

A&O 2.0 First Op Session (mini)

David #1 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

After the massive clean-up and unboxing of some equipment for a most enjoyable open house held 9/28/13, I decided to unbox a lot more stuff and stage our first operating session. Even though not much mainline is completed, there is more than enough auxiliary trackage to provide lots of car movement and interesting switch jobs. Switch lists had to stand-in for car cards with waybills, which took some preparation, but got the job done.

Eight trains were "staged" (stacked) for sequencing into Millport's yards for power/caboose removal and hump classification. Three Turns worked the A&O and NR&W tracks thru Willow Creek and Sobol Springs. International Paper got a full switch. The industrial area of Fillmore Heights had its sidings visited. And the 16th St. businesses, including Campbell's Soup, was...served.

There were seven of us for this semi-historic occasion lasting most of Saturday, Nov. 2, 2013. A lasagna at noon and a good time was had by all.

What was gleaned from this first, mini-ops?

2.0 is going to be a lot of fun.

It's going to need lots of equipment

It has the potential to keep many folks busy

There is a learning curve for the tracks and their control panels

A hump yard classifies cars really fast vs. flat switching, but the big boys already figured that out

Like John Allen of old, a layout doesn't have to have the mainline done in order to have a fun operating session.

Now it's time to get back to the construction. We're getting close.

Bob Sobol was the company photographer on Saturday and will add to this post photos and comments of the day. Thanks Bob.

David

Bob #2 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

First up we have a quick snap of the co-conspirators. From left: David, Bill, Vince, Craig, Bob K, Jack and Bob S.



David spent a lot of time 'splaining things before the session started. I don't remember what he was saying but it must have been good. At the start Havens Yard (far right) was almost empty. That didn't last long.



Vince operated the N&W turn from Willow Creek (staging) to Ricksburg, running by trackage rights on

the New River & Western and A&O. Here he interchanges a car in Willow Creek. Power on this turn is N&W 2910, a GP-35 inherited from the Nickel Plate merger.



Bob #3 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

Yardmaster Craig sports a “stylish new HD antenna” 😊 as he shoves a cut of cars in the distance for Bill to classify on the hump.



Bob K enters Sobol Springs with the Atomic Turn, which serves the Atomic Fuel truck dump. Bob is a very experienced modeler but this was his first time operating. He did great, and enjoyed the day.



Craig doubled as the CM Tower operator. Here he lines a route for Jack on the south yard panel. Most of the time operators had little difficulty mapping control panels to the actual track work, even though this was their first time running the layout.



Bob #4 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

Jack runs his Jackson & Southern GP9 through CM Tower. Despite what his T-shirt said, he seemed happy-happy-happy.



Bill reviews paperwork as he prepares to run the day's first cars over the 8-track hump. He might have snuck a nap or a prayer in there, too!



Jack classifies cars to set aside, those that should not go over the hump.



Bob #5 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

David gives a short course on the use of motorized grade brakes in Sobol Springs. A temporary nail marks the location of the brake pins. A blue LED by David's right hand illuminates when the brake is raised.



The super watches as Bill sets out a load of sand that should not be humped.



The N&W turn “joins with” the Atomic Turn in Sobol Springs.



Bob #6 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

Jack switches out a load of sand that should not be humped.



An A&O reefer rolls down the hump and through the master retarder.



Vince heads out with the Mill Job. This train serves 28 linear feet of paper mill industry tracks, and will be a favorite of many operators.



Bob #7 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

The Havens Yard switchers serve the International Paper pulpwood tracks when there is a free moment. In the background Vince works the south end of the mill.



Vince ponders his next move as he prepares to drop interchange cars for the B&O and NYC.



Some old friend locomotives that ran on A&O 1.0.



Bob #8 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

The Super says "Pay no attention to the hand!" 🤪



Havens Yard fills up. The GP9 and SW1200 rest in the engine terminal while a leased C&O SW9

heads for Wye Knot.



Bob K runs the Fillmore Heights turn. Building flats planned for the area will block this view and make Fillmore an isolated operating position.



Bob #9 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

By the end of the session, the hump bowl was filling up.



Well, that's it for photos. Maybe David will add a comment or two.

David #10 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

Thanks for the photos Bob. Great candid shots as usual, except for the posed first one which our gracious meal host took, wife Katie.

As the trains arrived in Millport at Havens Yard, the pull-out shelves there began to look like the aftermath of a Christmas morning; paper strewn. But that's what these breadboard-like shelves were designed to do, keep the RR liter free. After just one session, this little addition is a big improvement from some 1.0 sessions where car cards were known to reside atop cars at times due to a lack of horizontal work space.

It will be fun to look back at these and compare similar shots when the scenery is done.

David

rnb3 #11 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

Looks awesome guys! I'm working as fast as I can on observation number 2... need more equipment. I placed an order for 100 more axles yesterday! That should cover a couple dozen more coal cars! Dullcoat went on 4 A&D coal cars last night with weathering starting tonight. Wheel sets for 3 cabooses are due in from NWSL any day now with the first body stripped of paint. I also got all (5) the Intermountain boxcars I picked up at the club swap meet stripped of their paint too.

Exciting times in O scale West Virginia!

jkparker #12 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

Congratulations on what looks like a great operating session!

Nothing like operating early to shake down the layout.

Looks like everyone had a great time.

John Parker

bnsfrr.net

Chester #13 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

David and crew,

Congratulations on the first op session. 😊 It was a long time coming and I can only guess at how much fun was had by all.

Now back to work.

Chester

Hopedale & Barre RR

hopedaleandbarre.wordpress.com/

Bob #14 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

Here are a few more photos from the op session.

Ricksburg yard is one end of the layout because the mainline on its north end is not yet built. That currently makes Ricksburg a staging yard. Here David conducts a portion of the morning's briefing. Three trains and interchange cars are staged.

During ops we discovered that a Tortoise motor was missing on one of the turnouts, making that one a very manual throw.



Bayfield Ohio is the current other end of the layout as tracks through Glen Forge are not complete. The double track main and a siding served as staging. Because car cards have not yet been printed, David had to manually write switch lists for each job. That took a lot of time. No wonder most layouts that use switch lists also use operations software such as JMRI.



Jack ponders his moves at the pulpwood tracks.



Bob #15 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

In Ricksburg Vince interchanges cars for the N&W turn. Because the yard is not finished a little 0-5-0

was needed.



The hump power drops down into the bowl to pull a few cars for the Mill Job.



Without car cards, Craig needed to manually fill out switch lists for the hump operator and for outbound trains. This slowed down ops quite a bit. When car cards and waybills are printed most of this manual work will be eliminated.



Bob #16 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

A view of the engine terminal above Havens arrival/departure tracks.



David believes that operating sessions should be low-stress and lots of fun for novice and experienced operators. Carried over from David's previous layout, we choose not to take anything too seriously. 😊

Shortly after this photo was taken, a switcher was heard running at warp 9 to the opposite end of the yard.



One big lesson learned is that the layout literally eats equipment. Anything with working trucks and couplers landed on the layout for this op session, but it wasn't enough for even a mini-op.

Now comes the hard part—packing up the rolling stock and getting back to the job of making more dust. There's a mainline to finish.

Must work faster!

Craig #17 February 14, 2016, 10:34pm

Bob...refresh my memory, but what did Vince say when we started?

Something along the lines: "Boy...we are going to screw this thing up!" 😊