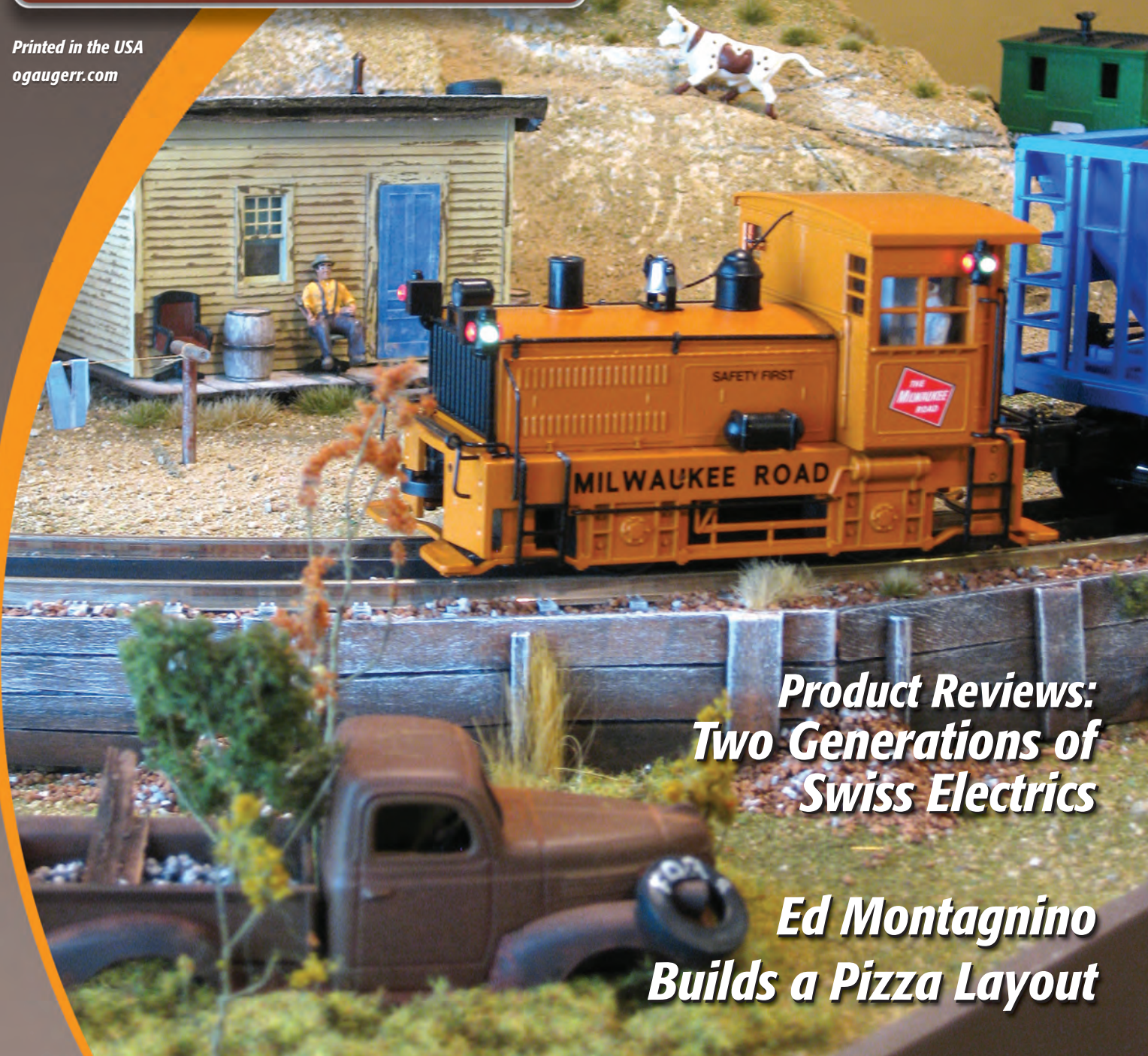




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***Nick Thill Creates  
a Nebraska  
Micro Layout***

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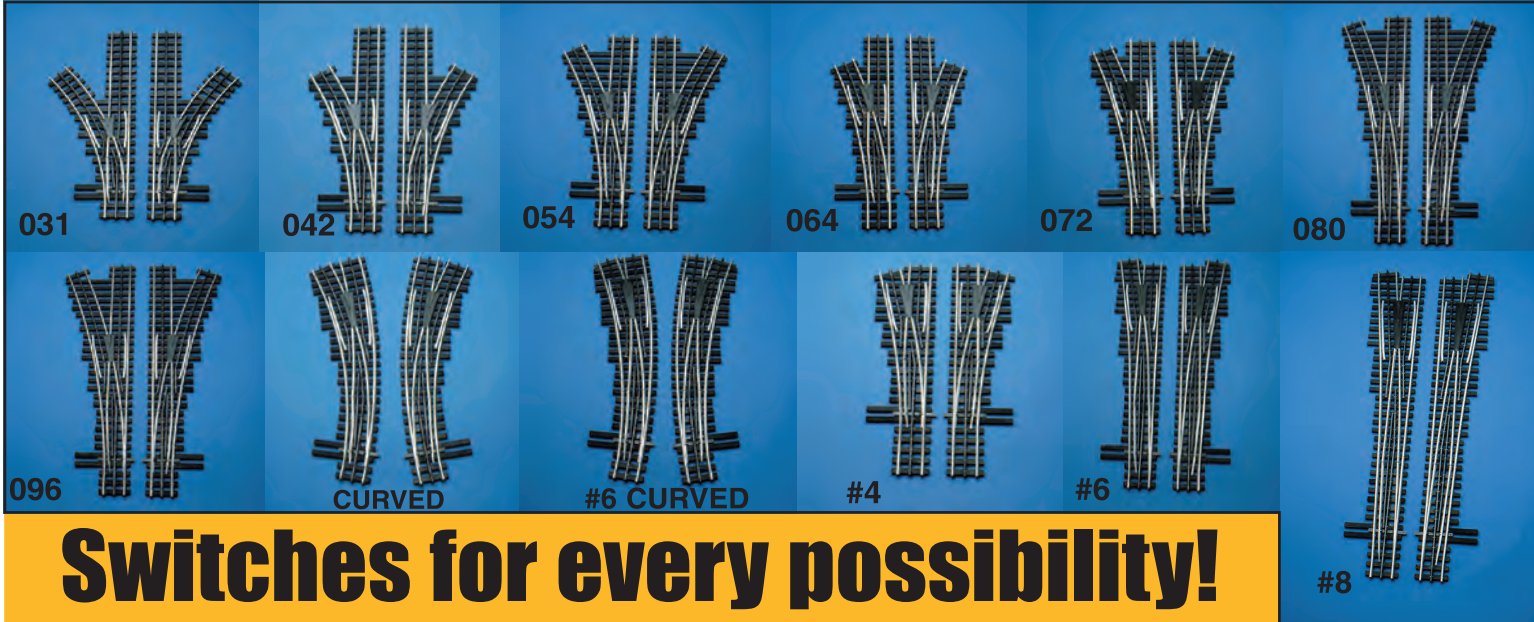
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Two Generations of  
Swiss Electric's***

***Ed Montagnino  
Builds a Pizza Layout***

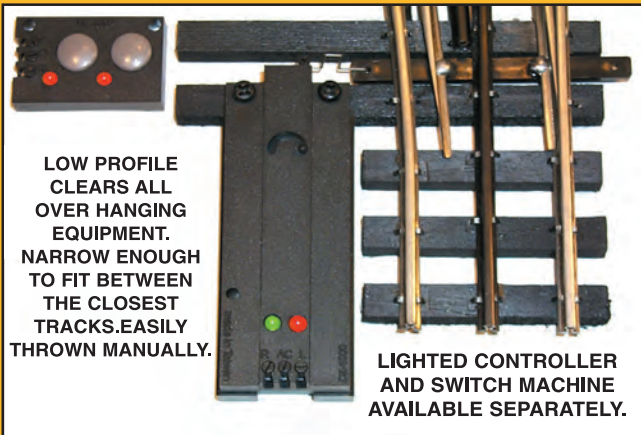
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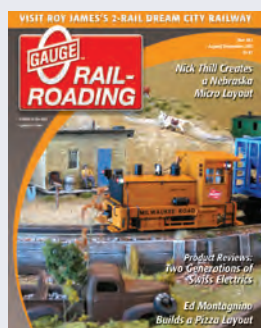
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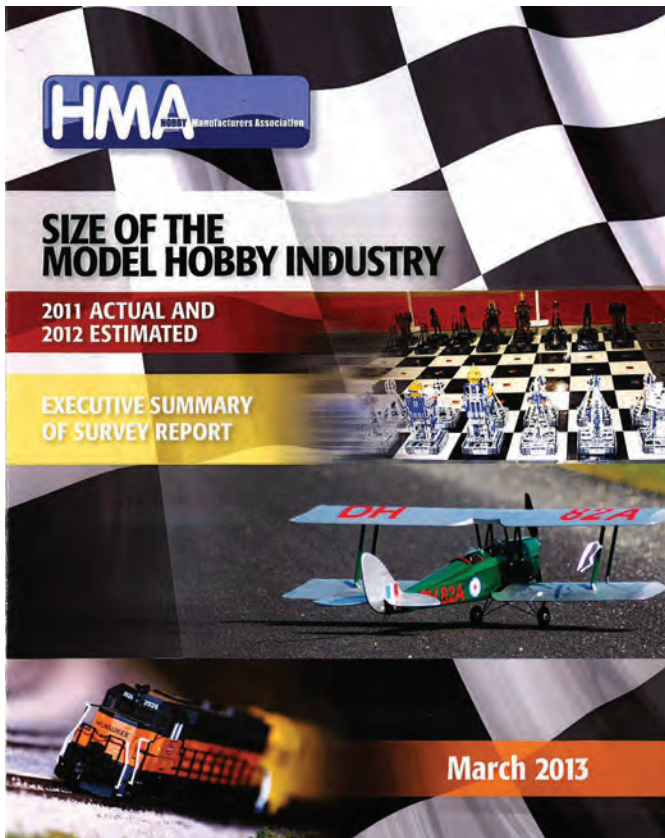
## ON THE COVER

A bucolic rural scene on Nick Thill's 3-rail O gauge micro layout is temporarily disrupted by a tiny Plymouth switcher rumbling by. Nick's layout measures just 33" on each side, but he and his son, Liam, had fun building this centerpiece for their basement lounge. See for yourself how even the smallest of spaces can accommodate a creative and fun-to-build O gauge layout.

*Photo by Nick Thill*



## State of Our Hobby: The Industry's Perspective



On the day this issue of the magazine was scheduled for transfer to our design team in eastern Pennsylvania, I received a document from the Hobby Manufacturers Association (HMA) titled "Size of the Model Hobby Industry." It is a summary of information compiled in a survey the HMA had conducted of its membership. Although the report is relatively brief, I found some of the findings quite interesting and I thought it would be worthwhile to share some highlights with you. First, though, here's a bit of background about the organization.

The HMA was created in 2005 through the unification of three hobby industry associations: the International Model Hobby Manufacturers Association, Model Railroad Industry Association, and Radio Control Hobby Trade Association. In its words, the organization "represents manufacturers, importers, publishers, distributors, and suppliers of all model hobby products and accessories. This includes model trains, plastic models, die-cast collectables, radio control products, and hobby accessories and tools." HMA's mission, as stated in the document, is "to stimulate the growth of the model hobby industry and to offer unique benefits to members and affiliated companies, including industry statistics and legislative information when appropriate and necessary."

The synopsis I received was based on a survey of 277 HMA members and nonmembers conducted in the fall of 2012, the results of which were compiled by Bruce Kemelgor, Ph.D. and the College of Business at the University of Louisville in Kentucky. The survey had a 39% response rate.

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Keeping in mind that this survey reports information compiled from manufacturers and distributors, not sales at the retail (hobby shop or train store) level, here are a few of the findings that are particularly relevant to the model train category as compared to the other major categories:

- Surveys conducted in 2009 and 2011 showed that sales in the model railroad sector of the industry grew from 27.7% of the combined total in 2009 to 38% of the total in 2011. All other areas, including plastics and die-cast, radio control, and general hobby, experienced declines ranging from a couple of percentage points to several percentage points over the same 2009 and 2011 comparative period.
- Assuming an accepted standard average retail markup of 40% to 50%, sales at the *retail* level were estimated to be between \$2 billion and \$2.5 billion overall for the 2011 reporting period.
- For the 2012 reporting year, respondents (again, specific to manufacturers and distributors) were asked to estimate their total sales, and these figures were compared with actual sales reported in 2011. The model railroad segment again fared better than the other segments with estimated sales of model railroad products for 2012 at \$516 million vs. \$425 million for 2011. All other categories showed declines over that same two-year period.


Survey respondents were asked to identify what they felt were the five major problems facing the industry. They were as follows:

- Hobbyists are aging, and the industry is not attracting a younger demographics.
- The economy (recession) is impacting the industry as hobbyists cut back on their hobby expenditures.
- Internet sales and direct sales to retailers are hurting the traditional distribution channels.

- Cheaper and lesser quality products from sources outside the U.S. are costing hobbyists more in the long run.
- The decline in hobby retail stores has made it more difficult for consumers to find products and to try and learn more about them.

What to do about this? Well, here are the recommendations offered in the report:

- Develop an industry-wide promotion targeted to more youthful demographics and cross-promote all hobby products in an effort to enhance the number and types of products used.
- Assist the retail community in using these promotions and increasing their marketing efforts to consumers.
- Assist manufacturers and distributors to find more efficient and economical ways to operate their businesses so that more promotional dollars are available to grow the industry.
- Develop an in-depth demographic study to ascertain interests and access to model hobby products.

There is, of course, more information in the document I received and certainly far more in the complete study, but I felt you might benefit from this relatively brief sampling. It also provides a glimpse into the industry side of the model railroading hobby niche that we all occupy and enjoy. Surveys of our hobby from any perspective are few and far between, and I'm delighted that the HMA is apparently doing this sort of thing on a regular basis. It does help us all to better understand changes we are seeing in the evolution of the hobby. 



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### Lionel Appoints New Management Team

Jerry Calabrese, CEO of Lionel LLC, has announced the appointment of a new management team based in Concord, North Carolina, to run the day-to-day activities of Lionel electric train operations and the Lionel NASCAR Collectables business.

Howard Hitchcock is the senior vice president and general manager of Lionel LLC, overseeing both operations. Michael Phillips has been named senior director of Marketing. Also based in Concord, Chris Elrod is the firm's CFO.

Most Lionel operations are now concentrated in Concord, with Customer Service under Mike Reagan, director of Customer Service, located in Canfield, Ohio, and Product Development, in Michigan, under the direction of Matt Ashba.

The executive offices of Lionel remain in New York City where Jerry Calabrese, with a top-level group of managers, is concentrating on expanding the Lionel brand into suitable new ventures for the company, like the recently announced line of Lionel theme Christmas ornaments.



Senior VP and GM Howard Hitchcock



Sr. Director of Marketing Michael Phillips



Chief Financial Officer Chris Elrod

### Lionel Customer Service 3rd Annual Open House

Lionel fans from across the nation will be making tracks to Canfield, Ohio, on Saturday, August 17, to attend the 3rd annual Lionel Customer Service open house. This event has ballooned in popularity over its short two-year history, and there's every reason to believe the 2013 version will set a new record for attendance.

According to Mike Reagan, director of Customer Service at Lionel, this year's open house will feature the following events:

- A chance to meet the entire Lionel Customer Service staff
- Tours of the Lionel Customer Service facility where trains are serviced and tested
- An opportunity to view two large operating layouts where Lionel products are tested
- Mini-clinics on servicing Lionel products
- Legacy product demonstrations
- Hourly drawings for great prizes
- A Grand Prize drawing for a Lionel Vision Line locomotive (must be present to enter this drawing)

A large selection of Lionel products will also be on sale the day of the event. Attendees will receive a complimentary 50 percent discount on all Lionel service parts orders on the day of the open house only. This offer is also being extended to on-line orders placed between midnight August 17 and midnight August 18.

Food vendors will be on-site all day along with representatives from the LCCA, *O Gauge Railroading* magazine, and other industry supporters.

The open house will be held from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at:

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# Smoke Signals

## Product Announcements



### The Black Diamond

The Lehigh Valley 4-6-2 Black Diamond is now available from Weaver Models. This limited-edition streamlined engine features brass body construction and is operational on O54 curves. It is offered in cab numbers 2089, 2093, and 2097. Features include accurate 1:48 scale dimensions, DC can motor with flywheel, sprung drive wheels, illuminated cab, firebox glow, and fan-driven smoke unit. Available in 3-rail with TrainMaster Command Control, RailSounds, and rear coil-operated coupler or 2-rail AC at \$1,249.00. Also available in 2-rail DC without sound at \$1,199.00. Both 2-rail and 3-rail with sound models are also equipped with ERR Cruise Commander. For complete details and descriptions, visit the Black Diamond page at [www.weavermodels.com](http://www.weavermodels.com).

### Cure for Smelly Smoke

Have a bad smelling smoke unit? The folks at JT's Mega-Steam have announced a new product that is a breakthrough in smoke unit maintenance. They call it Eliminator, and it is chemically engineered to eliminate bad smelling smoke. Use it just like any

smoke fluid with 15–20 drops per filling, then wait at least 30 minutes before turning on the smoke unit.

The result will be lots of smoke, but you'll notice a light pleasant scent as Eliminator works its magic. If you

have a difficult and really stinky smoke unit, just add the Eliminator and let the engine sit overnight while the product soaks into the wicking. Then proceed as normal. Results are usually achieved after three to four filling cycles. Repeat as needed. Eliminator is safe in all smoke units and fully compatible with the Mega-Steam line of smoke fluid. Visit [www.megasteam.com](http://www.megasteam.com).



### Landmark Structure Kits

In response to persistent customer requests, Woodland Scenics is now offering its popular line of O scale Built-&-Ready buildings in kit form. Each of the six structures released to date is now available as a Landmark Structures Building Kit. Kit number PF5895, Deuce's Bike Shop, is pictured here. These architecturally accurate building kits are infused with details accurate to the time period. A positive alignment system ensures a quick, accurate assembly, and the prefinished edges reduce preparation time. Each kit includes a generous number of accessories, clear window material, and window treatment options. An assortment of bright, colorful dry transfer decals is also included. Look for the new O scale building kits at your local hobby shop and learn more about the full line at [www.woodlandscenics.com](http://www.woodlandscenics.com).



### The Perils of Pauline

Scenic Express has two new 1:48 scale fun figures that are designed to help create your own version of the *Perils of Pauline* film series. Item number CG0051 is Periled Pauline who could very well find herself bound to a heavily traveled O gauge railroad track. Periled Pauline sells for \$6.99. The mustache-twirling, top-hatted baddie with the cane is Dastardly Villain, number CG0050, with a retail price of \$7.99. Both figures are fully painted. You create the scene and scenario with Dastardly Villain and Periled Pauline. Order these figures and see the full and extensive line of landscaping supplies and layout details at [www.scenicexpress.com](http://www.scenicexpress.com).

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## Toy Train History

Toy train historian Robert Osterhoff has completed three new projects in his continuing effort to provide a comprehensive record of print and promotional materials produced by the toy train industry in the prewar and postwar periods. *Lionel Postwar Instruction Sheets, Volume IV — Dealer Displays with Advanced Catalog Promotional Pages* (\$18.00) includes over 150 pages of rare Lionel display instruction sheets and documentation as originally published. *Lionel Postwar Instruction Sheets, Volume III, Revised and Expanded Version 2.0 — Transformers, Track, HO, & Miscellaneous* (\$14.00) has been expanded to 400 pages of Lionel instruction sheets and documentation as originally published. Also includes a bonus of rare postwar Lionel Service Bulletins from 1960–69. *Lionel Postwar Promotional Records with Audio* (\$16.00) enables you to actually listen to 11 promotional records produced by or for Lionel. This DVD also includes a number of bonus features. Shipping is \$2.50 for one DVD and \$3.50 for two or more. Order direct from Robert Osterhoff, 1622 Garden Valley Dr., Wildwood, MO 63038, or via his website at [www.trainpaper.com](http://www.trainpaper.com).



## Cool Cabin Cars

The new N5c caboose from Ready Made Trains (RMT) is based on the Pennsylvania Railroad's N5c cabin car. The 7-1/2" long N5c features an operating smoke unit, lighted interior and markers, roof antennae, and conductor figure. Metal parts include the detailed underframe, die-cast trucks and couplers with air hoses, ladders, and brake wheel. Five different models are in this initial RMT release of the N5c including three Pennsylvania Railroad schemes. Pictured is Pennsylvania RR #477939 (RMT-97915-2) featuring a brown body with black roof scheme from the 1950s through 1960s. White lettering includes Railway Express Agency service assignment markings. Other releases of the N5c include an American Railroads model and an Amtrak version. \$119.95. For special prices and to see the full product line, visit [www.readymadetoys.com](http://www.readymadetoys.com).



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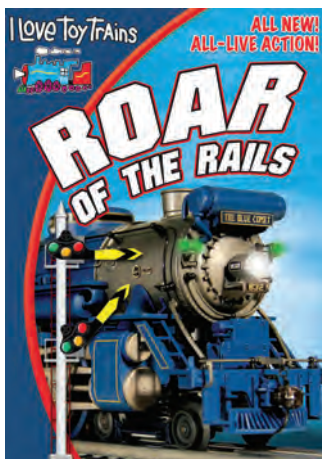
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## Roarin' Rails

New from TM Books & Video is an innovative approach to the popular *I Love Toy Trains* series that has earned the producer many accolades and awards. The new *Roar of the Rails* DVD is packed with exciting visual effects that have Vinnie the puppet dreaming about being an engineer on magical trains that take him to famous landmarks around the world, including the Grand Canyon, Paris, Washington D.C., and others. In another segment, aliens return for the friends they had left behind in the *All Aboard* DVD of the same series, and they are not particularly happy at the greeting they receive. The program also includes new bloopers and a story proving girls like trains as much as boys. The many special effects are a first in a toy train video. Price is \$12.99 plus shipping. Available at hobby stores and direct from TM Books & Video, P.O. Box 9228, Michigan City, IN 46361. To order, call 800-892-2822 and view the full catalog of offerings at [www.tmbv.com](http://www.tmbv.com).



## Exclusive Stockyard Express Accessories

Stockyard Express is offering two exclusive MTH RailKing accessories that commemorate and promote this popular Ohio train store. First is a modern lighted billboard, which sells for \$35.00. The billboard features the slogan "Where the bull stays in the barn & the train rolls down the track." The other item is a completely assembled, fully painted, and lighted country store also bearing the Stockyard Express name and the same slogan selling for \$59.00. Both items can be purchased together for only \$80.00. Order direct from Stockyard Express, 49293 Plate Rd., Oberlin, OH 44074. Phone 440-774-2131 or visit [www.stockyardexpress.com](http://www.stockyardexpress.com) to view the extensive inventory of O gauge trains and accessories. 



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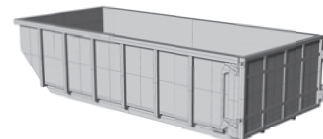
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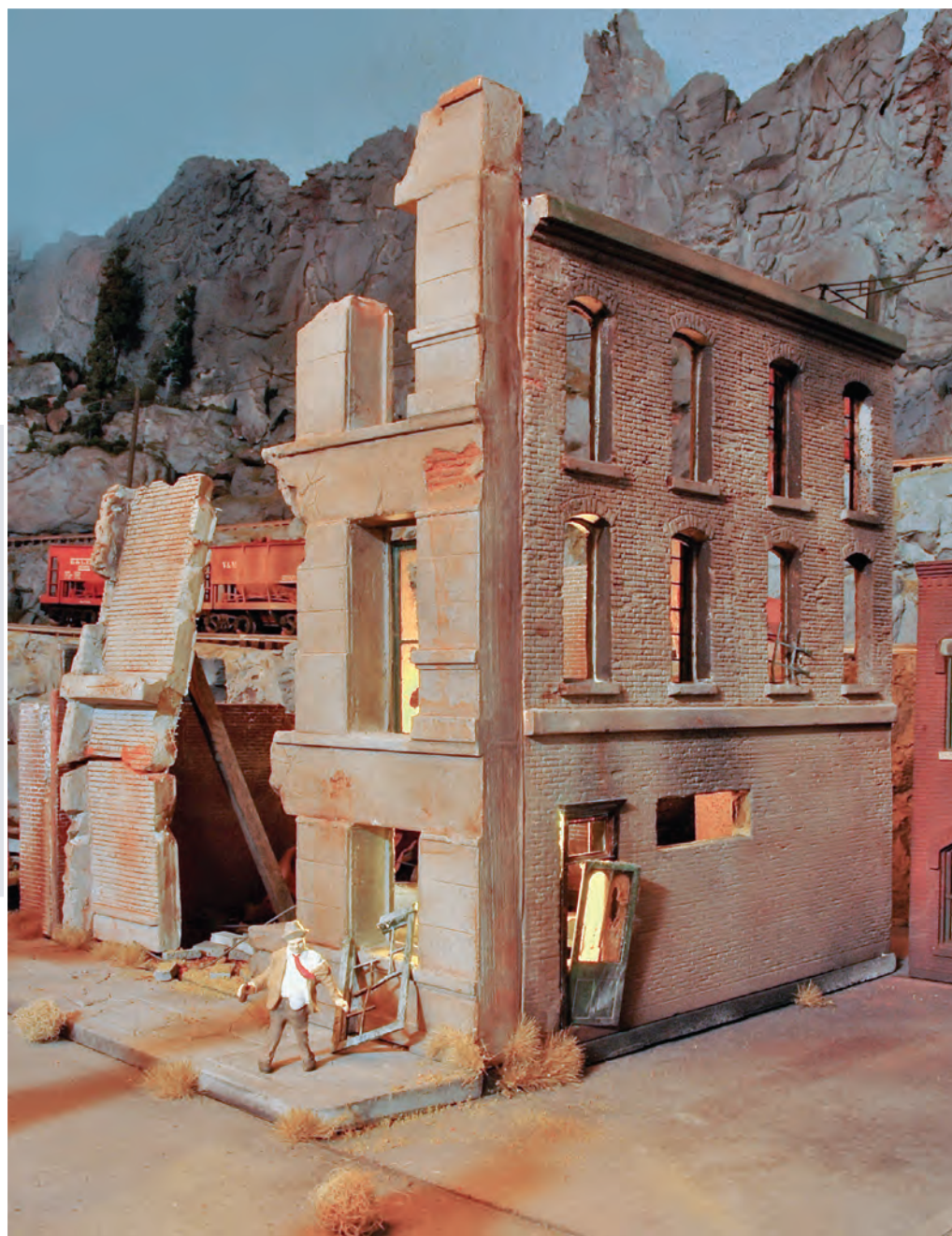
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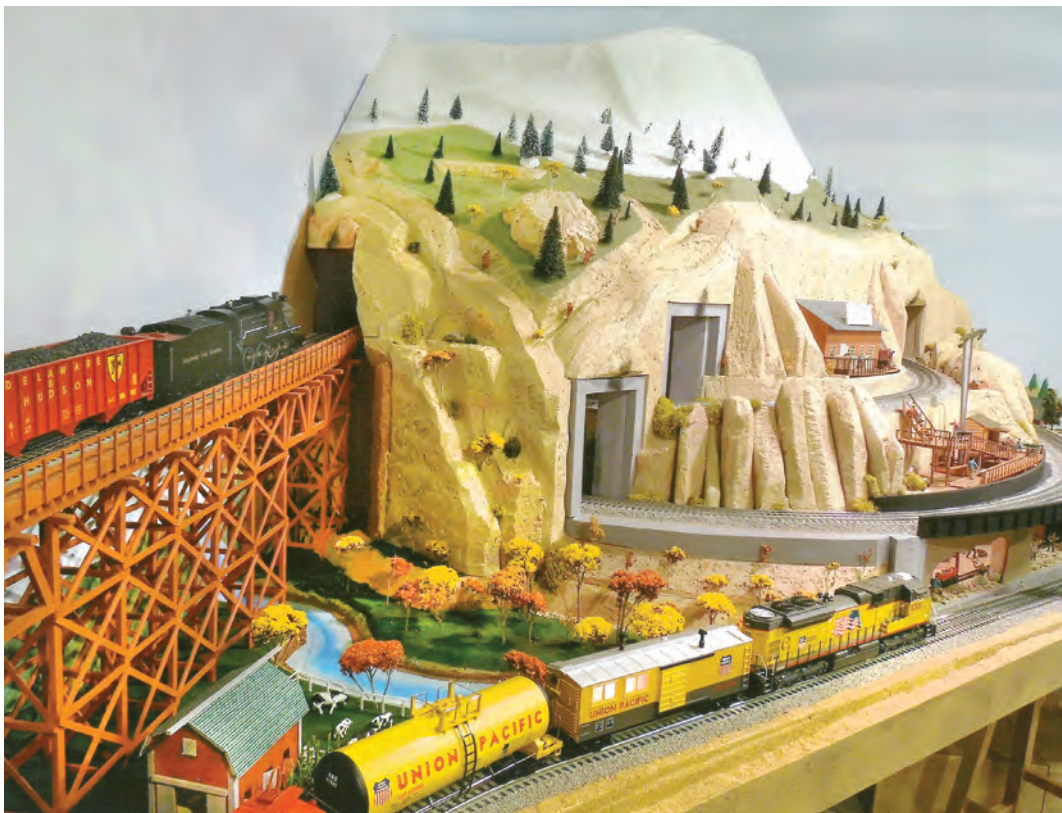
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### ***Last Man Standing***

Here's Darryl, the last man living in Copperopolis, a small copper mining town on its last legs. The last bright rays of sunset are striking what's left of the Grand Hotel, aptly named for the town's bustling days, now not so much. This scene is part of the first section of the all-new 3-rail layout Don McCuaig is building in his Maui, Hawaii, home. The building parts used for the hotel are from DownTown Deco.





### ***Rugged Rocks***

An Erie camelback enters Mount Brenden over the trestle bridge on George Simon's 3-rail 0 gauge layout in Greentown, Pennsylvania. Winding through the valley below, a Union Pacific SD70 hauls a short consist of company rolling stock to a new work site.

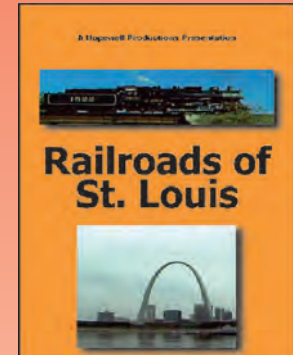
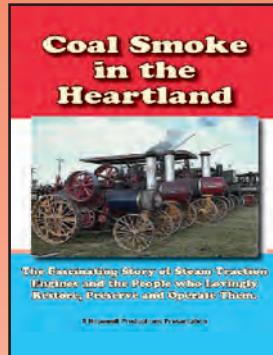
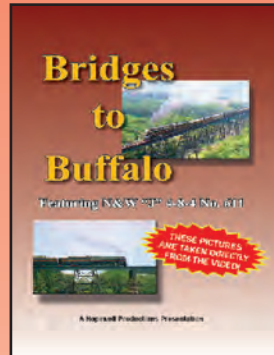
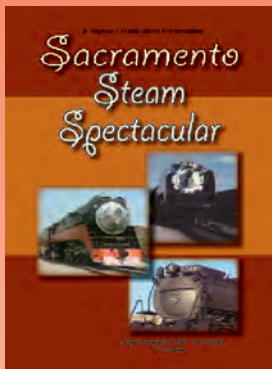
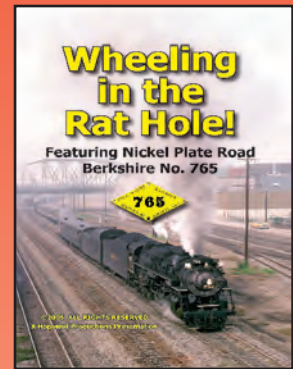


### ***Trains and Troopers***

There appears to be a situation at this unguarded crossing on Patrick Nardella's 3-rail layout in Babylon, New York. State police are on the scene, and an approaching freight has slowed to a crawl as it glides past. Patrick didn't tell us if this was a simple traffic stop, an accident, road construction, or something more serious, but we'll assume that Smokey has everything under control.

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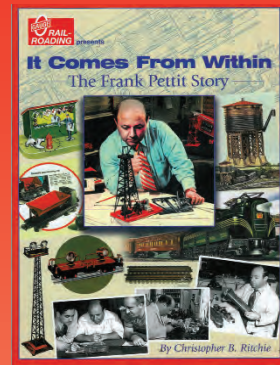
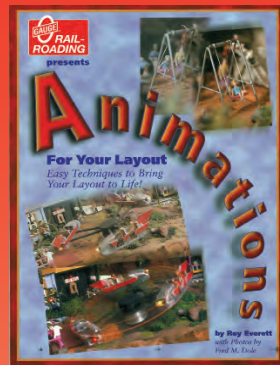
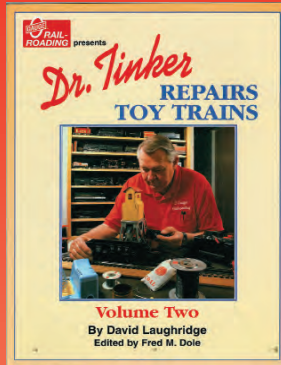
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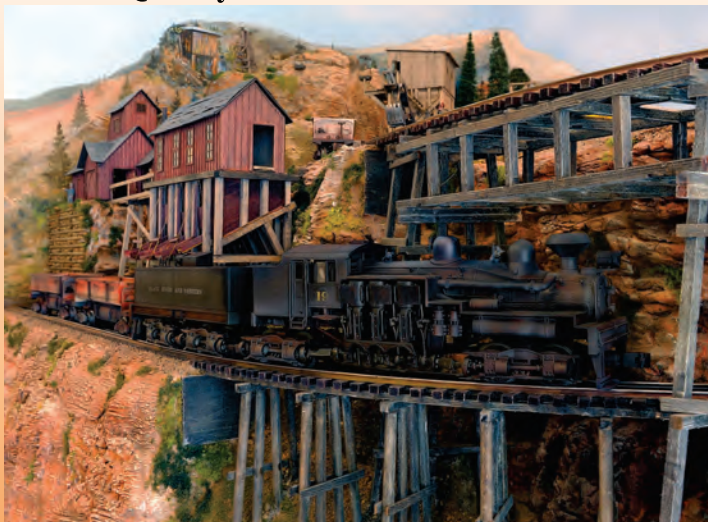
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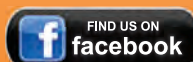
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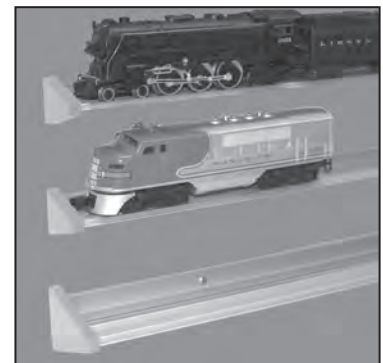


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## MTH European Electrics Two Generations

Review and Photos by George Brown

### SBB Class Ce 6/8 II Swiss Crocodile

The real Ce 6/8 II Swiss Crocodile entered service soon after WWI with the ES-64-U2 introduced several generations later at the millennium for the 21st century. My side-by-side study of the two MTH models of these European locomotives proved to be an accidental yet fascinating study in history. On my desk sat 1:45 European scale representations of two different generations and industrial priorities—not just machinery. Early

of 66,000 lbs, the SBB Class Ce 6/8 II developed 3650 hp at 28 mph. In this class number, the “C” signified the top speed of 40 mph, “e” meant electric, and “6/8” indicated six drivers with eight wheels total per engine.

To negotiate the tight turns and still have enough motors and driving wheels for traction, three major units made up each of these bidirectional articulated electric locomotives. The center section, or steeple cab, rode between two engines with a 1-C-C-1 wheel arrangement in European terminology (2-6-6-2

by the Whyte system used in North America). The cab housed crew compartments at each end, the necessary high-voltage transformers,



in the 20th century, streamlining to reduce air resistance and thereby energy was strictly for the birds...literally. To the people and businesses that built, ran, and repaired the real Crocodiles, getting the job done and a long service life were higher priorities than light weight and aerodynamic efficiency. These locomotives were built to last using heavy steel and iron with the heavy electrical equipment of that era. They weren't fast or stylish, but they worked with the dedication and finesse of a sledge hammer.

The SBB, Swiss Federal Railways, bought 33 of the Ce 6/8 II Swiss Crocodile electrics built in 1919–1921 to drag freight trains over its mountainous Gotthardbahn between Lucerne and Chiasso, Switzerland. This line was a main route between Germany and Italy with its 2.6 percent ruling grade, tight turns, close clearances, and 9-mile Gotthard Tunnel making for an extremely difficult railroad to lug trains over. With a tractive effort

cooling blowers, and two pantographs. In keeping with the technology of the time, two large electric motors mounted rigidly to the frame drove a common jackshaft in each engine. Side rods transferred the mechanical power from the motors and jackshaft to the six 53” drivers. These rods utilized a strange architecture as shown in the photos of the MTH model. A two-wheel pony truck on each engine served as the leading or trailing truck, depending on the locomotive’s direction of travel.

## ES-64-U2 EuroSprinter Taurus

The real Taurus, which entered service 80 years after the Swiss Crocodile, definitely was the product of a totally different era and industrial mindset. It was much lighter, faster, and efficient with twice the horsepower and about the same pulling power as the Swiss Crocodile. About the only point where the Taurus fell short compared to the Crocodile was putting the crew in the front where they were more vulnerable to frontal collisions, especially with roadway vehicles.

Built by Siemens Transportation System, the 6,400 kW (8600 hp) EuroSprinter ES-64 was a modular product equipped with quill drive for the European rail transportation industry. The ES-64-U2 was a universal locomotive for either passenger or freight service. With a top speed of 230 km/h, or 140 mph, the U2 variant could use either 15 kV, 16.7 Hz power or 25 kV at 50 Hz. Named the Taurus initially by the ÖBB of Austria, the name spread so the ES-64-U series of EuroSprinters all came to be known as Taurus. Four traction motors internal to the B-B type of trucks power all eight wheels with a tractive effort of 67,000 lbs, which is only slightly greater than the tractive effort of the Swiss Crocodile with its 12 drivers. Because of its modern lightweight but strong construction materials, the Taurus weighs 46 tons less than the Swiss Crocodile.

Given the apparent performance superiority of the Taurus vs. the Swiss Crocodile, I find it interesting to speculate whether an operational Taurus, or even just a static example, will still be in existence 90-plus years from its introduction in 2000. After all, several post-WWI Swiss Crocodiles are still around 90 years after the first one pulled a train, and I understand some of them are also operational.

### Model Construction and Features

The silver on top of the Crocodile cab grabbed my initial attention to the model. The traditional style of pantographs dominated the view along with several visible and colorful cables and insulators. I particularly liked the wooden insulated walkways on each side of the model's motor-driven automatic pantographs. Oh, on our evaluation sample, the cab-length walkway was not bonded to the cab and



came loose, much to my surprise. But it was easy to install back on top of the cab.

Actually, during my entire time with the MTH European electrics, I kept finding more details such as the wiring and electrical junction boxes for the lighting and the detail on the pilots. Underneath the Crocodile is as fascinating as its topside. I'm not a fan of European trains, but I particularly like the colorful paint schemes on the MTH locomotives I've reviewed in the past, including the current green and gray on the Crocodile. On the topic of the paint, which includes the lettering and decoration, it was outstanding on our evaluation sample, which I've come to expect from MTH.

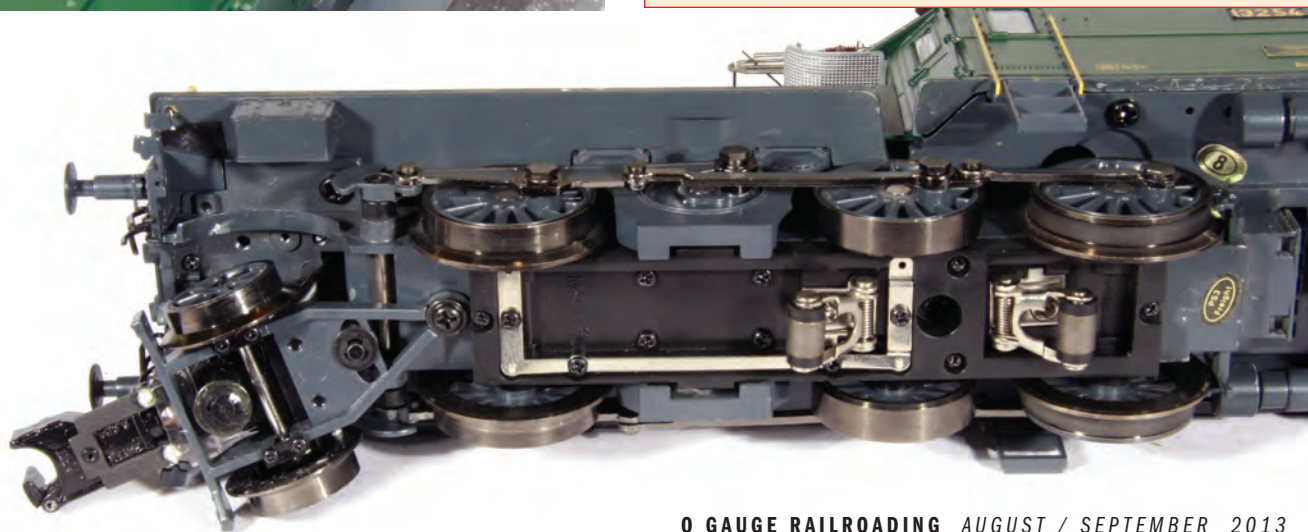
In character with most early jackshaft electric locomotives, the rods on the Swiss Crocodile were fascinating with their unusual architecture. One end of the main rod connected to the jackshaft, and the other rode on a counterbalanced idler wheel and shaft. The driving wheel was in between. The rods to the other two driver wheels were more conventional in appearance.

The pivot point for each of the articulated engines is underneath the respective end of the cab. Regarding each engine, a small horizontally mounted can motor is geared directly to the jackshaft, not unlike the real Crocodile. And like the model's prototype, this gearing appears to be extremely low for pulling power, not speed.



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- Die-cast engine frames and pilot trucks (Crocodile)
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under removable hatch covers on top of the long hoods. Small magnets imbedded in the hoods hold both hatch covers in place. On the Taurus, these switches are in the frame underneath the body along with the cast housing for the speaker and volume control for the sound.

On the model of the Taurus with its streamlined body, little in the way of small detail parts are visible with the possible exception of the modern lightweight pantographs along with simulated electrical cables and insulators mounted on the roof. The interior of the model's cab reflects what appears to be the contemporary design with an uncluttered desktop and console of display screens and controls.

Paint application flaws such as orange peel, overspray, or paint buildups are easy to spot on the large, smooth, and flat surfaces of the Taurus body. No worries there since the paint and lettering on our evaluation sample were flawless.

Because both models have Proto-Scale 3-2, they both have the requisite controls for 3-rail or 2-rail operation on AC or DC power with Proto-Sound 3.0 or DCC operating systems. In the Crocodile, these switches and the sound volume control are hidden

My only concern with the Crocodile was with the step assembly extending down from each corner. The step's backbone is wire that extends down from the frame and is vulnerable to damage. Fortunately, straightening the steps is not difficult because the wire seems to be fairly soft, but I question how much it will take before breaking off. The paint at the bends wasn't as resilient as the wire.

On the Taurus, one of the sprung bumpers was broken off prior to arrival at the OGR Southwest Offices. After removing the sheet plastic and foam wrapping from the locomotive, what remained of the bumper was lying loose in the wrapper. If the big red Railion rail rocket were mine, I would have simply glued the bumper back into its socket. As the situation turned out, the missing bumper proved beneficial...more on that later.





## At Trackside

Both the Crocodile and the Taurus were fun to run with their pantographs raising and lowering automatically at direction change. Both engines ran smoothly at 4 mph with only single-digit test miles on them. I didn't get to put many scale miles on either locomotive, but I feel certain they would run smoothly at a lower speed once they were thoroughly broken in.

On the editorial Carpet Central Railroad, the articulated Swiss Crocodile with its long driver wheelbase ran without a problem on the O54 main line while the shorter Taurus was, by MTH specification, restricted to my O72 line. Freight cars with articulating couplers had no problems when coupled to the Taurus through O72 curves. However, cars with their couplers mounted directly to the trucks would more than likely derail the leading truck—the one coupled to the Taurus. The problem was the frame-mounted sprung bumper on each corner of the big red EuroSprinter. These bumpers limited the lateral swing of the coil-equipped tinplate knuckle couplers to just a few degrees, which

resulted in derailling the lead car. On wider curves, such as O82, I'm reasonably sure the problem would disappear. To run the Taurus with any one of my freight cars as the lead, I coupled it to the end of the locomotive with the missing bumper. Because all turns were toward the missing bumper, the now-unconstrained coupler was free to swing sufficiently in curves. No further derailments occurred with the lead car—a crude but effective fix to an aggravating problem.

I do not have access to European-styled cars, so I could not test the NEM fine scale couplers for unobstructed operation on curved track. But in studying the couplers and even mounting one on the Taurus, I didn't see any reason why they shouldn't work.

On either locomotive's start-up under DCS or conventional control, the sound of blowers, which force cooling airflow across the electrical components inside the body of real electric locomotives, was unmistakable. Equally unmistakable was the Crocodile's shrill whistle so characteristic of European trains of that generation.

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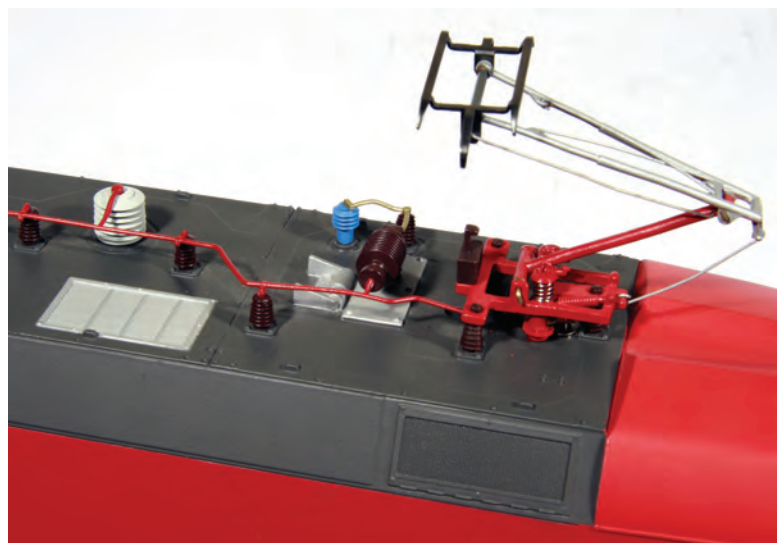
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As the Taurus accelerated past 4–5 scale mph, it emitted what sounded like an ascending scale of electronically generated musical notes, stabilizing at a high D. I'm not a musician, so the sound could likely be some other note. This note sounded continuously until the Taurus stopped, when it then rapidly sounded a descending scale. As I ran the Taurus, the singular high D note became quite wearing and rather quickly. Praises be to the sound control button on the DCS remote! I understand that because electric locomotives are often serenely quiet as they dash along the rails, these tones on the real Taurus are to alert trackside personnel to its approach.

## At the End of the Run

For the enthusiast of European trains, the Swiss Crocodile and EuroSprinter Taurus underscore their respective generation's motive power. Although both locomotives could be considered as somewhat unusual in appearance on this side of the pond, they are still MTH all the way. 🐉



### 20-5638-1 Swiss Federal Railways Ce 6/8 II Crocodile

Retail price: \$899.95 at MTH dealers

### 20-5651-1 DB Railion ES-64-U2 Taurus

Retail price: \$449.95 at MTH dealers

M.T.H. Electric Trains; [www.mthtrains.com](http://www.mthtrains.com)

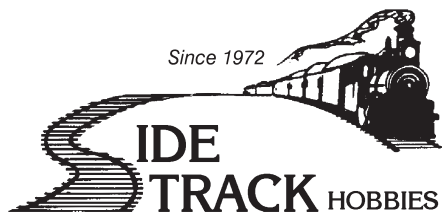
## Crocodile and Taurus DCS Performance

(sound: on; speed control: on)

Crocodile	Taurus
<b>Length:</b> 18-3/4" over couplers 17" between end sills	18-1/2" over couplers 17" between end sills
<b>Distance Between Pickup Rollers:</b> 1st and 2nd: 1-7/8" 1st and 3rd: 5-1/4" 1st and 4th: 7-1/8"	7-3/4"
<b>Weight on Driving Wheels:</b> 6 lbs, 2 oz	4 lbs, 4 oz
<b>Tractive Effort @ 18 VAC:</b> 2 lbs, 9 oz @ 5.8 A, 104 W	1 lb, 11 oz @ 5.4 A, 97 W
<b>Minimum Sustained Speed @ 18 VAC:</b> 2 scale mph @ 0.7 A, 13 W	3 scale mph @ 0.8 A, 14 W
<b>Maximum Tested Speed @ 18 VAC:</b> 40 scale mph @ 1.0 A, 18 W	60 scale mph @ 1.2 A, 22 W

### Test Train

15-car mixed freight; train weight 13 lbs; pull to move train 7 oz; 0 scale cars from various manufacturers



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20-20154-1	NS SD40-2 Diesel Flatcar Freight Set W/PS2 M11V1 MSRP 649.95	\$599.95
20-2197-1	New Haven EP-5 Electric Engine Boxed Set (QSI)	\$449.00
20-2250-1	Pioneer Zephyr Det Burlington W/PS2	\$525.00
20-2382-1	Denver Rio Grande F40PH Diesel Engine Box Set	\$399.00
20-2771-1	MO PAC SD70Ae Diesel Heritage Set W/PS 2 MSRP 499.95	\$399.00
20-2925-1	Union Pacific M1000 Diesel Passenger Set W/PS2 MSRP 699.95	\$599.00
20-2967-1	American Freedom Alco PA Passenger Set W/PS2 MSRP 649.95	\$549.00
20-2986-1	GE Evolution Hybrid Set W/PS-3 (JHRW) M12V2 MSRP 539.95	\$449.00
20-3023-1	WV P&P Shay W/PS As Set W/20-48103 Log Cars	\$879.00
20-3412-1	PA 4-4-6 Q2 Specialty Frt Set W/PS2 M10V2 MSRP 1399.95	\$1,249.00
20-3427-1	PA 4-4-6-4 Q2 Specialty Frt Set W/PS2 M10V2MSRP 1399.95	\$1,249.00
20-3441-1	Erie 0-8-0-80 Freight Set W/PS3 M11V1 MSRP 1399.95	\$1,259.95
20-5631-1	New Haven "The East Wind" EP-3 Pass Set W/PS2 MSRP 899.95	\$749.00

Item No.	RAIL KING	Our Price
20-1550-1	PA 4-6-2 Imperial K-4s Pacific STM Fgt Set M10V2 MSRP 549.95	\$449.00
20-1551-1	PA 4-6-2 Imperial K-4s Pacific Steam Pass Set M10V2 MSRP 549.95	\$449.00
20-20046-1	Caterpillar SD70Ae Freight Set W/PS2 M11V2 MSRP 429.95	\$387.00
20-2582-1	PA GG-1 Express Bear Set W/PS 2.0 MSRP 499.95	\$379.00
20-4137-1	PA Steam Passenger R-T-R SET W/PS2 MSRP 349.95	\$259.00
20-4190-1	M&M'S F-3 Diesel R-T-R SET W/PS2.0 (Uncataloged) MSRP 369.95	\$269.00
20-4200-1	Pittsburg Stealers 2-8-0 Passenger RTR Set MSRP 499.95	\$449.00
20-4202-1	Santa Fe Scale F-3 R-T-R Diesel Set W/PS2 MSRP 499.95	\$359.00
20-4203-1	Pittsburg Stealers 2-8-0 Freight RTR Set W/PS2 MSRP 499.00	\$399.00
20-4204-0	Amtrak F40 Amfleet Pass W/Horn & Bell M10RTR MSRP 299.95	\$199.00
20-4204-1	Amtrak F40 Amfleet Passenger W/PS2 M10RTR MSRP 399.95	\$299.00
20-4205-1	Norfolk So. SD70Ae Diesel Deluxe Frt. M10RTR MSRP 399.95	\$299.00
20-4207-1	Christmas 4-6-0 Steam W/PS2 M11RTR MSRP 349.95	\$249.00
20-4214-1	UP SD70Ae Diesel RTR Deluxe Frt. Set W/PS2 M11RTR MSRP 399.95	\$299.00
20-4215-1	PA Steam Freight R-T-R Set W/PS3 M12RTR MSRP 389.95	\$299.00
20-4216-1	PA Steam Passenger R-T-R Set W/PS3 M12RTR MSRP 419.95	\$319.00
20-4218-1	Christmas 4-6-0 Steam Passenger R-T-R Set W/PS3 M12RTR MSRP 399.95	\$299.00
20-4219-1	Norfolk So. SD70Ae Diesel RTR Frt. Set W/PS3 M12RTR MSRP 419.95	\$319.00
20-4220-1	BNSF SD70Ae Diesel RTR Deluxe Fgt. Set W/PS3 M12RTR MSRP 419.95	\$319.00
20-4222-1	Santa Fe F-3 R-T-R Passenger Set W/PS3 M12RTR MSRP 349.95	\$269.00

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20-20031-1	Amtrak RDC Budd Car Set W/PS3 M11V1 MSRP 399.95	\$299.00
20-20031-3	Amtrak RDC Budd Car 2-CAR Add-On Set M11V1 MSRP 179.95	\$149.00
20-20032-3	New Haven RDC Budd Car 2-CAR Add-On Set M11V1 MSRP 179.95	\$149.00
20-20042-1	NYC Aerotrain Diesel Passenger Set W/PS3 M11V1MSRP 399.95	\$319.00
20-2373-3	Metro Transit Authority R-12 2-CAR Add-On MSRP 119.95	\$93.00
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20-2504-1	PCC San Francisco W/Proto Sounds	\$149.00
20-2513-1	Chicago Electric PCC ST. Car W/PS	\$69.00
20-2521-1	Pacific PCC Electric Street Car W/Proto Sound	\$150.00
20-2584-1	Pitts & Allegheny Fair PCC	\$177.00
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20-2756-3	Metro 2-Tone Green LO-V 2-Car Subway Add-On (NP) MSRP 149.95	\$119.00
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30-2759-1	NY Transit Green O Type 3-Car Subway W/PS2 M10V1 MSRP 349.95	\$259.00
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30-2760-3	NY Transit Blue Q Type 3-Car Sub Add-On (NP) M10V1 MSRP 199.95	\$149.00
30-2766-1	Chicago Bears 4-Car 3200 Series Subway W/PS2 MSRP 399.95	\$295.00
30-2766-3	Chicago Bears 2-Car Subway Add-On (NP) MSRP 149.95	\$119.00
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30-5120-1	Boston PCC Street Car W/PS2 M11V1 MSRP 229.95	\$189.00
30-5121-1	Port Auth. Of Allegheny County PCC Street Car W/PS2 M11V1 MSRP 229.95	\$189.00
30-5122-1	Baltimore Transit PCC Street Car W/PS2 M11V1 MSRP 229.95	\$189.00

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10-1299-1	Christmas #384 Steam Frt. Set W/PS2 TP2008(RTR) MSRP 599.95	\$449.00
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10-6011-1	249E 'O' Crackle Blk STM. 3-Red Pass Set W/PS2 - Uncataloged	\$399.00
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10-6015-1	Blk No.279E O Distance Control steam Pass Set LT12 MSRP 699.95	\$599.00
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81-4003-1	Harley Davidson Deluxe Freight W/PS3 MSRP 239.95 M10RTR	\$169.00
81-4004-0	M&M'S F3 Diesel Deluxe Frt. W/Horn & Bell MSRP 179.95 M10RTR	\$129.00
81-4004-1	M&M'S F3 Diesel Deluxe Freight W/PS3 MSRP 239.95 M10RTR	\$169.00
81-4006-0	Christmas F3 Diesel Deluxe Frt. W/Horn & Bell MSRP 169.95 M10RTR	\$129.00
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11658	John Bull Add-On Coach	\$65.00
11710	Canadian Pacific Rail Frt Set 027 STEAM	\$369.00
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30133	Strasburg Railroad Steam Passenger Set L12 RTR MSRP 369.99	\$299.00
30142	Texas Special FT Freight Set w/Train Sounds L10V1 MSRP 699.99	\$549.00
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30161	Boy Scouts Of America Stm Frt Set L12 RTR MSRP 389.99	\$269.00
30162	Thomas' Friends Remote Christmas Set L13RTR MSRP 199.95	\$139.00
30164	Santa's Flyer Christmas Stm. Frt. LC12 RTR MSRP 289.99	\$189.00
30165	Candy Cane Transit Commuter Power ZPK MSRP 179.99	\$89.00
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30167	Southern Pacific Merger Stm Frt Set L12 RTR MSRP 399.99	\$279.00
30168	Rio Grande General Set w/Train Sounds L12 RTR MSRP 299.99	\$249.00
30169	2011 Limited Edition NJ Transit Set L11 RTR MSRP 349.99	\$259.00
30171	GG-1 Freight Set L12V1 MSRP 549.99	\$439.00
30173	Santa Fe Flyer Steam Freight Set L12 RTR MSRP 289.99	\$199.00
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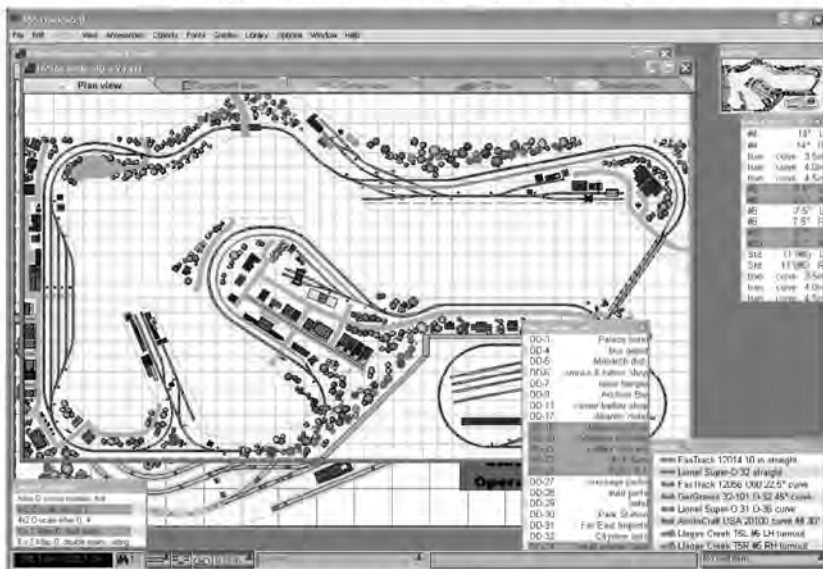


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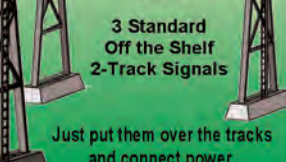
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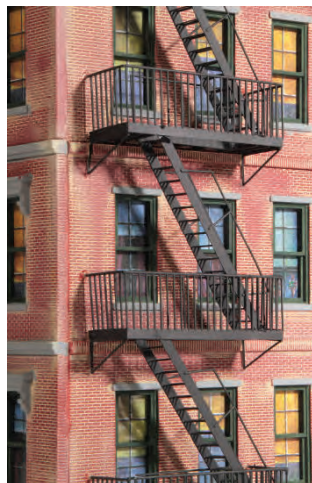
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# Weaver Milwaukee Road Ribbed Side Boxcars

Review and Photos by George Brown

Models of steel side boxcars with prototypes from the decade of the late 1930s through the 1940s are available from a number of manufacturers in 3-rail and also 2-rail. Many are models of cars built to a standard design from the Association of America Railroads (AAR) as well as those built by Pullman-Standard. One recent exception is the new series of unique ribbed side 40' boxcars from Weaver Models.

The real 40' ribbed side steel boxcars were built and owned by the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific—the Milwaukee Road. These unique cars emulated the streamlined appearance of the equally unique ribbed side passenger cars of the road's streamlined Hiawatha trains, which began service in the late 1930s.

Built between 1937 and 1949, the patented ribbed side boxcars were designed by Karl Nystrom, the superintendent of Milwaukee Road's car department. The horizontal ribs in the steel side sheathing made it stronger, thereby allowing a lighter gauge steel to be used in constructing each car. As a result, the ribbed side Milwaukee cars were approximately 2,600 pounds lighter than similar sized 40' boxcars built to the AAR standards of that era. As a side note, the Milwaukee Road also built a fleet of 50' automobile cars using the same ribbed side sheathing. Hmm, I wonder if Weaver Models is considering the 50' ribbed side automobile cars for release somewhere in the foreseeable future.

## Construction and Features

To me, the biggest news is the Weaver ribbed side cars are molded, painted, and assembled right here in the U.S.A. These all-plastic cars are decorated in 11 different Milwaukee Road styles using Weaver Scalecoat paint. Each of the styles is available in four correct Milwaukee Road car numbers.

Die-cast 3-rail or 2-rail sprung, self-equalizing Bettendorf style of trucks, also made by Weaver, are under the cars. Our 3-rail cars sported the usual die-cast thumbtack style of operating tin-plate couplers mounted on the trucks. Of course, cars with 2-rail wheels have scale couplers mounted in realistic draft gear boxes. With metal weights bolted inside the ends, immediately above the trucks, each car weighs approximately 14-1/2 ounces.

The major moldings are the body, floor, and frame with Ajax brake details molded into the frame. What appears to be a ventilation hatch is molded into the B end of the cars; that is, the end without the hand brake. Of the 11 styles of cars, eight have corrugated side doors with the remaining three carrying ribbed doors. One of our three evaluation cars had the ribbed doors. Oh, these detailed plastic doors slide open to reveal the simulated wood plank flooring of the prototype cars.



Separate simulated wooden tack boards are precisely bonded on each door as well as on both ends of the cars. Wire grab irons along with plastic brakeman's stirrups, hand brake apparatus, and ladders are separately mounted as are the simulated wooden roof walks. The hand holds on the roof walks are separately molded plastic with what appears to be a prototypically correct shape. All of the major and decorative pieces are sharp and clean, obviously created from tooling made by one or more skilled artisans. The finishing of each piece before assembly, which is a labor-intensive and exacting task, was equally flawless. If you've built plastic models, especially those with a number of small detail pieces, you can appreciate what the Weaver assembly workers did.

With an approximate length of 10-1/4" between the ends (excluding couplers), height of 4", and width of 2-1/2", the Weaver ribbed side cars are definitely 1:48 scale. I understand from Weaver that the cars were developed using the *Railway Prototype Encyclopedia Volume 13*, so I'll take it on faith that the dimensions, details, and decoration are accurate.


As to the Scalecoat paint and decoration, they are first rate. Lettering is crisp and crystal clear, and I have to assume prototypically accurate. For years I have used Scalecoat paint and found it to be an excellent finish in both application and wear resistance. Actually, I consider it bulletproof. My only criticism of the cars is a slight bleeding of the yellow stripe at the road name end of the XML color scheme. This slight color separation slip is also apparent in the photo of the color scheme on Weaver's website. On the same car, the color separation of the black ends is perfection.





## At Trackside

Weaver advertises O31 minimum curves for 3-rail operation, and I can confirm operating success on O36 curves. I found all three of our evaluation cars to roll freely, and their weight seemed to be perfect. When I put the cars in the front of a heavy consist, I didn't experience any unwanted coupler openings, even with aggressive starts. Best of all, each of the three cars blended into my freight trains modeling those from the mid-20th century.

For fans and modelers of the Milwaukee Road, your time has come with the Weaver ribbed side Milwaukee boxcars. 



## Milwaukee Road Ribbed Side Boxcars

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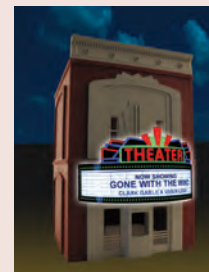
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*There is always space for a creative O gauge layout.*

# Micro View of the Great Midwest

**Article and Photos by Nick Thill**

When a micro-layout competition was announced on the OGR On-Line Forum late in 2012, a link was provided that led to a website created by Carl Arendt ([www.carendt.com](http://www.carendt.com)). Carl's site is devoted to micro layouts in all scales with micro being generally interpreted as an operational model railroad that can fit into the very smallest of spaces. A gallery on that

site titled "Layouts for Fun to Run" included a tiny 12"x 12" (yes, that's inches and not feet) On30 layout built by Steve Bennett. His scenery resembled the Midwest where I live, and this got me to building a micro layout of my own to enter in the contest and use as a centerpiece in our basement lounge.

My layout represents the period

around 1971 in western Nebraska between the Sand Hills and Badlands, about 25 miles northeast of Alliance. My wife Jamie's great uncle Barney was born in 1910 in Alliance, and both are related to the Buffalo Bill Cody clan. Barney passed away in 1978 after having lived his whole life as a bachelor residing in the Sand Hills. His "mansion" was a two-room shack with



Appropriately sized motive power commonly used on this micro layout includes a K-Line Plymouth switcher.

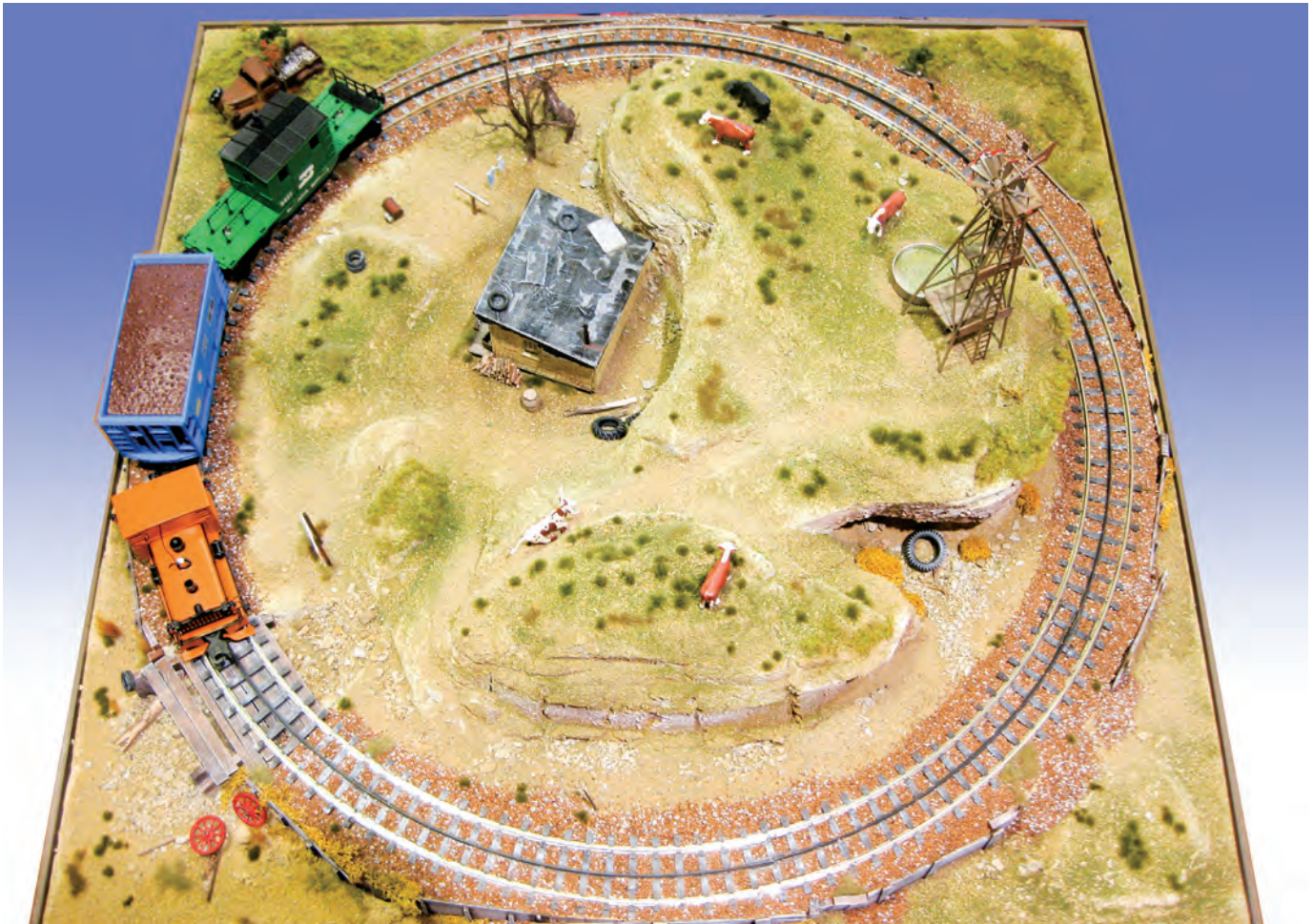
just the most basic amenities. A sign posted by the tracks on my layout reads “Wanted, One Hansom Women, Must Own Rifle.” His one loyal pal was his mule Molly. Aside from receiving a newspaper once a week courtesy of a friendly conductor on a passing train, most of Barney’s conversations were with his mule and cattle.

The micro layout I constructed to commemorate Barney measures 33” along each side. The frame is 1x2 pine with painted 1/4” MDF board on the outside edges. Track is O31 MTH ScaleTrax. I power the layout with either an MTH Z-1000 or a Lionel CW-80.

The lone structure, Barney’s shack, is built out of 1/8” Hardie board fitted with siding from Evergreen Scale Models. The windows and door are from Grandt Line. The porch and the retaining walls were constructed from hobby sticks and coffee stirrers. I stained the wood with diluted sienna brown and black India ink before cutting to size and gluing together.



Some detail parts used on the layout are the remains of several of Liam’s toys that had been “played with” by the family dog.



Here’s a hot air balloon view of the entire layout.



The pickup truck is another detail provided courtesy of the family pup's playful nature.



This is an overall view of the layout's most populated area. Population: 1.



A micro layout necessarily places track very close to the layout's edge, which can lead to some dramatic camera angles.



That's a figure representing Barney framed in the open doors of our favorite boxcar.



Sempre Fi! This U.S. Marine Corps Beep is another example of the small motive power particularly well suited to an O gauge micro layout.

The hills and the layout's base are made from pink extruded polystyrene left over from our larger main layout. I carved the foam to make it look like shale and limestone. After the foam was glued in place with Locktite, the seams were filled in with drywall mud. Then a topcoat of Sculptamold was used to smooth out some of the hills. Real Nebraska sand, easy to come by out here, was used on the layout, and the grasses came from Scenic Express. Our "state tree," otherwise known as a windmill, was purchased on eBay, and I added the lumber, ladder, pump shaft, and weathering. The horse watering trough was made from the lid of a pill bottle.


We acquired the cattle and Molly the mule from local hobby shows we attended in recent years. The old pickup truck and tires came from my son's collection. When our puppy would chew one of Liam's toys beyond saving, we would relegate the spare parts for use on our main layout.

My entire micro layout was lightly weathered with white or wicker white acrylic paints. I chose not to weather the rails, but in retrospect I wish I had. I was just more or less experimenting with the MTH ScaleTrax for possible future use on a much larger layout. We already have the green light to proceed from the CEO, Jamie.

Primary motive power on our micro layout is a K-line Plymouth switcher in Milwaukee Road livery. This engine was given to us by Allan Miller after he saw a photo on the forum and determined that we needed something small to run on the micro layout. Liam is especially fond of this engine, and it is one of his favorites to run.

The RMT Beep diesel in 1775 U.S. Marine Corps colors is another regular on the layout. Having served four years as an infantryman in the Corps, I really couldn't pass on buying that little engine. A Lionel 2026 steam locomotive also sees occasional running time on the layout, but it's heavy and tends to shake things, causing Barney's cows to topple over.

A blue DMIR ore car was given to us by my uncle Kris, recently retired president of W. H. Miner Division. There's a Miner Corp. graphic printed on that car; something seen on very few RailKing freight cars. We also like to run the Lionel I Love Nebraska boxcar for rather obvious reasons.

My micro layout was affordable, easy, and fun and offered something new and challenging. It also proved there is *always* some space available for O gauge model railroading. 



This overview shows more than half of the entire layout.

Small steam power, such as this postwar Lionel 2026, is also at home on a micro layout.



In this final run of the day, it's time for the two-man crew to head for beans.

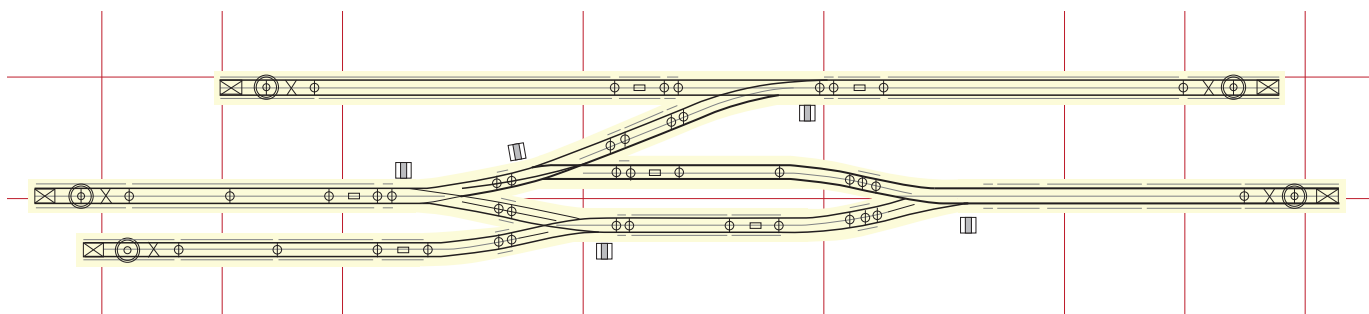


### About the Author

Nick Thill was born in Milwaukee and moved to Oxford, Nebraska, when he was young. After subsequent service with the U.S. Marines, he moved to Lincoln where he is employed by Lincoln Fire and Rescue. Jamie, his wife, and Liam, his son, share Nick's interest in the hobby.

# A TIMESAVER TRAINING TOOL

Article by Tom Gilsdorf    Photos by the River City 3 Railers



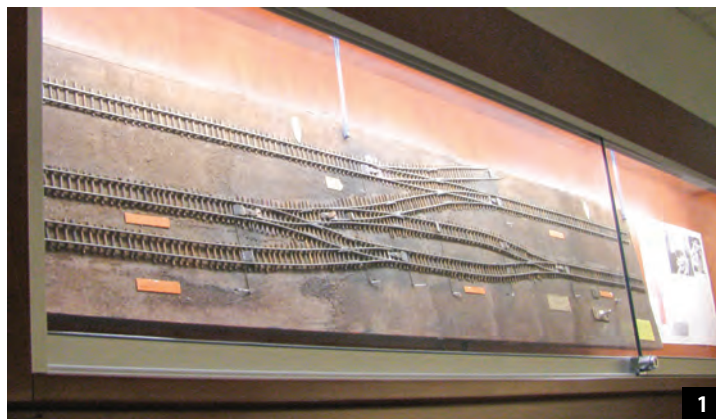
The original “timesaver” switching layout was inspired, designed, and built in HO by model railroading legend John Allen (1913–1973). His layout, the Gorre & Daphetid Railroad, was featured in numerous publications from the late 1940s through the 1960s. John intended his timesaver layout to be used as an activity for operators after running sessions on the G&D. The prototype timesaver layout was typically set up in his kitchen, and operators would take turns running trains on the timesaver layout in a friendly competition to see who could accomplish spotting various freight cars at designated spots in the shortest amount of time or with the fewest number of moves. Two timesaver layouts were built and used for this activity. John built the first, and the second was constructed by Bill Corsa. These two timesaver layouts were connected by left-hand turnouts. This turnout can be seen at the top edge of the board, now residing at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum in California (Photo 1).

The earlier timesaver layouts most often used hand-laid track. They were built to run trains and were not intended to be pretty. As a result, they were Spartan and had no ballast, scenery, or buildings. Turnouts were all manually operated, and uncoupler mag-

nets were used to spot cars on sidings. Locomotives were run at fixed speeds and were controlled by simple switches. In order to minimize the required space, wyves were used rather than the usual turnouts.

Tragically, the G&D was destroyed by fire shortly after John’s death. The prototype timesaver, while damaged by the fire, was saved.

I am an active O gauge hobbyist, so the timesaver switching layout interested me. I discussed the feasibility of an O gauge version with other members of our modular club, the River City 3 Railers (RC3R) of the Richmond, Virginia, area. We decided to give it a try with the goal of providing an interactive attraction that



could stimulate interest in the hobby.

The timesaver layout is not specific to any gauge, and ours is certainly not the first to be constructed in O gauge. The key to getting a timesaver layout right is sizing the sidings for the rolling stock and motive power that will be used. Car lengths are critical for determining the length of these sidings. For our layout, we based the siding lengths on 40’ scale cars and a RailKing F3 diesel. There are five sidings on our timesaver layout. Sidings can contain either two or three pieces of equipment, such as locomotive and



two cars or just three cars, as shown in the diagram. Having extra space on the sidings would defeat the challenge in a competition.

Staying true to the original timesaver layout, we selected wyes rather than left and right turnouts. We omitted the left turnout that was used to connect the two original timesaver layouts. In an effort to provide maximum realism and flexibility, an O72 minimum turnout radius was selected. Each siding has a remote magnetic uncoupler, and all turnouts are thrown manually.

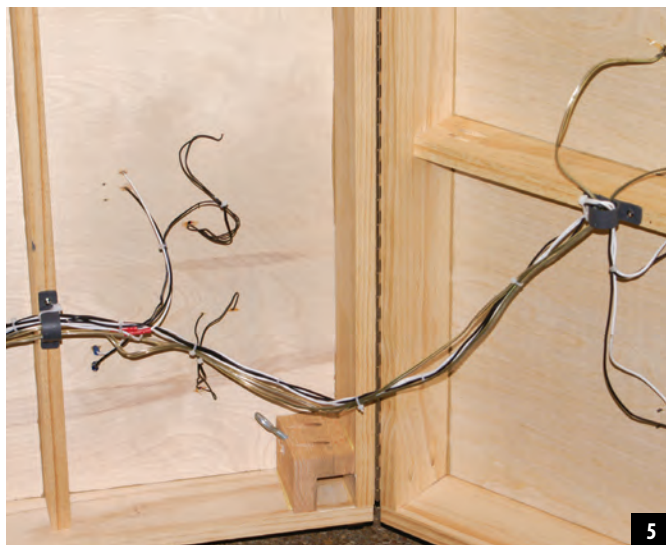
Track selection posed a dilemma. Using RR-Track software, we created layouts using every brand of 3-rail sectional track available. We ultimately selected GarGraves Phantom track with wooden ties because we wanted to make our timesaver layout as much like the original as possible. That meant wooden ties and manual wyes and turnouts.

We decided to construct the layout in three sections. In order to conform to dimensions used on the club's existing large modular layout, and if we wanted to incorporate the timesaver layout into our larger layout, we maintained a front-to-back depth of 32". Lengthwise, there is one 6' center section and two 3' side sections (Photo 2). The three sections are attached using 30" piano hinges (Photo 3). By placing the hinge at the bottom of each section, the track sections join and separate cleanly. Window locks and C clamps are used to hold the side sections into position (Photo 4). Electrical continuity between sections is maintained by wires soldered to the track and then neatly bundled in small loops secured by strain reliefs on either side of the hinge (Photo 5).

When building a 32" x 144" transportable module, weight is a primary concern. The perimeter of each module is 1x4 premium quality clear yellow pine with 1x3 cross sections. To add strength, all joints are both glued and screwed together. Kreg joint pocket screws and Gorilla Glue are used in the construction, and Kreg and Bessemer clamps assure square and true joints (Photo 6).

The module's legs are made out of 2x2s. On the bottom of the legs, we drilled and installed captive nuts and threaded feet (Photo 7). This allows for height adjustment and leveling of the layout. The height of 32" makes it easier for children to see and operate the trains. In the future, we can easily create longer legs so the timesaver will match our main modular layout.

Legs are attached to the benchwork with 3x3s. A 2"x2" dado cut forms a socket for the leg (Photo 8). Again, captive nuts and





eye screws clamp the legs in place. We also have added door stops and carrying handles to aid in moving and transporting this module (Photos 9 and 10).

The original John Allen timesaver layout was basically a bare board with track. We took more of a hi-rail approach with our timesaver layout. Track rails were painted with Floquil Rust Brown and ballasted (Photo 11). The ballast matched the 3:1 mix of gray and cinders we used on our main modular layout. We also added a number of buildings and accessories to make the layout more attractive and, more importantly, to give the switching moves some sort of purpose (Photo 12).

A timesaver layout is basically a puzzle to be solved while trying to beat the clock. The game starts with five cars positioned on the five sidings with one car per siding. Destination tags are set in place to indicate the desired finish position for each of the cars. The train engineer completing the moves in the least amount of time wins. An alternative version of the challenge that's also a lot





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of fun involves moving the cars from start to finish positions in the least number of moves. Basic operating rules for a typical competition are simple and straightforward as follows:

- You may not touch any equipment aside from switch or turnout levers needed to perform operations.
- Time begins when the timekeeper indicates. Thinking time is included in the total score.
- The goal is to move all cars and the engine from the starting positions to the end positions designated by the markers.
- Only time is counted, not the number of moves.
- A time penalty is imposed for derailments including the time required for re-railing.
- Time to correct derailments caused by equipment malfunctions is not counted.

Our timesaver layout is primarily intended to be an educational tool that can be enjoyed by the general public. We participate in the “See-it, Hold-it, Run-it” program sponsored by M.T.H. Electric Trains. This program allows clubs to purchase MTH Ready-to-Run sets at a discount and meshes perfectly with our desire to enable visitors to operate trains at our shows. The winner of a raffle gets a train set at the end of the event (Photo 13). We are proud that our club’s efforts were awarded a 2013 Blue



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Comet Award honorable mention from MTH. The award states, “The 12 members of the River City 3 Railers reached over 46,000 people in the Richmond area last year in 37 days of public displays at Richmond’s children and science museums, county and village fairs, and a storefront display during the holiday season.”

We selected the RailKing M&M’s set to run on our timesaver layout (Photo 14). As an alternative to the race against the clock



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competition, our visitors were afforded an opportunity to just run the M&M's train.

This layout is built to allow quick and easy setup. As noted earlier, it can be used in conjunction with our club's larger modular layout and can also be used by itself in space-limited venues. Our standard operating procedure for the larger modular layout is "please do not touch." Our timesaver layout is quite the opposite. It was built and is displayed with a "please touch" philosophy.

To add some additional operational interest, we included a special section of GarGraves track to accommodate a Lionel gantry crane (Photo 15). Visitors can load and unload cars staged on that siding. Plug-in connectors carry the power for the crane and the building lights, which make setup and operation quick and easy.



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The timesaver layout can be an affordable, interesting, and challenging way to hone your railroad operating skills. It also serves as a portable and easily transportable display and fun hands-on experience for the young and old (Photo 16). It doesn't get much better than that! 🚂

### About the Author

Tom Gilsdorf, his wife, Susan, and their two sons live in Midlothian, Virginia. Tom is employed as a staff engineer with a Fortune 500 company located in nearby Richmond. He is a founding member and president of the River City 3 Railers. Tom was a scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop T2801 from 1997 to 2010.



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## River City 3 Railers

The River City 3 Railers is an O gauge modular club located in the Richmond, Virginia, area. The group is an O gauge special interest group of the Richmond Freelance & Prototype Model Railroaders (RF&P) based in Ashland, Virginia.

The group that formed the club came together in 2008 when an invitation was extended to run trains with Ron Timma and his club out of Crewe, Virginia, at the Chesterfield County Fair. After the next year's fair, we decided to form a modular club, and the charter members immediately began construction of the first 12 modules from 2009–2010. The original layout consisted of four corners and eight straight modules and was displayed for the first time at the Chesterfield County Fair in 2010. We also used an 8' bridge on loan from Ron.

In 2011, with the addition of new members, an additional nine modules were constructed. The yard crossover wye lead and three six-track yard modules provided us the much needed ability to switch trains on the fly. Without the yard, the layout would have to be shut down between trains. Two crossover modules were also added and they allow trains to be routed from outer to inner loops and vice versa. A new bridge module replaced the loaner bridge the club had been using since 2008, and two more modules were added to the carnival area for a new Coaster Dynamics roller coaster.

The club's full modular layout occupies a footprint of 20' x 26' (Photo 17). Setup time is about three hours, and teardown takes about two hours.

*Micro-layout fever catches on.*



# PIZZA LAYOUT ANYONE?

**Article, Photos, and Diagram by Ed Montagnino**

Late in 2012, a member of the OGR On-Line Forum proposed holding an informal micro-layout contest that would be open to all forum members. The rules were simple. The layout must measure less than 13 square feet overall, include at least one building, and also have a running locomotive or trolley. From the standpoint

of dimensions for O gauge, this pretty much calls for what is generally known in the hobby as a micro layout, a very compact but fully detailed and operational model train layout. Some micro layouts take the form of a rectangle, and others are square. Examples of all types and sizes of micro layouts can be seen at Carl Arendt's

website ([www.carendt.com](http://www.carendt.com)). There you'll see that one of the more popular micro-layout formats is known as the pizza layout. As stated on the website, "This is a small circle of track amid carefully crafted scenic surroundings, often looking as though it could be delivered in a pizza box."

I was intrigued by the pizza-layout concept. Strangely though, I've never seen a pizza layout that looked like a pizza. How about a pizza layout that took its name literally (Photo 1)?

In Connecticut, when I think of pizza, I think of Pepe's in New Haven. I decided to create the layout as a tribute to the many years of great pizza enjoyed there. The question was whether I could fit some of the characteristics of the real Pepe's pizza into my miniature neighborhood.

Pepe's is located on Wooster Street with a small park across the street. Today, it consists of a double-wide building located across a parking lot from the smaller original building, which is now named The Spot. Street parking and a small lot serve



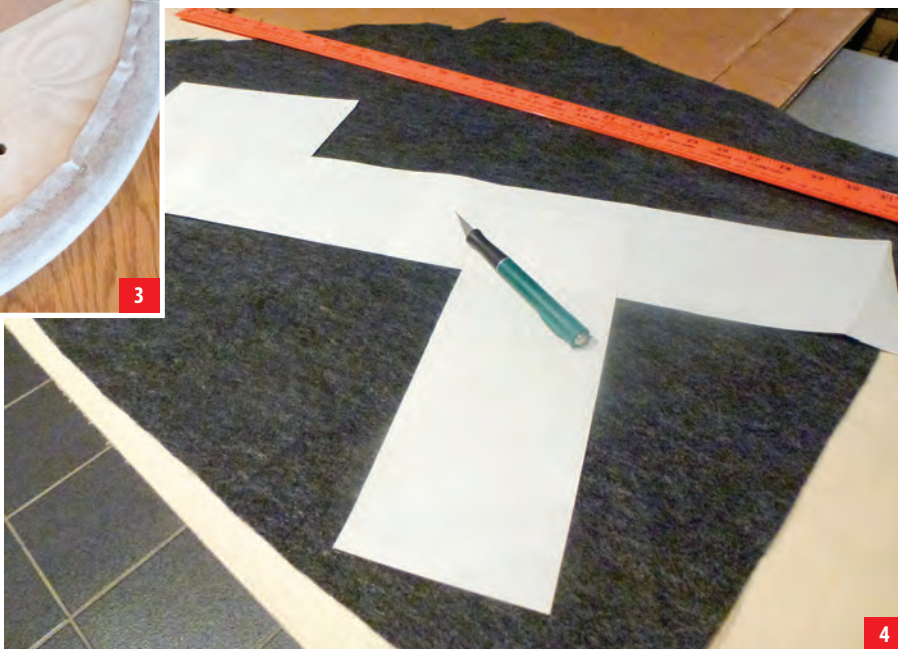
the restaurant where the pizza is cooked in a coal-fired brick oven.

Using O31 curved track would require a 34" circle, and there would still need to be additional space figured in for the "crust" around the outside edge. I used 3/4" plywood for the base. Using a router and a homemade compass arm, I cut the circle and then arranged the various items I wanted to include on the base, just to see how everything might fit.

Because of the O31 tubular track, I felt ballast would detract from the already limited visual space on the pizza, so plain track was my choice. A turnout would be nice but probably wouldn't fit.

I'm a big fan of Lionelville buildings, any of which have a roughly 6"x 9" footprint. They fit inside the circle along with some roads, cars, and a tree or two. Including The Spot in my scene made the space pretty tight.

I used felt for the base material because



there were a variety of felt colors available at just about any local fabric store. Also, it was available in a 36" width, which was ideal for this micro-layout project. I selected a dark red felt for the "sauce" and used spray glue to attach it and then stapled the edges (Photo 2). I found that if I predrilled the wiring holes, I didn't have to worry about snagging the fabric or cleaning sawdust out of the felt (Photo 3).

With a paper template, I figured out where the streets would be located. Using

this template and a razor knife, I cut the roadway from one piece of dark gray felt (Photos 4 and 5). The road was also spray glued and positioned.

The rest of the pizza ingredients including cheese, pepperoni, mushrooms, and olives were cut to shape from felt pieces and glued down (Photo 6). I used beige felt strips to help define the wedges of pizza and for the crust (Photo 7). The crust was made of a strip of felt with a flap sewn on by my wife, Evelyn. I used the flap



to create a ragged edge where the crust meets the sauce (Photo 8). Once the crust was stapled to the edge, a section of round garden hose was screwed to the base, and the felt was then wrapped over it resulting in the appropriate crust-like shape.

My pizza may not look (or taste) as good as the real thing, but it provided a good basis for the theme. I used plastic lettering tape to convert two Lionelville Cotton's Candy stores to the pizzeria. They are brick buildings, like the prototype Pepe's. A Lionelville Pharmacy was too large to fit the space for The Spot, so I used a razor knife to cut off the back wall and shorten the side walls. I then glued the walls and added a new styrene roof (Photo 9).

To create a spur for coal delivery, I took an extra section of O31 curved track and cut the rails to blend into the loop at the back of the restaurant. It's not functional but does add to the look of the simple loop





7

(Photo 10). A smoking K-Line New Haven Plymouth switcher is the perfect locomotive for the layout and it delivers a few repainted ore cars, loaded with coal, to the pizzeria's back door where two empty cars wait on the siding.

As the layout approached completion, I isolated a section in the back of the scene and added a push button and an optional bumper. With this setup, trains can be triggered to do a single loop, a bump-and-go trolley can be triggered to do an out and back, or the train or trolley can run continuously. As shown in the wiring diagram, the track is wired for various operations. Isolating pins are located on the center rail with a wire soldered to the isolated center rail. Track power is fed through wires connected directly to the transformer. A push button connects track power to the isolated section (Photo 11). A train, switched to forward-only mode, will run until it hits the isolated section. A press of the button will start the train on a single loop and then stop.



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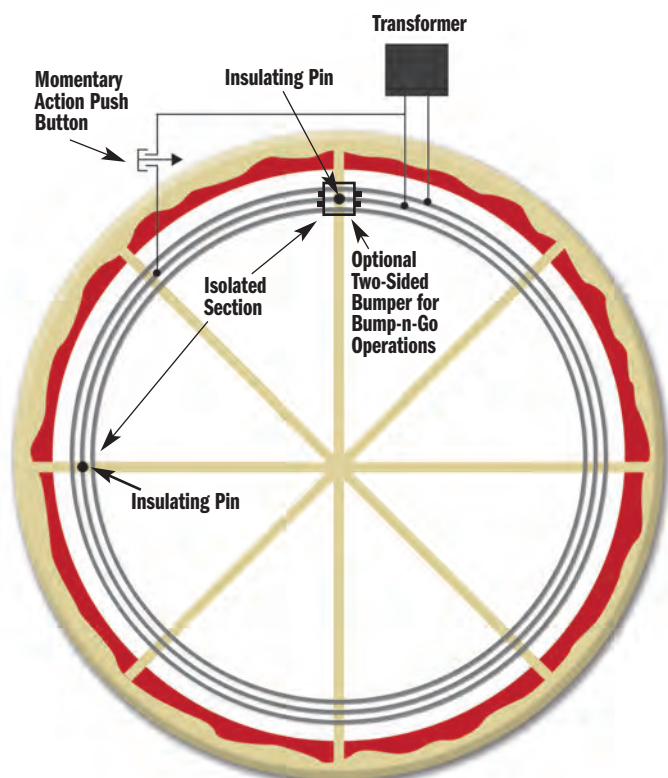
A bump-and-go trolley will behave the same way, and if a two-sided bumper is placed on the track, the trolley will go out, reverse, stop, and then repeat the action. Connecting the isolated section without the push button allows for continuous operation.

In prototypical fashion, the street and parking lot are filled with cars. In my scene, a policeman listens to a little girl (Photo 12). Meanwhile, Pepe's own 0-6-0 switcher is heading through town with another load of fixins for the best pizza west of Italy (Photo 13).

Extra toppings anyone? 🍕



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## About the Author



Ed Montagnino still has his childhood Marx tinplate set. Four years ago, retirement provided time, and a spare bedroom provided space, so he decided to get into O gauge railroading as a hobby. His main layout, the Union Eastern, Thomaston and Williamstown Railroad ([www.uetwrr.com](http://www.uetwrr.com)) measures 12' x 12'. Ed credits the OGR forum and his local club, the Boothe Memorial Railway Society, with expert advice and friendship as he continues to enjoy the world of O gauge. His other hobbies include ham radio and Corvettes.



The Coronation Scot rounds a sweeping curve after exiting Clairetown tunnel.

# Dream City in England

**Article and Photos by Roy James**

**D**ream City Railway, my 1:43 scale 2-rail O gauge layout in Great Britain, has taken roughly 16 years to build to its present stage, and it is the culmination of many layouts I have built over the years. The name of the railway relates to when I lived in North London in the 1940s, shortly after World War II. I used to walk by a toy shop on Wightman Road, Hornsey, that had Hornby clockwork train models on display. Similar products and displays could also be seen in London department stores like Gamages and Selfridges over the Christmas holiday period. I could not afford to buy these toys at the time, and it would have been a dream for me to even consider ending up with a complete model railway like the one I now possess. Today, years later, Dream City Railway represents the fulfillment of that boyhood dream.

I started off in the hobby in OO scale, a United Kingdom

modeling scale roughly equivalent to the U.S. HO scale (1:76 scale as compared to U.S. 1:87 scale for HO) in the sense that both operate on a 16.5mm/0.650" track gauge. My first train set in this gauge was the Ever Ready battery-powered underground train from 1938. From that point on, various Rovex, Triang, and Hornby train sets followed.

In the early 1960s I decided to become self-employed, and for my first venture I built an exhibition OO gauge layout at the Merry England Amusement Park at Ramsgate. I also got to drive the electric Tunnel Railway at Ramsgate, which has long since closed. After three successful years, I purchased my first public house—those were the days when pubs were pubs, and you never saw a poor publican.

It may be somewhat of a coincidence that some 60 years later



The fully operational Dreamland amusement park never fails to attract and delight visitors.



A variety of locomotives line up at the turntable awaiting their assignments.

I have been tempted back to what I refer to as “coarse scale” locomotives and rolling stock, meaning items that are not made to true scale proportions. I hear a shudder from fine scale modelers, of which I also am one, but in the last four years there has been an explosion of great coarse scale models released by various manufacturers that bear no resemblance to the coarse scale toy trains of previous years. Even better, these models are available at prices I could not ignore, especially considering the amount of rolling stock I required.

My guiding philosophy is if it's ready-made buy it; if not make it. This railway has evolved over a number of years as more and more ready-made models became available. In the early days, nicely crafted ready-made locos were hard to find, and I did a good bit of kit building. But with the large undertaking I had set for myself, time was not available for a lot of kit building.



You often can get from Point A to Point B faster by rail, as this scene with jammed-up highway traffic nicely illustrates.



This scene, like so many others on the layout, captures the true feel of urban activity along a British rail line.



Most structures on my layout are ceramic and detailed inside and out.



This overview shows the tracks leading to Leesam Town mainline station.



Lauren Hill suburban station is near the center of this view, and a portion of Clairetown Cross mainline station is just visible at the upper right.



Trains meet along the east-west main line leaving Clairetown Cross.

My 30'x 50' railway is based loosely on London's railways, and consists of various lines operating in and around London. I am able to simultaneously operate 30 full-length passenger trains through 17 stations, which are named for my grandchildren and have a grand total of 52 platforms. Placed together, the passenger platforms alone would stretch for over 500'.

I operate various liveries that cover more than four decades of the prototype ranging from the period of nationalization in 1948 to the privatization of British Railways in 1993. My railway attempts to display most of the popular classes of both diesel and steam locomotives seen on British Railways in this period.

When I built the layout, my intention was to create a system whereby one could see trains operating in natural surroundings, passing by and disappearing, not to be seen again for many minutes; in other words, seeing in miniature what one would expect to see track side in real life. Emphasis is not only on the trains themselves but also on the way the trains operate. When trains enter a station, they do so at a realistic speed and gradually come to a halt. Likewise, after an appropriate station stop, they slowly accelerate to continue their journey. Color light signals operate correctly, and when showing a red aspect, the train will glide to a halt and wait until a yellow or green aspect shows. Like the prototype, the system is not immune to switch point or signal failures or to train mechanical or electrical failures. However, it still has a highly enviable safety record.

Structures on the layout are of ceramic construction—fully detailed inside and out, and illuminated. Primarily made by Lemax and Department 56, they are based on English buildings, but they originated in the U.S. and were manufactured in China.

Road vehicles are mainly from Corgi, Cararama, and Solido. The buses are 1:50 scale, but they do not look too much out of scale and they do add considerable atmosphere to the London scene.

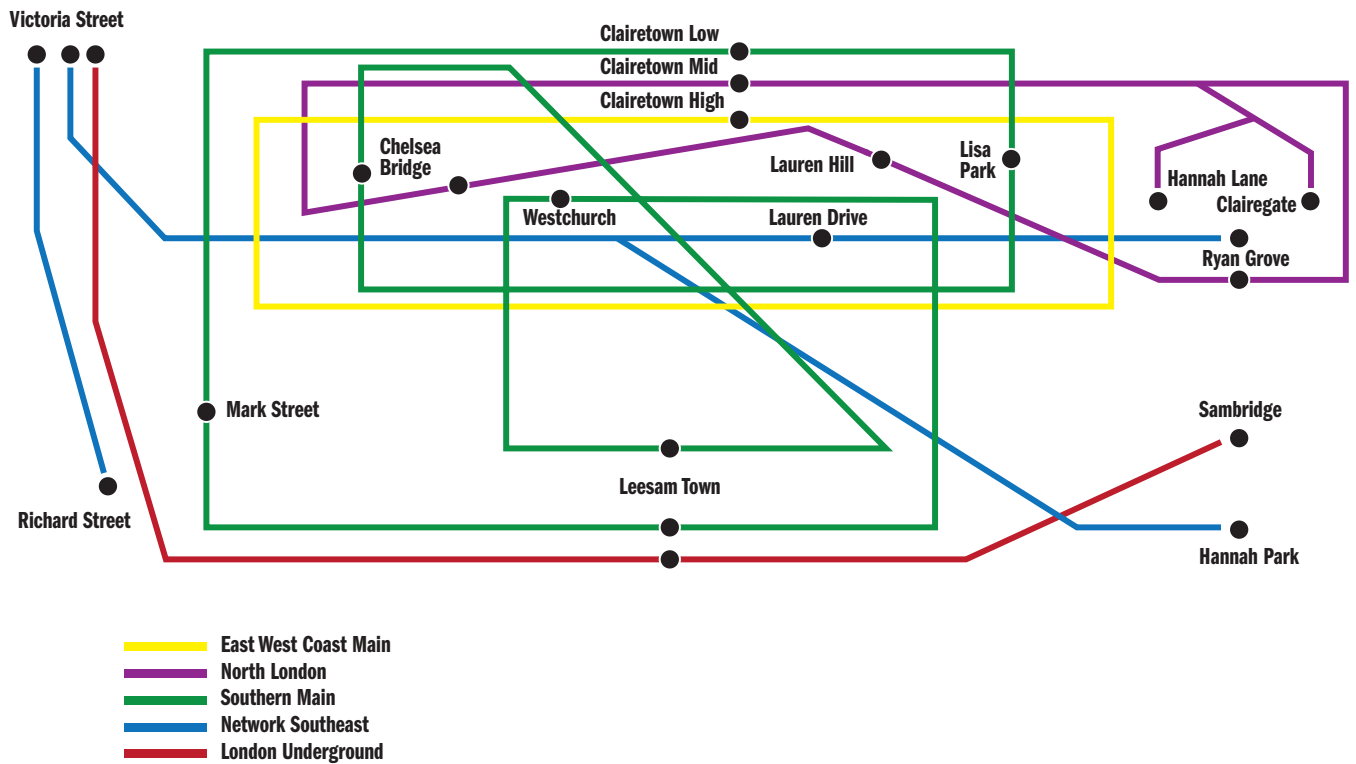
The diesel locomotives I operate are mainly manufactured by Heljan in Denmark. The steam locomotives are mainly from Ace Trains of London, while the rolling stock is a mixture of Ace Trains, Bachmann, and Darstaed. The locomotives currently being offered by Ace Trains of London really are magnificent: Staniers,



Pedestrians on this footbridge get a great view of mainline action.



A Class N2 locomotive rests at Richard Street station.



This Schools Class locomotive was made by Ace Trains of London.



The Clairtown complex of stations includes a total of 25 passenger platforms, including the few seen in this view.

Spam Cans, Castles, and so forth, with a very promising list of goodies still in the pipeline. These wonderful models are extremely weighty and have plenty of pulling power. My current roster includes more than 100 locomotives and 400 coaches, and that offers plenty of operating variety.

Track, some 2,000' of it at last tally, is Peco fine scale. One of the first challenges I faced was keeping the track clean and maintaining continuity of power through the rails. With so much track on the layout that was not easily accessible, a method of automatic cleaning was required. For example, some of the tunnels are over 70' long. I modified a number of Lima freight wagons to make them into track cleaning cars fitted with a Garyflex block underneath and suitably weighted to polish the track without wearing it out. This method has worked for years, and I never have to clean my track in any other way. All track joints are soldered, which is a must for continuity in slow running.

The track system is divided into separate block sections, and each section then has further controls that allow the speed of an incoming train to be controlled. Acceleration and deceleration can be adjusted, and the time a train stops at any station is individually adjusted and preset. As noted earlier, the whole system is fitted with custom-built working color light signals. Points are activated by standard Peco solenoids.



A Metro Vic electric locomotive, of the type used by London Transport up to 1960, provides passenger service between Baker Street and Rickmansworth.



The Golden Arrow is hauled by a West Country Class locomotive.

The whole system is operated from a central control room with the aid of closed circuit television monitors. This allows 30 trains to be operated simultaneously by one person (me). Over 100 amps at between 12 and 20 volts are required to power the track. A combination of Maplin Bench power units plus Helmsman and Gaugemaster transformers are used.

Structures on the layout are lighted by transformers dedicated to that purpose.

The railway is constructed in a walk-around format with viewing on the north side made possible via hatches in the side walls. Interconnected lines are located on four levels. Access points for maintenance are provided at strategic points by means of hinged hatches. One of the aspects of this

railway that is somewhat unusual is the fact that it is fully built up as a primarily urban scene rather than fitted with scenic hills. It is fully populated with thousands of figures imported from China. To see 30 full-length O gauge trains running together at the same time is really not only unusual but a sight to be savored with the imagination of the viewer.

If you wish to see the layout in action, there are various videos on YouTube that show the trains in action around the layout, with cab views provided as well. Just search dreamcityrailway on the YouTube site.

Occasionally members of various clubs are invited to come by for viewing. I intend to continue improving my railway with whatever goodies become available, and who knows, viewing it might just encourage a youngster somewhere or at some time to be inspired as I was those many years ago. 🇬🇧



Here is a closer view of a striking streamlined steam West Country Class locomotive.



This is the home of Dream City Railway.



### About the Author

Roy James is retired and living in an idyllic location in Great Britain overlooking the ocean. When not involved with his railway, he relaxes by his swimming pool and watches the ships go by. Roy adds that he still retains his health at present, and he considers this to be what life is all about.



## Safe Haven for Lionel History

Most of the operations of Lionel LLC are now located in Concord, North Carolina, in a clean, modern facility that also houses Lionel NASCAR Collectables. A new management team oversees both business activities. Senior Vice President and General Manager Howard Hitchcock, Senior Director of Marketing Mike Phillips, and Chief Financial Officer Chris Elrod head a staff of motivated employees who are deeply involved and enthusiastic when it comes to O gauge trains as well as NASCAR racing. In the past few months of working together in North Carolina, both the racers and the railers have learned from each other, and that cross-pollination of ideas and insights has benefited our 3-rail hobby in a variety of ways.

One of the benefits of the move to North Carolina for Lionel history buffs and collectors is that the Lionel Archives are housed in spacious new quarters. It is now possible on special occasions, like the recent LCCA and Lionel Red Carpet event in April, for visitors to see portions of this treasure trove of Lionel history for the first time (Photo 1).

### Archives Overview

Thanks to the willing cooperation of Lionel management and staff, we are able to bring you images of some of the archives' items that were on display during the Red Carpet event. When you are in the archives, you can literally stroll by decades of Lionel trains as you walk around the shelves. The following are a few highlights from about 80 years of history we got to see during our visit.

Orange boxes, with tags identifying the cars inside them, dominate a shelf of prewar items (Photo 2). A mix of boxed bridges and passenger cars resides on another shelf (Photo 3). Nearby are some prewar accessories, including a boxed 119 tunnel and a clear-wrapped 445 diner (Photo 4). Postwar highlights included boxes of O27 Alco diesels, earlier F3 B units, and powered units (Photos 5 and 6). Other shelves hold 2400 series O27 passenger cars (Photo 7). A colorful array of modern-era diesel samples greets the archives visitor along with quantities of modern passenger cars and other rolling stock (Photos 8 and 9). Boxed MPC-era freight cars fill more shelves (Photo 10).

## Mysterious Transformers

Many of the pieces I was able to see and handle during a respectful and carefully conducted personal tour are well known to collectors, but there are some real surprises even for hard-core types like me. I was going by shelves of vintage Lionel transformers when two shapes caught my eye. They were big, heavy, and totally unfamiliar. With the help of my willing Lionel guide, we were able to remove these units from the shelves and position them for photography. The first transformer carried a handwritten green tag that read “Unidentified Two-Train Operating Transformer” (Photo 11). A closer view of the other side of the transformer provided more detail (Photo 12).

The tag on the second one read “Unknown Transformer Prototype.” It had two cream-colored dials on the top surface as well as four levers with translucent circular plastic knobs that appeared to control voltage (Photo 13). As can be seen from this image on the other side, there are also six thick, red and gold plastic buttons on the back of the unit (Photo 14). According to Tom McComas and James Touhy in *Lionel: A Collector's Guide and History, Volume 5: The Archives*, this was a 400-watt prototype made by Lionel in the postwar era when the company was located in Irvington, New Jersey.

Both transformer prototypes are sturdily constructed with wooden frames, metal levers, and old-fashioned heavy electrical components that appear to be fully operational. One look at the ancient wiring and power cords dispelled any momentary desire to plug them in and try them out. I can't tell you much more about the two prototypes and neither can anyone else currently at Lionel. As can be seen, the tags on the two transformers were obviously printed at a much later date than when the prototypes were constructed and they are not very informative. However, even though these prototypes never made it to production as Lionel transformers, they sure are interesting.

## Diesel Prototypes

J. Don Reece of Lionel went through the archives and came up with representative samples of trains for the Red Carpet event



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20-20199-1/3	DT&I GP35 Powered w/3.0 and Dummy.....	\$550.00
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30-20101-1	Chesapeake & Ohio E3 AA w/3.0.....	\$325.00
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30-5128-1	Penn Central E33 Electric Fruit Train Set w/3.0.....	\$379.95
30-67133	Santa Fe 4-Car Streamlined Pass Set.....	\$199.95
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30-69127/28/29	Lehigh Valley 7-Car Madison Set.....	\$385.00
30-69142	NP 60' 4-Car Madison Set.....	\$209.95
30-69142/43/44	NP 60' 7-Car Madison Set.....	\$385.00

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that spanned the history of Lionel, including this manual crane (Photo 15). Because there was such a wealth of material, in this edition of "Collector's Gallery" we are going to focus on just two of the postwar F3 diesels with prototype paint schemes that were displayed at the event: The Kansas City Southern and the Alaska Railroad.

### Kansas City Southern F3

The first time I saw the very colorful Kansas City Southern livery was in *Lionel: A Collector's Guide and History IV; Volume 1970-1980*. The Kansas City Southern F3 was a featured image in the archives section, along with two other colorful prototypes that were not produced during the postwar years: the Southern Pacific Daylight GS-4 steamer and the Bangor and Aroostook F3. The striking Kansas City Southern sitting in a glass case at Lionel headquarters was a perfect choice for "Collector's Gallery" attention with its colorful combination of red, green, yellow, and black design anchored with the hexagonal Kansas City Southern logo centered on the nose (Photo 16). As a collector, it was a privilege to be able to drool over...er...handle this engine.



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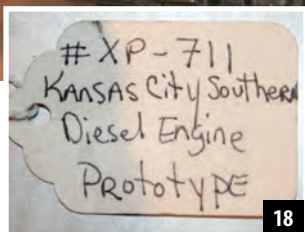
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The side view of the Kansas City Southern prototype illustrates that by the time this sample was made, Lionel had stripped the F3 shells of details like separately applied ladders, nose grab handles, and port holes. The “0000” designation for prototypes that had not been assigned model numbers is plainly marked on both sides (Photo 17). Product model numbers were usually assigned only after an item was cleared for production. Even though

Archives section, but I never expected to actually examine it and photograph the Alaska Railroad F3 for “Collector’s Gallery.” What a great experience! This sample wore its years pretty well, but close-up viewing revealed the inevitable nicks and dings of a diesel that had not exactly received TLC during its 60 years or so on dusty shelves in New Jersey and Michigan (Photo 19). A side view of the engine shows off the simple but attractive blue



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this postwar project did not make the grade, the Kansas City Southern paint scheme has proven popular with hobbyists and it has appeared on contemporary road diesels from Lionel.

paint scheme with wide yellow stripe to good advantage. The original handwritten ID tag helps confirm the authenticity of the piece (Photos 20 and 21).




19

Last but not least is an image of the original Hillside identification tag for the prototype (Photo 18).

### Alaska Railroad F3

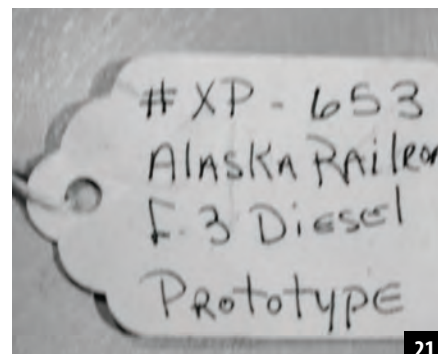
I had seen this prototype in a photo of the Alaska Railroad F3 that also appeared in *Lionel: A Collector’s Guide and History; Volume IV 1970-1980* in the

### More to Come

We have many more images from the Lionel Archives in North Carolina that we want to share with you in future editions of “Collector’s Gallery.” After all, now that these pieces of Lionel product history have seen the light of day, we want as many people as possible to see them. 



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The recovery train is beside the derailed gondola on the adjacent track.

## Derailment Closes Penn Central Main Line

Article and Photos by Thomas A. Densel

Delphos, Ohio. A train derailment at shortly before 3 p.m. yesterday caused a temporary closure of the Penn Central Railroad main line just outside the industrial area of west Delphos. Railroad officials reported that a gondola car in a westbound freight train left the tracks when a wheel bearing failed. Only a single empty car was involved in the accident, and minimal damage was done to the tracks and roadbed. No injuries were reported in this incident.

"We were lucky," said conductor I. M. Krood who was aboard the train. "An eastbound freight was passing us when the car

derailed. Thankfully, the car went off the north side of the tracks toward a siding and not toward the train that was on the eastbound main."

Engineer K. C. Jones concurred. "If that car had gone in the other direction, it's hard telling how bad things could have been. One thing I know for sure, the wreck might have resulted in some injury and it definitely would have cost the company a lot of money to fix."

A wrecking train was dispatched to the scene from the railroad's shops in Pharaway, Indiana. The recovery crew arrived



Foreman Dick Tater supervises as the wrecking crane crew carefully lifts the car body.

## About the Author

Thomas Densel grew up near the former Pennsylvania Railroad Ft. Wayne line. He watched this line as the Pennsy, Penn Central, CSX, and finally CF&E with the PC years especially memorable. Tom is a pipe organ builder and technician based out of Elida (Lima), Ohio, and is active on the OGR forum. He resides in Delphos, Ohio, with his wife, Karen, and two children, Emily and Ryan. His 10-1/2' x 12' hi-rail layout models the Penn Central.

approximately two hours after the derailment. In the meantime, both mainline tracks were shut down, backing up traffic for a number of yards.

Recovery crew foreman, Dick Tater, assessed the situation and quickly had his crew in action. Their first duty was to lift the derailed car off the damaged truck. Repairs were made to the damaged rails and crossies, and a replacement truck was put into position on the track. The derailed car was then carefully lowered onto the replacement truck.

After a thorough inspection of the gondola, the wrecking train was sent on its way so the eastbound tracks could be reopened. The westbound freight was coupled to the re-railed car and given clearance to continue.

“Overall, I don’t think things could have gone much better, considering the circumstances,” said railroad CEO Tom Densel. “The tracks were only closed for a little over five and a half hours. There was minimal damage to the railroad and no damage to surrounding property. Most importantly, nobody was hurt.”



The gondola is slowly lowered onto a new truck.



Workers carefully inspect the re-railed car.



Both mainline tracks are now reopened.

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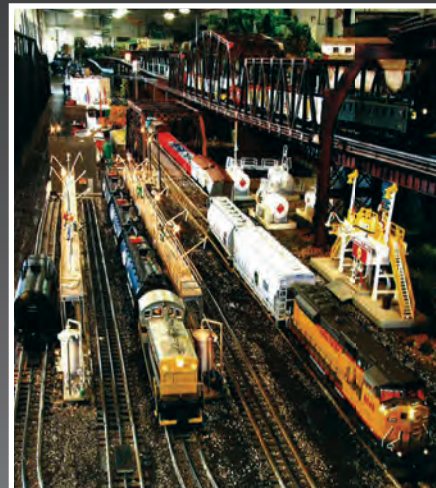
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## Train in a Tube

Article and Photos by Daniel Kleine



When I first saw the Heritage Series Lincoln Funeral Train from Lionel, it was one of those gotta have it moments (Photo 1). After receiving the set, I realized I didn't want to run it on my layout set in the 1950s. I am not a collector, but I also didn't want to keep it stored away in its box where it couldn't be viewed and admired by myself and others. Since displaying it on an open shelf would add another dust collector to the house and probably degrade its value over time, I decided to house this distinctive set in some type of protective case. With the 150th anniversary of the real train's run coming up in 2015, I also wanted to be able to display it at a local historical museum. I established the following four requirements for the display:

- It must be reversible so the model can be returned to its original condition; therefore, no modifications could be made to the items.
- The equipment must be displayed on track as if it were an operating train.
- It had to be protected in a dust-proof enclosure.
- It had to be easy to transport so it could be placed on public display.

I thought about using a rectangular acrylic box set on a board, one of the more traditional ways to display train items, but

my skills working with plastic are limited. I chose a variation of the ship-in-a-bottle approach that would work in this instance and result in something out of the ordinary (Photo 2).

The engine and three cars in this set measure about 50" in length. I bought a 55"x 6" outside diameter acrylic tube and two 6" diameter acrylic disks (Photo 3).

The oak components I used included a 54" long 3-1/2"x 1/2" board, a 54" length of half-round molding (3/8"x 3/4"), and a 16" length of 1-1/2"x 1-1/2" oak that was cut into two 8" lengths.

I cut a 45-degree chamfer along the length of the base to make it conform to the curvature of the inside of the acrylic tube (Photo 4). A band saw was used to cut depressions in two 8" lengths of square oak using the 6" acrylic disks as templates (Photo 5). I then cut the wood base and molding to their finished lengths, about 1" shorter than the tube. I lightly stained the oak pieces and let everything dry for a week.



3

Felt strips glued in the depressions of the support stands protected the tube. I nailed the track to the center of the base. I carefully removed the nameplate from the Lionel display board, positioned it at the center of the base, and reattached it using the same brass nails (Photo 6).



4

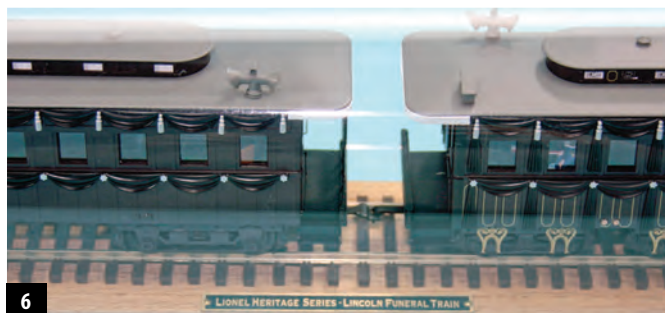
The engine and cars needed to be anchored to the base so that the model stayed put in the tube. I found that one axle on each truck needed to be attached to the base with a J bolt (Photo 7). This took a while because the holes needed to line up with the axles, and this required precise measuring and double-checking. On the engine, I anchored the center-rail pickup roller and one axle of the pilot truck. These attachments were nearly invisible. I made the nuts just finger tight, as over-tightening would strain the bearings, and trimmed the bolts flush with the nuts.

The half-round molding served to hide the nuts and washers of the J bolts under the base (Photos 8 and 9). I bored out clearance holes with a 1/2" Forstner bit and attached the molding to the base using wood screws in pre-drilled countersunk holes about every 8". At this point, the track, nameplate, base, and half-round molding formed a complete assembly.

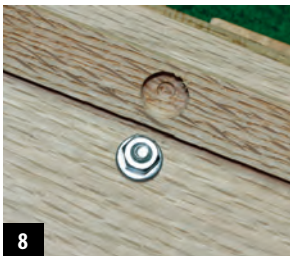
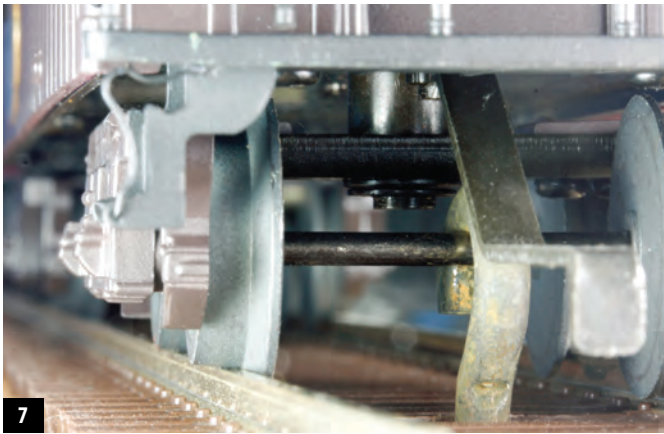
After cleaning and dusting the model and the tube's interior, I slid the model assembly into the tube with a microfiber cloth covering and supporting one end to avoid scratching the interior. Two small pieces of cork on the ends provided a buffer between the plastic disks and wooden base. The disks were glued on the ends of the tube with high-quality, crystal-clear silicone and fit so that the assembly could barely roll side to side in the tube, but not so tight that it compressed the cork. A 1/4" cut edge of the tube was lightly coated with silicone, and the disk was pressed on flush to the outer edge of the tube. I found it important that the disks were



5



6



## Materials List


- Cast acrylic tube 55" long, 6" OD, 1/4" thick
- Two acrylic disks 6" OD, 1/4" thick
- Tube of crystal-clear silicone (I used DAP Sidewinder 816)
- O scale track 53" total length
- Oak board 3-1/2" x 1-1/2" cut to 54" long
- Oak half-round molding 3/8" x 3/4" cut to 54" long
- Oak 1-1/2" x 1-1/2" cut into two 8" pieces
- Green felt with sticky backing
- 12 #8 J bolts, washers, and nuts
- Small nails for the track
- 10 #4 flathead brass wood screws, 3/4" long
- 2 pieces of cork 4" x 1", 1/2" thick
- Microfiber cloths
- Plastic cleaner and scratch remover (I used Novus)

carefully sealed and did not spring against the display assembly.

To take the train out of the tube, the seal has to be broken, which can be glued again when the train is back in the tube. The model assembly essentially floats in the airtight tube with the cork end pieces preventing the base from sliding end to end. Although the base could rotate side to side, gravity and the cork keep things from slipping. I could have anchored it securely, but it served my purpose.

The display is level and stable on two 1-1/2" square by 8" long oak stands (Photo 10). It can be easily and quickly dusted with a microfiber cloth. I keep the Lionel boxes, ribbons, bases, and instructions for the set together in a closet just in case I or someone else ever wants to disassemble the display.

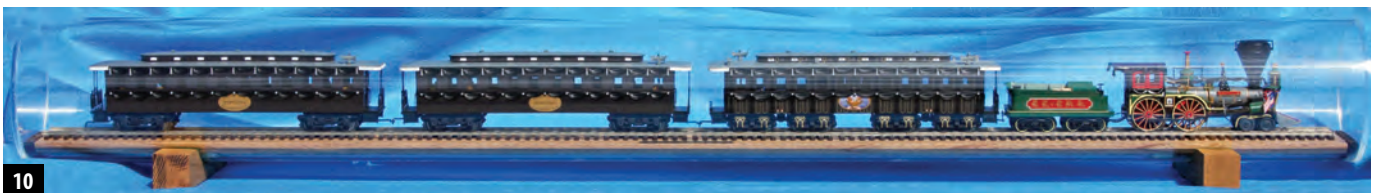
This train-in-a-tube idea would work for most any model in most any scale assuming you can find a tube of the proper diameter. If you are not going to transport the model, you may be able to skip the J bolts for attachment and just use wire ties to anchor the model. Be sure to photograph the model before you put it in the tube because reflections on the surface of the tube tend to make it hard to photograph the contents without glare. Also, it's a good idea to keep this and any such displays out of direct sunlight.

This past spring, I had the honor of having my Lionel Heritage Series Lincoln Funeral Train (in a tube) featured in a special Civil War commemorative exhibit at the Indiana Welcome Center in Hammond, Indiana. 



## Lincoln Funeral Train

In 1865, the rail car "United States" was completed as the first presidential car. President Abraham Lincoln was scheduled to ride in the car for the first time on April 15, 1865, but his assassination on April 14 kept him from that appointment. The President's funeral included a rail journey of over 1,600 miles through seven states with the "United States" carrying the remains of the President and his son, Willie, who had died in 1863, back to Springfield, Illinois. The route was similar to the President's inaugural train trip four years earlier. Numerous locomotives from various railroads pulled the funeral train with the *Nashville* of the Cleveland, Columbus, & Cincinnati in Ohio as the most famous.





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## The Overnight Sensation Continued

Ross Custom Switches has been in business for 40 years. Farmer Steven Ross Brenneisen decided that instead of working outside in the hot, dry Illinois summers doing farm work, mowing lawns, drilling wells, and putting up hay, it just might be a whole lot more fun, cooler, and comfortable building model railroad track switches. Thus the beginning of an entrepreneurial idea developed. It was time to tell his story. Last issue, I took him through his youth as a farmer and told how his mother lovingly and generously provided funding to start his business; in this issue, I'll tell you how he fulfilled his dream.

He called his new venture "The Switchyards." In addition to getting some trains from a wholesaler, he learned to look for things like buying out leftover inventory from K-Mart stores after Christmas and finding used trains to repair and resell.

Steve begins, "I wasn't rolling in money though. I was still drilling wells, tending bar, anything to make money. Gas was now

up to \$1.00 per gallon, and even though the work on houses and well drilling had tapered off, the work on building more and more custom-made switches steadily continued to grow."

Steve decided at some point to give his switch line a name. The first thing he came up with was a pun on the JLC logo for the Joshua Lionel Cowan name. His company name began as S-ROSS-BE for Steven Ross Brenneisen. "I guess it was sometime in '76 or '77 I even had some business cards made up with the S-ROSS-BE name on them. If you still have one of those, I guess you might have a real collector's item. At some later point, I thought it better to simply name the company Ross Custom Switches, which had a nice ring to it," Steve explains.

A turning point of sorts happened sometime in the early '70s. Through Steve's acquaintances in the hobby, he learned of the TCA train shows being held in Chicago. "I decided to attend these shows to sort of show off my own handmade O

gauge switches. When some of the local show officials began to see what I had to sell at the show, they took particular notice that I wasn't selling pure collector-type Lionel track switches. They huddled together off to the side and later confronted me with a decision they had made. They decided they would no longer allow me to sell my switches at the show based on the fact they weren't true tinplate-style switches as compared to what they perceived as simply my homemade stuff." Ultimately, through persistent lobbying efforts by Steve and other TCA members who already knew him and his product, they wisely decided to allow the sale of Steve's S-ROSS-BE switches.

"This was the first time in my life that I ever had anyone challenge me on what I was doing. It made a big impression on me. I guess the lesson I learned from that was, put simply, success is the best diplomatic revenge."

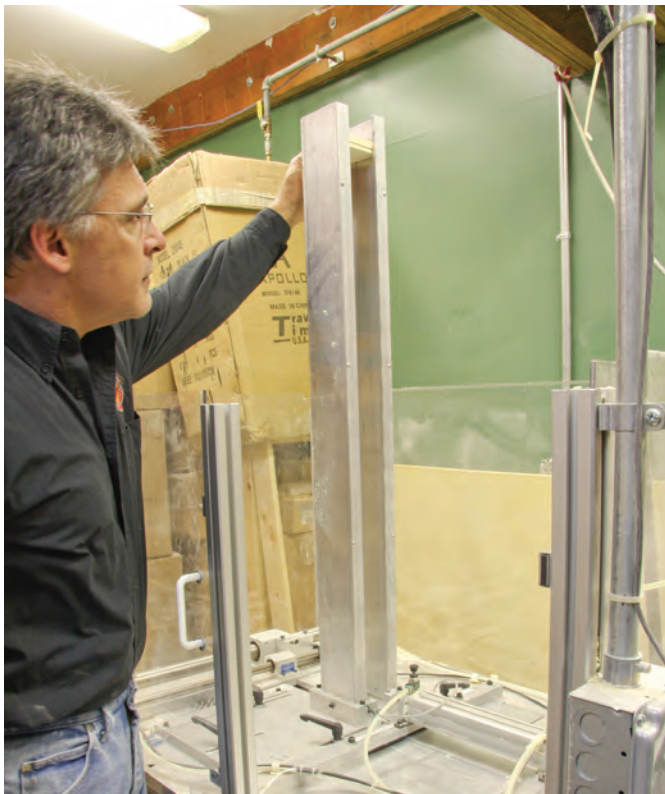
All through the '70s, Steve was still buying GarGraves track, stripping off the



Steve prepares machined slats of aspen for processing into ties. The slats are cut into the correct widths for the ties of various sizes.



Slats are further cut into rectangles...



...and loaded into a hopper...

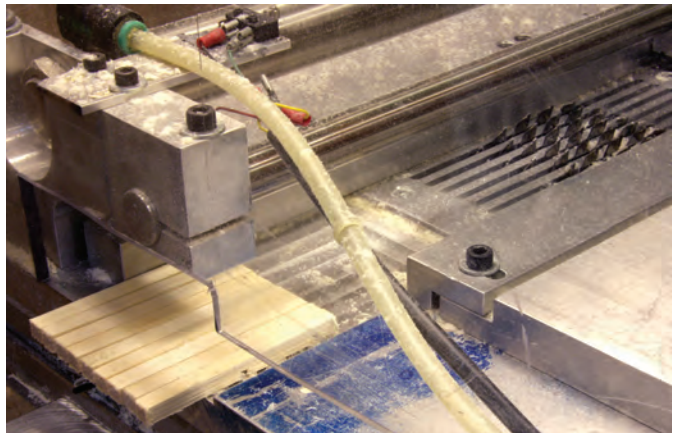
ties, and grinding off the lower flanges of the rails to use for his switches. "I did all of that rather than approach GarGraves about buying rail stock without the ties. I just thought I probably was regarded as a competitor by Don Roder who owned GarGraves. It never occurred to me I could in fact buy flat bottom rail from GarGraves rather than buy the track, strip the ties, and grind off the lower flange."

Finally, sometime in the '80s, he called Don who quickly revealed to Steve that indeed he was not considered a pariah, that not only could he buy rail lengths without the ties, but he could in fact buy the rail with the flanges already rolled flat on the bottom. "That became the beginning of a wonderful friendship with Don and Marsha Roder. They were more like parents to me after that. I finally realized the more switches you could get on a layout, the more GarGraves track people needed. That's synergy. It was sort of my professional awakening. I realized good business practices could and, in fact, did put me on an even footing with people who in the past I had only considered somehow untouchably higher than me in the business and in the hobby." During the early '80s, Steve's friend Sam Griffith came home from a York train show just to find he had been robbed. The bad guys selectively took all the perfect specimens Sam had collected over the years of the rarest and most valuable trains in his collection. This emotionally crippled Sam for a time. I'm not sure they were ever caught, but to this day I'd like to get my hands on them."

Sam's enthusiasm about York made Steve wonder what magic this train show in Pennsylvania could possibly have that would cause Sam to leave his collection long enough to allow such a thing to happen. Around '82 or '83, Steve went to investigate for himself. He drove most of the night from Illinois to York, Pennsylvania, and slept in his car at the fairgrounds until the doors to the halls opened in the morning.

"It was glorious," Steve says. "All the apostles of the hobby were gathered together in this catacomb under the grandstands of the horse track in this thing called the Yellow Hall. What a glorious mess. It was the Woodstock of train shows. It was fun." Steve decided that by the next time he came to this show, he would make up lots of everything in his lineup and sell as much of it as he could.

Also, by the mid-1980s, Steve's new bride was in the retail sales business, which by design and necessity required them to move all around Illinois following her career in retail sales. During this time, Steve remained the diligently employed



...to be cut into ties.



Carefully machined tooling for each switch awaits the building process.

entrepreneur of Ross Custom Switches, constantly expanding his line of O gauge switch products. He often did this in various apartments where they lived, utilizing the second or third bedroom to build switches and design new ones to add to the lineup.

In 1984 Steve went back to the York train show but could only get two 8' tables in the Blue Hall. He brought a build-up of about 60 of his switches. The people went berserk. They had never seen anything like his product. "They bought them all," Steve exclaims. Now for the first time, Steve saw a future that began to look a little settled.

In the hobby, the early '80s saw the beginning of what is now called the hi-rail era. There are lots of stories about just what this term originally meant and who coined the term, but one thing is sure, heavy contributors to the movement were GarGraves and Ross Custom Switches. When Jerry Williams began making scale-sized 3-rail brass locomotives, it kindled a fascinating interest in the hobby's midlife baby boomers to appreciate the wonderful scale appearance of 3-rail O gauge trains compared to the non-scale appearance of the cast locomotive designs of the late '40s and early '50s.

The mid-1980s also saw the emergence of the first building boom of scale-type hi-rail layouts. One such layout was being built by Bill Benson, who was also making hi-rail locomotives, cars, and other equipment for layouts. In the process of building his layout, Bill ordered many switches from Steve.

Bill became more than just a customer of Steve's. At one point, Steve visited Bill's layout in Akron, Ohio. While there, he noticed that Bill had locomotives made by the Mack Brothers from Chicago, Illinois. They were the first articulated steamers in 3-rail O gauge. "They were made from Lionel Berkshires by cutting two of them up and modeling them into Big Boy-style locos," Steve says. During this time, Bill proposed to Steve he become a partner with him to among other things help fund a bigger operation for tooling improvements Steve wanted to make. Steve took him up on his offer, moved to Akron, and worked at Bill's house while renting a room there.

"Bill wanted to use the switches as a base to get a train company started. As part of that, I proposed in addition to the switches, we should also make the world's first production die-cast Big Boy steam engine. Bill however wanted to make it from brass since there were little or no tooling costs. I argued that folks really wanted a die-cast loco, one that offered the owner the heft and solid feeling Lionel had proven buyers wanted," Steve continues.



Keith Gencarelli positions the ties carefully into the tooling base. The ties are placed into the base with the bottom side up.



A drop of glue is added to each carefully machined slot in the ties...



...and the wooden stringer is added into the tie base and trimmed to length.

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"Not too much later, Mike Wolf came along and made a die-cast Challenger. We know how that turned out. Regrets? Yeah, I've had a few," Steve admits.

For various reasons, funding for new tooling didn't pan out, and expanded tooling for a new design in track points for switches also just didn't happen. After some period of time, Steve gave up on that enterprise and moved back to Naperville, Illinois, sometime around 1987. There he found a machinist to make the necessary tooling to at least produce a hand-spiking machine for spiking rails to ties for switches. This dramatically speeded up the production of the switches over the original hand-spiking method. Now the slowest thing in production was still the hand forming and hand grinding each and every one of the movable point rails for switches.

One of the pet projects that Steve had been pursuing during this time was a design for a three-way yard switch that allowed a single track to branch into three sidings all within the space of a single switch, a remarkable achievement for the time. He had shown a picture of his project to Vane Jones, the founder and early editor of *O Scale Railroad* magazine, the predecessor of *O Gauge Railroad*. "He published the photo, and I was amazed at the reaction from people who saw the photo in the magazine," Steve says. "That was a recognition shot in the arm for what I was doing."

Another layout customer Mike Primak asked Steve to design a layout utilizing his switches. The design came out so good that Dick Christianson of *Model Railroader* published the layout design in the June 1990 issue.

Harvey Silets, another one of Steve's customers, wanted Steve to design and build a hi-rail layout, which at the time was just more than Steve could do while also maintaining his new fledgling business. Steve just couldn't do it. After it was built, Harvey asked Steve to redo much of the wiring and some of the track work of the layout, resulting in a friendship which benefitted Steve and his business in many ways. "Harvey passed away around 2007 and was one of the finest men I ever met. If you look at the Who's Who of Attorneys, Harvey's name is right up there with the famous ones like Melvin Belli, yet he was the most down-to-earth, train-loving guy you could ever meet."

Frank Curtis approached Steve by phone with a business proposition that convinced Steve to move Ross Custom Switches to North Stonington, Connecticut, and to form a partnership with Frank, utilizing his workspace. For various reasons the partnership didn't last, and Frank wanted to continue alone. Steve relocated his company to Mystic, Connecticut, about 1991. Frank began his own line of Curtis hi-rail switches after that.

Any path to good fortune almost always has good memories and great people along the way. Steve met Tom Monroe in '93 or '94. "From the minute I met him, I could tell he was a real go-getter and a quick study. He was my right-hand man all the way until 2010. He usually answered the phone, so most of our customers knew him. I hated to lose him, but after so many years he was ready to try on a new career. I am happy to report he is doing well. Luckily, I have had Trey Hartung and Chad Muehlbauer with me for close to 15 years each. They are master turnout builders and are skilled in every phase," Steve says.

"I have to mention that one of the best parts of my life has been meeting so many great people who have become lifelong friends. The train shows that we promote all over the country afford a wonderful opportunity to meet new folks and share good times with old friends. An interesting thing is many people believe that



The finished tie base has been dyed black and is ready for its rails.

competing companies are often enemies. That is a misconception at least in the model railroad world. Dinners with guys from MTH, Lionel, Bachmann, OGR, and others all at the same table are always spirited and fun. I have yet to see any fisticuffs even after a few pops...okay, maybe even more than a few. I can't thank these people and all the others who have helped me along the way enough."

Also in the late '80s and early '90s, Steve had come up with a number of innovations in his business such as an assembly line method of improving production while still maintaining his unmatched quality. He expanded the operation to not only make switches, but he found there was a significant market in customers who also wanted him to make hand-spiked track, both in pre-formed curves as well as straights. The two benefits of this track are the rails are actually spiked down at each and every tie, matching the appearance of the switches, and that the rails have no revealing bright steel flange beneath the rails between the ties. Also, these new hand-spiked track sections maintained their pre-formed shape due to Steve's own process of embedding wooden runners into the bottoms of the ties to stiffen the track sections.



Chad Muehlbauer begins bending rails to specific angles for each switch. The dye for spiking the rails to the ties is just to his right.

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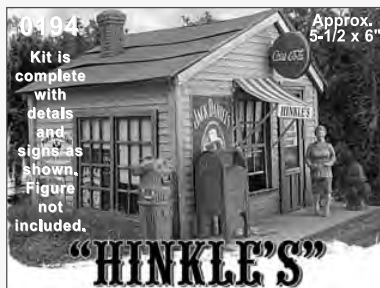
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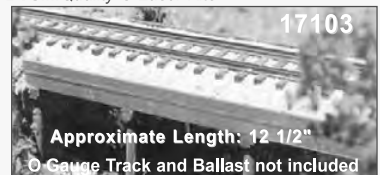
This two-building kit has a "flexible footprint". It'll fit just about any space and can even be broken up into two separate scenes!

Figure not included.

Footprint: 8 x 12"

0424 The Crown Crate Company O Kit...89.98 84.95

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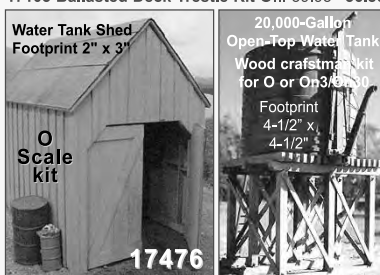


17103

Approximate Length: 12 1/2"

O Gauge Track and Ballast not included

17103 Ballasted Deck Trestle Kit O... 29.95 36.80



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Each black center rail is bent to its exact angle needed for the switch.

These innovations resulted in dramatic increases in orders and the need for additional people to make products. Steve quickly found himself out of space again, so he moved one more time to his present quarters in Norwich, Connecticut, in September 1998. The building he found he could afford was originally a run-down barn dating back to 1858. When he bought it, the floors were even pancaked in on themselves. Steve completely refurbished the building all from the proceeds of his track and switch sales.

The additional space and proceeds from the business also allowed Steve to purchase some modern machinery such as a CNC machine, precision routers, and milling machines. "I now roll all my own sheet metal rail products right here within my shop. I've also trained myself in computer-driven design and manufacturing processes, which allows me to branch out further into other products," Steve says. "With the advent of these machines, finally the laborious method of hand grinding the point rails has largely been replaced with accurately machined point rails manufactured with the CNC machine. Now the finished product only needs hand grinding to tweak each finished machined point rail to perfectly match the side rails in each switch." That has resulted in increased productivity and quality along with the ability to make even more intricate products like accurate indexed turntables, engine transfer tables, tubular O gauge switches, Standard gauge switches, as well as his newest endeavor railroad bridges to add to his line of products.

What does the future hold? "I need to continue to build and ship the products we now have plus continually try to improvise new products that will improve layout building and layout operation for my customers. For the serious tinplate builder, I now have tinplate-style switches matching perfectly to Lionel's original tubular tinplate-style track. The obvious difference is my tinplate switches are very accurate, perfectly built pieces with zero product-caused derailments. I am always working on making improvements to make our switches and track even better as well as coming up with new product ideas," Steve says with no further hint. So stay tuned.

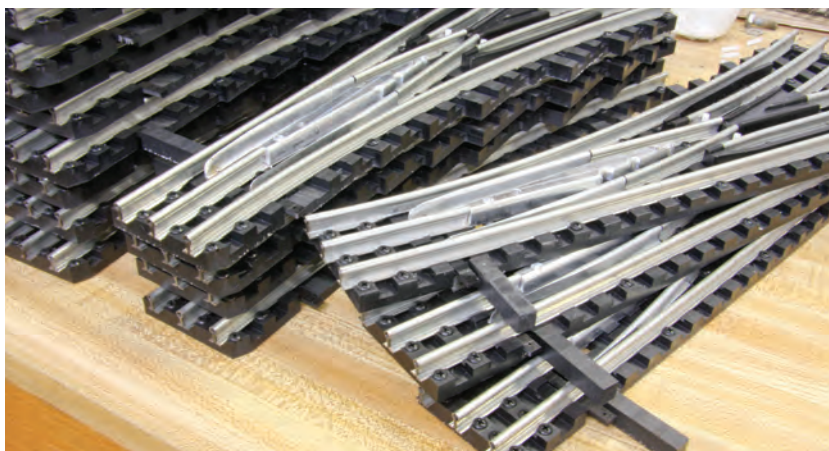
After listening to this story unfold over most of a day, I was prompted to ask Steve what was the motivation that made him continually choose to overcome so many obstacles and tough times to hang in there for 40 years in his business. His answer says a lot about what motivates most people in this hobby who have truly improved it in some way. "Well, it sure isn't wealth. It's doubtful I'll ever be able to retire. I think it was always a simple desire to do something better than anybody else had. Money be damned, there is no better feeling than an excited happy model railroader shaking your hand. It keeps me going," Steve says followed by a short pause. "And besides, it wasn't something I chose. The reality is that the business actually chose me."



The basic switch assembly now awaits the movable point rails and the throw bar.



Trey Hartung begins spiking the movable point rails to their pivot points on the ties.



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## Chopped AC

In our previous two issues, Runs 263 and 264, I reviewed the new Lionel ZW-L transformer, which outputs *pulse width modulated power*. This type of power is frequently referred to colloquially as *chopped sine wave*, or more simply, *chopped AC*. Since the release of Run 263, a number of our readers contacted me regarding chopped AC output and why Lionel chose to use that form of power from the ZW-L. Before getting into why, I'll explain the power basics of both the full sine wave and chopped AC.

### Full Sine Wave

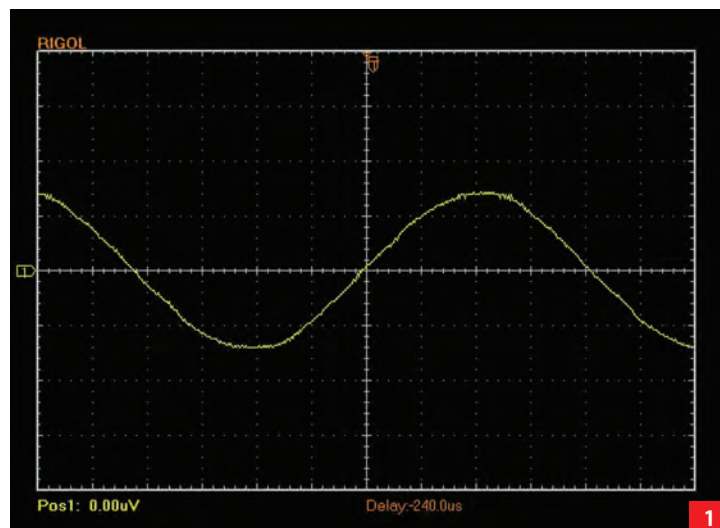
Until Lionel released TMCC in 1995, power supplies sold in North America for 3-rail O gauge trains produced a continuous stream of 60-cycle AC power at whatever level the operator selected, up to 20 volts. On an oscilloscope, which displays electrical signals in a graphic format, this AC power looks like an S laid on its side in what's called a sine wave, as shown in Figure 1. This oscilloscope trace, which is from OGR reader and contributor Alex Müller, shows 1-1/2 cycles of a sine wave from his postwar Lionel KW transformer, which is outputting 10 volts.

By the way, the horizontal reference line shown in the scope trace represents 0 volts. Where the sine wave crosses this line is called the zero crossing, which is a prime reference point in power supply technology. With full sine wave power in North America, the time duration or length of every cycle is the same at 1/60th of a second regardless of the voltage level. I'll return to zero crossing later in this discussion.

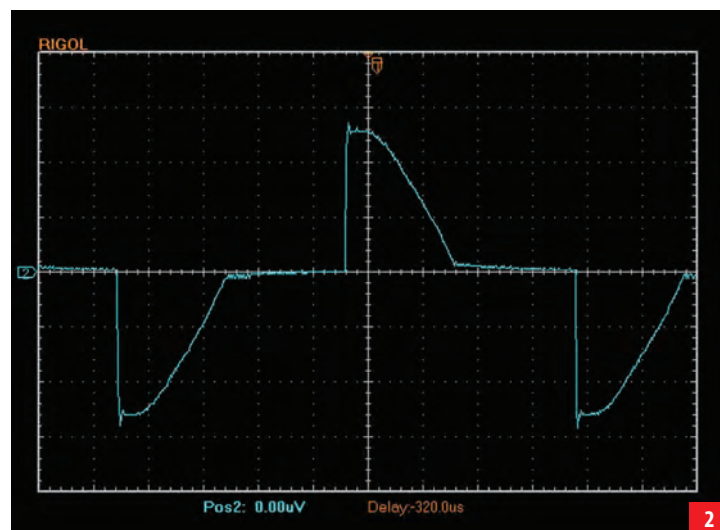
At the power level shown in the figure, each peak above and below the zero volt line is slightly over 14 volts. Without getting into a lengthy and dry dissertation on the mathematics of electrical energy produced by a sine wave, the energy available to the train or accessory is 10 volts. With higher voltage, the peaks of the wave would be a greater distance above and below the zero reference and vice versa for lower voltage.

### Chopped Sine Waves

A number of AC power supplies released since the mid-1990s output electrical pulses similar or identical to the chopped sine wave shown in Figure 2 instead of a full or pure sine wave. The pulse shown in the scope trace also has the energy of 10 volts AC and is from channel AU of Alex's new ZW-L.



Trace photo by Alex Müller



Trace photo by Alex Müller

Figures 3 through 6 show chopped AC outputs for 8, 10, 14, and 18 volts respectively from a ZW-L. Lionel Senior Electrical Engineer James Rohde, who designed the transformer, plotted each of these diagrams from 76 individual coordinates within one cycle of the AC power. A like-voltage sine wave is also included in each illustration so you can see how the power from a chopped AC signal compares to that of a full sine wave.

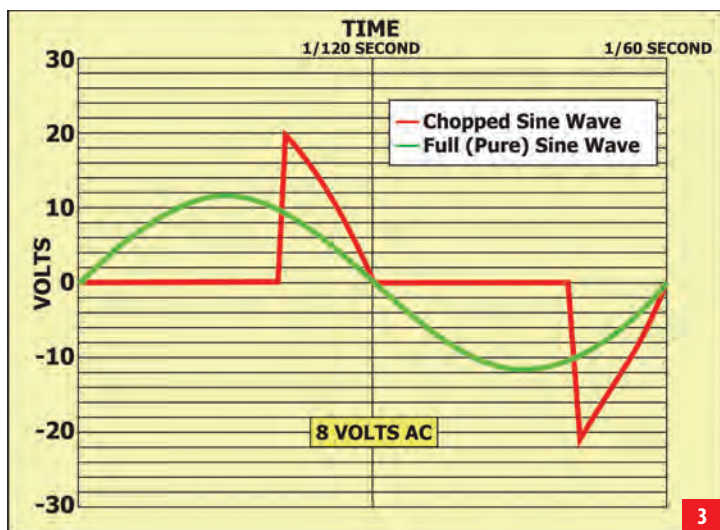


Illustration by Jim Rohde

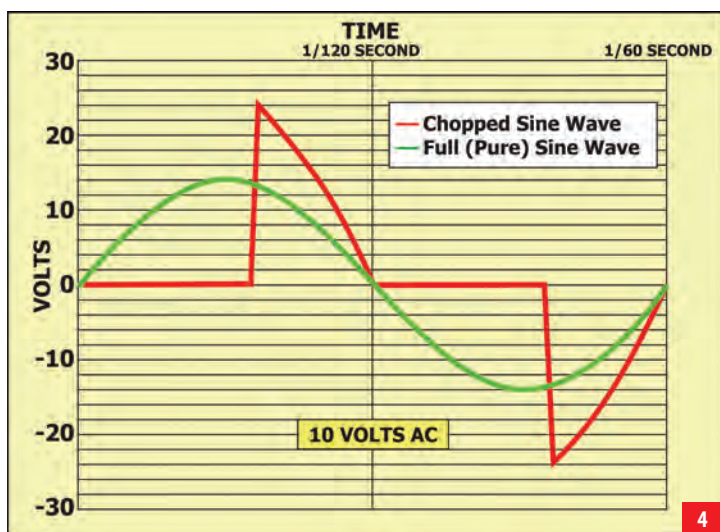


Illustration by Jim Rohde

As implemented in the ZW-L, chopped AC pulses switch on and off at 120 times a second, or twice in each of the 60 cycles. One pulse is positive and the other negative corresponding with the positive and negative phases of one AC cycle.

The pulse width, or the length of time that each pulse is on, determines the effective electrical energy available to the train or accessory. Shortening the pulse width lowers the voltage; lengthening the width raises the voltage. The electrical energy of these pulses is the same as the energy available from a sine wave of the same voltage, but at a higher peak voltage.

To illustrate this behavior, notice that the leading edge of the 8-volt pulse is relatively late after the leading zero crossing, but both waves cross zero together at the trailing crossing. When the throttle handle is moved to increase the voltage output of that particular channel from 8 to 10 volts, the leading edge of the chopped AC pulses occur closer to the leading zero crossing, thereby creating a wider pulse. Moving the handle to output 14 volts causes the pulses to occur even earlier in the cycle resulting in an even greater pulse width. Also, the peak of each pulse above and below the zero

line increases or decreases slightly with the voltage increase or decrease, as do the peaks of the full sine wave.

At a wide open throttle of 18 volts, the output is illustrated as a full sine wave. Actually, and as shown in Figure 7, a scope trace of the 18-volt output from Alex Müller's ZW-L shows a slight notch still exists at the cycle's leading zero crossing where the output is turned off for a few milliseconds, or thousandths of a second. But for all intents and purposes, it's a full sine wave.

Sophisticated microprocessor electronics control the exact timing between the leading edge of each pulse and its preceding zero crossing. Each pulse occurs at precisely the correct phase of the AC cycle according to the voltage level selected by the throttle handle. As such, the term *phase control* refers to this technology within transformers such as the ZW-L, or even the Lionel TPC, CW-80, GW-180, and PowerMaster. The MTH Z-500, Z-750, and Z-1000 also use phase control for their chopped AC output.

## Why Chopped AC

In a phone conversation with Jim Rohde, I understand that the manufacturers' rationale behind contemporary chopped AC transformers is multifaceted. To begin with, precise electronic regulation of the AC output along with high output from a reasonably sized package are paramount. Other major factors are ease and cost of development and manufacture in addition to compliance with the safety regulations for the target market. In the case of the ZW-L, this market is the toy train power supply with the emphasis on toy. Additionally, with today's electronic transformers, there are few if any critical mechanical components that can wear out and need periodic replacement, such as the carbon rollers and tap windings of the postwar Lionel ZW.

From the viewpoint of the O gauge railroader, today's locomotives equipped with coil-operated couplers and smoke units require a lot of power for these units to work right. Smoke units in particular are electrical energy hogs with their heating elements and fans. In command operation with 18 to 20 volts on the track, ample power for smoke generation, coupler actuation, and especially motor drive is not a problem. But with these same engines running under conventional transformer control at low speeds and thereby low track voltage, lack of electrical power could become a problem with lethargic pulling power or acceleration under load as well as wimpy smoke output.

Contemporary locomotives with DC can motors have capacitors in their motor driver boards or DC reverse units that contribute to smooth power for the motor and therefore smooth operation. These capacitors also store energy, not unlike the tank on an air compressor, so the higher the energy that's input to them, the more they can make available to the motors, couplers, and smoke units. In TMCC or Legacy locomotives, these capacitors charge up to the peak voltage of the sine or chopped cycle. For example, at 14 volts output from a full sine wave, the capacitors will charge to 20 volts; from chopped AC they will charge to 26 volts.

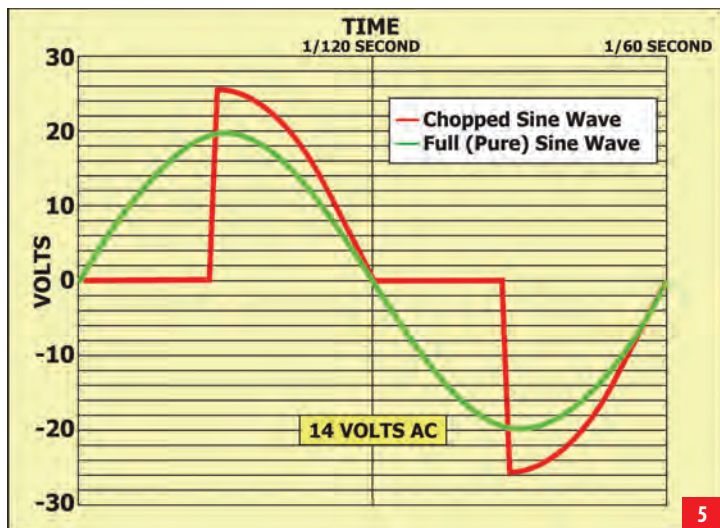


Illustration by Jim Rohde

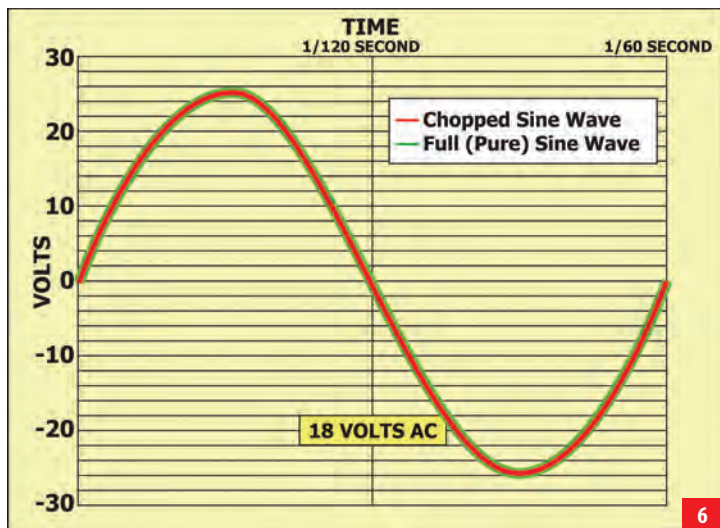
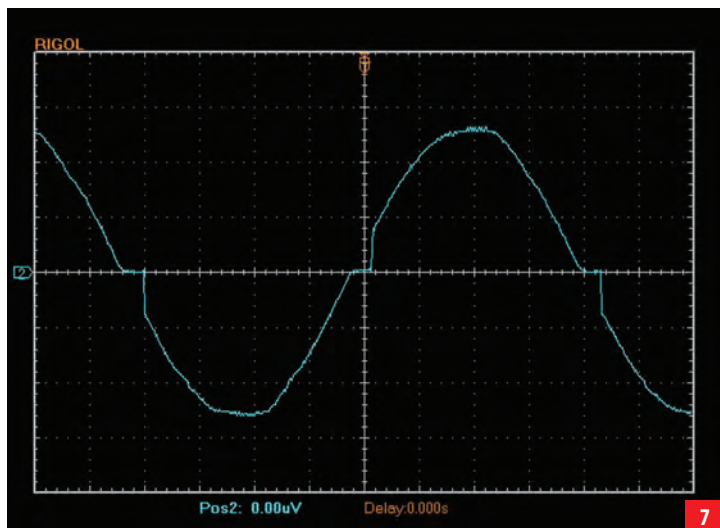


Illustration by Jim Rohde



Trace photo by Alex Müller

This difference in electrical potential is the main operational advantage of a chopped AC power supply over one that outputs a full sine wave. It is this extra electrical energy that will run a locomotive in low speed switching duty at low track voltage in conventional operation. The locomotive can still generate its normal volume of smoke, and ample electrical power is available to the motor for pulling a train.

On the down side and as a number of hobbyists including me have learned, not all is wine and roses with chopped AC power. For those of us who own and still run locomotives with old electronics and train control systems, especially those from QSI, chopped AC power can lead to erratic operation or even outright failure of the locomotive. Additionally, chopped AC can generate an audible hum or rasping from RailSounds 4.0 systems as a result of pulses spaced rather widely apart. As these pulses become closer together within a given time frame and even join into what is essentially a full sine wave at 18 volts, the audible hum or rasping either ceases or is significantly reduced.

Not directly related to the ZW-L but still part of the power technology, the receiver-controller board inside each TMCC locomotive without speed control, such as the venerable R2LC, delivers chopped AC to the Lionel or licensed aftermarket motor driver board, regardless of the type of AC power that comes from the track. Additionally, the motor driver electronics in Lionel locomotives with DC can motors inverts each negative pulse to a positive one to maximize the power available to the motors.

In engines with speed control, the Lionel motor driver board converts the track power, either sine wave or chopped AC, to pulses of DC power and supplies this pulsed DC to the motor, usually at a frequency high enough to be relatively silent. To me, a smooth, slow, and realistic start of the locomotive, even with a heavy load, is visual proof of the success of this technology.

## Author's Notes

My thanks goes to Alex Müller for the many scope trace images that inspired the topic for this column and to Jim Rohde for his drawings and technical information about chopped AC and the ZW-L.

Also, I recommend viewing the Product Instructional Video titled "Transformer Sine Wave Explanation" available on the Lionel website under the Customer Services link. This and other instructional videos are presented by Mike Reagan, head of Lionel Customer Services, and are a wealth of information about Lionel products and technology.

See you next issue. 

# Scheduled Meets

**August 17, 2013**

**PLANO, TX** – Train Collector's Association Summer Train Show, Plano Holiday Inn, 700 Central Parkway East Hwy. 75. 10:30a-4p, Adm: \$6 adults, \$9 per family. Info: Pat Halpin (210) 661-4238 or pathalpin@aol.com.

**August 24-25, 2013**

**WESTMINSTER, CO** – Colorado Toy Train Group & Lionel Collectors Club of America Model Train Auction. The Ranch, 11887 Tejon. Viewing begins at 8a, auction at 9a, \$10 registration. Free auction list. Info: Jim Cathcart (303) 880-3877 or www.lwp.com/go/cttg.

**August 25, 2013**

**CARROLLTON, KY** – Kentucky Flyer RR Ltd. Train Show & Swap Meet, General Butler State Resort Park Conference Center. 11a-4p, vendor tables available. Free train rides for all. Info: Chris K. Pape (502) 743-5414 or chriskape@att.net.

**September 7, 2013**

**VENICE, FL** – TCA Train Show, new location at Ramada Venice Hotel, 425 US 41 Bypass N. I-75. Exit 193 onto Jacaranda Blvd., turn right at Venice Ave., turn right at Venice Bypass, hotel is

on the left. 10a-4p, Adm: \$5, under 12 free. Train drag races, how-to clinics, operating trains, door prizes. Info: Tim Evert (941) 475-5278.

**September 14, 2013**

**DALLAS, TX** – 2nd Annual TrainWorx Layout Festival, 2808 McGowan St. 10a-5p, Adm: \$10, family \$20, free parking. Vender and other info: (877) 881-4997 or dorcie@traindame.com.

**September 28, 2013**

**COLUMBIA, SC** – Columbia Model Train Show (TCA), Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1715 Broad River Rd. 9a-2p, Adm: \$3, 12 and under free. All gauges. Info: Mitch Ayer (803) 438-2087, rrlco@sc.rr.com or www.palmettotca.org.

**September 28-29, 2013**

**MONROE, WI** – Green County Model Railroaders 35th Annual Model Train Show & Swap Meet, Stateline Ice and Community Expo, 1632 4th Ave. West. 10a-4p. Info: Kevin Johnson (608) 325-9779 or www.gcmrrinc.org.

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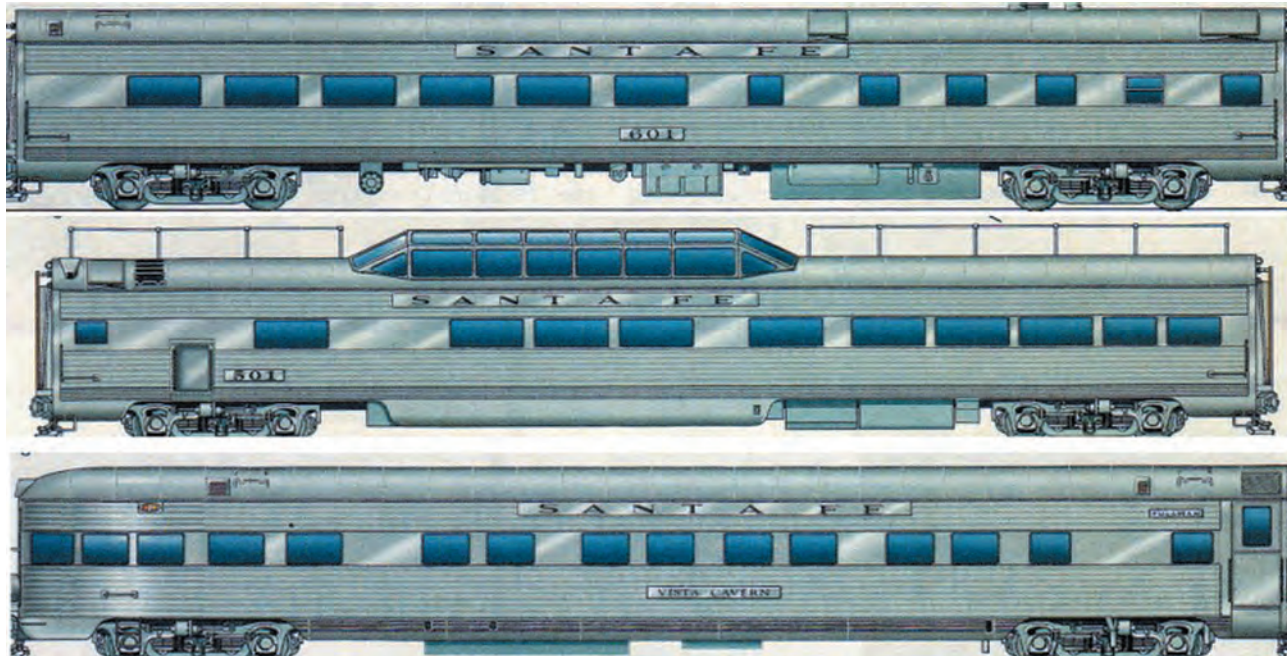
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