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Run 266
October/November 2013
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*First Look at Lionel's
CAB-1L and Base-1L
Command Set*

*Passenger Service
Rules the Rails
on Vernon Hart's layout*

*Easy-to-Make
Backup Light for
Starter Set Tenders*

*Walk the Planks
at Munoz Station*

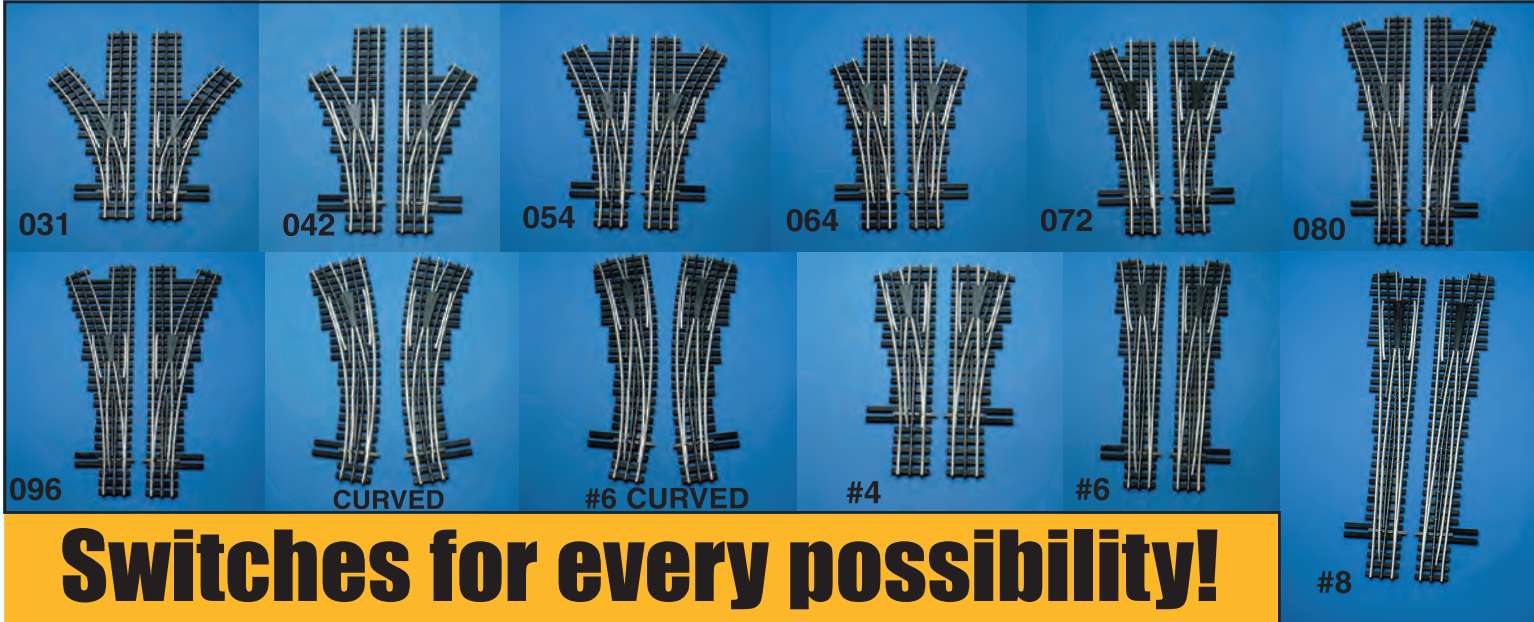
*Texas-Style O Gauge
on Rich Tyra's Layout*



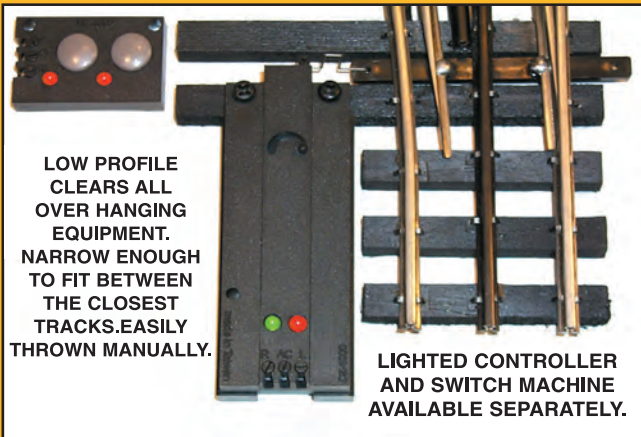
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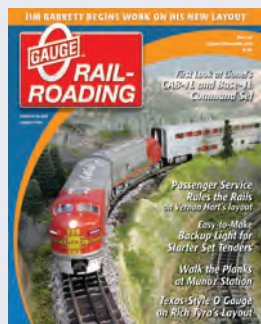
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Walking the Planks
Eliot Scher

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ON THE COVER

After some 30 years as a locomotive engineer handling prototype freight trains for the Frisco Railway, Vernon Hart became a big fan of passenger trains in his retirement. Here, Santa Fe's legendary El Capitan gracefully guides a string of double-decker hi-level cars, introduced in the mid-1950s, through a mountain pass on Vernon's hi-rail layout.

Photo by Vernon Hart



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A Lasting Legacy

Some in our hobby would probably take offense at being called a “train nut,” but Bill Parisi, longtime friend and associate of our OGR Publishing family, would most certainly have worn that label proudly. I write the words “would have” with a heavy heart because Bill passed away this past June 17 at the age of 65.

Bill's byline has appeared often in this magazine—he was one of our devoted Section Gang members—and his name is also very familiar to the 12,000-plus members of the OGR On-Line Forum, where he was a frequent and valued contributor. Forum members remembered Bill with a full five pages of personal tributes.

Bill also maintained a website at www.parisiconsulting.com and a visual record of the many home and club layouts he visited and photographed is maintained there. If you haven't had a chance to visit the site, be sure to do so when you have an opportunity.

A retired U.S. Air Force Master Sergeant, Bill was exceptionally proud of his 21 years of service to his country. But even in retirement, he never really left the active civilian work force. He worked with the Mahoning County Board of Disabilities for 19 years and was an adjunct professor in the computer science department at Youngstown State University for 14 years. Until a short time prior to his death, he also worked part-time at the Lionel Customer Service Center in Canfield, Ohio.

Beyond that, Bill also assisted the OGR staff by working tirelessly at our sales booths at a number of shows, meets, and other events, including the not-so-fun aspects of setting up and tearing down. He was an ever-present figure in our Orange Hall



Grandpa Bill with Zach.



Zach prepares to give one of his favorite locomotives some run time.

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booth at the Train Collectors Association Eastern Division York (Pennsylvania) Train Meet, and this afforded him the opportunity to meet and befriend the owners of the many layouts he and his wife, Judy, visited in Bill's retirement years.

But perhaps the greatest hobby-related legacy left by Bill is his close bond with nine-year-old Zachary, his admiring grandson. Zach was ever-present at grandpa's side whenever and wherever trains were involved and he was ably assisting in the reconstruction of Bill's large basement layout. That task was begun just a couple of years ago so Bill could make full use of lessons learned in building an earlier layout in pretty much the same space.

When I attended funeral services for Bill, the first thing Zach said to me was, "I have to finish my grandpa's layout." I assured him there would be plenty of help available to assist in that task and that his grandpa certainly would not want to see things rushed. All of Bill's sizable O gauge collection is now being entrusted to Zach, and I have no doubt that the love of toy trains Zach also inherited from his grandfather will keep the legacy of our good friend Bill Parisi going for generations to come. 



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Announcements

This IS the New Polar Express



1

Lionel is celebrating the tenth anniversary of the launch of *The Polar Express* movie by the debut of a new version of its O gauge Polar Express train set complete with a new, easy-to-use, and fun-to-run wireless control system. The new Polar Express Remote Set promises to open new vistas of enjoyment for operators of this perennially popular Lionel train (Photo 1).

I was able to spend time putting a preproduction prototype of this set through its paces and gave special attention to the new LionChief remote control system that will be part of this and a number of other entry-level Lionel sets.

At first glance, the traditional-size 4-8-2 Berkshire, with the familiar 1225 on its cab sides and Polar Express on its tender, looks just like the familiar steamer we have seen heading the Polar Express for the last decade. However, this new version has operating capabilities that are well suited to the way today's younger Lionel customers expect to run almost everything electronic ranging from mobile communication devices to televisions and even to electric trains.

What really makes this set different is the LionChief remote, which is a wireless hand-held unit that is so simple to use any child and most adults can learn to operate the Polar Express within a few minutes or less (Photo 2). The knob at the top of the remote controls forward and reverse as well as the speed of the locomotive. The three buttons below this knob activate the whistle, the bell, and the official and well-known "All Aboard!" and "Tickets Please!" announcements from the movie. Three AAA alkaline batteries energize the remote.



2

Instead of a traditional AC transformer, the Polar Express Remote Set is powered by a DC wall pack (Photo 3). Simply plug the wall pack into a 110-volt outlet and plug the barrel connector into the special FastTrack



3

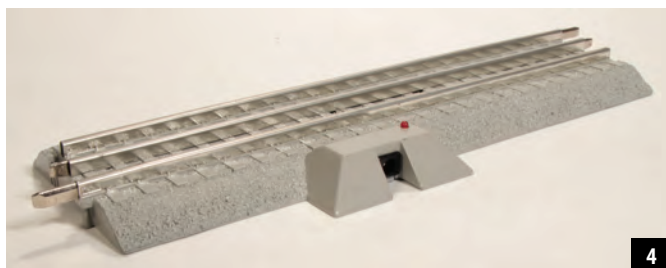
straight section provided with the set (Photo 4). You are ready to run your train. The 36-volt DC, 2-amp power supply has enough juice to run the 1225 Berkshire and the three lighted cars that come with the set. It can also illuminate at least three more passenger cars or six street lamps. Older Polar Express cars can be run with the new set, but it is advisable to replace their 14-volt bulbs with 18-volt lamps.

Equipped with a bridge rectifier, this set's locomotive can be powered by any AC transformer or DC power pack that delivers at least 2 amps of current at 18 volts. The 1225 locomotive can be operated simultaneously with Legacy and TMCC locomotives operating on the same track because the frequency used for the LionChief controlled Polar Express Remote Set does not conflict with the frequencies and signals propagated by the two other Lionel command control systems. We did not have a chance to test the LionChief system for compatibility with MTH DCS equipment but will report on that as soon as we obtain production sets to evaluate.

There is no provision to run the new set conventionally, but many youngsters today are technically savvy and instinctively familiar with remotes of all types. Besides, when was the last time any of us got out of our chairs to change the channel on a television?

The Polar Express Remote Set comes complete with a 40"x 60" oval of FasTrack, two Polar Express coaches, and a special Polar Express observation car (Photo 5). Also included are four Polar Express figures and even a decorative Polar Express bell.

The set's sound features also merit special mention. In addition to a bell, whistle, and Polar Express conductor announcements from the movie, a RailSounds RC sound system provides steam chuff and engine background noises as the



4

locomotive operates. Thanks to a decent-size speaker in the tender, the miniaturized and simplified digital sound reproduction system is able to reach its full potential, resulting in crisp sounds with ample volume. Interestingly, RailSounds RC embraces the same cost-effective technology implanted in greeting cards to enable them to talk and sing. The implications for the production costs of starter sets are obvious.

The new Polar Express Remote Set brings plug and play to an ever-growing base of potential new users and is a logical step in continuing the tradition of one of our most well known and beloved of all trains, real or model.

— *Ed Boyle*



5

Mike Reagan Assumes Expanded Role at Lionel

Director of Customer Service Mike Reagan of Lionel LLC has recently relocated to Concord, North Carolina, where he will assume the additional role of Director of Production. Mike's skills and experience in organization, infrastructure, and process, along with his thorough knowledge of the product line, will be an asset to the production team at Lionel. Director of Production and Customer Service will be Mike's new title. All contact information for Mike will remain the same as he assumes his new role in North Carolina.



Phil Hull will be overseeing day-to-day operations at the Lionel Service Department in Canfield, Ohio, and there will be no interruption in the service that Lionel customers have come to expect.

Alan Arnold Appointed Ad Sales Manager for OGR



Effective July 22, 2013, Alan Arnold joined the OGR team as our new Advertising Sales Manager. Alan is an active O scale modeler and is also an active participant on the OGR On-Line Forum.

Alan hails from Mountain Home, Arkansas. He attended the University of Arkansas and graduated with degrees in architecture and secondary education. He has worked as a teacher and taught eighth grade through college level courses for 11 years.

Twenty-three years ago, Alan left the teaching profession and went to work for the local Gannett newspaper. He handled advertising sales, racking up an impressive record of performance. After a few years in the print business, he left the newspaper to try a new challenge using his architectural and marketing backgrounds to plan and sell manufactured housing. A few years later, Alan went back to his true love: marketing and selling advertising. Back at the local newspaper, he earned the title of Senior Key Account Manager and was in charge of the paper's "white glove" accounts. In 2006, Alan became Marketing Director for a company that owns several television stations.

Fast forward to 2013, Alan is now the Advertising Sales Manager at OGR Publishing, Inc. He will be making regular calls to our current advertisers and building relationships with new clients as well.

Alan can be reached at 800-980-OGRR (6477) or at his new OGR e-mail address, adman@ogaugerr.com.

Our OGR family welcomes him aboard!

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Smoke Signals

Product Announcements



Preserving a Heritage

M.T.H. Electric Trains has released the first four in a series of Norfolk Southern (NS) heritage locomotives for O gauge. The RailKing Imperial SD70ACe diesel locomotives bear special Norfolk Southern heritage paint schemes commemorating former lines now part of the NS system. The first four models represent (pictured left to right) Norfolk Southern (original livery), Virginian, Wabash, and Jersey Central. In total, ten different NS heritage road names will be released as RailKing Imperial SD70ACe models followed by ten RailKing Imperial ES44 diesels in 2014. Both the SD70ACe and ES44 diesels are equipped with Proto-Sound 3.0 with freight yard Proto-Effects, operating smoke unit, constant-voltage LED lighting, two flywheel-equipped motors, cab interior figures, remotely activated Proto-Couplers, and die-cast metal fuel tank, pilots, and truck sides. The full RailKing SD70ACe Norfolk Southern heritage lineup can be seen at www.mthtrains.com/news/067c, and the first of the RailKing ES44 NS heritage diesels can be seen in the 2013 Volume 2 catalog. The catalog is available at authorized MTH retailers and can be viewed online at www.mthtrains.com/news/519.



TOFC for Canadian Railroad Fans

The Canadian Toy Train Association announces that Weaver Models has manufactured a scale British American Oil trailer mounted on a Pacific Great Eastern Railway flatcar. The Pacific Great Eastern Railway operated from 1912 until 1972 when it was renamed BC Rail. This very limited-production O gauge trailer-on-flatcar (TOFC) comes in three car numbers and is available for both 3-rail and 2-rail operation. Cost per TOFC is \$80.00 plus \$10.00 shipping. For complete ordering information, e-mail mlhorne@shaw.ca or call 604-560-4028.

Fill 'em Up

The folks at Weaver Models are running their 40' tank cars. First to roll off the production line are models for Lion Oil and Dow of Canada, but the list doesn't stop there. By the

time this magazine hits the stands, all 40' tank car liveries listed and depicted at www.weavermodels.com should be available. In addition to being made in the U.S.A., other features include 1/4" scale dimensions, choice of 3-rail or 2-rail, operation on O31 curves, weighted car built from prototype blueprints, high-impact styrene body, reinforced upper platform, individually mounted body add-on features, underframe with see-through grid, fully detailed Ajax brake system, hazard signs and steps, and painted with durable Scalecoat paint. Equipped with die-cast trucks and couplers, these cars are available in three different road numbers. Full description and pricing information is available at www.weavermodels.com/page27.html.



Boxcar Grain Panel Door



Great Lakes Models has an add-on that will give your boxcars a distinctive appearance. Boxcar grain doors were designed to contain grain inside boxcars for transit and were used by virtually all grain hauling railroads well into the late 1980s. The boards would be installed on the inside of the boxcar door, and then grain would be blown into the boxcar over the boards or through chutes in the car's side. These doors were also put into service to haul other supplies like coal, including anthracite, and powdered dolomite limestone. The O scale grain doors from Great Lakes Models, made from laser-cut wood, can be used on rolling stock, stacked alongside the track, or piled near a grain elevator. Cost is \$14.96 for 18 panels. Visit www.greatlakesmodels.com for more information or e-mail greatlakesmodels@aol.com. Great Lakes Models, N1510 State Rd. 32, Oostburg, WI 53070.

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Adjustable LED Car Lighting


Royz Trains is offering LED passenger car boards that provide user-adjustable constant brightness. The board attaches to the inside of the car roof using double-sided tape. A minimum of 14" interior car length is required. Board includes an MTH compatible plug and complete instructions. Cost is \$22.50 per car, and all makes of cars are supported. See the full range of offerings and sample photos at www.royztrains.com, or contact royztrains@aol.com for more information.



Critter Corral

Want a place to load or unload that string of stock cars you have on your layout? The Traingineers at TrainWorx have added this practical and attractive O gauge corral/stock pen to their laser-cut kit line. Once assembled, the completed accessory measures approximately 9" x 23" and features a trackside loading ramp, a truck dock ramp, and ground level gate to meet all of your livestock handling needs. The TrainWorx Corral/Stock Pen Kit sells for \$137.00, including shipping. Purchase online at www.TWTrainWorx.com or call 877-881-4997 toll free.

Freight Car Fundraiser

Limited-edition freight cars are being made to benefit the Port Clinton Museum in southeastern Pennsylvania. The cars are from MTH, and each car is being made for one year and dated for that year. Two different numbers for each car will be available for fans who want more than one. A Heisler's refrigerator car is the first piece of rolling stock and is dated for 2011. A Weiner Iron & Metal gondola is the second car and is dated for 2012. The car for 2013 will be a Tuscarora Coal Co. hopper dated 2013. The first two cars (pictured) are available now for \$59.95 each plus \$8.00 shipping. The hopper will be out in the fall of 2013 and can be pre-ordered at \$59.95 plus shipping of \$8.00. Four more cars will be offered in the future, with a Reading Northern locomotive to be made to lead the set. To order, send a check payable to Glenn Frantz, 210 E. Market St., Orwigsburg, PA 17961. 



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Warren Buffett's O and Oh Trains

Article by Dorcie Farkash Photos by TrainWorx



This overall view shows the BNSF layout.

Talk about a dream come true or, more accurately, multiple dreams coming true, this year I had the pleasure of joining the traingineers of TrainWorx. They installed the 8'x 32' layout that Chief Traingineer Roger Farkash, my husband, had designed for the Berkshire Hathaway Annual Shareholders Meeting held in Omaha, Nebraska, this past May 4.



A train of covered hoppers, pulled by a BNSF genset locomotive, heads into the town while a container train passes on the outer line.

For me, the first dream come true was when I had the pleasure of meeting Warren Buffett, one of the world's most prominent figures in business, investing, and philanthropy. Mr. Buffett is the primary shareholder, chairman, and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway, which is the parent corporation of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF).

The second dream come true was having my picture taken with Mr. Buffett, and this led to the third dream materializing when he graciously signed a photo book I had put together.


It was a real treat for me to experience firsthand the amazing event that is set up in the Century Link Convention Center where just about every Berkshire Hathaway corporate entity is represented. As they have done for the past four years, our crew built this layout for inclusion in the BNSF Railway's display at the event. After Berkshire Hathaway acquired BNSF in 2010, railroad officials approached Lionel LLC to see if they could use the Lionel layout, which our crew designed and built for the Berkshire Hathaway Annual Shareholders Meeting that year. Lionel contracted us to modify the existing 7-1/2'x 40' layout with BNSF logos and to deliver, install, run, dismantle, and ship everything back to BNSF corporate headquarters in Ft. Worth, Texas. The Lionel layout was used for two years, and in 2012 Roger was asked to design a new BNSF layout.

The primary enhancements included building new models to represent new businesses acquired by Berkshire Hathaway. Also new for 2013 were custom decals on cargo containers that represent BNSF clients.

For train fans at the meeting, the place to be most definitely was the BNSF booth. There, shareholders got to see trains running on over 300' of track through mountain ranges, tunnels and cityscapes, and over a very cool canyon bridge. They also had the opportunity to meet and chat with BNSF representatives and try their hand at running BNSF locomotives in two huge locomotive cab simulators.

The layout drew tremendous crowds. It was a joy to see how many youngsters were there with their parents as they learned about investing and also saw every subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway depicted on the layout. Traingineer George Watson was always nearby letting young BNSF engineers take control via the Lionel Legacy command control system.

The display's eight 4'x 8' sections are mounted on aluminum frames equipped with 5" casters so these sections can be rolled off the truck and plugged together for an 8'x 32' configuration that is ready for placement of buildings and other accessories. Lionel continues to donate locomotives, rolling stock, and Legacy command control system components for the display. Our crew created, built, or modified the buildings for this display.

This special BNSF layout will be a featured attraction at the TrainWorx Second Annual Layout Festival to be held September 14, 2013, in Dallas, Texas, benefitting the Ronald McDonald House of Dallas. Visit www.trainworxfestival.com or call 877-881-4997 for full details. Five exclusive and free TrainWorx screen savers are available at www.trainworxstore.com. 



Scenes on the layout depict BNSF employees hard at work.



Here's a view down the length of the layout from the Cajon Pass end.



This view shows a city at the other end of the layout.



The layout's intermodal yard represents a key aspect of the BNSF Railway.

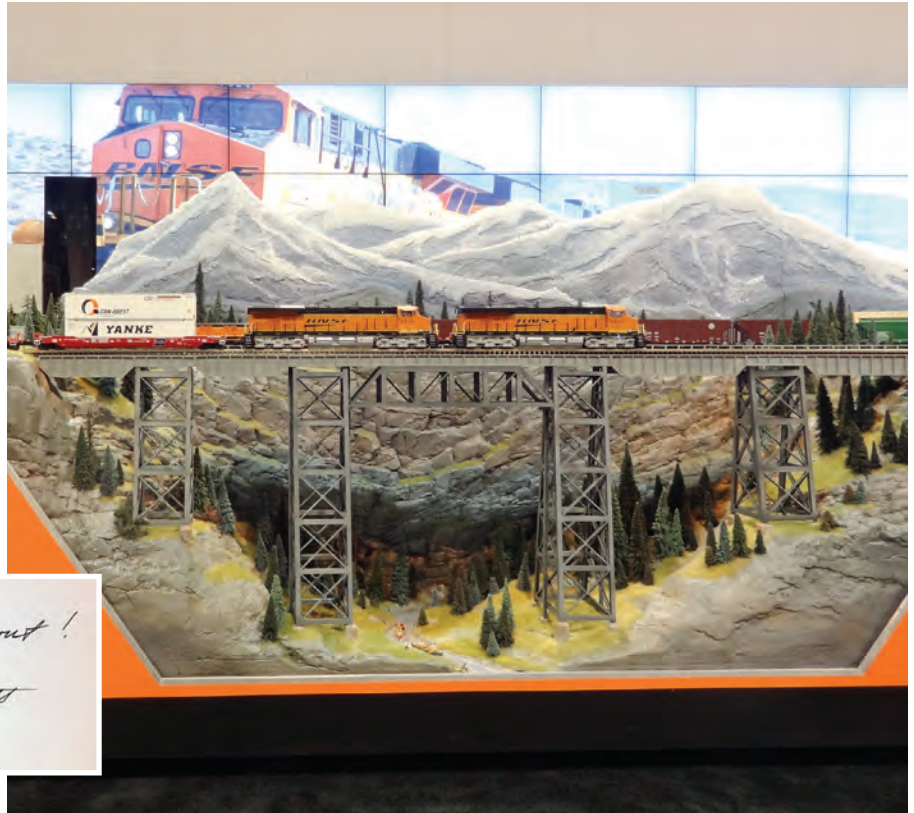


This photo should leave no doubt about whose railroad this is. An imposing video wall is in the background.



I love the layout!
Wm & Buffett

Mr. Buffett and me—my dreams
 2 and 3 are realized.



An impressive trestle spans Two Medicine River.

V&T "Carson City" Mint Car



The Carson City, Nevada Mint was built to facilitate minting of silver coins from silver mined in the Comstock Lode. Don't miss out on an exciting and unique opportunity to add a "Mint" car with the Virginia & Truckee roadname to your collection! Become a Member of the **LIONEL OPERATING TRAIN SOCIETY (LOTS)** and purchase your **2013 Virginia & Truckee "Carson City" Mint car(s) today!**

The V&T "Carson City" Mint Car is all Lionel-manufactured and features striking graphics, die-cast metal sprung trucks and operating couplers. It will negotiate O-27 curves and is 10 1/4" in length. Anticipated delivery - December 2013.

Production is extremely limited (only 600) and will be sold on a "First Come, First Served" basis. Offer is available to LOTS Members only! Join LOTS (\$35) AND order your car(s) (\$70.00 ea plus shipping), before it's too late!

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You can take your photos using a digital camera capable of at least 3.3 megapixels set to the best JPEG image. Please send only original, unedited JPEG files. Color prints of 4"x 6" or larger are also fine. Be sure to include brief notes about the trains in the photos and any other information you'd like to share, such as the size of your layout, unique scenery, make of track, power supply or control system, and so forth.

We are looking for quality photography with good lighting and clear images; however, on-camera flash photos are generally not acceptable. Send your photo, CD, or prints to Readers' Rails, 33 Sheridan Road, Poland, Ohio 44514-1680. Or you can e-mail your image and text files to editor@ogaugerr.com.

Conrail at Carousel Corner

Here's a Conrail and GE meet at Carousel Corner on Christopher Finch's modular hi-rail O gauge layout. A westbound run, pulled by an MTH C40-8, meets a pair of eastbound trains: one pulled by a Lionel C30-7 and the other by another MTH CW40-8. The carousel is by Lemax, and music is provided by a 3-D band organ behind Conrail 6214, which Chris created from a photograph. He is an active participant in the Lehigh Valley Hi-Railers club.



Dressed Up Southern Style

A train headed by Southern Railway E6 No. 2901, resplendent in Southern green livery, maintains a slight lead over another Southern streamline consist dressed in the equally striking black-and-white tuxedo paint scheme. This scene is along the right-of-way on the hi-rail layout built by Sam Hopkins.



Green Is Good for Go

This view of a portion of the control panel on Jim Steed's layout includes 50 Lionel switch controllers displaying green for routing along the main lines. Jim and Gayle Steed's Great Georgia Central & Southern is a classic Lionel postwar layout with all the time-honored operating accessories, engines, rolling stock, and transformers. The layout is featured in all its postwar glory in the *Great Layout Adventures 3 OGR* video.

Accessory Enhancement

Bob Terpak enjoyed dressing up some of Lionel's classic operating accessories to give all of them a more realistic appearance without significantly altering the original. This view of a Lionel No. 264 Fork Lift accessory in action amply demonstrates the level of enhanced realism Bob achieved while retaining all the operating action associated with this fun accessory.



Tinplate Comes to Town

Hal Maury has constructed a highly detailed hi-rail layout, but he also enjoys the color and craftsmanship so amply evident in O gauge tinplate. In this station scene, onlookers young and old gaze at MTH tinplate reproductions of a New York Central model in gunmetal gray and a second one in the ever-popular Blue Comet livery.

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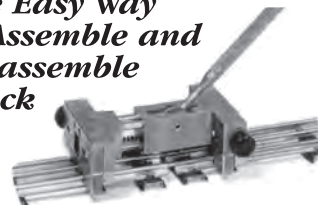
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Product Reviews



Weaver Lehigh Valley Black Diamond 4-6-2

Review and Photos by George Brown

In the mid to late 1930s, a number of North American railroads embraced streamlining, special paint schemes, and passenger amenities to promote their prestigious intercity passenger trains and primarily to attract travelers back to trains during the Great Depression. The regional Lehigh Valley Railroad joined into this promotional foray in the late 1930s and commissioned noted industrial designer Otto Kuhler to glamorize the road's name trains including its flagship run, the Black Diamond. Part of that commission included streamlining shrouds for several of the road's existing 4-6-2 locomotives. The resulting color scheme of red and black with thin white stripes and white lettering was striking and carried from the streamlined locomotive back through the cars.

The Black Diamond name reflected the Lehigh Valley's principal source for freight revenue: coal. Since the 1890s, the Black Diamond train provided the road's most prestigious and elegant daytime passenger service between New York City and Buffalo, New York. Unfortunately and because of the Lehigh Valley's route, its passenger trains were at a travel time disadvantage against its two principal competitors in that market: the Lackawanna and the New York Central. So to close the competitive gap, the Black Diamond had a well-earned reputation for pampering its patrons.

As a side note, Otto Kuhler's other streamlined locomotives included the New Haven Class I5 Hudson for the road's Shoreliner and the Milwaukee Road's F7 4-6-4s for the



Hiawathas. The arguably distinctive Alco DL road diesel was also his design.

Engine number 2097, the prototype for our evaluation sample, was erected at Alco-Schenectady in the 1920s with streamlining done in the Lehigh Valley's shops in 1939. I understand the Weaver model of the streamlined Lehigh Valley 4-6-2 is also available with cab numbers 2089 and 2093.

Construction and Features

As with most of the current and previously released steam locomotives from Weaver Models, the 1:48 scale streamlined Lehigh Valley 4-6-2 is hand-built from brass sheet and bar stock with lost wax castings. Of course the engine is a limited-production model with only 75 of the 3-rail versions built. Build numbers for 2-rail versions are 31 with DC motors, no command or sound, and just 3 with TMCC and RailSounds for the 2-rail AC operator. Each model carries a builder's plate stating the serial number in the total production run for that version with our evaluation sample 3-rail locomotive being number 11 of 75. This small and rather attractive etched brass plate is attached to the underside of the frame between the rear drivers.

One of the results of streamlining was the covering of the myriad of appliances and plumbing that characterized steam locomotives. So it's no surprise that few of these details were on the



Weaver Black Diamond 4-6-2 Features and Details

- TMCC with RailSounds 4.0 from The Electric RR Co. under license from Lionel
- Four steam exhaust chuffs per driver revolution
- Cruise Commander cruise control
- DC can motor with flywheel
- Sprung journals for driver axles
- Articulated side rods
- Traction tires on rear drivers
- Wire handrails, grab irons, and coupler cut lever
- LED headlight, classification lamps, number boards, and directional backup light
- Smoke unit switch for on or off
- Coil-operated coupler on tender
- Detailed boiler backhead with crew figures on seat boxes
- Opening cab roof vent
- Real coal in tender bunker
- Opening water hatch on tender
- Clear plastic windows in cab
- Minimum 3-rail 054 curve



streamlined model of the 4-6-2. The few castings representing the real engine's steps, valve gear hangers, power reverse equipment, pop-off valves, backhead gauges and valves, and so forth are all excellent. Although it's small and partially hidden inside the skyline casing, I especially liked the natural brass-colored whistle. The bright metal trim on the cab side windows was also attractive.

One of the attributes of just about any scale model fabricated from brass is the realistic thickness of what was sheet steel on real locomotives. To me, the Weaver model carries on with this realistic appearance, particularly where the edges of the various sheets are visible, such as on the cab and the shrouds surrounding the drivers.

Side frames on the trailing and tender trucks are lost wax brass castings as are the brake shoes and hangers between the drivers and on the pilot truck. On the subject of the trailing truck, its cast wheels have realistic spokes. I understand that the driver diameter is accurate as are the diameters of the wheels in the leading, trailing, and tender trucks. I was unable to locate a scale drawing of that particular class of Lehigh Valley 4-6-2, so I couldn't verify the model's scale dimensions. Because our evaluation sample is for 3-rail operation, all wheel flanges are necessarily oversized to accommodate the tubular tinplate rails still in wide use within 3-rail O gauge railroading.

Much to my pleasure, the drive mechanism is all metal, not plastic. The reasonably large DC motor with a flywheel resides inside the firebox area of the boiler. A universal joint couples the motor to the drive shaft and gear box. This gear box is on the main driver axle and has a removable cap for periodic greasing of the worm and gear inside. Four small screws hold the cap to the bottom of the gear box casting, so all that's needed to remove it is a number 0 Phillips screwdriver.

Control electronics and the sound system reside in the tender and receive AC power directly from the center rail via a roller on

each truck. An 8-wire tether cable connects the electronics in the tender to the electrical components located in the engine. To hold the motor and thereby the locomotive at a constant speed, the Cruise Commander motor driver board uses electrical feedback from the motor rather than an external optical sensor and flywheel timing marks.

Although the locomotive is capable of TMCC operation, it will also run under conventional transformer control. For the conventional operator, provisions are included for an owner-installed 9-volt battery, which keeps the sound system running during the momentary power interruptions required to change the engine's direction of travel. Additionally, the reverse electronics can be locked so the engine runs in only one direction. Controls for the command, direction, and sound electronics are hidden underneath the opening water hatch on the tender and are explained in the owner's manual that comes with the model.

For the engine's audio-visual effects of sound and smoke, a microswitch actuated by a cam on the lead driver axle triggers the realistic four steam exhaust chuffs per driver revolution. A fan-driven Turbo Smoke unit from Train America Studios generates the white vapor that a number of hobbyists like to see emanating from a locomotive's smokestack. The output is respectable with more than 12 volts on the track; best results occur with 15 to 18 volts. The owner's manual states that operating the locomotive at less than 12 volts will result in poor performance from its smoke unit. The manual is right if the track power is from an iron-core transformer such as the postwar Lionel ZW. But with a transformer that outputs chopped sine wave power, such as the Lionel ZW-L, the smoke unit performs noticeably better. My "Helper Engine" column on chopped AC in Run 265, August/September 2013, explains why. For those folks who don't like smoke for whatever reason, and I'm one of them, a switch located under the firebox shuts the smoke unit off.



As I expected based on my prior experiences with Weaver brass steam locomotives, the paint and lettering on our evaluation sample were flawless. I might argue about the esthetics of the Otto Kuhler industrial design with its fins and louvers, but I can't fault the colors of the Lehigh Valley Black Diamond livery. With the 4-6-2 at the point of a matching consist of passenger cars, the overall visual effect of the train would be striking. On that topic, I understand from Joe Hayter, president of Weaver Models, that another manufacturing run of its Pullman-Bradley coaches is in the works with the Lehigh Valley red, black, and white color scheme.

At Trackside

Out of the box, the 4-6-2 started and accelerated smoothly on command from the CAB-1L, which I also reviewed in this issue. In command operation, the engine can accelerate or decelerate in either 32 or 100 speed steps, with 100 steps as the factory default. The owner's manual describes how to set the engine to either of the speed steps, but for smooth operation, I recommend the 100 setting.

Deceleration from road speed, which on the editorial Carpet Central Railroad is between 35 and 45 scale mph, to a stop was as smooth and realistic as the rest of the engine's operation. Oh, high speed of 60 scale mph can be considered spectacular and is part of



our testing paradigm, but on my small layout it's really too fast. I like to watch the action of the locomotive and individual cars in the train as they pass by.

An obscure but notable feature of Lehigh Valley 4-6-2, in addition to other Weaver steam locomotives I've seen in the past, is the unusual position of the coupler on the back of the tender. The pulling face of the knuckle is even with the rear face of the tender frame, which creates realistic close coupling with the lead car. One of the passenger trains I coupled to the 4-6-2 strictly for my enjoyment and not part of our structured testing had a pair of express reefers at the head end. Even when running through the engine's minimum O54 curves or backing through O72 switch turnouts, the tender and lead car never conflicted with each other, and I liked the visual effect.



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On the topic of backing through switches, the engine performed well setting out or picking up head end cars. On our evaluation sample, the coupler action was relatively free, so I didn't have to slam the engine into the waiting train or car just to get the coupler to close. Working with...okay, playing with the Weaver Black Diamond 4-6-2 was a lot of fun.

At the End of the Run

For O gauge railroaders who are partial to the Lehigh Valley, the limited-production brass Black Diamond 4-6-2 from Weaver Models could be a perfect fit. 

Lehigh Valley Black Diamond 4-6-2

Retail price: \$1,249.00 (3-rail or 2-rail AC with TMCC and RailSounds); \$1,199.00 (2-rail DC) from Weaver or Weaver dealers

Weaver Models; www.weavermodels.com

Weaver Black Diamond TMCC Performance

(smoke unit: off; sound: on; speed control: on)

Length: 22-3/4" over couplers; 22-5/8" pilot to tender sill

Distance Between Locomotive Pickup Rollers: 3"

Distance Between Tender Pickup Rollers: 4"

Weight on Driving Wheels: 4 lbs, 14 oz

Tender Weight: 1 lb, 14 oz

Power Consumption at Idle @ 18 VAC: 0.2 A, 3.6 W

Tractive Effort @ 18 VAC: 1 lb, 13 oz @ .07 A, 12.6 W

Minimum Sustained Speed @ 18 VAC: 2 scale mph @ 0.3 A, 5.4 W

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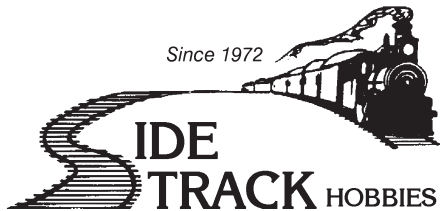
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M10-1097	ORANGE/ CREAM #78 S GUAGE BLOCK SGN 2000 V2 MSRP 69.95	\$49.00
M10-1098	#500 Caboose(Red) 2008 V1	\$89.00
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M10-1105-1	#9E ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE (GREEN) QSI.	\$225.00
M10-1108	ALUMINUM #63 LAMP POST SET MSRP 39.95 2007	\$25.00
M10-1110	192 Villa 4-HOME LITHOGRAPH SET 2003 V1	\$229.00
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M10-1131-1	DK GRN 408E ELG ENG CONT MSRP 899.95 2000 V2	\$699.00
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M10-1167-1	AppleGreen408ETinplateEng.PS2. MSRP 899.95 2001 V3	\$699.00

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Lionel CAB-1L and Base-1L Command Set

Review and Photos by George Brown

Since the introduction of TrainMaster Command Control in 1995, Lionel produced and sold a serious number of CAB-1 remote controllers as well as many companion Base-1 Command Bases, right up to the somewhat recent end of production. Considering how long ago the TMCC and RailSounds systems were designed, I find it remarkable that they still deliver operating pleasure to 3-rail O gauge railroaders, me included.

After adding a 990 Legacy Command Set to the editorial Carpet Central Railroad in 2007, I still preferred running all my TMCC and Legacy trains using my CAB-1 rather than the CAB-2. There was nothing wrong with my Legacy system or the CAB-2. But for just lying on the floor and watching trains pass by on the CCRR even today, the smaller size and simplicity of my cranky old CAB-1 usually wins out over the reliability and sophistication of the larger CAB-2. So when I learned that the new CAB-1L was under development, I eagerly awaited the opportunity to get one of the command sets. To get ahead of myself for a moment, the wait was worth it.

As with the Lionel ZW-L, the “L” in CAB-1L and Base-1L stands for Legacy, but that’s not to infer they will command all functions of a Legacy locomotive. They won’t! The CAB-1L and Base-1L have all the familiar TMCC CAB-1 functionality plus the Legacy function of the quilling whistle. Also, train numbers are expanded from the TMCC maximum of 9 to the Legacy maximum of 99. However, I emphasize that the Legacy functions only work when controlling Legacy locomotives.

For operators who already have a Legacy system, the CAB-1L is fully compatible with the Legacy Command Base and works great with it. With a Legacy base on a layout, a Base-1L is not needed. In fact, the 2013 Lionel Signature Edition catalog states that only one of these command bases is allowed per layout, which means the layout can have either a Legacy base or a Base-1L, but not both. To be blunt, they will interfere with each other, and neither will work. If this sounds like the voice of experience, it is.

I have to qualify that both the CAB-1L and Base-1L I’ve had the pleasure to review are preproduction units. They have the

external appearance, internal hardware, and software code of the products soon to enter production and shipment to Lionel dealers. As I understand the product schedule from Lionel Chief Technology Officer Jon Zahornacky, production units may arrive at dealers within a very few weeks after distribution of this issue of *OGR*. The remote and the base will be available either separately or together as a command set. As a set, the cost is significantly lower than a Legacy command system. Or a separately sold CAB-1L can add an additional remote to an existing Legacy command system at a modest cost.

The System

Unlike the original TMCC system that used 27 MHz for one-way communication between the remote and base, the CAB-1L/Base-1L system uses the same 9-channel 2.4 GHz frequency and 2-way messaging formats as the CAB-2 and Legacy base. At this time, two-way communication only occurs during a couple of operations with the CAB-1L. One is when configuring the whistle/horn button for either a normal whistle or the quilling whistle; the other is when setting channel 1 through 9 for communication with either the Base-1L or the Legacy base.

The communication and messaging capabilities of the serial port in the Base-1L are fully compliant with those of the Legacy base. I understand from Jon that several really cool new features are in the works at Lionel that will utilize the serial port on both the Base-1L and the Legacy base. Communication between the Base-1L and the track remains at 455 MHz, which is the same frequency used by the original TMCC and Legacy bases.

Given that the original TMCC system was designed almost two decades ago, which is an eon in the electronics world, the hardware and software for the CAB-1L and Base-1L are all new. Oh, for O gauge railroaders who run TMCC and Legacy equipment using their MTH DCS remote and TIU, good news! The Lionel Base-1L works with DCS using the latest interconnect cable from MTH, which is the TIU/TMCC-Legacy 6' Connector Cable, #50-1032.

CAB-1L

While packed in its window box, the CAB-1L looks identical to an original CAB-1, but with a blue case and Legacy label. The familiar function buttons and numeric keypad are all there as is the same red throttle knob. However, with the new remote out of its box, the telescoping external antenna for the old 27 MHz transmitter and the jack for connection of the old big red control knob are noticeably absent. I understand the new remote's case uses the same tooling as the original CAB-1 case, which was reworked to eliminate the holes for the antenna and jack. Even the same bay and snap-off cover are there for the four AA batteries.

Although the commands to TMCC locomotives have been revised for smoother acceleration and deceleration, the CAB-1L outputs only relative speed step commands, as did the original CAB-1. In comparison, the CAB-2 generates both relative and absolute speed step commands. For a brief explanation of relative and absolute speed steps, see the sidebar in this article.

Features retained from the original CAB-1 include the "sticky keys" and entry into the remote's sleep mode after 30 seconds of inactivity. As a plus, the new CAB-1L throttle now works when





addressing an accessory that recognizes throttle commands. Additionally, rotating the throttle knob will exit the CAB-1L from sleep mode. To my frustration, the original CAB-1 would not respond to throttle rotation after entering sleep mode. One of the other buttons had to be pressed first, such as whistle/horn, before the CAB-1 throttle worked. Much to my pleasure, the CAB-1L wakes up upon any action with a button or the throttle knob.

When CAB-1L enters sleep mode, it retains all of its operating settings as well as the last engine or train operated. For example, if engine 3, accessory 7, switch 88, and route 6 were addressed before the remote entered sleep mode, at wake-up these settings would all remain the same. If train 4 was last operated prior to sleep mode, the remote exits this mode with train 4 still active.

A nonvolatile random access memory, NVRAM, retains the quilling selection for engine and train IDs in addition to the channel number for communication with the base. If the batteries are removed from the CAB-1L, only the contents of the NVRAM are retained. After battery installation, settings for engine, train, switch, route, and accessory are automatically reset to their default of 1.

As with the original CAB-1, the three momentum buttons have no affect within the CAB-1L. Pressing the L, M, or H momentum button sends the command to only the addressed locomotive for the appropriate momentum action. How a particular locomotive reacts to momentum commands is explained in its owner's manual.

The big operating news for the CAB-1L is the whistle/horn button. It looks the same as the one on the original CAB-1, but its underlying switch is totally new and definitely high tech. When set up to blow the whistle or horn on a RailSounds locomotive, the button behaves as it did in the original CAB-1: press and the whistle or horn blows. But when set to operate the whistle or horn on a Legacy locomotive, the button senses in three increments how hard it is being pressed and controls the whistle or horn accordingly. Although it is not as sensitive as the whistle/horn slider control on the CAB-2, this button still lets the operator play





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with modulating or quilling the three whistle tones resident in each Legacy RailSounds repertoire.

Because the CAB-1 has no display panel, audible short beeps are emitted to announce the result of the configuration command just issued to the base. For example, when configuring the whistle/horn button, two beeps confirm Legacy whistle operation, with one beep confirming normal whistle operation of the old CAB-1.

When set to CAB-1 control of a normal whistle or horn, the whistle/horn button works with all releases of RailSounds and also Legacy RailSounds, but Legacy's manually quilling whistle will not function. However, if the whistle/horn button is programmed for Legacy RailSounds and its real-time quilling whistle, pressing the button results in silence from an earlier version of RailSounds, such as release 4 or 5. These earlier releases of RailSounds simply do not recognize the Legacy commands.

Base-1L

For hobbyists familiar with the original command base, the Base-1L has few external differences. One is the blue case and Legacy label, which matches the CAB-1L; the other is a small pushbutton on the lower right side for selecting the communications channel. This button is in the same location as the receiver frequency label on the original Base-1.

On the back of the command base are the familiar binding post for the wire to the track, the 9-pin D socket for the serial port, and the jack for the power cord. Output of the serial port supports the same current level as the original Base-1, which happens to be greater than the serial output from the Legacy base. A wall plug style of transformer that outputs 9 volts at 500 milliamps is included with the Base-1L, but as with the other command bases, there is no on-off switch. Connecting or unplugging the transformer is the power control for the Base-1L.

A green light on the top of the case indicates power on while a red light flashes when the base executes a command, again just like with the original command base. As with prior command bases from Lionel, the Base-1L receives command characters from the CAB-1L via radio signals, decodes these characters, assembles data messages that the addressed locomotive or accessory can work with, and transmits the command messages over the track or serial link.

Operation

In its recent ad, Lionel states that the new CAB-1L and Base-1L will operate most TMCC equipment. So far, I haven't found any TMCC locomotives or accessories that either the CAB-1L or the new remote and base together won't operate, but then I don't have access to every piece of TMCC equipment in existence.

Not that the CAB-1L feels familiar, but whenever I pick it up for a session of running trains or set it back down on top of the base unit after the session is over, I still occasionally reflex to extend or collapse the antenna that's no longer there. Some habits are hard to break, especially those that have stood since 1995 when I started using the CAB-1.

To this point, I've used the CAB-1L with either the Base-1L or the Legacy base with no surprises or problems. I've enjoyed a number of hours of frustration-free operation with each TMCC and Legacy locomotive in my collection. Depending on their age, these locomotives have RailSounds 2.5 through RailSounds 5.0 or Legacy RailSounds.





To further broaden the spectrum of what I ran using the CAB-1L, the motor and light driver electronics in these locomotives are from Lionel, Electric RR, or the former Train America Studios. Lionel electronics included its original LCRU, the modular R2LC, and the latest receiver board. I'm really pleased that the CAB-1L and Base-1L as a system runs all of them, and not only that, the new remote controller runs the engines better than the original TMCC system. Each locomotive runs noticeably smoother as it accelerates or slows to a realistic stop.

Of course I used the new CAB-1L to run the Weaver Black Diamond under review for this issue in addition to a couple of Legacy steam locomotives and several new TMCC motorized units or "critters" currently planned for a future issue. And that also goes for my Lionel ASCs and especially the new ZW-L.

Setting up the CAB-1L and Base-1L to the same channel number used on my Legacy base, channel 5 in this case, proved to be easy. For the Base-1L, I pressed the channel select button repeatedly until the green light flashed 5 times. Setting the channel for the remote is a manual operation that was equally easy. I held the set button, pressed the 5 button, and listened for the single beep indicating successful communication with the base over channel 5. Had I pressed a numeric button for some other channel, such as 3, the remote would have emitted three beeps indicating it did not find a base on that channel.

I was especially pleased that a linear distance of over 50' plus the walls for three rooms did not affect communication between the remote and base units. The shrill, quilling whistle of my Legacy 2-8-2 sounded on cue in response to my varying the pressure on the whistle/horn button. And speaking of the pressure-sensitive whistle/horn button, I found a deft touch with my thumb was essential to get the whistle tones I wanted.

As I mentioned previously, the CAB-1L can address train numbers of up to 99 as long as the locomotives are all Legacy units. I created a Legacy lashup of my 2-8-2 and a borrowed 2-8-8-2, both at the head of a coal train addressed initially as train 9 and then later as train 73. Programming multiple engines into the same train with a CAB-1L is almost identical to the original CAB-1, with one exception. The train number has to be entered on the numeric keypad as two digits, such as 02, 09, 14, 76, and so forth. For example, when programming train 9 with engine 55 as the front engine, I entered the command sequence TR 09 55 F SET on the remote. However, this two-digit addressing is only needed when programming the train, not when running it. To run train 9, I addressed it simply as TR 9.

I expect battery life for the CAB-1L to be the same as with the old CAB-1. Although today's electronic components typically use less power than did the components of 20 years ago, the 2.4 GHz radio circuit in the CAB-1L draws more power than the 27 MHz transmitter in the original CAB-1.

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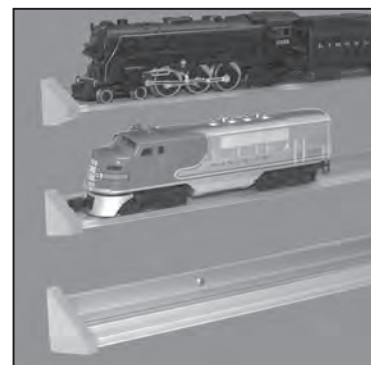
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At the End of the Run

I'll use a single term from the social network to rate the CAB-1L and its operating partner, the Base-1L—"Like!" Actually that rating falls awfully short because...well...I like them a lot.

For the O gauge railroader who is new to command control, the simpler and smaller CAB-1L is easier to learn and use than the larger, more complex, and more sophisticated CAB-2. And as I mentioned earlier, the complete set with the CAB-1L and Base-1L is considerably less expensive than the full-featured Legacy command system.

As an experienced TMCC operator, I instantly discovered that the CAB-1L functioned as a familiar old friend with a few new and neat capabilities. Mainly, it's dependable and always there. And now that I can use the small remote to play with Legacy's quilling whistle, the CAB-1L has essentially put my CAB-2 into relief pitcher status. I'll likely bring the "Big-2" off the bench to pitch commands to whatever Legacy locomotive is at bat for review, just to test the engine's Legacy-specific features. Other than that, for me it's the CAB-1L all the way. 🚂

6-37147 CAB-1L/Base-1L Command Set

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Absolute and Relative Speed Steps

A speed step is where a 3-rail command-controlled locomotive increases or decreases its speed by some amount according to the command issued to it by the remote controller. For this discussion, the remote can be a CAB-1, CAB-1L or a CAB-2. The method for setting or changing the speed is either absolute or relative depending on both what command format the remote controller sends out and what the locomotive can accommodate. TMCC locomotives can operate using 32 absolute steps or relative steps; Legacy locomotives can operate using 32, 100, or 200 absolute steps or relative steps.

In absolute speed steps, the remote sends a command instructing the locomotive to run at a specific speed step, such as 2, 15, 74, 125, 187, or whatever. The command issued depends on how much the speed control knob on the remote is rotated and in what direction, such as to increase speed from step 26 to step 35. The locomotive responds by accelerating or decelerating at the selected momentum to the speed step specified in the command, increasing to step 35 in this example, and then running at that speed until it receives another speed command. The CAB-2 issues absolute speed step commands in Legacy and TMCC modes of operation.

When a locomotive is running under relative speed steps and the operator rotates the throttle knob on the remote, the speed increases or decreases by one to five steps based on, or relative to, the current speed the locomotive is running. The number of steps from one to five that the engine speeds up or slows down depends on what direction the speed control knob on the remote is rotated, how much, and how fast. For example, turning the knob slowly clockwise for one blink of the indicator light on the command base causes the addressed locomotive to increase its speed one step from its current speed. Turning the knob faster will issue a command to change the speed by up to five steps.

Even though TMCC locomotives are capable of absolute or relative speed steps, the CAB-1 and CAB-1L issue only relative speed step commands. The technology for issuing absolute speed step commands does not exist in these remotes. Additionally, the CAB-2 can be configured to either CAB-1 or R100 operating mode and thereby issue only relative speed step commands.

As I understand it, Lionel recommends not using both a CAB-2 and CAB-1L to run the same Legacy locomotive. Using both types of remotes to run the locomotive will likely result in unexpected speed control. Regardless of whatever speed a Legacy locomotive was running as set from a CAB-1L, a subsequent speed command from a CAB-2 will result in the locomotive always changing its speed to that specific speed step. For example, if I use the CAB-1L to run a Legacy locomotive fast and then pick up my CAB-2 and rotate its velocity knob one click for speed step 1, the locomotive will immediately slow to and run at speed step 1.

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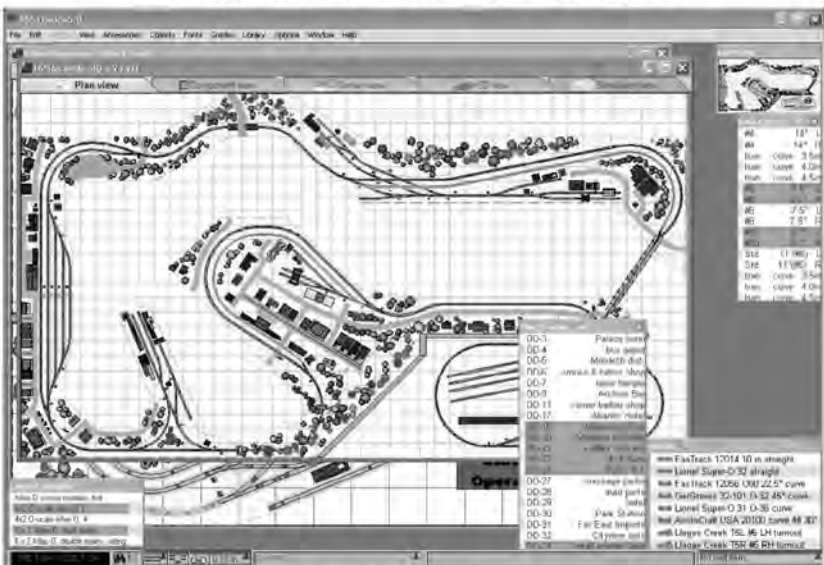


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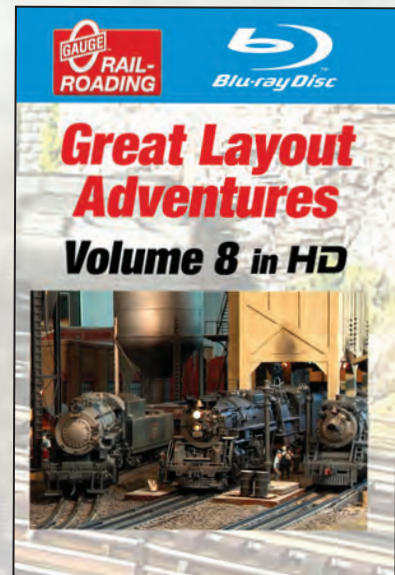
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Passenger service rules on Vernon Hart's layout.



Gleaming Amtrak Superliners glide across Stone Bridge.

Railroading Vocation — O Gauge Avocation

Article and Photos by Vernon Hart

Holeee catfish! Mary, you gotta come see this locomotive! That's pretty much how it went when I first fired up my new Lionel Legacy Santa Fe 3759 engine a couple of years ago. The sound system just blew me away. I had been a Lionel RailSounds fan for some time, but hearing that Legacy model really sealed the deal.

I am a retired locomotive engineer and worked almost 30 years for the Frisco Railway starting in 1970, and I had also been active in HO model railroading since the early 1970s. I completed the requirements for the National Model Railroad Association's Master Model Railroader certification while involved with that scale. Around 1989, I got into 3-rail when I acquired some K-Line trains. A short time later, Lionel introduced RailSounds, and that

was the turning point. As a result, O gauge became the focus of my modeling, and I have never looked back.

After retiring in 1999, my wife, Mary, and I did the unthinkable: we actually upsized to a fully finished basement with a house on top. At last I was able to escape from the stuffy attic where I enjoyed my hobby for many years. My first O gauge layouts had been toy-like Christmas layouts using some of Mary's Department 56 buildings, but I soon went back to scale buildings and realistic scenery of the type I had worked with in HO. My rolling stock also evolved to scale-size equipment. That first new Lionel Legacy locomotive turned my whole operation around so my motive power now features Legacy steam engines pulling assorted passenger trains.



AT&SF 3751, a Lionel Legacy model, makes a stop at the Albuquerque depot. Today the 3751 heads up a westbound Super Chief. The western architecture station was made by TrainWorx.



The Precision Scale On30 Galloping Goose labors uphill past an abandoned truck sitting trackside near the old quarry spur.



Eastbound El Capitan passenger figures watch an On30 Shay working the logging operation nearing the Wildwood depot.

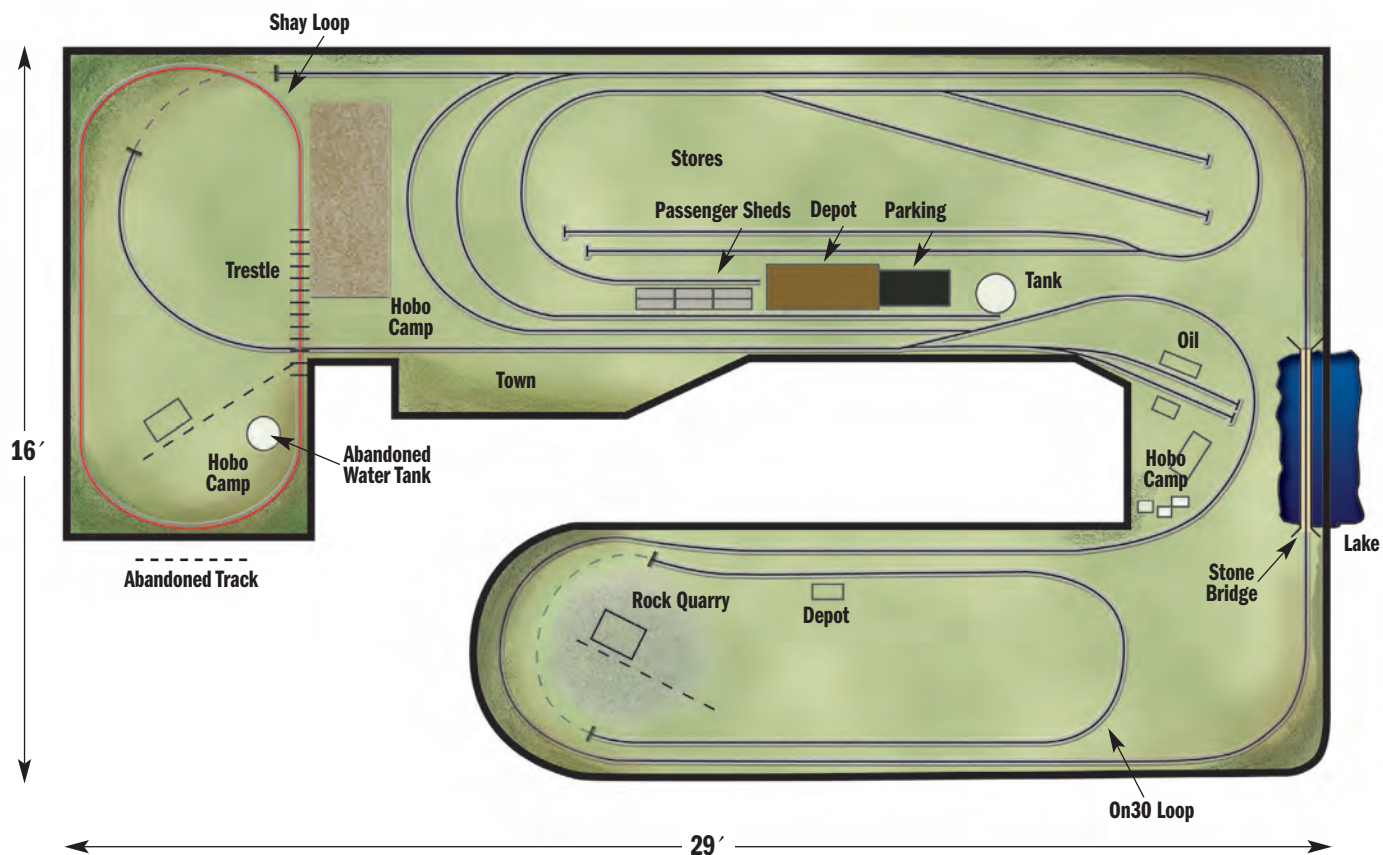
My new O gauge layout was started in 2004. It was originally built in a 12'x 20' L shape with a track plan that featured a lot of switching capability. Almost all the layouts I built over the years had that operational feature. Now, however, I just want to watch and listen to trains running. After about 30 years of seeing and operating more real freight trains than I care to think about, I just could not recall seeing a beautiful one, so my favorites now are passenger trains. I like anything ranging from narrow gauge combines to superliners—steam power preferred, of course. I was highly amused by the sounds of a Precision Scale model of the narrow gauge Galloping Goose, and to this day I still grin every time I start it up. I have sold about half my freight cars, all but a couple of diesels, and nearly all of my steam engines without Legacy.

My layout uses the time-tested L-girder benchwork. In the many years I have been designing and building layouts, I have always preferred L-girder benchwork because it can be assembled and then changed to meet just about any need.

I use cabinet-grade particle board with Homasote laminated to the top for roadbed as well as for flat areas. I have seen



Timeworn but still a dependable workhorse, AT&SF 2396, an Alco RS1, struggles by Castle Rock with the West Local.



Here's an overall view looking west of most of the layout.



This view looks west down Commerce Street on a busy early morning.



Santa Fe No. 3759, another favorite Lionel Legacy model, leads a string of heavyweights across Stone Bridge.

a lot of other materials used, but I have found nothing else that is quite as good.

My first design modification changed the layout to an almost full U shape to increase the length of the main line and to accommodate an On30 narrow gauge loop. The right side of the U was elongated to provide a longer main line, and I capped things off with an inverted L. Once again the L-girder benchwork made things easy.

Track is GarGraves as are the turnouts, nearly all of which are hand-thrown. That, after all, was how most real turnouts worked when I was employed on the Frisco. The only exceptions are two Lionel O72 powered turnouts on the back of the layout.

I used 54" minimum diameter curves, and broader when possible, and I eased the tangents. For example, I used O72 for the first 6" or so of a curve, resulting in a slight egg shape. Along with that, I added a little superelevation to curves—just enough to barely move the bubble from level. This meant making sure that the sub-roadbed was slightly elevated. Some card stock placed under the outside of the track ties achieved this result. These are both prototype practices.

Power is provided by a pair of Lionel 180-watt transformers along with a TPC 400 and a Legacy controller. I use an automotive 15-amp fuse in the output wire to the track. These are all mounted on a board up front for easy access. I prefer to use Lionel power systems with Lionel trains and MTH power systems with MTH trains. I have another tinplate layout powered with MTH transformers.

The motive power includes a pair of Lionel Santa Fe 3700 Class 4-8-4 Northern, a Milwaukee Road 4-8-4 Northern, a CB&Q 0-8-0 switcher, a pair of Santa Fe warbonnet F3s, and an old Atlas RS1 that I keep around just to remind me how crude the old diesels were.

My rolling stock is a mix of brands, although I generally prefer Lionel. I have one set of MTH streamliners that will eventually be sold if my Lionel Milwaukee Road cars ever arrive. I tend to model the Santa Fe, but I don't let that interfere with running other liveries that I like. In my years of Frisco railroading, I saw any sort of train you can think of: detoured trains, fan trains, circus trains, and all manner of other railroads' engines in run-through service. If an engine is consistent with a general time frame, it might have been



A locally assigned 0-8-0 handles switching duties along the line that crosses Main Street in Placerville.



The El Capitan, running late, prepares for a late evening departure from Albuquerque.

seen most anywhere at one time or another. Take for example my Milwaukee Road train. That's easy. I consider it to be a fan train.

A basic part of real railroading is waiting. You might be waiting for a train in a passing track or, often enough, several trains. Or you might be waiting for a switch list; waiting while a crewman converses with a customer; waiting while a crewman walks the train to spot hotboxes, shifted loads, or dragging equipment; and on and on.

While sitting and waiting on the job, I began to study what the right-of-way and the world around it really looked like. It's surprising the amount of detail that can be seen along the right-of-way including brush, weeds, old junk, the assorted spills around industries, hunks of trees, odd bits of lumber, and so on. If they haul it on or near a railroad, some of it gets spilled, sometimes in the middle of the track and

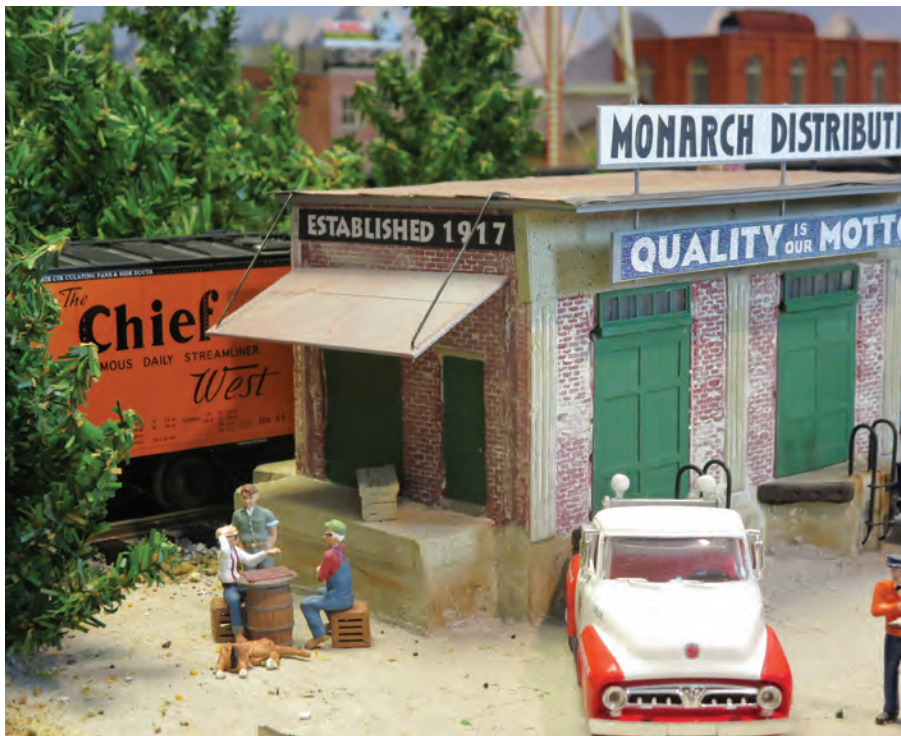
sometimes along the sides. That is how I came to begin super detailing my layout's scenery. Things just do not look right otherwise.

It's important to be continually aware of color, texture, and blending. I work with a large and varied inventory of things found in nature. When I'm out and about, I look around in the woods, along streams and dry creek beds, and along the sides of seldom traveled roads. It is surprising how many useful scenery materials can be collected. Old coffee cans or dollar store containers are great for storing natural treasures.

I never forget the rocks—all sizes of rocks. When using molds to create rock work, I apply a light and highly diluted spray of raw or burnt umber or perhaps some gray to the castings. I like to use Woodland Scenics Liquid Pigment. If something comes out too light, it's easy to add more color, but it's kind of a pain to

lighten something that is already too dark. One cheap source of color for stones and rocks I use is the local cement company, which uses a dry powder to color concrete. A half of a pound of the stuff provides pretty near a lifetime supply. Also available are some very usable tans, browns, and grays. Easy does it. I use a small brush to apply this powder sparingly. It's best to practice on some well-worn rock casting molds that have just about exhausted their useful life. If you get colors too dark, as I do at times, the effect can be lightened by brushing over with a white pastel dry color. There also are commercial weathering kits available that feature dry colors in a range of different hues. I like those very much. If I'm not happy with the results, I can always apply a very thin coat of new plaster. This will get me back to somewhere near ground zero.

Most cliffs or cuts are stratified, so I use horizontal strokes to simulate that effect.



A fast freight rumbling by fails to distract players concentrating on a checker game.

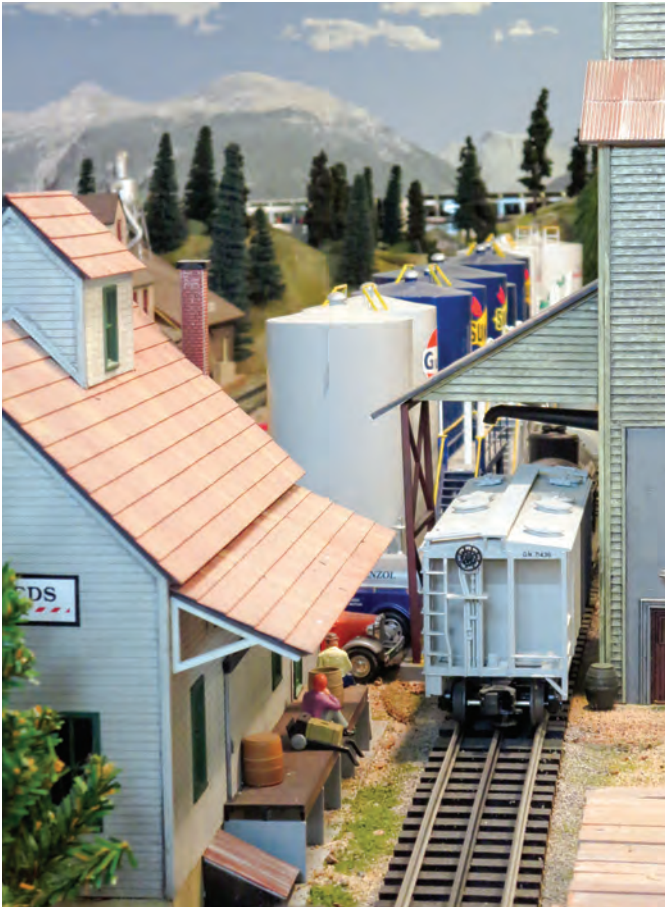
I vary the color, usually very subtly. Deep recesses can be dabbed slightly darker to represent shadowed areas. After I'm satisfied with the basic color, I start lightly adding ground cover and other details. Scenic Express offers just about anything and everything I might want or need in that regard, including some great blends of ground foam for grass, weeds, soil, and just about any other effect. Woodland Scenics Talus is also great for realistic detailing along the base of steep rock faces.

I have also learned that scenic backdrops look much better when set a couple of feet back from the layout. I prefer to design a layout with a 2' access all around. That provides easy access for work or play. Plus, the whole thing looks better with no shadows on the backdrop cast by trees, bridges, or the like.

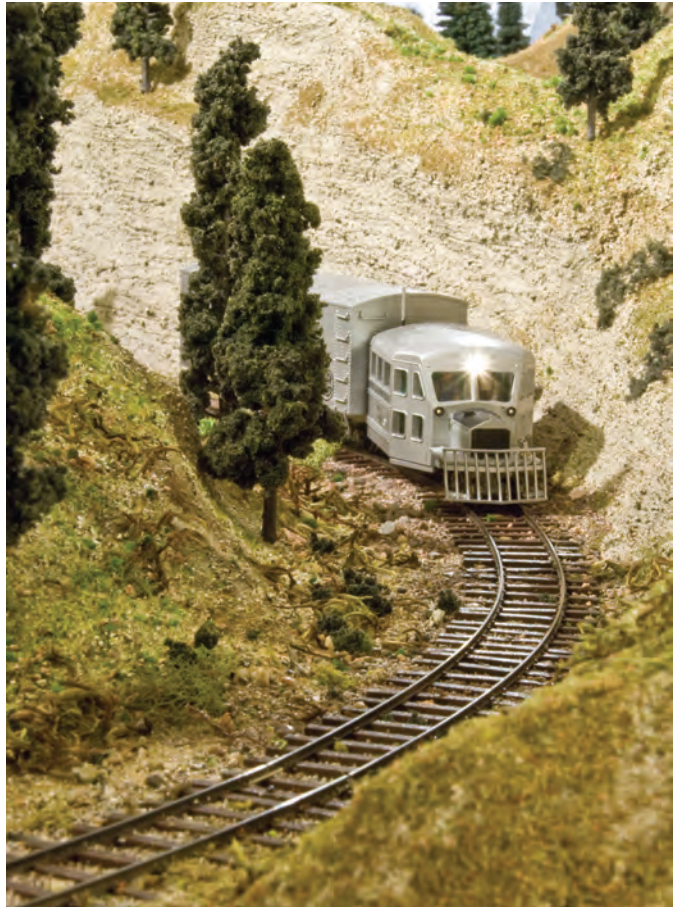
Buildings are certainly an integral part of scenery, and I'm always careful to use some sort of material, such as plaster, gravel, weeds, bushes, or whatever, to fill



Roger, a well-known area racing mechanic, operates this filling station and garage in Placerville.



This scene is at Purina Mills with an oil company facility located behind.



Galloping Goose No. 5 rounds a curve just west of Wildwood.



That rock bunker in the background behind the passing C25 narrow gauge locomotive won Best of Show for Mary many years ago



The switcher is preparing to slap an extra baggage car on the nose of the El Capitan at Albuquerque.



In the foreground, a group of hobos gather around an oil drum fire on a chilly evening. The Texas Chief ghosts along in the background.

around the base of the building. This makes it look as if the structure belongs there. Nothing looks worse to me than a building just plopped in place without anything done to disguise the inevitable and easily distinguishable line around the bottom.

I also try to add some level of detail inside my buildings. If the building is to be lighted, I include at least some interior detail and also hide the bulbs from view. I can always glue in a rafter to suspend the bulb from to give a convincing overhead light effect. I use amber bulbs for a building that would likely have incandescent lighting and clear bulbs to represent florescent light.

I try to be inventive. I make and buy junk and trash. More than likely there is more trash around the railroad than can be found in a back yard. Weeds, weeds, brush everywhere, not to mention the junk—then, again, I have seen some back yards that....



Power for the layout is placed out front for easy access.



About the Author

Vernon Hart received his first Lionel train set at age 12 and wishes he still had it. He still has a modest collection of old Lionel and Marx that he operates on a second layout. Vernon went to work in engine service for the Frisco Railway in 1970. His first article in *Model Railroader* magazine appeared in 1972, and in the late 1980s, he wrote the "Tips 'n Tales" column for *Model Railroader*. His HO gauge Ozarks Wilderness Lines was the subject of an article in that magazine and was later featured in a photo essay.

The Right Look

Article and Photos by Peter H. Riddle

There was a time, decades ago, when toy trains were exactly that—toys, intended for children to play with. Scale proportions were of far less importance in the 1920s and 1930s than play value. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the animated accessories and buildings that each company made to go with its trains.

Consider, for example, Lionel's No. 1045 Flagman (Photo 1). It was sold to operate with both Standard gauge and O gauge trains and towered unrealistically over both. The flagman attracted a huge number of buyers who were fascinated by its waving flag that warned of an oncoming train.

Today's toy train enthusiasts are somewhat more sophisticated, and realistic proportions are increasingly important to the overall appearance of a layout. But although most accessories available today are scaled to approximate O gauge size of 1/4" equals 1', the way in which they are combined with each other and placed on a railroad can make a considerable difference.

It is likely that few of us have a train room large enough to encompass our dreams, but with the careful use of forced perspective, we can make even a modest-size layout seem larger. The principle is a simple one. Place the largest buildings and accessories near the front of the layout and smaller items toward the back.



The scene in Photo 2 is dominated by two large MTH buildings: a bank and a bus depot. The city block at center right is made up of somewhat smaller structures. Compare the three-story building at right with the tall two-story bank. These models are almost the same height of 9", but because you expect a three-story building to be taller, it creates the illusion of being farther away. Also notice the placement of the tow truck and the buses in relation to the smaller vehicles in the background. Were their positions reversed with the large buses in the background, they would seem much closer than the smaller cars that are there now. Although only 7' back from the barber shop in the foreground, the undersized Lionel lighthouse seems much farther away. This is an optical illusion where the observer knows that lighthouses are very tall structures. Therefore, this one must be a long distance away to appear so short, and so the layout seems larger than it is.

Nothing destroys the illusion of distance more than the sudden appearance of an object or objects that are too outsized for their context. A string of scale O gauge freight cars is climbing a hill behind a residential neighborhood (Photo 3). They appear to be just a few feet from the houses, which are separated by an almost vertical rock wall. In addition to this compressed perspective, attention is drawn away from the highly detailed scene by the seemingly oversized trains despite the fact that they are O scale.

Photo 4 is the same view, except the train climbing the hill is a much smaller train from an Atlas starter set that is closer to S scale where 3/16" equals 1'. The train no longer dominates the scene and distracts less from the scenery in front. It isn't always possible to restrict different sizes of trains to specific areas of a layout, but wherever possible, run your smaller equipment toward the back to increase the feeling of greater depth.

Everything in a scene should be in proper proportion to everything else, and this is especially true of the trains. In Photo 5, the scale Canadian National Northern locomotive looks right when seen against a backdrop of scale buildings, crossing gates, and miniature people. And notice how a feeling of depth is created by the small vehicles parked on the city street toward the back.





However, the passenger train in Photo 6 looks almost comical by comparison. Both the locomotive and the coach are far too small in relation to their surroundings. When Atlas designed this attractive starter set, the company made the equipment undersized, which allowed for long and well-proportioned coaches that could still negotiate sharp curves. Notice how its presence in the foreground detracts from the illusion of depth and distance and how the white ambulance (right center) now seems oversized and out of place. The same Atlas starter set looks perfectly at home, however, when surrounded by structures built to smaller proportions, such as in the town in Photo 7. These attractive little buildings measure about halfway between O scale and S scale and do not dwarf the trains the way scale size city buildings do. If your trains and buildings are somewhat undersized, choose vehicles that are in correct proportion to them. The automobile models are correct for O gauge and fit the scene better than a large limousine or 18-wheeler.

The marching band in Photo 8 is on parade in an amusement park where figures of children are on a Lionel swing ride and scrambler. The band is placed near the front of the layout where it can be admired. But there is a more compelling reason for locating these musicians front and center. Although it isn't obvious in this context, the marchers are actually about 2-1/4" tall, which translates to 9' in O gauge. Keep them near the edge of your layout where their size discrepancy will be noticed least. However, if you move the band from the foreground to the background, and especially if you place it among scale figures, the reverse perspective makes them look ridiculous. In Photo 9, the Artista figures on the sidewalk measure slightly under 1-1/2" tall, a perfect 5'9" in O gauge, but placing them in front of the oversized band members makes them look far out of scale. It is the accurately sized figures that suffer by comparison with the oversized ones.

O gauge and O scale are not the same thing. The word "gauge" refers to the distance between the outside rails of the track, while "scale" means that the models are built so that 1/4" is equivalent to 1' in real life. Trains of widely varying sizes have been made for O gauge track over the past years.




Choose trains that coincide with the overall proportions of your layout. Lionel's NW2 switch engine, first marketed in the 1950s, is a close-to-scale model of a relatively small prototype that also matches the scale freight cars it is pulling (Photo 10). However, these trains are far too large to seem at home in this small town. The modest-sized buildings and generally compact nature of the layout conspire to destroy any feeling of realism



that the scene should have given the otherwise accurate appearance of the models. Scale trains should travel on broad curves and should be matched to scale buildings and accessories. The sharp curves on this pike make these long cars look especially awkward.

The same scene is far more attractive when the size of the trains is congruent with the overall proportions of the layout. Although the little Marx set from the 1950s is far more toy-like than the highly detailed trains in the previous view, it is much more satisfying in appearance in this context (Photo 11). Marx trains were not much bigger than the S scale models made by American Flyer, but they were designed to run on O gauge track. On a compact layout, they seem to fit in perfectly.

Creating a convincing model railroad involves more than just rigid adherence to scale. The way the components are arranged and displayed is just as important as absolute size, and the judicious use of out-of-scale items, especially smaller ones, can enhance rather than detract from the overall impression of realism. 





In this view, trains are operating on three of the four main lines.

TEXAS TRAINING

Article and Photos by Brian Inch

Texas is a big state, so Rich Tyra's layout had to be big just to capture a feel for some of the region's basic topography. Fortunately, Rich had 1,000 sq. ft. in his train room to work with. As owner and operator of Model Rail Scenes, I design and build custom layouts for my clients.

The basic concept Rich wanted was a center-style showcase layout instead of the around-the-walls type frequently used in smaller rooms and even some larger ones. Since there was a decent amount of space available, Rich and I wanted something that was not only big but also would possess a wow factor that would lead people to say it was awesome.

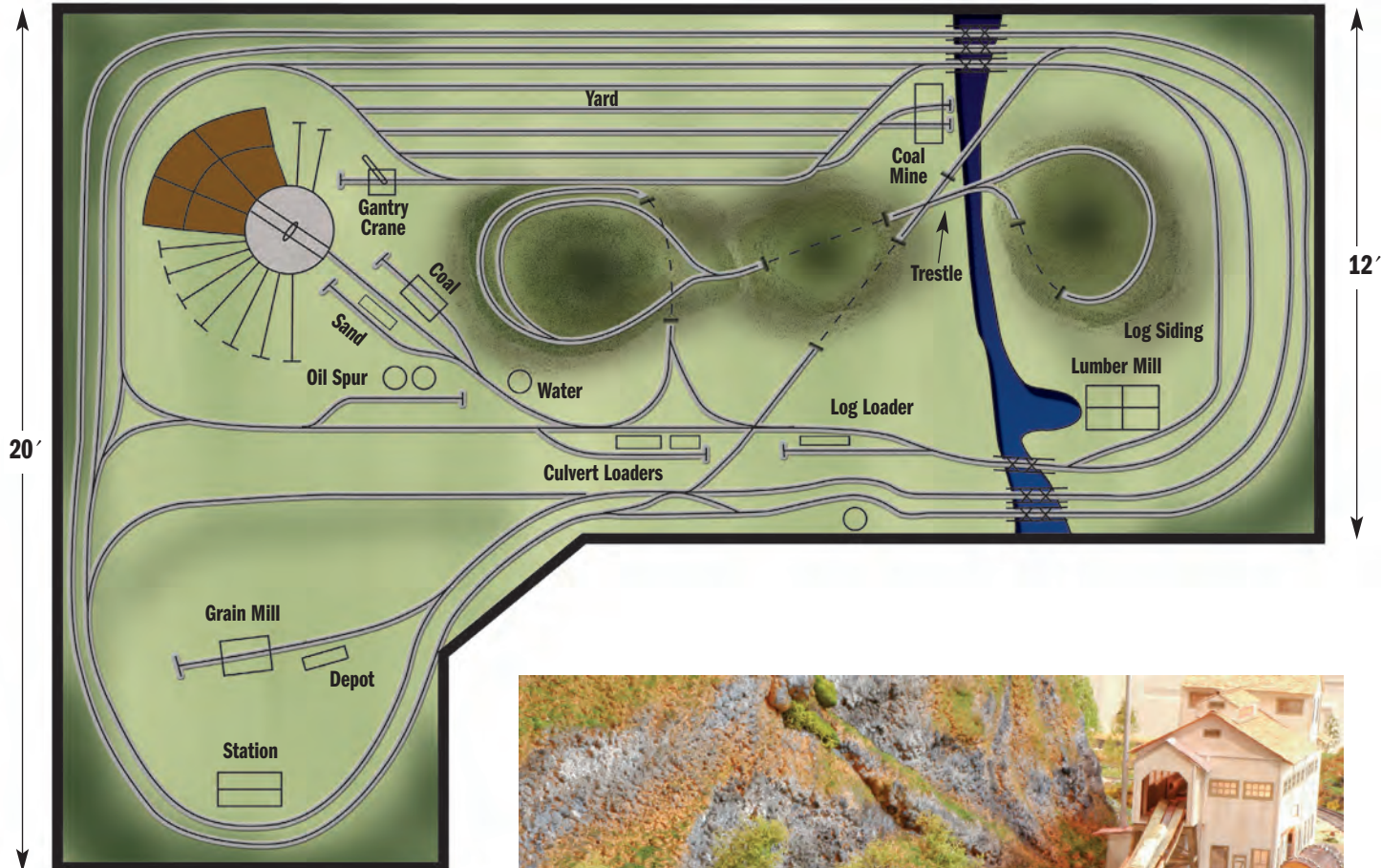
The layout room had 15' ceilings, so in the planning process I decided to incorporate three 10' high mountains with a big river valley running in between. There would also be a substantial town, an airport, a turntable and roundhouse, a large yard, and of course oil pumps and a refinery often associated with Texas.

The first stage in construction involved the massive table. We used L-girder benchwork made of 16' long 1x6 girders with 1/2"

plywood as a base support. The plywood was topped with Homasote to help provide some sound reduction. With cross bracing used throughout, this table could hold 300 pounds of weight per square inch. Since we had a 60' long room to work with, we made the table 12'x 48' with an extension on one end for the town scene.

The track plan used GarGraves track and Ross switches, which is a great combination for reliable operation and realism. Fake cork, the type sold at home improvement centers for making bulletin boards and the like, was used for the roadbed. The combination of the Homasote and cork keeps even the biggest steam engines operating quietly. I like using switch buttons while walking around the layout, so we decided to go with Z-1000 switch machines.

For power, we used color-coded 14-gauge wire and connected both Lionel TMCC and MTH DCS to a couple of ZW transformers to provide control of four different track sections. There is a double main line around the whole layout with a double



crossover installed to connect them. These two loops enable continuous running, and the inside main loop crosses the layout in the middle under one of the mountains and also reverses itself through the town. This way the layout has a double reverse loop that enables trains operating on either loop to change direction.

A third loop is an industrial loop used for all the industries and sidings. It connects through a large, double-ended yard capable of handling a variety of switching operations. The industrial loop also has two crossovers through the inside main line, so you have to be alert when running trains on this line. The industrial line serves several industries including an oil refinery, lumber mill, gantry crane, operating culvert loader, operating log loader, large coal mine, 34" turntable, and yard service area.

The final loop is the mountain top loop used for the logging line that connects a large lumber mill with a hillside sawmill. This line connects from the inside industrial loop and cuts through and winds around the mountains in a large figure eight. It crosses over a large ravine and river



It's uncertain what that big NYC 4-8-2 Mohawk is doing way out here in Santa Fe territory, but it provides an imposing sight as it rumbles by with a load of equally big logs.



This overview shows most of the layout.

on a 3' long wooden trestle. One of the coolest features is that viewers don't see the track or train that hugs the huge mountains until a train traversing the line is visually spotted and followed.

Running the four train loops at one time is a challenge for a single operator, especially with approximately 50' of running room with tall mountains to loop around. An operator who is really good at multitasking might also simultaneously operate a switcher in the 20' yard.

Although I like to run trains, the scenery is what makes this layout really stand out. A variety of scenery techniques were used in building this layout to give it the wow factor Rich and I were looking for. Base structural support for the mountains was constructed with wood and chicken wire. Then foam and plaster were applied and covered with a couple of gallons of flat brown paint and five one-gallon buckets of ground foam. After four boxes of Scenic Express SuperTrees...voilà...instant mountains! My knees are still recovering.

The river was cut into the table with a jigsaw, and the resulting riverbed piece was lowered 5". The riverbed was created with plaster, blue paint, real gravel, and two gallons of two-part epoxy as the water.

On the opposite end of the layout, I installed a Millhouse River Studio 34" turntable and an Atlas roundhouse. This required some modifications, but nothing a table saw couldn't handle. I placed a small shanty behind the roundhouse for the turntable controls.

The town includes a number of Lionel operating accessories such as kids on a playground, a dog chasing the mailman,



We can't represent Texas without having an oil rig or even a field full of such rigs on the layout. Here, a Santa Fe F unit, resplendent in warbonnet scheme, passes by a Lionel oil derrick.



Here's a bird's-eye view of the yard.



Oil extracted from a well near the roundhouse is temporarily stored on-site and then pumped into tank cars for transport to refineries. In the background is the 3-stall roundhouse.



Visiting from the faraway East Coast, a leased Maine Central Geep crosses a small bridge on the mountain line. Critters grazing on the hillside are unfazed by the action.



A ramshackle and long-abandoned barn is one of many structures on the layout that have been customized and appropriately weathered.



Track hugging portions of the mountain line is only visible to viewers when there's a train operating over it.



The Lionel operating triplane and biplane accessory provides airborne action over one of the three mountains.



Life is quiet in this small town street scene.



A crane car has been pressed into service to load railroad ties into a hopper.



The 34" turntable, a Millhouse River Studio model, is capable of handling the largest and longest motive power on the roster.

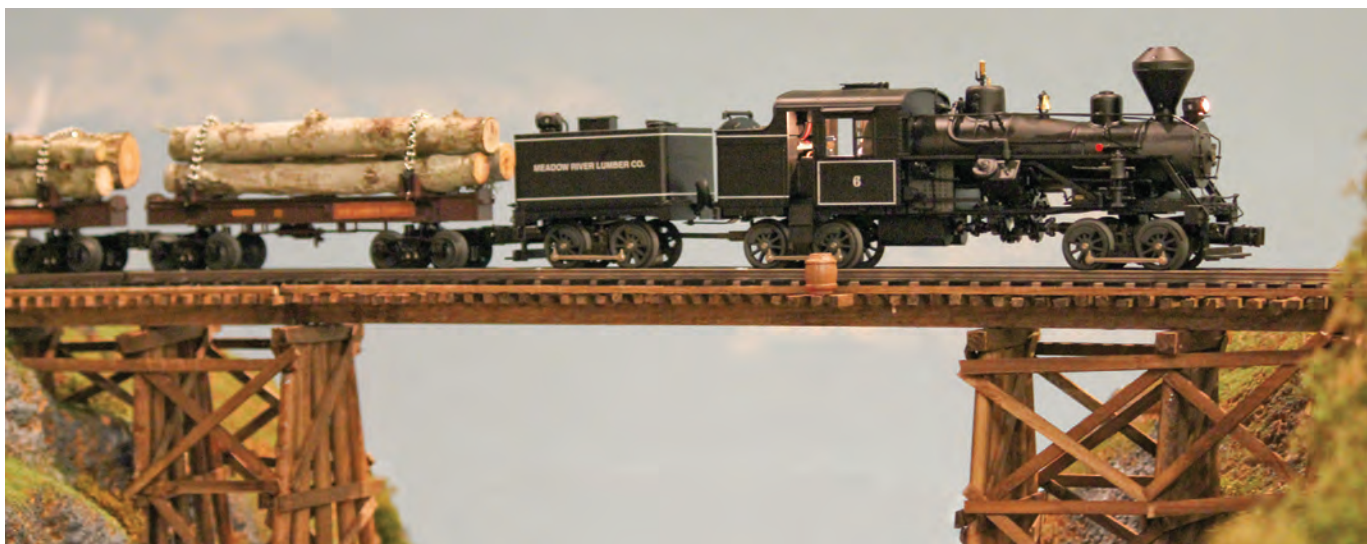


This Alco RSD diesel is about to retrieve a loaded hopper at the Black Diamond mine facility.

kids on swings, and so forth. The bases of these items were recessed into the Homasote to make them level with the surrounding ground cover. The result is a town park that has some interesting animation.

Roads were made with painted wood putty. Almost all the houses and other structures came from my shop and have custom-made signs that represent Rich's town. All structures were lighted and weathered.

There are a couple of neat things we came up with while building the layout. Since Rich likes to fly, he wanted to include an airport. So I used the Lionel heliport and placed a Lionel operating control tower near the runway. For a special added touch, I cut a hole on the top of one of the mountains and installed an operating plane accessory. After painting the shiny metal arms blue to match the sky color of the backdrop, the planes really look as though they are flying around the mountain.



Meadow River Lumber Co. #6 works its load across a trestle on the mountain line.




Boaters in that canoe have to deal with some white water, so they pay scant attention to the UP turbine crossing a stone's throw away.



A Lionel operating freight station sits in an appropriate location adjacent to the Santa Fe passenger station.

In town, just beyond the Santa Fe yellow brick train station, I also created a drive-in movie theater where a Clint Eastwood movie is showing. Light is emitted from a small projection booth, just like the real thing.

A variety of other layout details include wooden crossbucks on each railroad crossing, lots of figures of people interacting in individual scenes, deer climbing the mountains, and even a Lionel operating hunter accessory shooting a fox near the camp. It's the details that really make the scenes come alive. 



About the Author and the Owner

That's layout builder Brian Inch standing atop the first section of this Texas layout while the layout's owners, Roberta and Rich Tyra of Houston, Texas, keep their feet firmly on the ground. Sections of the layout were constructed in the Tyra's 12,000 square foot garage. Brian lives in Maine with his wife, Jessica, and three children: seven-year-old Riley, four-year-old Elise, and two-year-old Meghan. Brian has a Master's Degree in art and owns and operates Model Rail Scenes (www.modelrailscenes.com), which specializes in building detailed layouts and structures for train enthusiasts around the country.



A Working Backup Light for Steam Engine Tenders

Article and Photos by Robert Rello

Starter set steam engines generally do not include an operating backup light for the tender, and I enjoy having as many lights as possible on my toy trains, consistent with what the prototype might have. A backup light on steam locomotive tenders adds to the realism and enhances the appearance when the engine is put into reverse, especially when running in a dark room with the light reflecting off trailing cars. If the reverse unit is in the tender and the engine is equipped with a DC motor, you can simply tap the voltage for a tender light from the wires leading to the motor and install a diode so the backup light goes on when the motor is in reverse.

The challenge is when the tender doesn't have a tender-mounted reverse unit because

starter sets typically come with the reverse unit mounted in the engine's boiler. This is easily verified. If your steam engine doesn't have a tether cable running from the front of the tender to the rear of the engine, the reverse unit is located in the engine. To get a tender backup light to operate when the engine is reversed, simply install a reverse unit or E-unit in the tender and wire it directly to a new backup light.

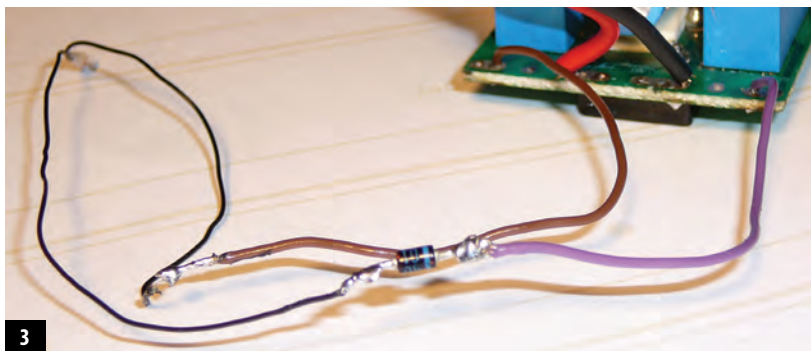
The first thing to consider is the cycling of the factory-installed reverse unit in the engine. Determine whether it is a forward-neutral-reverse, neutral-forward-neutral-reverse, or forward-reverse cycle. The reverse unit used for the backup light needs to mimic the reverse unit currently installed in the engine. The unit I used

works only for a reverse unit that starts in either forward or reverse. If your engine starts in neutral when you first apply power to the track, you will need to purchase a reverse unit that can be configured to do this, such as #518 from Dallee Electronics.

I chose the starter set locomotive from the Lionel NYC 0-8-0 freight set because it appealed to me, had an ample amount of available room in the tender, came with a backup light housing already mounted with no light installed, and included a clear lens on the backup light so none would have to be purchased (Photo 1). The reverse unit I used came from Williams for around \$30. The diode is from Radio Shack. The light bulb is a 2.4 mm, 16-volt incandescent commonly used for HO scale



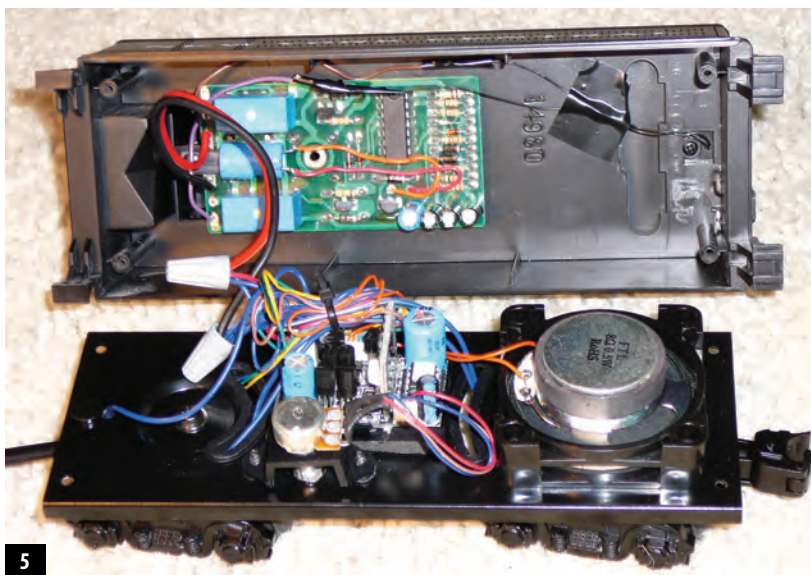
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trains. I bought this item in a 10 pack at my local hobby shop for around \$10. I'll use the other nine bulbs for lighting other cars since they take direct track voltage. This bulb was small enough to fit inside the existing light housing. I already had the wire and hardware available.

Remove the tender shell from the frame by removing the four corner screws and carefully check for any wire connections or attachments. This tender was easy to separate because no connections ran from the frame to the tender shell (Photo 2). I did some experimenting to check the fit of the reverse unit in the tender and determined that it would be best mounted in the body, using the coal bin area to provide an adequate amount of cooling space. The only connection needed from the frame to the reverse unit is for track power, so identify the two leads fed from the track center rail and the return. These are generally red and black wires. I ended up using the existing wire nuts and added the red and black wires that were soldered to the reverse unit.

The reverse unit outputs are brown and purple wires soldered on one end of the board. These wires go to the backup light with a diode soldered inline (Photo 3). Make sure the diode is installed correctly regarding the position of the colored band.

Attach the reverse unit to the tender shell with double-sided tape. The installation shown worked for my application, but you should test the light's operation at this point to make sure it works correctly by placing the frame with the reverse unit attached onto a track with the power not applied. Then slowly increase track voltage and check operation of the light as you cycle through the positions. If the cycle is reversed from that of the engine, reverse the inline diode to correct the problem.

Remove the existing backup light housing from the tender shell. Cut off the tab that aligned the cover and drill a 3/32" hole for the bulb at the former tab location (Photo 4). Also drill through the tab hole in the tender cover so the bulb can be inserted. Because electric drills tend to operate too fast, I used a hand drill so the bulb will be as close as possible to the center of the housing. Slide the bulb through the drilled hole and into the backup light housing. Then tighten the screw that holds the housing on the tender body. Secure the light wires with some tape and check once more for any wiring errors (Photo 5). Install the tender shell on the tender frame. In the event the backup light ever gets out of sequence with the engine's operating direction, reset the two reverse units by merely shutting down and restarting power to the locomotive. 

Walking the Planks

Article and Photos by Eliot Scher

When Ginny, my wife, and I began designing the Munoz Lines, we had a theme in mind. We watched in amazement as our railroad seemed to take on a life all its own. Themes morphed into dreams and then, in turn, into plans that became realities. We really had no way of predicting exactly what our miniature world would eventually look like. When I am asked how I thought of this or that, I always respond that much of what we have done has been serendipitous.

The arrival of the Munoz Station from Roger and Dorcie Farkash at TrainWorx set an entire chain of events in motion.

Perhaps the only common denominator in the entire scene is the icon of our childhood memories: the Santa Fe Super Chief (Photo 1). As soon as I set the magnificent mission-style Munoz Station at the end of our peninsula, I began to think of how the Super Chief would arrive in style (Photo 2). As the train wound its way up the grade past Independence and into the city of Munoz, I imagined it approaching the Munoz Station by way of the turnout leading to the 12' peninsula that terminates at the station complex. I wanted a southwestern scene that would equal the station and train I so fondly remembered.

Then the plan came to me in a photograph. A railroad photographer by the name of Jack Delano created a photographic image of the Super Chief being serviced in Albuquerque, New



Mexico (Photo 3). In the image, the warbonnet diesels are being refueled with hoses that snake across a walkway from waiting tank cars. While the refueling took place, passengers in the background boarded the Super Chief in front of the Albuquerque station.

I wondered how I could replicate that scene and create a believable southwest station atmosphere. I could create three approach tracks to the station that traversed desert scenery and culminated with the tracks buried in a wooden planked walkway with desert sand and dirt between the ties. I would, in fact, be using the prototype photo to create the scene. I had my plan.

Once the station had been positioned, the tracks laid, and the asphalt pavement in place, the planking could begin. I tested the height of O scale wooden ties from Kappler Mill and Lumber Co. and quickly discovered one layer barely made it halfway up the side of an Atlas O plastic tie, which was at least 1/4" high. The solution had to be found in the creation of a base layer. My friends in a store paint department, who know me as "Navajo White" (my favorite color), were always asking me to take home as many wooden stirrers as I liked. I took them up on their offer. The wooden stirrers made a base layer that, when topped by the O scale ties, precisely equaled the height of an Atlas O tie (Photo 4).

I began to lay the stirrers on the table deck and secure them with yellow carpenter's glue. I started with the end of the station where passengers would step off of a curb and use a walkway to get to the appropriate train (Photo 5). The stirrers were then temporarily pinned with brads until the glue set. Once the glue was dry, I began placing alternating lengths of O scale ties on the tops of the stirrers and along the sides of the Atlas O ties. I staggered the wooden ties for effect and found that a small amount of glue held them firmly. I was careful not to let the glue ooze over the tops of the ties because the glue would interfere with the uniformity of the stain to be used on the finished planked walkways. I envisioned the



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ties stained an early American color and then weathered with chalked powders to provide an appropriate aged look.


Fortunately, the ties in the first planked walkway almost exactly fit between the set of tracks next to the station platform (Photo 6). Being pleased with the look, I decided to extend the planked walkway out to where tank cars would refuel the diesels. Of course, since the tracks are not parallel all the way out to the refueling area, I had to improvise and squeeze additional ties, staggered fashion, into the ever-widening area between the tracks (Photo 7). I would later fill in any small gaps between the O scale ties and the tracks with real desert dirt. Once all the ties had been set, I carefully sanded the tops of the ties smooth. I used medium grit paper on a sanding block and then several finer grits until I could run my hand over the planked walkway to assure it was smooth.

I decided upon Minwax Early American stain and was pleased with the color (Photo 8). The stain was accepted by the ties in a fairly uniform style, although there were a few areas where glue caused a stain block. My plan was to weather the area to reduce the apparent differences. Giving the stain several days to dry, I then applied several shades of Bragdon Enterprises gray powders with a stiff bristle brush. I was pleased with the result.

The same basic process was used to create the final two planked walkways. All had the same O scale ties and had varying widths of planks. The last planked sections were trimmed, and all the planked walkways were stained similarly. The Bragdon Enterprises powder was applied once all of the stain had dried. Weathering too soon after the stain is applied causes the powder to be absorbed into the color of the stain. I wanted the powder to weather the stain. I chose a deep sandy brown color as the effect I wanted (Photo 9). Or I could have used an aged gray for a different visual effect.

The final task, and the most fun, was brushing on desert dirt or sand. With the closest southwest desert being about 2,000 miles away, I journeyed out to our yard and brought in a gallon of Carmel dirt, which looked like desert dirt to me (Photo 10). After baking the dirt in the oven at 350 degrees for one hour, I had clumps of dirt that I put through an expendable strainer into my very fine southwest desert scenic ground cover. I made sure there were no wooden twigs in the dirt mix and was attentive to the oven at all times; however, I did experience one small twig fire. Baking the dirt also dries it to eliminate any insect hoboos.

Once the dirt was strained, I used a small cup and soft bristle brush to fill in all of the areas in and around the track ties. With the dirt in place, I wet it with Windex and water. I then used a pipette to drizzle a 50/50 mixture of white glue and water into the dirt. The following day, after everything was dry, I removed all of the track screws. I was very happy with the result (Photo 11).

Now, when the Super Chief arrives at Munoz Station, my miniature passengers seem to be very happy with the convenient and safe planked walkways. 



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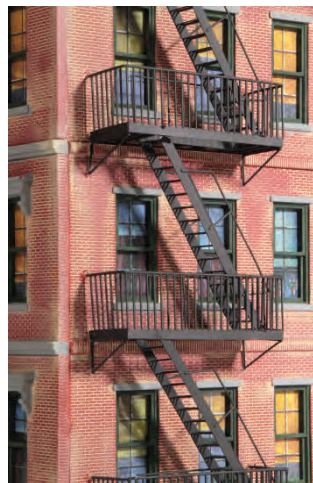
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Postwar and Postwar-Inspired Union Pacific Anniversary Sets

In 1950, Lionel celebrated its 50th anniversary by introducing Magne-Traction for its steam and diesel locomotives, bringing back a version of the 700E scale Hudson with a smaller 2426W tender as the 773, refining the fabled 2343 Santa Fe and 2344 NYC F3s, and debuting the most coveted O27 passenger set of the postwar era: the No. 1464W Union Pacific three-car passenger set. Since this was the Lionel golden anniversary year, the Union Pacific diesels and the three streamlined cars were fittingly clad in deep golden yellow paint.

In 2012, Lionel issued a postwar-inspired replica of the UP anniversary set with the No. 6-38354. Thanks to a contributor to this column, Dave Siburn, we were able to compare the new and the original sets (see sidebar). Photo 1 shows the Alco FAs for the postwar and postwar-inspired sets.

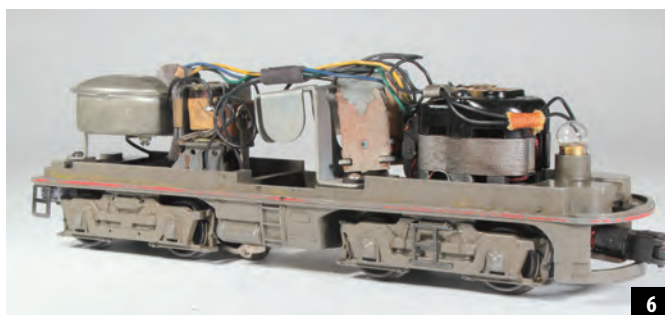
In order to give you a better idea of why O gauge collectors think the original 1464W set is so desirable, I am going to give you a detailed description of the engines and cars.

The Postwar Union Pacific Passenger Diesels

The 2023 twin diesel A-As I examined came in this box (Photo 2). I started to get excited about them when an acknowledged expert in identifying postwar equipment, Lou Caponi, president-elect of the Lionel Collectors Club of America, pronounced that they were the real thing and the appropriate version to go with the three 2400-series streamlined passenger cars that came with the two diesels and made up the complete 1464W set (Photo 3). Authentic passenger set versions of the 2023s are worth quite a bit more than their lesser cousins that powered the 1467W UP freight set from 1950 or later 2023 A-A units that were painted silver.

The 2023s have gray roofs and the all-important gray antiglare noses that mark them as belonging to the 1464W set (Photo 4). The gray die-cast frames with thin red stripes ride on matching gray trucks.





The deep golden yellow bodies have thin red stripes just below the roofline and red letters and numbers (Photo 5). These are the early production UP Alco diesels and are considered to have the most elaborate and attractive paint schemes of all the UP Alcos. Inside, the mechanicals are also first-rate (Photo 6). The fronts of both A units have operating coil couplers, and the powered A unit has a high-quality open-frame motor, operating horn, and electromechanical E-unit. A silver hatch on the bottom of the frame covers the opening for the D-size battery that powers the operating horn.

Wear and Tear and Catastrophes

It should not be a surprise that O27 diesels such as the UP Alcos, which are almost old enough to collect Social Security and often not pampered when stored, should show signs of their age, as you can see in these views of the powered and dummy units (Photos 7 and 8). Damage like this, as well as the crack in the nose of the nonpowered A unit, negatively affects market value, but things could be a lot worse.

Photo 9, supplied by Craig Christensen of Arkansas Traveler Hobbies, provides a disheartening view of heat damage that destroyed a customer's fine UP set. It is surprising to see that the Union Pacific logo on one of the A units remained intact, and both images show a 2483 observation that looks more like the rear end of a Milwaukee Road streamliner's observation car. Destruction like this points out the need for insuring prized



collectibles so they can be replaced if necessary. This is hard to write, but it also emphasizes an upside for the cold-blooded collector. One less set in existence means the remaining UP anniversary sets are worth just that much more.

The Postwar Passenger Cars

The three-car consist is a thoroughly traditional combination for an O27 passenger set from the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, with two Pullman coaches and an observation car. Postwar design had progressed to the point where the three cars were highly detailed streamline plastic body models that nicely complement the twin Alco A units. What makes the 2481 Plainfield (Photo 10), the 2482 Westfield (Photo 11), and the 2383 Livingston observation (Photo 12) especially desirable is these three cars are a matched set with paint colors that indicate they came from the same production run. There are a fair number of put-together UP anniversary passenger sets floating around, but truly matched sets are much tougher to find. The gray roofs, red stripes, numbers and letters, and, most importantly, the golden yellow bodies all match perfectly. The only damage found were chunks out of the body paint on the back of the observation car (Photo 13).

The 2012 Postwar-Inspired Diesels and Cars

In general, the postwar-inspired twin diesels are fitting stand-ins for the originals (Photo 14), complete with gray noses (Photo 15), gray underframes and trucks (Photo 16), and rear steps on the back of the A units (Photo 17).

The red 2028 numbers and Union Pacific letters on the sides of the A units use the same thin sans serif style as the originals but are smaller in order to accommodate changes made over the years with the available Alco tooling.

The reproduction anniversary set cars are an attractive threesome (Photo 18). The 2481 Plainfield (Photo 19), 2482 Westfield (Photo 20), and 2483 Livingston observation (Photo 21) wear their postwar numbers authentically against deep yellow bodies with the thin red stripes above and below the passenger windows (fitted with postwar-style passenger silhouettes) and Lionel Lines emblazoned in red above the windows. These three gray-roof O27 cars from the postwar-inspired 6-38354 set are convincing representations of the original 1950 cars, despite the fact that they are constructed differently under the skin than their postwar predecessors.

Comparisons

As you can see from this end view of a postwar UP Pullman on the left and a new Pullman replica on the right, you can peer into the postwar car because it has a separate, open vestibule that is closed on the simplified body of the more recent car (Photo 22). The observation cars demonstrate the differences in paint and ride height (Photo 23). The postwar yellow is a shade or so deeper than the yellow on the newer car, and the bright red stripes on the 1950 car contrast significantly with the dark, almost maroon, striping on the new 2483 observation car on the right, which also sits higher than its older postwar sibling.



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12

A surprising disappointment was the small size of the Union Pacific winged logo on the new A unit, which is quite apparent when the two diesels are placed side by side (Photo 24). The 2012 catalog depicts a larger size logo in its product illustration. The new logo even adds a word to the Union Pacific shield on the logo. It reads "Union Pacific Railroad" versus "Union Pacific" for the postwar version.

The innards of both powered A units look similar because each is fitted over the front truck with the same type of large open-frame vertical motor (Photo 25). The postwar-inspired frame on the right houses a speaker and digital sound electronics for the horn and bell. The horn sounds a simple single note regardless of how you activate it but is loud and clear, as is the bell.

The undersides of both frames have opening hatches, but their purposes are different. Printed on the silver postwar unit's hatch cover is "To Operate Horn Insert a Size D Flashlight Cell Here" and "Caution



13



14



15



16

Remove Cell When Locomotive Is Not in Use" (Photo 26). Fortunately for Dave Siburn, the previous owner did just that, and there is no battery damage. The hatch for the postwar-inspired A unit is the same color as the frame and covers the direction and lock slide switch for the electronic E-unit and the silver volume control knob (Photo 27).



17



18

Operating instructions for the new UP Alcos point out that they do not have operating couplers and that the operating couplers on the passenger cars should be used to uncouple the engines from the three-car consist. This provides an interesting comparison with the coil couplers fitted to the 1950 A units.

Acknowledging the fact that several current O gauge track systems use nonmagnetic materials, the new Lionel Alcos are fitted with both traction tires and Magne-Traction.

Add-Ons

Lionel product developers took advantage of the fact that two versions of the 2400-series O27 passenger cars did not exist in the postwar era and they created the 6-27929 UP anniversary passenger car 2-pack consisting of the 2485 Montclair baggage car and 2484 Bloomfield combo car from tooling made in the 1980s (Photo 28). The end result was not all that sophisticated by today's standards. Witness the way the baggage door inserts fit in with the rest of the body on the baggage car. However, the two cars provide an appropriate addition to the basic three-car consist and are compatible with the spirit of the anniversary set.



19



20



21



22



23



24

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25



26



27



28

Conclusion

The 1950 UP anniversary set is legendary for a number of reasons involving more than its striking appearance. It was the first year that Lionel made the O27 Alcos, and the company put everything in them in terms of level of detail and features that could be found in the top-of-the-line 2343 Santa Fe and 2344 New York Central F3s, except for the two motors. In addition, 1950 was the only year that the Union Pacific set was produced in all its gilded yellow finery. The 1951 sets appeared in silver dress, shorn of the golden yellow colors that made the first sets so special. It would take until 2012 for a successor Lionel company to make a serious effort to produce a Union Pacific 50th anniversary set using the proper cars and the correct postwar numbers. Differences in production tooling, manufacturing techniques, and painting formulas did not allow the replica components to exactly match the appearance and the colors of the originals, but it was obvious the production people tried hard to do this. Pricing considerations for the postwar-inspired series would also make desirable additions to

Dave Siburn

"Collector's Gallery" is greatly enriched by the assistance that knowledgeable folks provide to make sure that what we print about collectible trains is as accurate as possible. An important element in "getting it right" for our readers is the historical knowledge experienced collectors have generously provided when questions arise about a particular train, accessory, or era of collecting.

Dave Siburn supplied the original 1950 No. 1464W Union Pacific anniversary set for this column, and I am grateful he shared this find with me so I could compare it with the 2012 UP anniversary set. Dave is assisting "Collector's Gallery" now that the technical components of an O gauge train have become increasingly important in determining the value of a collectible and its worth in the marketplace. He is a graduate of a number of repair courses for modern trains and runs a successful service operation covering several dealers in northern New Jersey. Not only that, Judy, his wife, makes great cookies and is willing to share. It doesn't get much better than that when I need help finding my way through vintage and modern mechanicals and electronics for this column. Dave can be reached at 908-642-0290, JD's Tracks & Trains, or at jdstracksandtrains@verizon.net.

the set—ElectroCouplers on the A units, for example—impractical.

The original 1950 set used for this article, despite the appearance problems of the twin Alcos, is still probably worth between a low of \$800 and the high of well over \$1,300, especially since the cars have original boxes. Not bad for something that Dave Siburn picked up at a yard sale. If it were me, it would have been a mass of broken Tyco HO that the owner was sure was going to put his son through the first year of medical school or at least Harvard. Oh well!

Meanwhile, I got the postwar-inspired O27 UP anniversary set with the two add-on cars for around \$400. The set runs well and looks nice on the shelf, but it is not the original. Oh well again! 📺

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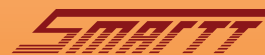
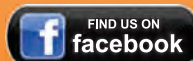
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Intrigue at Crystal Point

Article and Photos by Jim PolICASTRO




For years the rail line through Pinnacle Peaks State Park has snaked past a geologic wonder known to locals as Crystal Point (Photo 1). This huge quartz crystal formed eons ago among the rocky spires for which the park is famous.

Since this location is inaccessible except by rail, the editor of the local newspaper became very suspicious when a reader phoned to inform him that he had seen a tall yellow boom crane rising above the trees in the Crystal Point area (Photo 2). Over the years, a few ambitious and physically fit locals had been known to make the difficult hike up to the area and return with some small glittering chips of crystal. This gradual chipping away at the local landmark had inspired officials to have the area declared a state park and protected area in an effort to shield this geologic feature from souvenir hunters. A sighting of heavy equipment in the immediate area was definitely a cause for alarm.

A young and spry reporter was dispatched to check things out and he made his way up the steep mountain trails to the remote location. Arriving at the scene, he quickly snapped this photo of a

few enterprising locals who apparently planned to purloin the whole of Crystal Point by loading the huge crystal onto a flatcar (Photo 3). It seems they had “borrowed” both the crane and the flatcar from a remote rail yard some distance up the tracks from Crystal Point. They were obviously planning to rely on sheer brawn rather than a locomotive to push their prize down the right-of-way.

The local sheriff was quick to respond. Fortunately, he received some much-appreciated backup from a helpful and very muscular U.S. Marine who happened to be hiking in the area while on leave (Photo 4).

Once the strong arm of the law was on the scene, the boys quickly saw the error of their ways. In hopes of leniency, they agreed to return the big crystal to its proper place among the pinnacles under the watchful eyes of the sheriff and his temporary deputy (Photo 5). Park officials contacted by the sheriff agreed not to press charges on the condition that the gang push both the flatcar and the crane back uphill some five miles to the rail yard it came from. 



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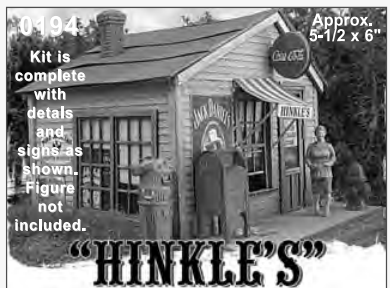
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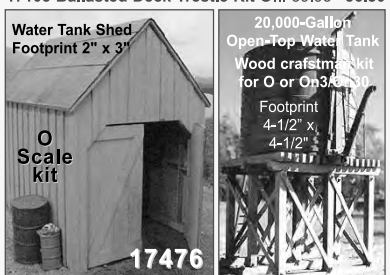


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Secure Flatcar Loads

Article and Photos by Frank Cozzi



In a discussion on the OGR forum about securing military loads on flatcars with tie-downs, someone asked how to keep them tight. Well, the answer is simple—use springs!

I have several die-cast vehicles from Solido and mounted one of my Sherman tanks on a flatcar (Photo 1). I purchased several U.S. Army flatcars and came up with a method that does not require modification of the flatcar or the vehicle load. I just needed a way to attach the chain to the vehicle. The inspiration came to me while rummaging through my wife's sewing kit.


The “eye” part of the hooks and eyes is used to attach the chain to the axle of the vehicle (Photos 2 and 3). Make wheel

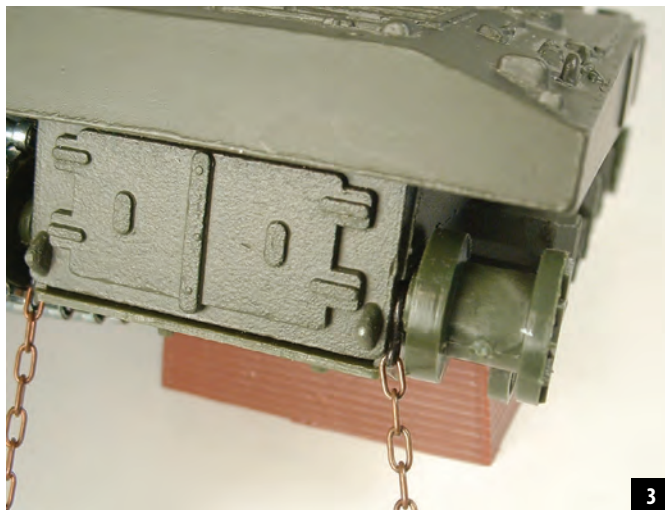
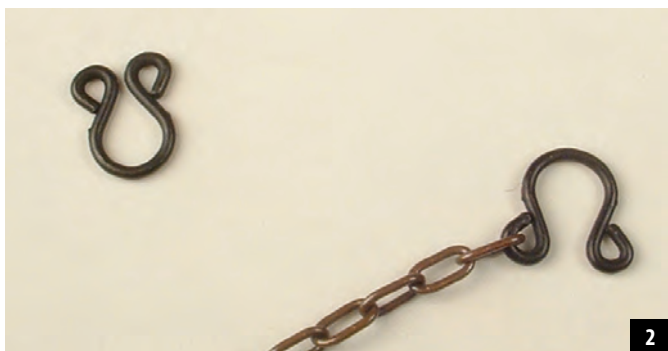
chocks out of .250 x .375 strip styrene (Photo 4). Make them long enough to reach the vehicle from the nearest stake hole in the flatcar. That way you do not have to modify the flatcar or put any new holes in it. Cement a piece of .125 x .188 strip styrene to the bottom of the wheel chocks using CA cement to fit in the flatcar stake slots (Photo 5). You may have to file down the thickness to get them to fit in the slots. You can adjust the length of the wheel chocks to suit each particular vehicle. To give some texture to the chocks, rough them up with sandpaper and a hobby knife. I painted them Polly Scale Earth with a thin wash of Grimy Black (Photo 6).

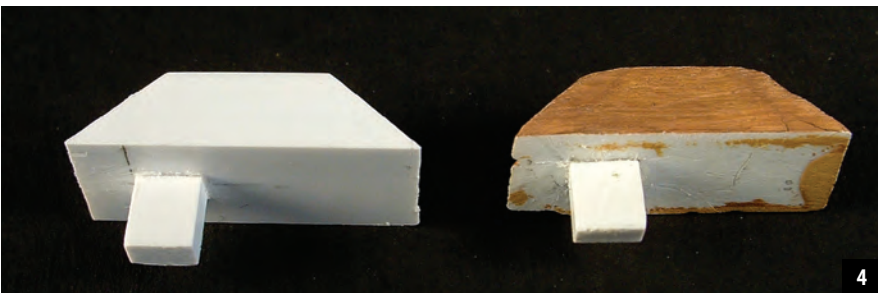
The scale chain comes in 10” lengths. Cut two of them in half to form four approxi-

mately 5” lengths (Photo 7). Use fine pliers to bend out the small loop on the eye so the last link of chain will slip over it as shown in Photo 2. Then use the pliers to bend it back. Spread out the eye so it will fit over the axle of the vehicle. Push the eye over each end of the vehicle axles using the blade of a small screwdriver. It is a tight fit, and you may need to remove the tank tracks first. Thread the chains through the outermost stake holes on the flatcar. I criss-crossed the chains (Photo 8). Turn the flatcar on its side and hook the ends of the springs to the chains; this will keep the chains taut (Photo 9).

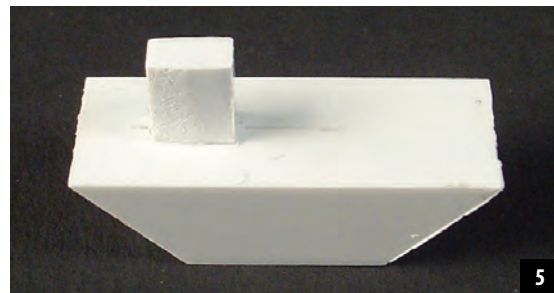
If done correctly, the chains will not interfere with the swinging of the trucks. Stand the whole assembly upright and fine-tune the position of the vehicle by adjusting the chains if necessary. If needed, experiment with different combinations of springs and chain lengths. The method described above stretched each spring about 1/2”, which seemed to give the hold-down chains a good tension.

This is an easy and affordable way to create a train with a caravan of military, circus, or other vehicles that can securely ride the rails on your layout. 





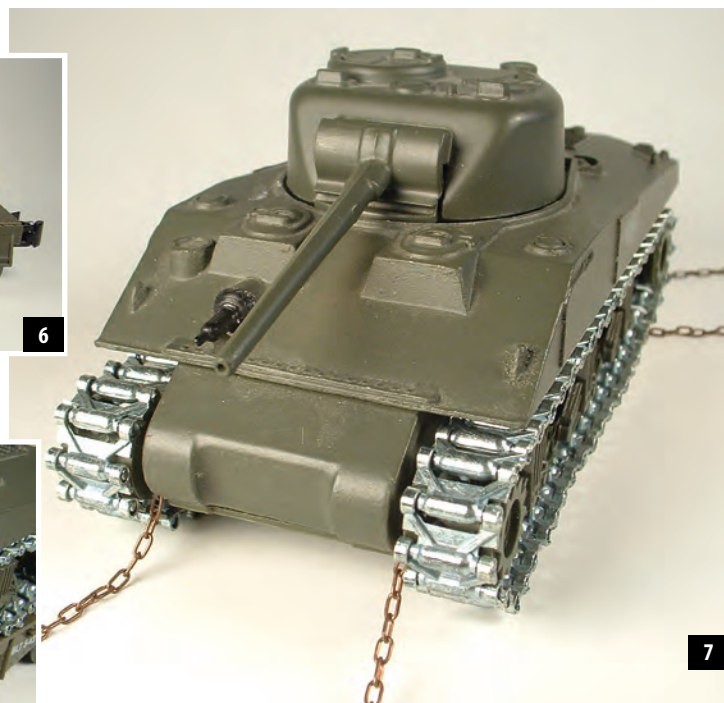
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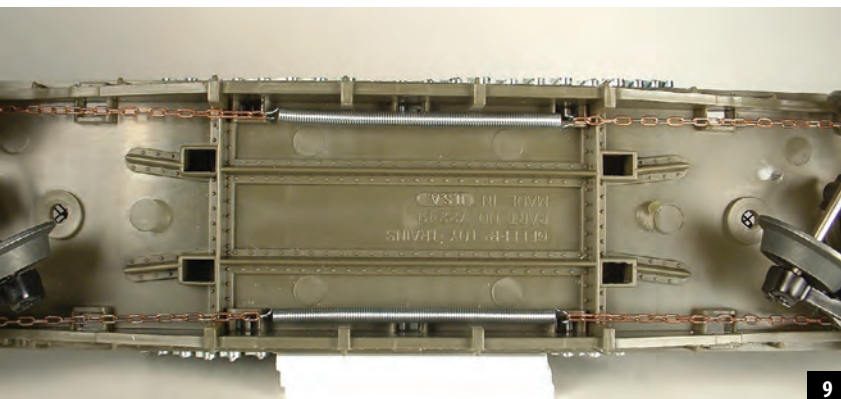
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7



8



9

Materials List

- Century Spring Corp.** – 1/8" x 1-7/8" x .014" utility extension spring (#C-51)
- Precision Scale Co.** – 10 links per inch brass chain (#48194)
- Fabric or craft store** – Hooks and eyes (size no.1)
- Evergreen Scale Models** – .250 x .375 strip styrene (#411)
.125 x .188 strip styrene (#188)
- Polly Scale Colors** – Grimy Black (#F414137)
Earth (#F414311)





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Building a Layout: Where Do I Start

Having a model train layout usually involves spending the layout's entire life mulling over what you would have done differently if you had another chance. I've been blessed with seeing and photographing a great many different layouts in my travels for the magazine, and now I've been dealt a new hand in my own life which involved moving to a new location and starting a new layout from scratch.

The logical place to start is with a design on paper, even if it is nothing more than a sketch with some measurements on it so you'll know what you can and can't get away with. Sketch out the walls of the planned layout space and if possible use graph paper so things will be drawn to some scale. That helps you see how O72 curves can eat up floor space. It also helps you see what you might

have to relocate, pole through, or work around to accommodate your plans. Don't forget to include doors, traffic patterns, and access to permanent fixtures like circuit breaker boxes and so forth.

With a plan in mind, focus on changes or additions that may need to be made to the space you have available for your layout and do this well before you start actual construction. The time to change or modify things above, behind, or under your planned layout is now, because once it is built, making major changes is difficult at best or even next to impossible at worst.

A layout, once it is adorned with full scenery, will absolutely swallow up light. There's nothing worse than a beautifully executed layout that can't really be appreciated due to inadequate or improper



3

lighting. In addition to *quantity* of light, the *quality* of the light you use is also important. While full and intense fluorescent lighting is a help when building and working on a layout, that type of lighting is also harsh and generally unflattering. Incandescent lighting is much warmer, more easily varied for mood or effect, and less apt to induce fading of the scenery and train items. Have you ever visited a train store and noticed boxes for merchandise that have been sitting unsold for a long time? In many cases, the color of the box bleaches out over time if it has been sitting exposed to fluorescent lighting. That type of lighting can, over time, also affect engines, rolling stock, and scenic items—definitely not something you want to happen to your trains.

Because layout scenery and features literally swallow up light, a high level of ambient lighting is almost always necessary. In addition, an alternate and separate system of track lights with variable-intensity floods, spots, and scene or mood lights is really the



4



5

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preferred way to go. For general construction, cleaning, and electrical work, overhead fluorescent light that floods the room will be fine. Home improvement stores sell very economical two-tube ceiling-mounted fluorescent light fixtures for as little as \$20. In my room, I placed a 4' fixture about every 8' down the middle of the 12' wide room (Photo 1). This turns an otherwise dark basement into daytime very nicely.

For lighting the layout, simple and efficient track lighting is available with 4' and 8' long tracks. I used 8' tracks wherever possible, making the future location of individual lights flexible. Since you're putting in the lights way before you know exactly where you want them focused, this is important. You will probably need an electrician to install a couple of new circuits for these track lights, especially if you live in an earlier house built back in the 1950s or 1960s.

With ceiling-related matters attended to, it's time to consider the rest of the available space. Don't let the current location of features such as household plumbing, hot water heaters, or even concrete block walls necessarily limit you in your new layout design. Believe it or not, those things can be easily moved or penetrated if you do it before you start building.

When working with basements, I hate the space that is lost just turning trains around so they can go the other way. Often enough, just on the other side of an existing wall, you may have a furnace using up a chunk of space for nothing but...well...a furnace. My current layout design calls for the train to go through that wall, make a loop around the furnace (nice use of O72 or larger curves), and go back through the wall to rejoin the main layout. That results in a couple of perfectly functional tunnels on a mountain face on the layout side of that wall. True, you may need a big concrete saw or a hammer and chisel to get the job done, but the result will be well worth the effort. I penetrated the wall where the track will pass through on two different levels (Photos 2 and 3). Both levels will turn in double-deck style around the furnace seen on the right in Photo 4.

And while we're talking about the furnace, don't let the PVC pipe vents get in your way either (Photo 5). Those two vents were put in by the furnace installer with the least amount of creativity and labor. He can be forgiven because he likely never had the privilege of planning a train layout. Photo 4 shows what happens when you relocate them to accommodate some tracks at a future date.





Consider the hot water heater, too. I needed some additional space for access behind my water heater along the back wall for my train storage design. With the help of a plumber and about an hour of his labor, I relocated this appliance to where it needs to be to fit the layout better (Photo 6).

Photo 7 shows a very pesky problem sink drain coming from the kitchen upstairs, as well as an old dishwasher drain that had been abandoned in place by a previous homeowner. That sink drain will play havoc with a track going to a future engine transfer table positioned along that back wall, and the abandoned dishwasher drain (the horizontal line near the ceiling) is just plain ugly!



I couldn't move the sink drain line where it went into the basement floor, but that was below the level of the future layout. I was able to relocate most of the line that extends above the future layout by making a jog in the plumbing line (it will be unseen below the table). That shifted the location of the rest of the drain line as close as I could possibly get it to the back wall, which included going through the paneling and right up against the block foundation (Photo 8). That left so little of the pipe exposed above the layout that I could most likely hide it with a future scenic panel.

I saved the best trick till last. I learned this while photographing a number of fine layouts. The best way to hide unwanted struc-

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tural details in the ceiling is to simply “eliminate” that ceiling. Make it go away by painting it black! If you have an old ceiling like the one at my house with different layers and elevations, visible wiring, plumbing, and even ugly ductwork sticking down through it here and there, paint it *all* flat black. That directs the eye of the observer straight down to the layout, which now stands out with all its color and lighting and away from the distracting stuff on the ceiling.

Use flat black paint on all areas of the ceiling including wires, pipes, lighting fixtures, and anything else installed there. A track lighting fixture mounted to the ceiling waits for the remaining

area to be rolled with flat black paint in Photo 9. Even the clunky old ductwork seems to blend in better where everything is painted flat black (Photos 10 and 11). The same is true of the old and new copper tubes, conduit, and the new lighting fixtures that all seem to blend into the ceiling and go away (Photos 12 and 13).

Completed track and fluorescent lighting is installed in part of the finished ceiling (Photo 14). But wait...what about that paneling in the background? Nobody ever saw sky backdrops in brown-colored wood grain now, have they? I’ll address that and more in the next “Backshop.”

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Tradition and High Tech

My layout is on the floor, so wiring is sparse by necessity and runs out of sight and harm's way underneath Atlas plastic roadbed. Between the control wiring for my switches and the requisite multipoint power feeds, no space is available for two-wire cables to uncoupling magnets or operating track sections. Without these operating accoutrements, my few traditional postwar operating cars get no use other than occasionally rolling as part of a train. So when I first saw the ad from Williams by Bachmann (WbB) announcing its four new operating cars, the hand-

held remote controller shown in the ad immediately got my attention. The ad stated this remote would wirelessly control up to 24 of the new operating log dump, coal dump, and boxcars anywhere on a layout. To say that I had to get a copy of each of these traditional appearing operating cars and their remote controller is easily classified as a major understatement.

Before the cars and controller arrived, I speculated that a traditional solenoid-driven mechanism would operate each of the coal and log dump cars as well as the boxcar. Of course the chase car would likely

use the equally traditional gear-driven mechanism with an endless belt carrying the two figures around the perimeter of the gondola. Well, I was right...sort of. The chase car mechanism was what I figured it would be. However, during unpacking of the two dump cars and boxcar, all of which were surprisingly heavy, I did not comprehend exactly what was inside, nor did I fully realize the fun that these cars were about to deliver.

Three of the cars were the WbB #47929 Little River Logging Company log dump car with six plastic logs, the #47953 Lehigh New England coal dump car with a bag of plastic coal, and the #47978 Milwaukee operating boxcar with four plastic simulated crates. These cars are listed by WbB at \$127.95 each, which at first thought seemed expensive. But with what I soon discovered was inside each of these cars, the list price was suddenly quite reasonable, at least to me. No trackside bin is included with either of the dump cars, so whatever the loads will dump into is up to the imagination of the hobbyist. The fourth car was the #47902 operating chase car listed at \$74.95.

It was immediately obvious that both dump cars discharge their loads to the side,





just like the traditional log and coal dump cars that gained tremendous popularity during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Except the WbB cars are noticeably longer than those from the postwar era. Like the traditional dump cars, the bed is raised on one side making the load roll or slide off the other side of the car. On the log car, the stakes lower as the bed tilts allowing the logs to roll off the car and into a trackside

receiver of some sort. And in a similar action, the side of the bin on the coal dump car lowers allowing the coal to slide off the raised bin.

My first contact with the #47999 remote control, listed at \$59.95, confirmed it was specifically designed to operate only the WbB cars. The instructions were brief and clear, and operating the remote appeared to be simple. Underneath the dump cars and boxcar are two groups of miniature switches that set the car's address for operation using the wireless remote control. One sets an alpha group address of A, B, or C, while the other sets a car number of 1 through 8 within that group. Up to 24 addresses are possible with this schema so that a number of operating cars can be operated using the wireless remote. I set the log dump car to A1, the coal dump car to A2, and the boxcar to B1.

After installing a 9-volt battery from my household cache into the remote, I loaded each car with its respective load, placed all three cars on the track, and turned on the track power to about 12 volts.

The remote has a power button with a red LED that lights when the power is on. A group of three buttons are labeled A, B, and C, and each button has its red LED. Pressing whatever button selects the associated group address and lights its LED. Pressing A lit its LED, which stayed on to indicate that I just selected group A. The same indications occurred for the B and C buttons.



Pressing one of the keys labeled 1 through 8 momentarily lights the indicator LED for the 10-key pad and initiates one operating cycle of the addressed car. By the way, buttons 9 and 0 have no function with the current WbB operating cars, but I won't be surprised if the company releases products in the future that will use the 9 and 0 to address them. I pressed the A and 1 buttons to actuate the dump cycle on the log car. Much to my surprise, instead of a solenoid with its rather vigorous action, a small electric motor whirled as one side of the car's plastic load bed slowly raised until it sloped about 45 degrees, gracefully dumped the car's load of six plastic logs, and then gently lowered back onto the car frame. You see, inside each dump car and also the boxcar is a printed circuit board containing radio receiver and motor driver electronics, a DC motor, and the car's operating mechanism.

Pressing the A and 2 keys on the remote put the coal dump car into operation. It also slowly and smoothly unloaded the simulated coal load from the car's plastic bin. My only criticism of the new operating cars is the load of simulated coal. It consists not only of small chunks that look like coal but also small cylindrical plastic pins and plugs of various diameters and lengths that look like scrap of some sort.

Underneath the bed of the log and coal dump car is a die-cast frame that houses the electronics and operating mechanism. I was pleasantly surprised by a second and unadvertised means to operate each dump car. A small red pushbutton switch mounted unobtrusively on the frame initiates one operating cycle, which is a nice feature for operators who don't have the WbB remote or any uncoupling magnets in their track. Actually this is called the reset button in the instructions and is intended for completing an operation cycle should a stall occur.


Hobbyists who have uncoupling electromagnets on their layout can operate the dump cars and also the boxcar in the traditional manner. According to the instruction sheet that comes with each car, just move the center of the car over the electromagnet and momentarily apply 10 to 20 volts to it. A magnetically operated switch inside the car starts one operating cycle.

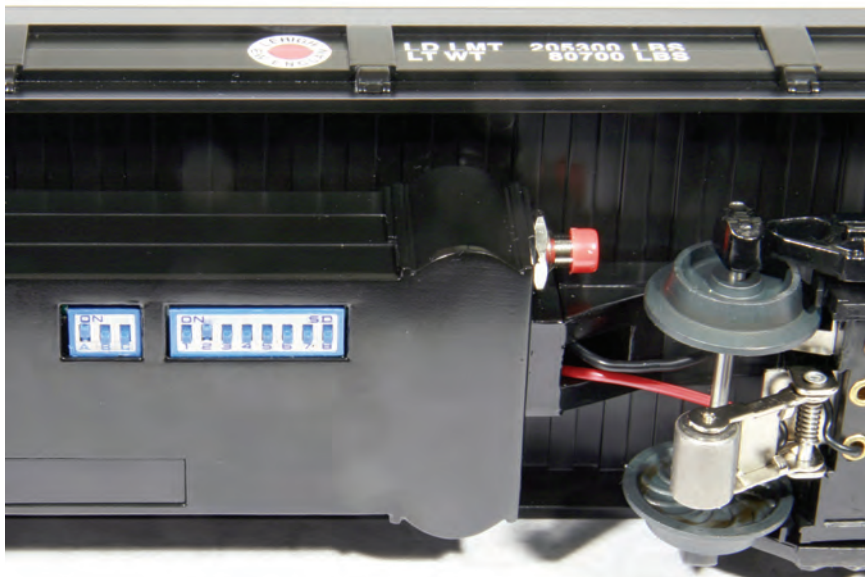
Speaking of the boxcar, it also proved to be fun to watch. Upon kicking off the cycle, the door slowly opens, and then the figure of the workman inside moves

toward the open door and shoves a small simulated wooden crate labeled as perishable fruit out of the car. Actually, vigorously ejected is a more accurate description, and fortunately the case isn't marked as fragile. The workman then slowly retreats back into the car, and the door slams shut with a resounding... clack!

The operating chase car was entertaining to watch and never missed a beat as it rolled around the CCRR. This gondola of course was the least complex of the four new WbB operating cars and also the most traditional. One of the two figures is decorated as an old-time cop while the other is a stereotyped hobo. Since the gear mechanism on one truck provides the mechanical power for moving the figures, the car must run with this truck in the trailing position for the chase to play out correctly. Otherwise, the figures will run backwards.

Die-cast sprung trucks with fast-angle wheels carry each of the four operating cars while their magnetic operating couplers proved to be problem free. Paint and decoration were excellent. These cars rolled on my Atlas track with minimal drag, which I found surprising considering their weight. The heaviest was the log dump car, which weighed in at a hefty 28 ounces empty and a little over 2 pounds loaded. The coal dump car came in a close second at 20 ounces empty.

Yup, the WbB ad was right. Using the wireless remote controller, I can operate either of the dump cars or the boxcar anywhere on my layout. Tradition and high tech join together for a bunch of operating fun. That's neat! 



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VIENNA, VA – WB&A Chapter, TCA Toy Train Show, Fire Department. Firehouse, 400 Center St. 9a-2p, Adm: \$5, under 12 and active military free. All scales, operating layouts, vender tables available, free parking, food available. Info: www.wbachapter.org, postwar@comcast.net, or dbeadie@verizon.net.

September 28, 2013

SPRING, TX – TCA Gulf Coast Chapter (Lone Star Division) Toy Train Show & Swap Meet, Cypress Creek Christian Community Center, 6823 Cypresswood Dr. 10a-3p, Adm: \$6, family \$9, under 12 free. Operating layouts, buy/sell trains, refreshments, and door prizes. Info: Carl Olson, (218) 277-7630, or www.tcagulfcoastchapter.org.

September 29, 2013

GREENWICH, CT – Southern CT Model Train Show, Greenwich Civic Center. 9a-3p, Adm: \$7, seniors \$5, under 12 free. Layouts, modeling clinics, white elephant table, free parking, refreshments. Info: SC Train Show, Ron's Books, P.O. Box 714, Harrison, NY 10528, (914) 967-7541, or ronsbooks@aol.com.

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DELAND, FL – 45th Florida Railfair, Volusia County Fairgrounds, Tommy Lawrence Bldg., SR 44 and I-4 exit 118. Adm: \$7, under 12 free. Info: Charles Miller, 3106 N. Rochester St., Arlington, VA 22213, (703) 536-2954, www.gserr.com, or rrshows@aol.com.

October 26, 2013

SUGAR CREEK, OH – Old Eli's Train & Toy Show, Valley View Church, 2772 Simons Dr. NW. 10a-4p, Adm: \$3, under 12 free. 100 tables available, \$10 per table paid in advance, no refunds. Info: Galen Eli Hoover, P.O. Box 45, Mt. Hope, OH 44660, (330) 763-1184.

November 2, 2013

KIRTLAND, OH – Cleveland 2-Rail O Scale Train Meet, Lakeland Community College Auxiliary Gym, 7700 Clocktower Dr. 9a-2p, Adm: \$7, spouse and under 12 free, active military free with ID, tables \$37. Free dealer load in/load out Fri. 12p-5p, Sat. after show. Great food kitchen, layout tours after show. Info: Sam Shumaker, 32575 Pettibone Rd., Solon, OH 44139, (440) 248-3055, jld464@yahoo.com, or www.cleveshows.com.

November 3, 2013

GAITHERSBURG, MD – 8th Annual Gaithersburg Model Train Show, Montgomery County Fairgrounds, 12 miles NW of Washington, DC. 9a-4p, Adm: \$7, under 12 free. Info: Charles Miller, 3106 N. Rochester St., Arlington, VA 22213, (703) 536-2954, www.gserr.com, or rrshows@aol.com.

November 8-9, 2013

TUCSON, AZ – Toy Train Show, Tucson Expo Center, 3750 E. Irvington Rd. Fri. 2p-7p, Sat. 9a-2p, Adm: \$6, 13 and under free. Info: Gadsden Pacific Toy Train Operating Museum, Dave Hoverstock, (520) 909-0722, trainshow@gpdtoytrainmuseum.com, or www.gpdtoytrainmuseum.com.

November 9, 2013

COLUMBIA, MO – Central MO Chapter TCA Open House & Swap Meet, Knights of Columbus Hall, 2525 N. Stadium Blvd. 10a-3p, TCA members 9a, Adm: \$3, under 12 free. Info: Richard Malon, 3801 Ivanhoe Blvd., Columbia, MO 65203, (573) 445-2446.

November 17, 2013

WALLINGFORD, CT – Classic Shows, LLC Train & Toy Show, Zandri's Stillwood Inn, 1074 S. Colony Rd. I-91, exit 13. 9a-2p, Adm: \$5, 12 and under free w/adult. Info: (203) 926-1327 or www.classicshowsllc.com.

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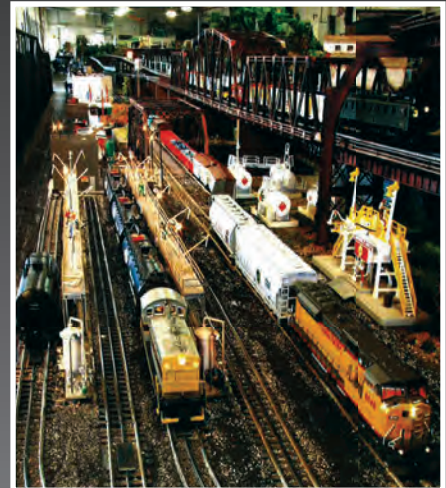
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