



ance and performance before going to the railroad. Later, I added wiring with a two-position plug to connect to the track for testing and programming of locomotives and decoders. I did put gaps in the rails near the coupler height gauges. They are metal and would short across the track.

Recently, a client asked me about where to place programming tracks on his plan that I am developing. I gave a few suggested locations. I informed my client that I have two programming tracks on my model railroad, but they are seldom used. DecoderPro is so easy and gives such flexibility that it is the only way I set CVs anymore. Therefore, I suggested that we could have a programming track, but strongly encouraged the use of DecoderPro. Any programming track on your railroad must be isolated from the mains to set the decoder address. A DPDT switch is commonly used to go back and forth from programming to mains from the command station. The programming track could be connected to DecoderPro through this DPDT switch—instead of the programming terminals of the command station to make things even easier.

Once you have the required components and installed DecoderPro, you are ready to start changing and setting CVs. As you use DecoderPro to set CVs for differing brands and types of decoders, you will notice that the tabs and screens are a little different for each decoder type. That is because although the decoder meets NMRA DCC specs, the manufacturer is not limited to specific functions. For example, there are sound and non-sound decoders that meet the DCC standards, but there are no CVs to control sound in a non-sound decoder. Therefore, some decoders will have CVs that you may not find on other brands or older decoders. The volunteers working on this have written software specific to each decoder type. Some CVs are required to meet the standards.

When you open DecoderPro, the first thing you will see is a roster of decoders that have been configured and saved on your computer with DecoderPro (**Screen Shot 1**). If this is your first time using it, the roster will be blank. When I start the process of configuring a new decoder, I have DecoderPro read the type of decoder that it is. This is a first test to verify that the decoder is good and that CVs can be read from the decoder. It gives me a list based on the ID stored in the decoder from the manufacturer. It gives you the likely