

Are you tired of constantly moving magazines from your favorite easy chair to the train room or looking for space to store those periodicals? Are you known as the pack rat around the house with regard to your collection of model railroad magazines? How many out there will answer that they cut out and save only that one article in the issue and really don't want to keep the remainder of the magazine? Of course, you may also be the person who wants to keep every magazine that comes across your door step (which is not necessarily a bad thing), thinking that you may never know when you might need to go back and re-read something or come across something that you can use later for your layout. If you fit into this category, no problem, this article probably isn't for you. However, if you do find that you want to save the occasional article, you may find the following tips of interest.

These are the ways I've chosen to store and file my articles of interest, especially if I receive them via a paper format, to reduce the amount of magazines and clutter that are present. Let me say that I do save complete issues of some magazines, as well as have cut out the occasional article and stashed it in a binder over the years. However, recent changes to the layout prompted me to re-think this idea of saving everything.

Many of you reading this will by now heard that *Model Railroader* magazine has digitally captured their 75 year collection of magazines on a DVD format (approx. \$200). The pages have been organized into 912 issues that can be browsed, and any page or group of pages can easily be printed on your home computer. Let's hope that other magazines will follow their lead and bring the cost into a more reasonable range. It goes without saying that if you can receive an electronic copy of a publication, it's easier maintain a copy on disk rather than printing it out on paper. Generally, more and more model railroad clubs and organizations have gone to producing an electronic

(usually pdf) version of their newsletter or journal, such as we have done with the Trainwire. Therefore, the first tip is to go and buy yourself a dedicated portable hard drive for storage of your electronic media. The prices of these units have come down over the last several years, with an average price for a 500 gigabyte to 2 terabyte storage ranging between \$65 and \$150. I have two portable units, which I use only for storage of electronic media such as electronic magazines or newsletter and digital photographs. The second unit is used only as a backup to the first drive. For electronic magazines or ezines, such as *Model Railroad Hobbyist*, the average magazine file size is only 20 to 30 megabytes. You'll find that you can store a lot of files on these drives and hardly even make a dent in the amount of space used. Of course you can also save your electronic files to a CD, however, I've found that CDs just start to accumulate much the same as the physical magazine does, and it's just easier to store everything on one physical hard disk, rather than using several CDs.

This brings me to the second and main reason for writing this article. As photo copiers have gotten more bells and whistles installed on them, one of the newest features that is quite common is the ability to scan a document into either a pdf format or into a file which can be read by some sort of photo editor (jpg or tiff file format) software. While I'm not a big fan of using the later format, I do find that scanning articles into the copier is easy and yields quite good results. No, the scanned version is not going to be as crystal clear as the original magazine version, however, playing around with the scan settings will allow you to get a very readable copy. For example, a 10 page article scanned on the highest quality setting results in a file size which is approximately 2 megabytes. For my purposes, this is an acceptable trade-off, as I'd rather not keep all of those magazines laying around, especially for one article I may want to refer to at some later time. With a scan, even if you desire to print the article at some point in the future, you have that ability. The other advantage that I see with a scanned image is that I can easily read the article at any time on my home computer, be it a laptop or desktop, as well as on a portable reader (such as the iPad or Kindle Fire). I really like using either of these later pieces of equipment, as I can take them directly to the layout and look at a track plan or photograph and envision how that may look on my layout. No more paper clutter as you tape a scene to your layout or photo to your work area. Simply store them in your computer or e-reader and call them up as needed. As to filing the articles I save on disk, I always give them a unique name, so that I can easily find them. My preferred method is to use the magazine name and issue month/year, followed by a brief article name. For example, a recent post in *N Scale Railroading* entitled *BNSF's Marias Pass, Part 1: Project Layout Introduction* was shortened to *NSR Nov 2011 Marias Pass Layout*. I can look

at my portable hard drive and quickly know what the article pertains to and when it was written, as well as what the magazine that it appeared in was.

Scanning won't be for everyone, but it certainly is a great resource to have available to you. For my purposes, it's great way to spend a little bit of time to have a lasting copy of an article, without the bulk of storing years and years of magazines. I look forward to other publications following MR's lead and digitizing their own materials.