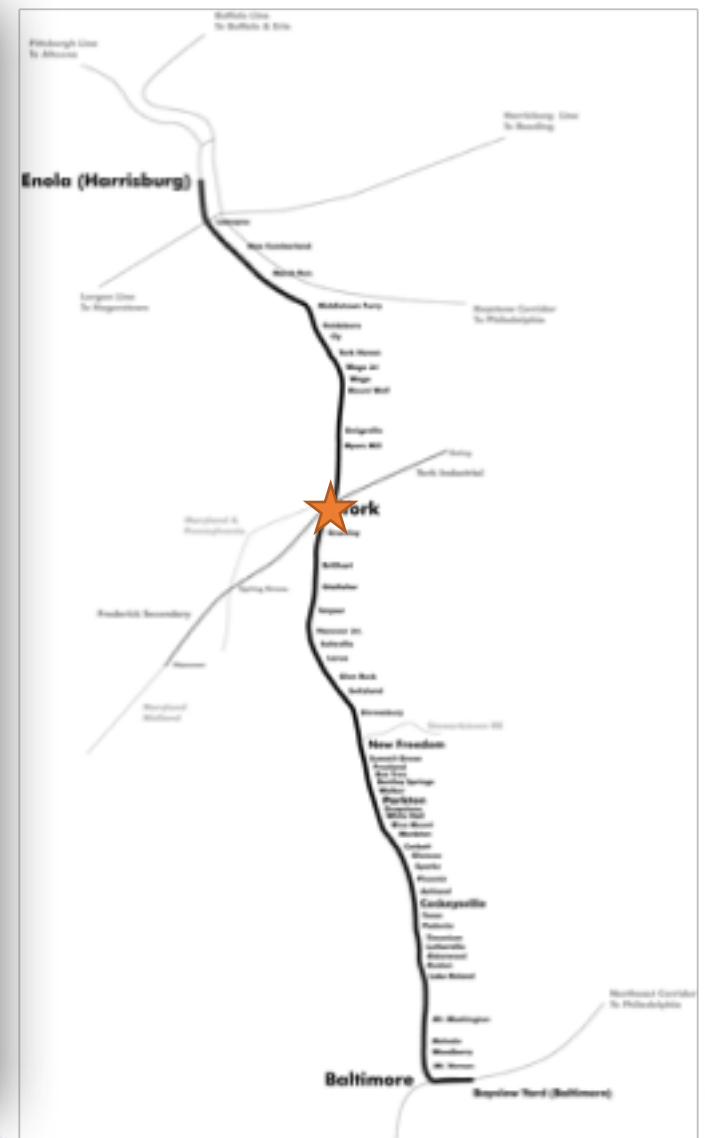




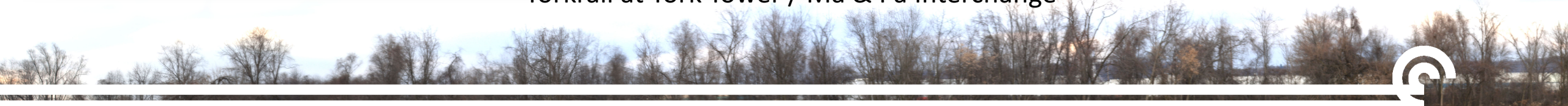
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Strasburg / PRR 7002 at York Tower





Yorkrail at York Tower / Ma & Pa Interchange





Early Conrail Power Laying Over at York Station (George Slonaker Photo, Ryan Thoman Collection)





The Last Real Passenger Train In York





York Station





1361 Visiting Pershing Ave – Steve Barry Photo





1361 Blasting Out Of Howard Tunnel





Steam Into History at Hanover Junction



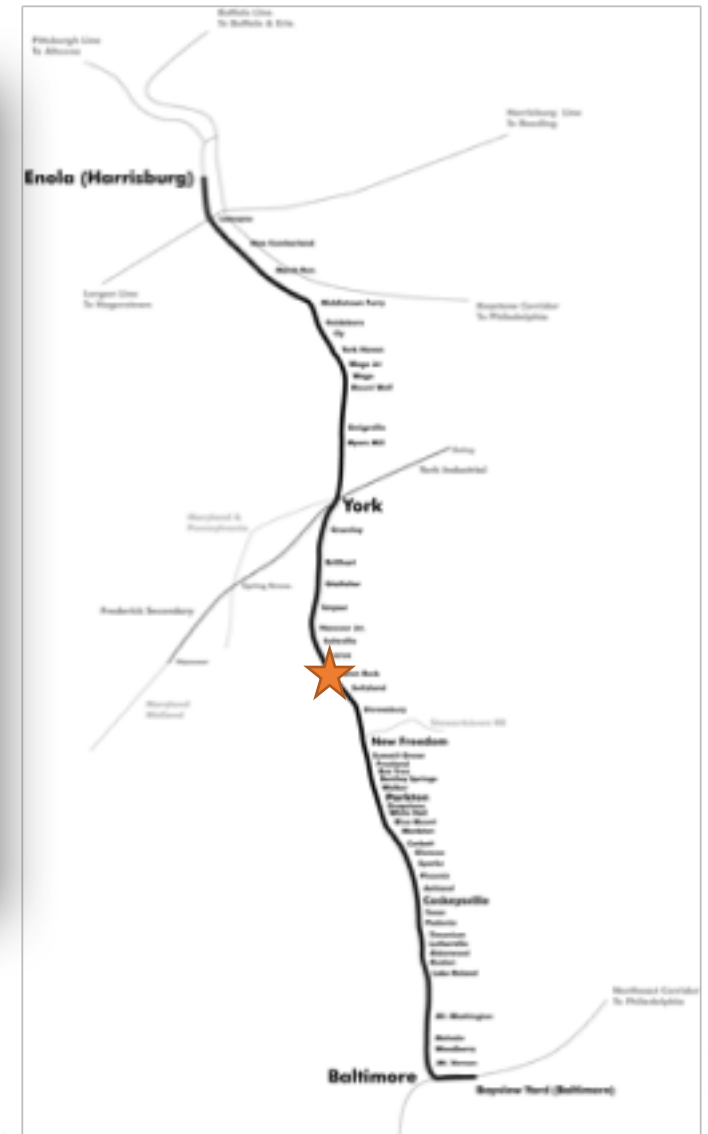


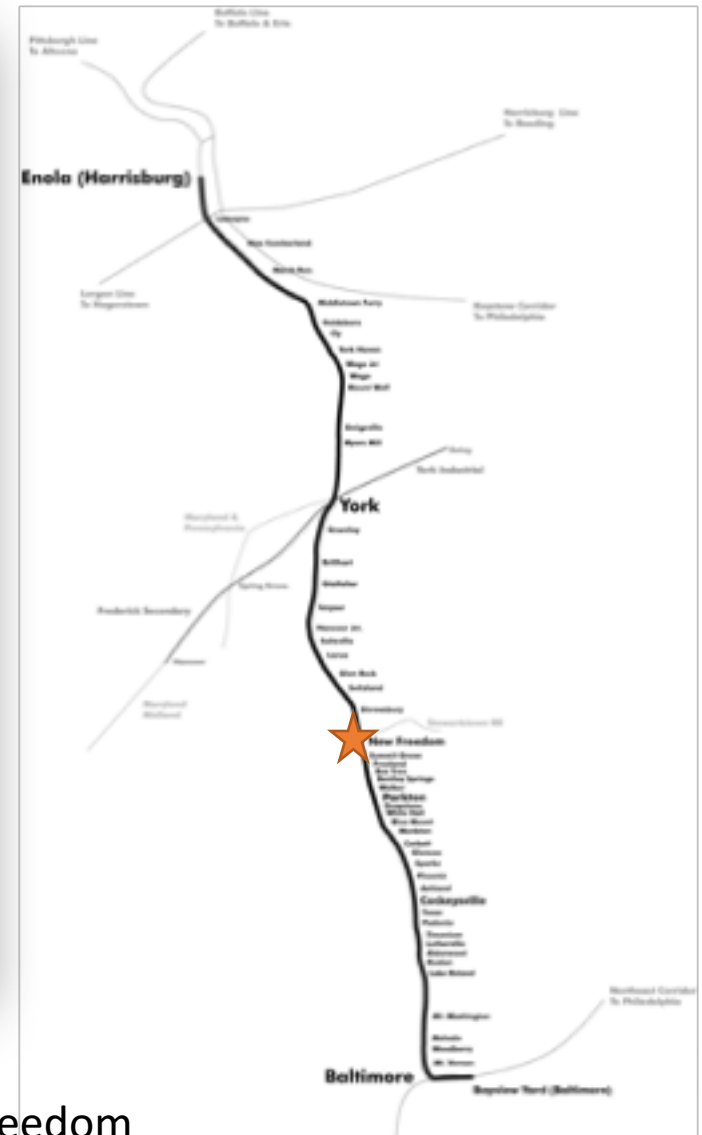
Abraham Lincoln at Hanover Junction





Glen Rock





Rebuilt station and Stewartstown RR Interchange at New Freedom





PRR E7s at Parkton MD





Parkton MD Today





Freight Station In Cockeysville MD





Conrail Dirt Train at Padonia Rd Crossing in Cockeyville – Lee Weldon Photo





Timonium Rd Crossing in 1990 – From RailfanGuides.us





The NCR From Interstate 83 in Baltimore





The NCR in Baltimore





Where The NCR meets The NEC in Baltimore



Why 1985?

- I worked at MB Klein and had to focus or go broke.
- Conrail was my first love.
- Picked the year for a number of reasons:
 - Motive power availability
 - State of the economy
 - Conrail was "Conrail" by 85 and kicking ass
- But there was no more NCR in 1985 so I messed with history.
 - Hurricane Agnes wiped out the Port Road, sparing the NCR





(c) Mike Stollpflug



Why York?

- The yard came first: It was purchased from a friend.
- York is where there was a yard on the NCR.
- It's the operational nexus of the line.
- I took some liberties to make it more fun: I modified history for the Maryland Midland and Ma & Pa to bring them into town.
- It's an interesting place.





Under Construction on Lee Weldon's WM





Hagerstown on Lee Weldon's WM





Hagerstown Turning Into Windsor St





Windsor Street Today





The Maryland Midland In York





The Ma & Pa Interchange at Poorhouse Yard



Why December?

- I saw Lance Mindheim's Monon layout in Model Railroader in the late 90s.
- Winter is beautiful.
- It's a challenge not many have taken on, and I wanted to do something "different".





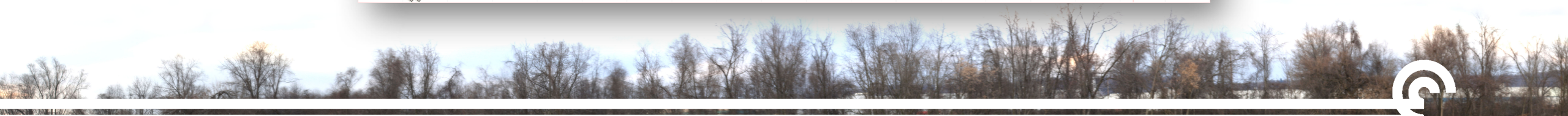


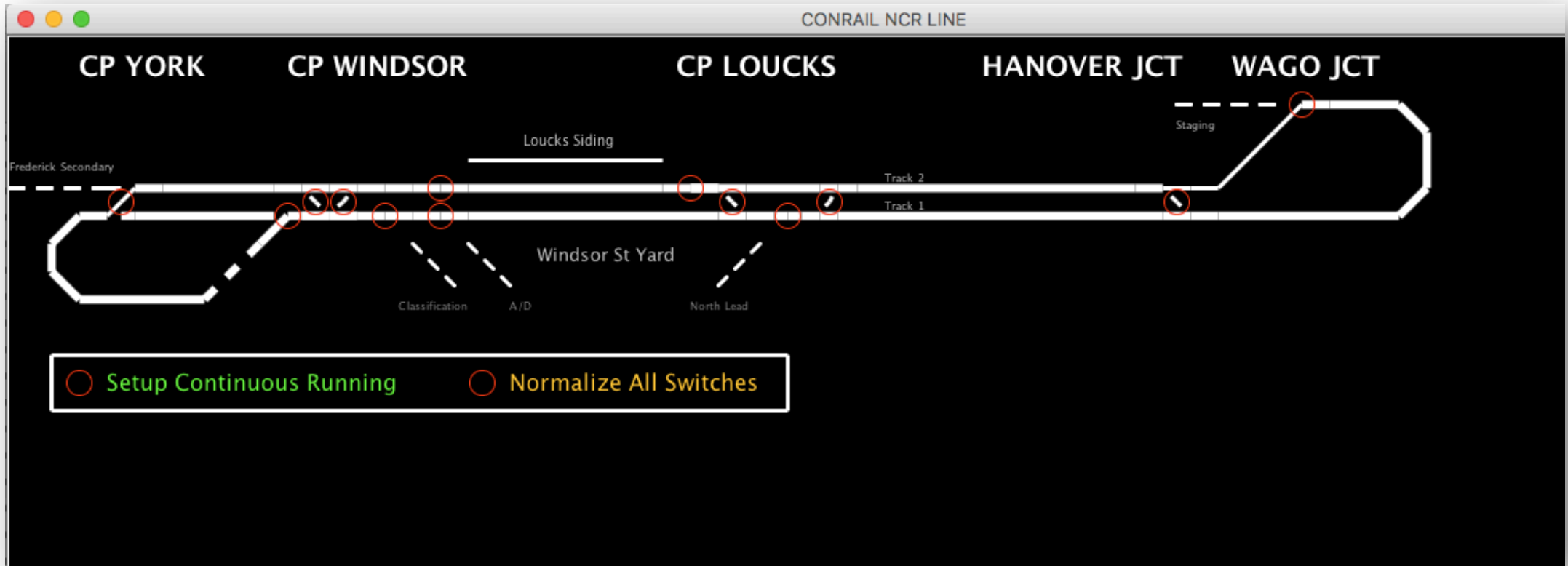


About The Layout

- Intended for operations and “drink a beer and watch trains” time
- 18’x16’ around the walls with a peninsula.
- Freestanding benchwork (stupid knotty pine) with foam on top
- Used modular construction for ease of relocation or reuse
- Uses Atlas Code 55 track (mostly), Digitrax DCC, and lots of electrical parts purchased from Amazon
- Turnout control via DCC using JMRI PanelPro
- Scenery from Woodland Scenics, Scenic Express and Lowes





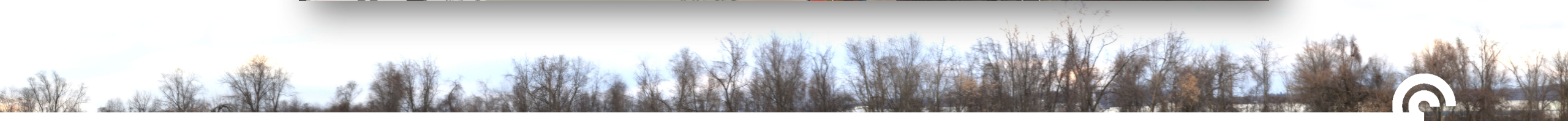
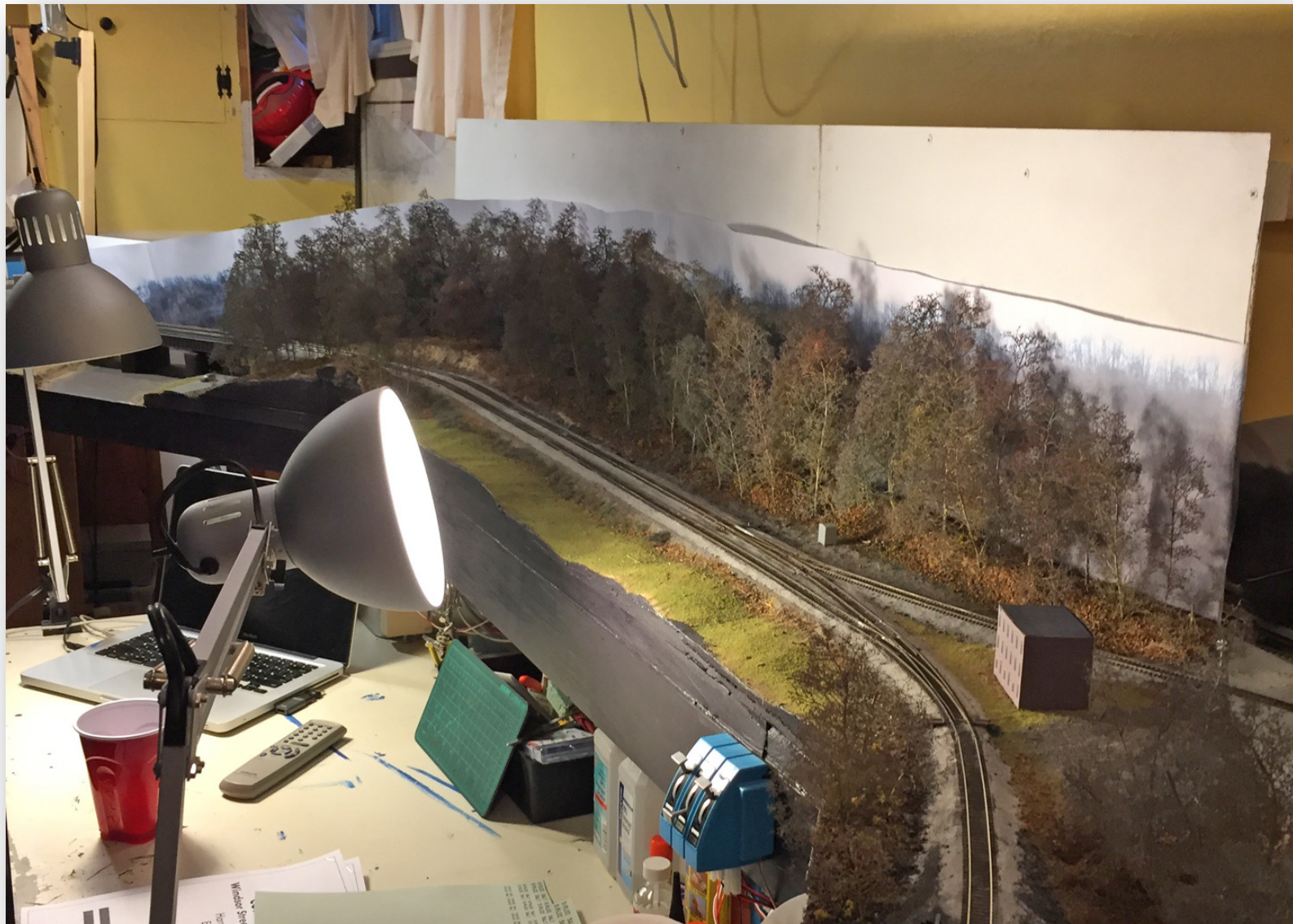


The Layout in JMRI Panel Pro











CONRAIL

9253

Lp
PC
361614

CORNING



CONRAIL



2735

HOKX 132263









CONRAIL
1971
CONRAIL
CONRAIL
CONRAIL

PRESTON



boxcar pool
any road

1971
CONRAIL

7883
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6807
CONRAIL













TRAILVAN

CONRAIL

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CONRAIL
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SOUTHERN
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CONRAIL
328 9

FLEX-FLD

6250

CONRAIL
23080

CONRAIL
22135

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8097

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8113

CONRAIL

SOUTHERN
SERVES
THE SOUTH

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527 724

SOUTHERN
SERVES
THE SOUTH











9253

CONRAIL





DA
Fast
Lightweight
PATCH & PRIMER
MAXIMUM STRENGTH
FOR REPAIRS
Masilla Avion

About Winter Modeling

- Winter is beautiful and sets colorful trains off well.
- Modeling winter is not easy.
- You must pay much more attention to detail: you can't just cover sins with clump foliage.
- It's harder to find suitable or appropriate materials.



Winter Modeling Tips

- Work from photos!
- Thank god for Scenic Express. Get their catalog and visit them at shows.
- Use super trees for trees.
- Trees are tall and gray.
- Use real leaves and brown ground foams for forest floor.
- You need generally muted colors for ground foam.
- There's not as much static grass as you'd think (in N).
- Visit Conrail1285.com for techniques.











Operations

- I wanted to replicate post-Staggers “modern” Conrail operations
- Ops centered on the yard: a “slice” of a larger concept
 - Through trains make set-offs and pickups
 - Locals originate and terminate
 - Interchange trains arrive and turn
 - Blocks get built in the yard for destinations via through trains
- Sessions are small: I can only fit a handful of people
- I manually create switch lists
- I have created copious documentation



Documentation

- **Layout Guide:**
 - Is the overall introduction to the layout.
 - Explains the background, locations, history and some important info for visitors like the Wifi password.
 - Modeled after real Conrail documents.

CONRAIL NCR Line
Windsor Street Yard and Environs
Harrisburg Division
Eastern Region



DEDICATED TO SAFETY



Documentation

- Terminal Information Publications:
 - One for each train or crew
 - Is the “job briefing”
 - Contains info about what the train is, what it does, and how it navigates the layout
 - Includes maps when necessary
 - Also based on real Conrail documents

NCR LOCAL - NCR LINE NORTH AND SOUTH OF WINDSOR ST YARD

CREW SYMBOL: WHYK-10 SIGN UP TIME: 0630 POOL CODE: 814

JOB PROFILE

THIS LOCAL JOB PROVIDES INDUSTRY SWITCHING ON THE NCR LINE FROM WINDSOR ST YARD IN YORK PA TO NEW FREEDOM PA.

TRAIN PLACEMENT

WHEN LEAVING WINDSOR ST YARD, THE TRAIN SHOULD BE SET AS FOLLOWS: OHIO BLENDERS CARS SHOULD BE NEXT TO SOUTH FACING ENGINE FOLLOWED BY MPA INTERCHANGE; AGMARK; DUKE ST YARD; AND YORK WAREHOUSE, THEN THE CABOOSE.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

1. AGMARK - CONTACT FOREMAN BEFORE BEGINNING WORK. ENSURE CARS TO BE PULLED ARE READY. MULTIPLE CARS SHOULD BE SPOTTED ACCORDING TO INSTRUCTIONS FROM FOREMAN. CLOSE AND LOCK GATE AND DERAIL IF CARS LEFT STANDING FOR MORE THAN 15 MINUTES. APPLY HANDBRAKE TO ALL SPOTTED CARS.
2. MPA INTERCHANGE - PAPERWORK FOR CARS TO BE PICKED UP FROM INTERCHANGE WILL BE FOUND IN MAILBOX ADJACENT TO MPA TRACK 1. ONLY MOVE CARS DESIGNATED FOR CONRAIL INTERCHANGE. LEAVE PAPERWORK FOR INTERCHANGED CARS IN MAILBOX ADJACENT TO MPA TRACK 1.
3. DUKE ST YARD - LEAVE SPACE FOR ACCESS BETWEEN ALL SPOTTED CARS. ENSURE ROOM FOR CLOSING OF GATE.
4. OHIO BLENDERS - CONTACT FOREMAN FOR INSTRUCTIONS ON PLACEMENT OF INBOUND CARS AND CARS TO BE PICKED UP PRIOR TO BEGINNING WORK.
5. YORK WAREHOUSE - CONTACT CONRAIL HARRISBURG EAST DISPATCHER FOR PERMISSION TO USE CP YORK, CP WINDSOR AND MAIN TRACK FOR REQUIRED RUNAROUND MOVE.



Documentation

- Car Locations and Destinations Sheet:
 - Is the switch list for the yard and local crews
 - Manually generated
 - Made to look authentic
 - Includes location, reporting mark, road number, destination, and customer if on-line
 - Definitely not a scalable solution

CONRAIL NCR LINE CAR REPORT					1/2
LOCATION	RPT MRK	RD #	DSTNTN	CUSTOMER	
SEPY	CR	898060	YKMM		
SEPY	CR	898087	YKMM		
SEPY	NSL	10035	WHYK-10	York Warehouse	
SEPY	CN	413104	WHYK-20		
SEPY	TTZX	86314	WHYK-10	MPA	
SEPY	BCOL	5421	WHYK-10	MPA	
WHYK40	RBOX	33604	Pittsburgh		
WHYK40	CAN	419309	Buffalo		
WHYK40	CR	208071	Harrisburg		
WHYK40	CR	166721	Pittsburgh		
WHYK40	CR	166863	Selkirk		
WHYK40	RBOX	33633	Potomac Yard		
WHYK40	GATX	35647	Harrisburg		
WHYK40	ACFX	77374	Harrisburg		
WHYK40	PCA	166118	Elkhart		
WHYK40	ACFX	75969	Potomac Yard		
Ohio Blenders	UP	71794	Pittsburgh		
Ohio Blenders	CWP	8776	Elkhart		
Duke Street	ACFX	69918	Harrisburg		
Duke Street	BN	749000	Elkhart		
York Warehouse	RBOX	17756	Potomac Yard		
Agmark	ACFX	17439	Potomac Yard		
MPA	ATSF	621318	Pittsburgh		
MPA	EJ&E	80426	Elkhart		
Class 6	ACFX	71994	WHYK40		
Class 6	RBOX	2901	WHYK40		

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Documentation

- Train Description Cheat Sheet

- For the yard crews
- Shows what blocks cars should be classified into
- Cars get classified into blocks and then assembled into pickups for through trains, or directly into locals or interchange blocks
- Printed and stuck on fascia

Trains Serving Windsor St Yard, York PA

WHYK-10 - NCR Local

York PA	MPA Interchange
York PA	Agmark LPG Terminal
York PA	Duke Street Yard
York PA	York Warehouses
York PA	Ohio Blenders
New Freedom PA	Stewartstown RR Interchange
Etters PA	Cold Storage Company (Mt Wolf)
Mount Wolf PA	Georgia Pacific (Mt Wolf)

WHYK-20 - York IT Local

York PA	York Container
York PA	Grain Dealer
York PA	Steel Fabricator
York PA	Perlite Company
York PA	Quaker Chemical
Wrightsville PA	Martin Marietta Materials

WHYK-40 - Frederick Secondary Local

Spring Grove PA	PH Glatelter Paper
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YKCS - Chessie System Interchange

Chessie System	Interchange Train
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YKMM - Maryland Midlant Interchange

Maryland Midland	Interchange Train
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PYSE - Potomac Yard to Selkirk

Frontier Yard	Buffalo NY
Selkirk Yard	Albany NY

SEPY - Selkirk to Potomac Yard

Potomac Yard	Alexandria VA
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BAEN - Baltimore to Enola

Enola Yard	Harrisburg PA
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ENBA - Enola to Baltimore

Bayview Yard	Baltimore MD
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BAEL - Baltimore to Elkhart

Altoona Yard	Altoona PA
Conway Yard	Pittsburgh PA
Buckeye Yard	Columbus OH
Elkhart Yard	Elkhart IN

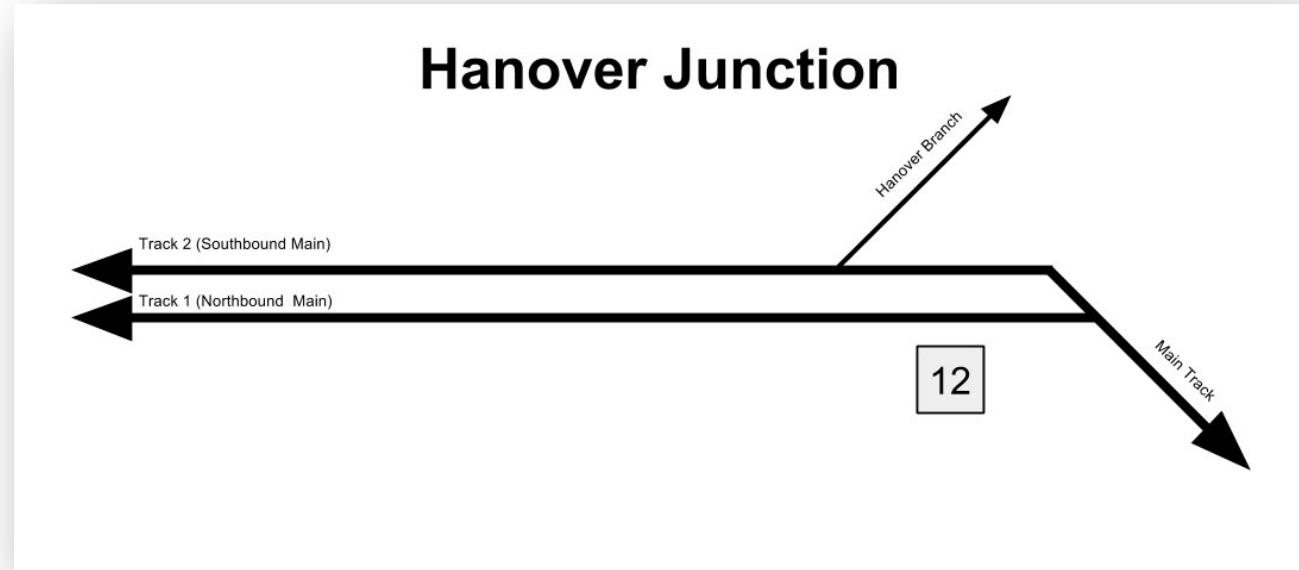
ELBA - Elkhart to Baltimore

Bayview Yard	Baltimore MD
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Documentation

- Maps
 - A local map printed at each Control Point or point of interest
 - Printed and hung on the fascia
 - Include locations and DCC switch numbers
 - Drawings were done in Google Drive



Lessons & Takeaways

- Favor simplicity over complexity
- Plan for achievability when planning a layout
 - Think about what you can actually when you factor in money and time



Lessons & Takeaways

- Practice Agile Model Railroading
- Don't worry about pre-solving all problems
- You can (almost) always do it over again



Lessons & Takeaways

- Challenge long-held orthodoxy
- When in doubt, refer to photos
 - Trees are big, gray, and can hide things.
 - What color IS grass in the winter?
 - What does the real world look like from above?



Lessons & Takeaways

- It's fun to do something different
- Look outside hobby shops for supplies: Amazon & Lowes in my case
- Visit Conrail1285.com and "Like" it on Facebook for updates
- Find this presentation and more resources at <http://conrail1285.com/2017mer/>

