

Publications Chair Report

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After numerous interruptions and personal issues, the *Marker Lamp* should be back on its normal schedule going forward, with the next issue planned for March 15 (submission deadline February 15). I won't go into all of the various reasons for the delays, but I do want to offer my sincere apologies.

At the moment, I am experimenting with tools to publish the *Marker Lamp* as an online "web magazine", where you can view and read content organized like a website, similar to a news website, or a site like Railroad Model Craftsman's. This will have several advantages:

- It will be easier and more accessible to read, as you won't have to download a large PDF document, you can access it from any browser (like your phone), and you will be able to easily adjust settings like font size and contrast settings if needed.
- It will allow multiple people to work on the *Marker Lamp* at the same time, so we could have folks upload and edit their own columns and articles (if they want to). (And in general, publishing the *Marker Lamp* will no longer require strong working knowledge of software like Adobe InDesign.)
- It will be *much* faster and easier to publish, as most of the work is laying out the articles and photos in InDesign by hand.
- It will enforce consistency in format and provide better linking to external sites and sources. It will also enable video to be included with articles.
- It would give us the ability to publish content anytime we want, not just quarterly, although that is not a primary goal.

Just to be clear, the vision here is not to move to a "digital publication" using an app like Zinio (like Model Railroader or the NMRA Magazine), because that would not give us most of the advantages listed above (digital publications still require a PDF file). This would be published on the LSR website using what is called a "Content Management System".

If there are folks out there who still prefer to download a single PDF file, I am working on a mechanism to allow that. I am also going to ensure we can archive each "issue". Finally, I don't expect this to cost the LSR any ongoing fees.

If all goes well, I will publish the March issue in both formats as a test.

I also want to mention that the LSR Google Drive is now set up and configured. There are a number of pre-defined folders set up for various departments and functions, as well as folders for each officer and chair. Of course, we can change the set up however we need to as time goes on.

I will close with my usual plea for content for the *Marker Lamp*. We do have several folks who are contributing regular columns now (thanks folks!) but it's still difficult to get "main articles". If there is anything you can contribute, please contact me. I am willing to edit whatever you have – even if it's not in article format (like a clinic/PowerPoint presentation, a review, a collection of photos, or even a video) – and it can be about *any* aspect of model railroading (or prototype railroading). If you're interested, someone else who reads the *Marker Lamp* will be too. (And officers and chairs, please don't forget to submit your reports.)

Thanks, and keep the FUN in model railroading!