

# Switchable Trolley Wire Frog

By Fred Miller, MMR

I have always enjoyed a bit of trolley freight switching on my HO Scale Gotham City modules. However, I found reversing the pole on the freight motors to move into and out of spurs to be a bit frustrating. Reaching down around scenery and trolley wire and pull-offs is no fun. In fact I resorted to “spacer cars” to keep my motors away from a trolley wire frog at a switching location. This allowed me to do some “back poling” without getting tied up in a trolley wire frog. At least that works if there are no other trolley frogs nearby.

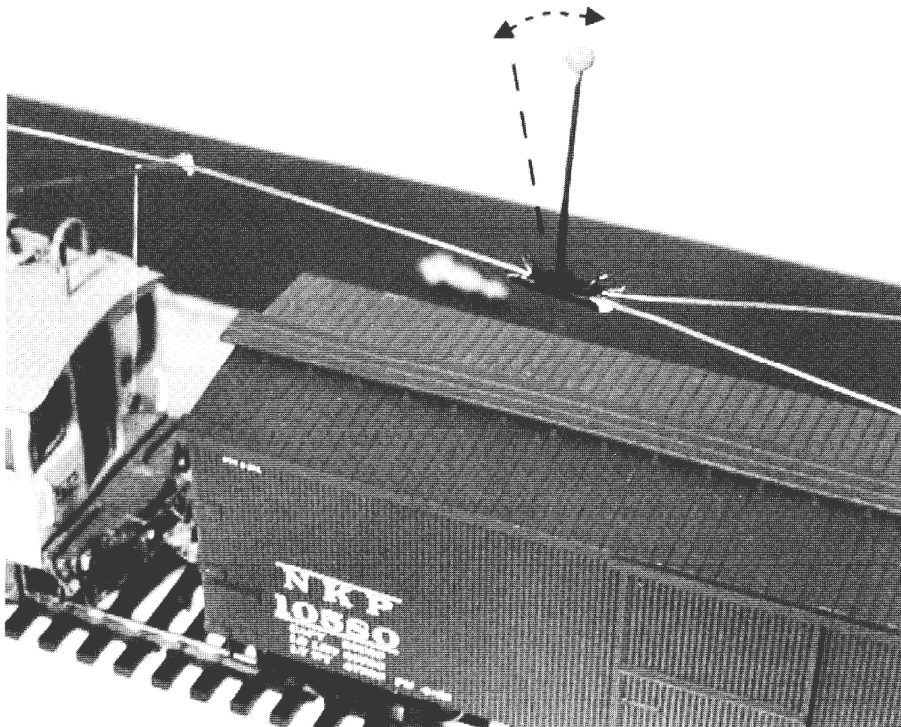
I am planning my next module with lots of freight switching to both industries and interchange with a railroad. Thinking hard about how to deal with the trolley pole and frogs at spurs, I remembered that frogs can be “biased” to allow a back-poled trolley pole to always take a given route. One easy way to



“bias” the trolley frog is to tilt it so that the trolley pole will follow the “highest” route in the frog.

Expanding on this thinking, I came up with the idea to provide a trolley frog tilting mechanism. With a fairly unobtrusive rod soldered to the top of the trolley frog, I could tilt the frog in the appropriate direction with a finger of one hand while controlling the freight motor speed and direction with the other hand. (I use Digitrax UT-1 DCC throttles.)

I built a little test bed to confirm that this switching rod would work. And it works very nicely. Enough so that I can continue to design my trolley freight switching module with confidence that I can do switching without reaching down too far into the scenery to reverse a trolley pole. I suppose the mechanism could be powered in some way but I'll leave that for a later exercise. Probably much later.



*More photos of Fred's Gotham City modules can be found on his website at: <http://hometown.aol.com/tractionfan>, or just Google “Fred Miller Trolleys.”*