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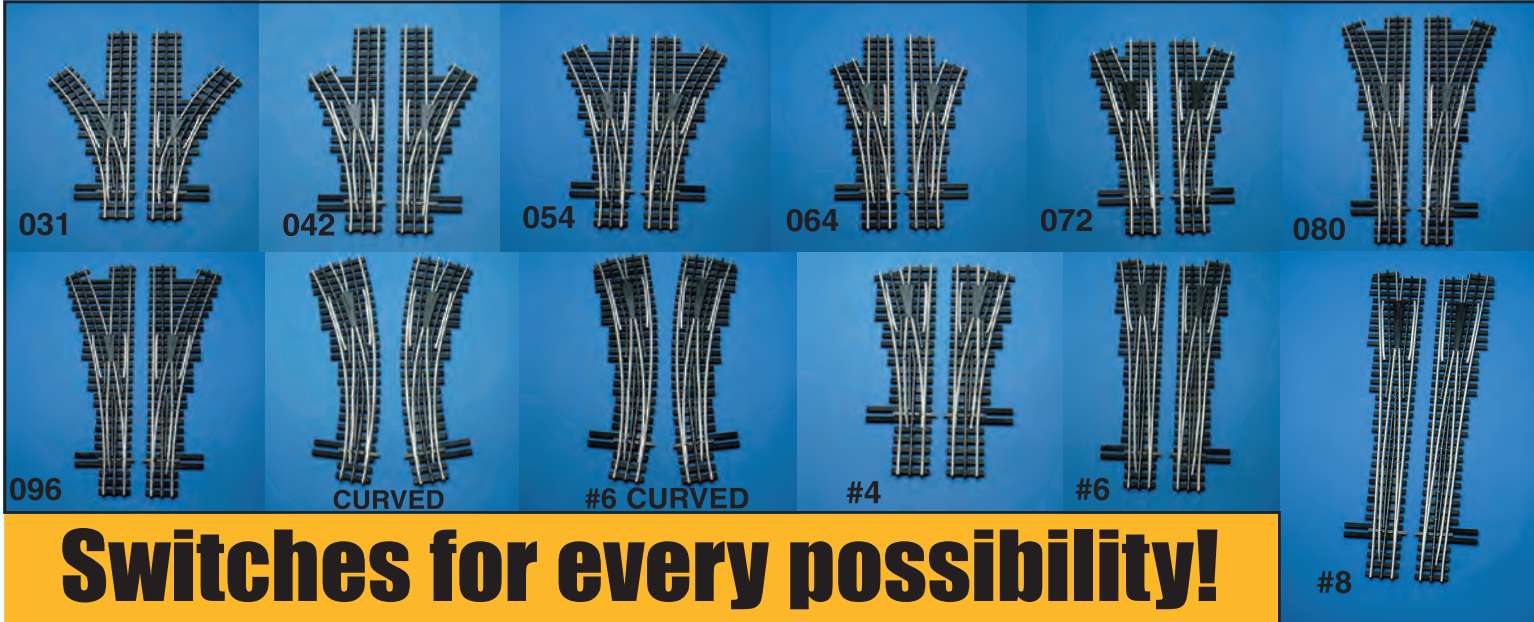
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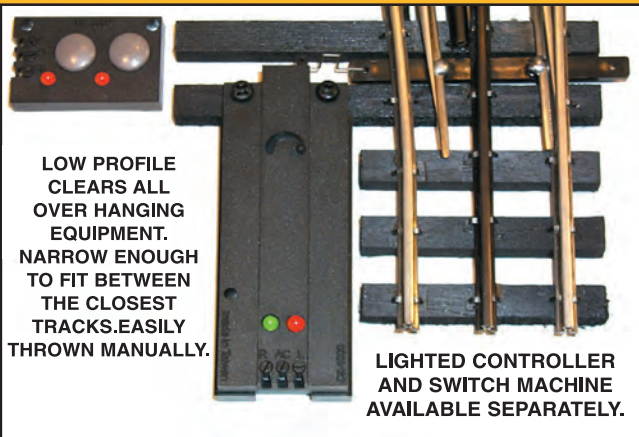
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Pat and Jean Marinari's Hodgson Valley Railroad
This happy husband and wife team created a large O gauge layout that runs beautifully and is a detailed delight.



Ron Zweig's Layout

Conventional control is alive and well on Ron's nicely done 3-rail layout, with operating catenary on the upper level!

Bob Cebula's 3-Rail Layout - O Gauge in a Small Space

Bob's heartfelt love of his trains goes all the way back to his childhood. You'll be amazed at the details on this small layout.

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ON THE COVER

Jim McIntosh likes bridges, and including a lot of bridges on a layout often requires multiple levels. Here's a typical example of a section on Jim's detailed hi-rail layout. In this scene, an MTH Yellowstone in Duluth, Missabe and Iron Range livery on the lower level paces a Lionel Milwaukee Road S3 on the middle level while a Lionel Vision Line Hudson tops both on the upper level.

Photo by Jim Barrett



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The Scale (R)evolution



It seems like only yesterday when Lionel revolutionized the 3-rail O gauge market by introducing a true-to-scale model of the New York Central 4-6-4 Hudson locomotive. Truth be told, I wasn't even around 76 years ago when that iconic model was released in 1937, but over the intervening years I've read numerous accounts extolling its enduring significance to the 3-rail world.

In addition to the Lionel 700E Hudson having been the first widely promoted scale locomotive to find its way into this segment of the hobby, as seen in the 1940 Lionel consumer catalog cover pictured here, its introduction also marked the start of an evolutionary process that has slowly but surely, and somewhat inevitably, impacted the 3-rail world in a very significant way. Today, I think it's fair to say that scale-proportioned O gauge models have, particularly over the past decade or so, taken center stage in our little corner of the model railroading world, and we hobbyists appear to be succumbing to their siren call.

My own experience likely parallels that of many others reading this column. I was a 3-rail *toy train* guy dating back to my boyhood years when Lionel trains dominated my indoor playtime. Then a couple of decades later when I returned to O gauge after a stint in N scale, I never gave so much as a passing thought to scale proportions, or the lack thereof, in O gauge models I bought. That was in the Model Product Corporation (MPC) era of Lionel production when

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cereal giant General Mills literally saved the Lionel brand from extinction. The trains offered by MPC were generally a continuation of the traditional-size products long associated with Lionel, and I, along with many others in the pre-baby boom age group, eagerly grabbed what were, at that time, about the only new 3-rail trains being offered.

Even in more recent times dating back to the early years of the current century, I remained perfectly content with purchasing and running what might best be known as *traditional-size* O gauge locomotives and rolling stock. These are, after all, the trains that have long been the cornerstone of the 3-rail O gauge hobby, and they are both plentiful and affordable.

I have a whole lot of traditional-size O gauge in my collection, but in the course of doing some recent reconfiguring of my layout, I noticed something rather interesting has taken place. Traditional-size locomotives and rolling stock, although still a part of my overall inventory, have all but disappeared from the layout. The tracks are now almost exclusively occupied by 1:48 scale equivalents that, in addition to being scale size or very nearly so, are also more finely detailed. For example, a Lionel U.S. Army GP7 from 1995 with its oversize and clunky-looking stamped-metal handrails has been replaced by an MTH U.S. Army GP9 from 2004 with far more realistic detailing, and a stubby K-Line S2 switcher has been sidelined in favor of a scale-proportioned MTH Premier line S2. There are many more examples I could cite, rolling stock as well as motive power, but what struck me most was how this *evolution* from toy-like to scale had more or less crept up on me over time and somewhat unintentionally.

But the evolution hasn't stopped there. I have also noticed that a good number of the layout's accessories have also taken on a more true-to-scale orientation. Not too many years ago, I was perfectly happy with structures, figures, vehicles, and other items that were simply "in the ballpark" as far as scale is concerned. Now as I look around the layout, it is readily apparent that I'm paying far more attention to proportions and dimensions when it comes to selecting items to be used in various scenes. In some cases that means a few favorite under-scale or over-scale accessories from

years past have gone back into storage with the possibility that they will be sold online or at a train meet at some point in the future and hopefully bring pleasure to some future owner.

There are, of course, some tradeoffs in moving to more scale-proportioned items. My layout resides in a 12' x 12' spare bedroom and is necessarily modest in size to begin with. That being the case, 1:48 scale accessories tend to gobble up the available real estate rather quickly, and scale-proportioned trains often need wider curves to handle larger and longer equipment. By default, and simply because it looks and operates better, I've pretty much resigned myself to operating locomotives and rolling stock based on relatively small prototypes such as 0-4-0, 0-6-0, and 0-8-0 switchers and diesels with two-axle trucks. Fortunately, I've always preferred models of smaller motive power over models of the giants of the rails probably because I never had and never will have space to give the behemoths their due.

Looking over my layout and seeing how more scale models have slowly but surely encroached into my earlier world of toy trains, I'm led to wonder what Joshua Lionel Cowen would think of all this. 🚂

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Toy Train Company Goes Solar



Solar collector panels were mounted on the roof of a structure on the RMT headquarters property. The RMT system is rated at approximately 16 kilowatts and required 68 panels of 245 watts each interconnected into six strings of panels.



Several nearby trees had to be removed to provide a clear path for the sun's rays. Wood from the trees became firewood that also saves on fossil fuel. The system does not work at night, but it does produce electricity on cloudy days.



Ready Made Trains is now powering its Bloomsbury, New Jersey, offices with solar energy. Conversion from conventionally supplied electricity to solar power was completed late last year according to Walter M. Matuch, president of RMT. He had always been interested in renewable energy and recently became aware of a solar program that would fit the energy needs for both his family and for RMT. He determined that this technology should be applied to power the administrative offices of RMT, the 3-rail electric toy train company he founded in 2002.

Walter learned of the solar program sponsored by Clean Energy Ventures, a New Jersey Resources initiative that would likely fit the energy needs for both his family and for RMT. Solar company representatives visited RMT to conduct an inspection to see if the application of solar power might be feasible. A roof-mount system was selected because the orientation of one of the property's buildings was deemed adequate for effectively utilizing the available sunlight. A large solar panel array installed on the roof produces all the electricity needed at RMT, and excess daytime energy is fed back into the local electric power company grid.

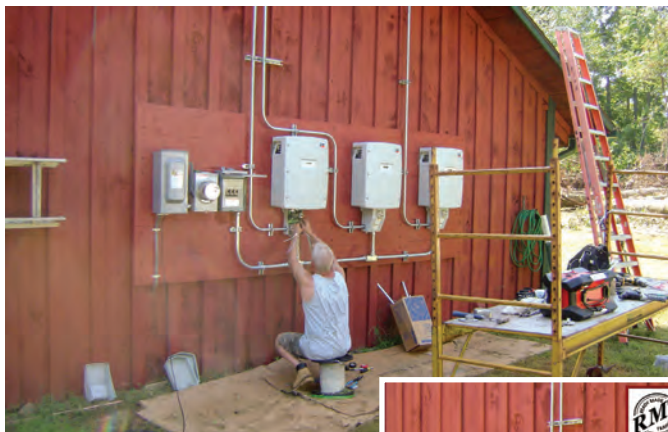
According to Walter, solar power provides all the energy needed to operate RMT office operations including computers, fax, printers, DSL communication equipment, lights, and so forth. Packaging and shipping of RMT orders continues to be done at the Aristocraft warehouse facility in Irvington, New Jersey. The solar panel system is expected to last at least 15 to 25 years.



Workers begin laying out the grid for the solar collector panels.



Installation of the panels is nearly complete.



The three large boxes are solar inverters that balance the solar power cycle to match the existing utility grid/power company electric cycle. Electrical power transfers from the roof panels to these inverters and then to an electric meter that transmits information by WiFi to the power company. In this way, any excess solar electric power is fed easily into the utility grid.



A pleased Walter Matuch threw the switch to go online in late September 2012.

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Hot Dog

The Nassau Lionel Operating Engineers (NLOE) is offering the latest in its commemorative car program: Nathan's Famous steel-sided reefer. Nathan's Famous was founded by Polish immigrant Nathan Handwerker, who started his business in 1916 with a small hot dog stand in Coney Island, NY. In the more than 95 years that have passed since opening day, Nathan's has gained worldwide recognition for product quality and taste. Slated for delivery in December 2013, the car will be available in two road numbers. This scale Standard O reefer will be brightly decorated in Nathan's green and yellow colors and will feature die-cast metal sprung trucks, operating couplers, opening doors and roof hatches, and under-frame details. Orders must be received by June 15, 2013. Cost is \$74.00 per car plus shipping (\$9.00 for first car and \$4.00 more for each additional car). Purchasers will automatically be enrolled as Associate Members of the NLOE. Make check or money order payable in U.S. funds to Nassau Lionel Operating Engineers and mail to Nassau Lionel Operating Engineers, P.O. Box 343, Levittown, NY 11756. For full details, visit www.nloe.com.



Classic Rogers

Schneider Model Railroad (SMR Trains) announces two new limited-edition locomotive releases: the Western & Atlantic *Yonah* and the New York & Harlem *Amenia*. The *Yonah* (pictured) is the third engine in SMR's Great Locomotive Chase series, which included the previously released *General* and *Texas*. The *Amenia* is one of the earliest engines of the NY&H, an early key part of what would eventually become the New York Central System. Both engines were produced by Rogers in 1848 and represent an important transitional step in locomotive design that would ultimately become the classic 4-4-0 American. The highly detailed 1:48 scale brass models are being produced by hand in South Korea, are fully decorated, and are fitted with electronics designed for conventional transformer control. Each is individually serial numbered. Preorder price is \$1,499.95, with a \$100.00 deposit required for all reservations. Delivery is expected in late spring 2013. Preorders are accepted at SMR's website, www.smrtrains.com, or by mail to SMR Trains, P.O. Box 753, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054.

Craftsman-Level Crossing Kit

Laser Modeling 3 has released its first limited-run O scale craftsman kit: NYO&W standard watchman's tower and crossing gates. The prototype for this tower was located on the "Old & Weary" Utica, NY, branch. Similar towers were located throughout the U.S.A. and used in congested rail areas. The kit



includes a fully detailed and LED-illuminated interior, many new castings, crossing gates, relay box, and numerous additional details. Also includes 4-color assembly instructions. Only 150 kits will be available in this limited run. Price is \$95.00 plus shipping and handling. Visit www.lasermodeling3.com for additional information and photos. Manufactured by Laser Modeling 3, 1 University Drive, Geneseo, NY 14454.

Clean-Up Made Easy

A new track cleaning car from Patrick's Trains is designed to work on any O gauge track system. The P&P track cleaning gondola is created using an MTH RailKing Rugged Rails gondola fitted with special tooling that includes a 1/4" metal weight insert, all-metal screws and springs, and a wet or dry cleaning pad. The MTH gondolas feature durable ABS bodies, metal wheels and axles, and operating die-cast couplers. Tension bolts and springs are used to adjust the pressure of the pad on the track. Track cleaning fluid can be applied to the pad if desired, or the dry pad can be used as is. Cars will operate on O27 curves. Select a suitable Rugged Rails gondola car (\$59.95) from several road names available from Patrick's Trains (visit www.patstrains.com), or visit the website to see other available options. A converted Rugged Rails track cleaning car sells for \$89.95 complete plus \$12.00 shipping in U.S. Contact Patrick's Trains at 142 29th St., Wheeling, WV 26003, phone 304-232-0714.



Lively Layout Figures



Artista Accessories, maker of almost 500 pewter figures and accessories in O gauge that are manufactured and painted here in the U.S.A.,

is highlighting several new entries that are available in time for Father's Day. The figures come both painted and unpainted (prices for the examples shown here are for the painted versions): 559 Man with Sandwich Board, \$7.25; 1561 Burglar, \$6.99; 1560 Panhandler, \$6.75; 1563 Boy Batting and Boy Pitching, \$13.50; 1564 Two Boys Catcher and Fielder, \$13.50; 1566 3 Seagulls, \$6.50; 1567 Package Delivery Man, \$6.50; 1568 Pizza Delivery Man, \$6.50; and 1569 3 Girls Jumping Rope, \$20.50. These represent just a small part of the extensive selection of Artista figures that bring your layout to life. Visit Artista Accessories for more information at www.artista.com, or call 302-455-0195. Phone orders 800-316-2493; fax 302-455-0197; Artista Accessories, 105 Woodring Lane, Newark, DE 19702.

Perpetual Pursuit

There's action aplenty as a cop chases a robber (or an elf chases a reindeer) aboard this new operating chase car from Williams by Bachmann. The motion ensues as the car moves along the track with the hobo (or reindeer) always remaining out of reach of its pursuer. The car operates on any O gauge track and features fast-angle wheels, all-metal trucks, die-cast sideframes, and operating couplers. Available in four models: #47901 Pennsylvania, #47902 Union Pacific, #47903 Santa Fe, and #47904 Christmas (elf & reindeer). Suggested retail price is \$74.95 each. See these action-packed and fun cars at your Williams by Bachmann dealer, or visit www.bachmanntrains.com.



Moo-ving Deliveries

American Heritage Models has a new 1:43 scale Divco delivery truck ready to deliver an assortment of Borden's Dairy Products to the



doorsteps of your town's residents. These distinctive and nostalgic-evoking trucks feature opening doors, jewel headlights and taillights, chrome accents, individual mirrors, authentic tampon-printed graphics of actual dairy farm operations from the past, a milkman figure, and a milk carrier. The Divco delivery truck for Borden's Dairy Products (#AHM43-014) sells for \$34.95 each plus shipping and handling. These and other finely detailed replicas can be found at Diecast Direct, 3005 Old Lawrenceburg Rd., Frankfort, KY 40601; 800-718-1866; or online at www.diecastdirect.com/tdm.

Bridge Those Gaps

Ross Custom Switches offers a 12" O gauge deck girder bridge. The bridge grew out of design work for Ross Custom Switches turntable



decks. The single-track bridge features wooden walkways on both sides, including detailed handrails covering the full length of the structure. Price for the bridge is \$59.95 plus shipping. Other lengths of the deck girder bridge are available ranging from a 9" version for \$49.95 to a 36" span for \$139.95. Custom lengths can be constructed on request. For more information, contact Ross Custom Switches, 45 Church St., Norwich, CT 06360; 800-331-1395; steve@rossswitches.com; www.rossswitches.com.

Safe Crossings

NJ International has a pair of scale crossing gates available and is offering a separate grade crossing activation system to control them. The crossing gates are exact O scale, of all-brass construction, and have LEDs installed on their operating arms. The crossing gates are available in two color combinations: #3160 has red and white striped gate arms, and #3161 comes with striped black and white gate arms. A package of two crossing gates is priced at \$69.99. The TDP ServoMaster #8000 grade crossing/semaphore activation system will operate two crossing gates or two semaphores. Optical sensors placed between the track ties are used for train detection. The system operates from 9 to 12 volts, either AC or DC. The TDP ServoMaster #8000 system flashes the gate lights and operates the gates at prototypical speed. The system operates independently from track voltage. Price is \$129.99. For more information and to view the Installation and Operation Manual in PDF form, visit www.njinternational.com. Contact NJ International, P.O. Box 1029, Higley, AZ 85236; phone 480-219-4035.



Freight Handler's Friend

Brennan's wooden freight dock kit is the third in an ultra-realistic kit series. Modeled on a Chicago & Alton prototype, this quality O scale craftsman kit features Northeastern scale lumber and comes with complete, detailed, step-by-step illustrated instructions and templates that make it another excellent project for the learner. The dock has a footprint of 3" x 14" as a standalone structure, but it can easily be modified into a loading dock for any building. Lumber, grain, produce, appliances, and machinery are but a few of the goods that might be shipped to or from this simple but vital little structure. Price is \$32.95 plus shipping direct from Brennan's Model Railroad, P.O. Box 520174, Independence, MO 64052. Phone 816-252-4605, or visit www.brennansmodelrr.com.



Catalog Gold for Lionel Collectors

The *Lionel Consumer Catalog Archive 1945-1969* carefully assembled by Hybrid Systems Ltd. (HSL) contains the most complete set of postwar Lionel consumer catalogs ever assembled in one place. This Lionel-licensed product contains all of the regular, mini, accessory, HO, and science catalogs issued by Lionel during the postwar era. Each catalog is professionally scanned and arranged using custom-designed software that will work on your Mac or Windows-based computer. The software even allows users to search by engine and set names as well as product numbers. The price is \$50.00. Mention "OGR Father's Day Special" and receive free shipping. Contact HSL at 800-779-2802, or visit the website at www.hslinc.com. Hybrid Systems Ltd., 200 University Park Dr., Edwardsville, IL 62025.



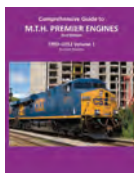
Stonewall in Style

Model Building Services, professional builder of many manufacturers' kits, announces the availability of a completely assembled and decorated scale



model of the Stonewall Hotel from Charlotte, NC. The model is designed to go next to the previously released Southern station. The Stonewall Hotel uses laser-cut windows, doors, and other construction details to make an accurate rendering of this historic building. You can see more photos of the Stonewall Hotel and other MBS models by visiting www.modelbuildingservices.com. For more information, contact Stu Gralnik, Model Building Services, 264 Marrett Rd., Lexington, MA 02421-7024; phone 781-860-0554; e-mail stu@modelbuildingservices.com.

Premier Locomotives Reference



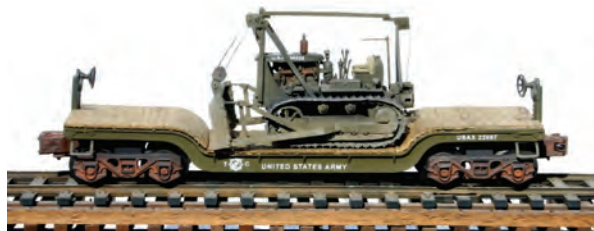
The *Comprehensive Guide to M.T.H. Premier Engines, 2nd Edition, 1993-2012 Volume 1* compiled by Richard Ridolfo covers all MTH Premier engines from the beginning of the line in 1993 through the 2012 Volume 1 MTH catalog. This updated volume lists the catalog, an item it was first offered in, the road number(s) of the engines, and the type of sound system (Proto 1, 2, 3, none, and dummy). The guide also describes if the locomotive is equipped with freight or passenger sounds, if it has a smoke unit, minimum curves required, and engine dimensions, along with the original catalog price. Nearly all item descriptions are accompanied by photos. The book sells for \$44.95 plus \$5.05 Priority Mail shipping and is available exclusively from Brentwood Antiques, 106 Lafayette Rd., Hampton Falls, NH 03844. Phone 603-929-1441 or visit the website at www.thetrainshop.com.



Make a Splash on the Roof

Korber Models has announced the Model 701 Roof Top Wood Water Tank made of real wood. This O scale water tank is a great addition to a wide variety of multistory buildings on any layout. Wooden water tanks were a mainstay on roof tops across the country and are still commonly seen on buildings today. This laser-cut kit features wood construction, comes complete

with step-by-step instructions, and has a compact 2" x 2" footprint. Like all Korber Models kits, the Model 701 is made in Ohio. The kit sells for \$15.00 plus shipping. For more information, contact Korber Models, 100 Castleberry Court #178, Milford, OH 45150, or e-mail info@korbermodels.com. See the full range of models at www.korbermodels.com.



Masterpiece Military Model

New from the custom models workshop of Ramesh Bishop at ModelCrafters is this World War II/Korea Conflict U.S. Army Corps of Engineers D7 Cat dozer with overhead gantry mounted on a drop-center flatcar. The dozer is resin and is highly detailed and weathered. This model is also available for U.S. Navy Seabees. Model No. EME35-FC5.2USA (the U.S. Army version) sells for \$325.00 plus \$15.00 shipping and insurance. Contact Ramesh Bishop at ModelCrafters, P.O. Box 2325, Jenkintown, PA 19046. Phone 802-310-6815, or visit www.modelcrafters.com and www.flickr.com/photos/modelcrafters.



Savor Your First Cup

Wake Dad up this Father's Day or any day with this Van Curler Coffee reefer car from M.T.H. Electric Trains. The colorful livery is sure to stand out on any O gauge layout. Like all MTH Premier O scale freight cars, this reefer will make a perfect complement to any manufacturer's scale-proportioned O gauge locomotive. Available in two car numbers, this reefer car can also be outfitted with scale couplers and trucks for an even more realistic appearance. Item No. 20-94173 features detailed and durable ABS body, metal wheels and axles, die-cast trucks, opening doors, separately applied grab irons and ladders, fast-angle wheelsets, and needle-point axles. Recommend for operation on O42 or wider curves. Price is \$54.95. See your MTH retailer, or visit www.mthtrains.com.



Be Prepared

These new O scale American Boy Scouts from Scenic Express are definitely "prepared." The Scoutmaster with his troop of brave backpackers, saluting scouts, hikers, and campsite preparers are true representatives of their U.S. pride, character, strength, and citizenship. The handcrafted figures are available from Scenic Express, your one-stop source for all your scenic materials and layout detail needs. See the Scouts and more on the website at www.scenicexpress.com.



Animated Nostalgia

Two new animated signs from Miller Engineering hark back to a time when Ballantine Beer was readily available and you created picture memories with Kodak film instead of digital media. These full-color operating window signs come on a clear background that can be trimmed in a variety of sizes down to .825" wide by .9" tall. The new window signs operate on 4.5 volts DC just like all the other Miller Engineering billboards and they are also compatible with Miller Engineering AC adapters and #4804 converter modules. These ready-to-run signs are only \$17.95 each. Visit Miller Engineering at www.microstru.com, e-mail milleren@microstru.com, or call 203-595-0619. Miller Engineering, P.O. Box 282, New Canaan, CT 06840.

Smoke 'em if You Got 'em



Patrick's Trains has introduced P&P's smoke fluid, a product produced with high-grade materials that the maker reports is harmless to trains and humans. Based on glycerin, propylene glycol, and vegetable-based liquids, this smoke fluid is currently

available in four scents: vanilla, pumpkin spice, pine, and no scent. A 2.0 oz bottle (any available scent) sells for \$4.99, a 4.0 oz bottle for \$8.99, and an 8.0 oz bottle for \$14.99. Patrick's Trains claims this smoke fluid is safe for use in any manufacturer's toy trains. Visit www.patstrains.com for more information and to place an order. Made by Patrick's Trains, 142 29th St., Wheeling, WV 26003.

A Towering Deal

Recently arrived from Ready Made Trains is a colorful selection of water towers crowned with a blinking red light assembly on the top of the tank. Each tower is 13" high, has a metal base that is approximately 4-1/4" square, and operates on 12 to 14 volts. The towers are completely painted in authentic colors. Some of the tower choices include Pennsylvania Power & Light (pictured), Long Island Railroad, Bethlehem Steel, Atomic Energy Commission, New York Subway, U.S. Army, and U.S. Navy. For the complete list and for special sale pricing, visit the RMT website at www.readymadetoys.com. Ready Made Trains by AristO, phone 973-351-9800 or 908-479-1279.



Streamlined Dreamin' from Atlas

Atlas has announced a new paint scheme for its O scale streamlined 10-6 sleeping cars. The Amtrak sleeper is a perfect companion to the streamlined Amtrak dome car, and both are now available. The Amtrak sleeping car has true scale dimensions and details. It is full scale length, measuring approximately 21-1/3" over the diaphragms. The realistic aluminum finish enhances an accurate representation of the stainless steel corrugations and welded seams of the prototype. The interior is fully detailed with LED lighting. Car includes full underbody details. This sleeping car is also equipped with the patented Adjust-A-Coupler system for horizontal coupler adjustment and spacing between cars. Recommended curves are 072 for 3-rail and 40-1/2" radius for 2-rail. Suggested price is \$149.95 for 3-rail and \$154.95 for 2-rail. Visit www.atlaso.com for more information, or contact your Atlas dealer. Atlas Model Railroad Co., 378 Florence Ave., Hillside, NJ 07205. Phone 908-687-0880.



Craftsman-Quality Benchwork



Mianne/Foley Woodworking offers a wide variety of pre-made benchwork components to provide a solid foundation for your O gauge (or any other gauge) layout. This high-quality, easy-to-construct benchwork features solid hardwood legs with levelers, built-up I-beam construction, is changeable and expandable, and

requires nothing more than a screwdriver for assembly. The design of this system provides for virtually unlimited layout possibilities. For more information, contact Foley Woodworking Company, 78 Holman St., Attleboro, MA 02703, phone 508-226-1600, or e-mail info@miannebenchwork.com. For complete details, visit www.miannebenchwork.com.

Rack Them Up

Expand the previously offered Motor City Express set with these uniquely numbered auto rack cars 2-pack from Lionel. Available in six modern road names, including the No. 6-19394 Union Pacific Auto Rack pictured here. These 1:48 scale cars feature opening doors, bi-level racks, self-adjusting couplers for operation on tighter curves, die-cast metal sprung trucks and couplers, hidden coupling tabs, and rotating bearing caps on trucks. Minimum recommended curve is 054. Suggested retail is \$219.99 per 2-pack. To locate a Lionel Authorized Dealer, visit www.lionel.com, or call 800-4LIONEL.



Please Take Your Seats



Golden Gate Depot has an assortment of 36 seated figures ready for Father's Day gift buying. Adorned in 1930s' to 1950s' attire, each of the male and female figures is uniquely painted. These will make great additions to a station platform or any scene or for adding important revenue sources to your previously empty passenger cars. The carded set of 36 figures sells for \$25.00 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling. Available online at www.goldengatedepot.com or send a check to Golden Gate Depot, 231 Market Place #223, San Ramon, CA 94583.

A Tinplate Tradition

Do you like prewar tinplate and want to get something different for Father's Day? Side Track Hobbies of Leonardtown, MD, has an extensive selection of new-in-box, older-issue MTH Tinplate Traditions trains and accessories in O and Standard gauge at very attractive prices. One example of available stock is this #10-1046 No. 79 Flashing Railroad Signal in ivory that measures a commanding 11-1/2" tall. Suggested retail price was \$69.95, but the Side Track Hobbies sale price is \$49.00. For more information on availability and special pricing, visit www.sidetrackhobbies.com, e-mail sidetrackhobbies@erols.com, phone 301-475-5381, fax 301-475-0337.



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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.

Trains in Two Scales

This amusement park scene is the first thing visitors to Alex Malliae's layout see as they enter his basement train room. The park features a Ferris wheel, Scrambler, carousel, swings, duck shoot, miniature golf course, and pirate ship. In front of the Scrambler, the HO train ride is added for the enjoyment of park visitors not lucky enough to be aboard that passing Erie passenger train. Action throughout the park is controlled by the same DCS hardware that Alex uses to run his trains.



Next Stop Moon Valley

A trolley line serves the town of Moon Valley on Bob Shaw's Moonglow Railroad. Seen here winding its way along the main thoroughfare is a Williams by Bachmann Peter Witt car. Bob used a router to cut channels into the plywood used for the city base. K-Line by Lionel SuperStreets was then placed in the cut-out areas resulting in a realistic flush appearance where the trolley tracks appear to be imbedded in the surrounding road surface. Moon Valley is the centerpiece of Bob's scenic 3-rail layout, which includes dozens of scenes like this.



Crew Change at Cedar Cove

It's a mild spring afternoon in 1964, and two new Ann Arbor GP-35 locomotives are being briefly inspected during a crew change at the town of Cedar Cove on Robert Brownsey's highly detailed 3-rail O gauge layout. Engines 388 and 391 are both Atlas O models. Now that there's some pleasant weather to deal with after a long winter, renovations are underway on that corner building on Stonewall Avenue. Robert has added individual lines to the utility poles on his layout, which is a detail often overlooked by most modelers.

Remembering

It is fall on Len Pilhofer's 3-rail layout, and a Lionel Legacy New York Central GP7 is working its consist of boxcars and reefers around a sweeping curve that skirts the town. Len's 16' x 11' layout occupies what was originally the dining room in his San Antonio, Texas, home. Len reports that he modeled the layout to resemble upstate New York along the NYC Water Level Route because that is the area he grew up in. The layout is controlled by Lionel Legacy command control system and powered by a Lionel Powerhouse 180, with lights and accessories powered by several smaller Lionel transformers. This photo was taken by his friend David Gast.

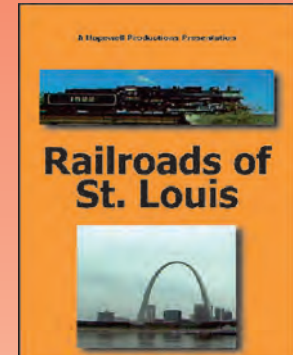
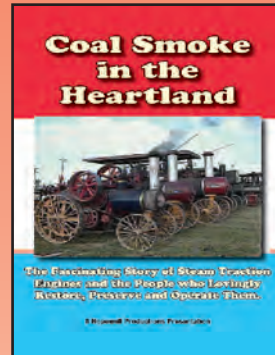
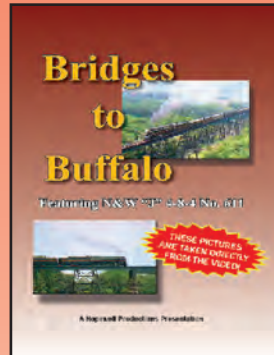
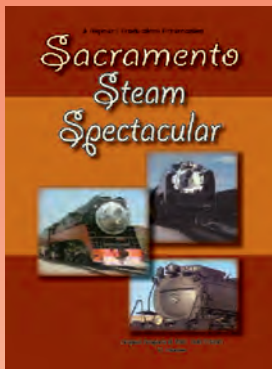
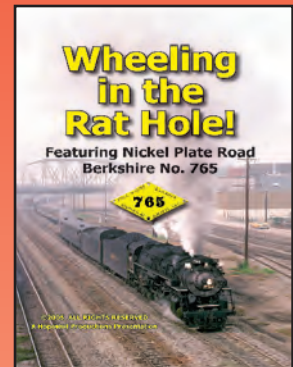


Warbonnet Red and Armour Yellow

Here's a view of part of the train yard on Mike Bennette's 3-rail O gauge layout. Mike models the 1950s when passenger trains were at their peak and he operates Santa Fe and Union Pacific motive power, all of which is MTH PS2 or PS3. Rolling stock is primarily comprised of MTH, Lionel, and K-Line passenger cars along with a variety of freight cars. Seen here are Santa Fe PA A-B-A units, a Santa Fe F3 A-B-B-A consist, and a Union Pacific DDX40. The engine house in the near background is an Atlas kit.

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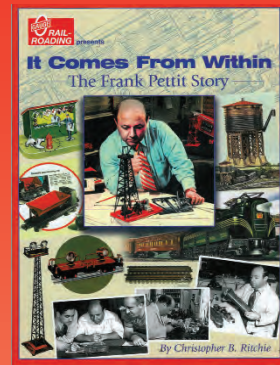
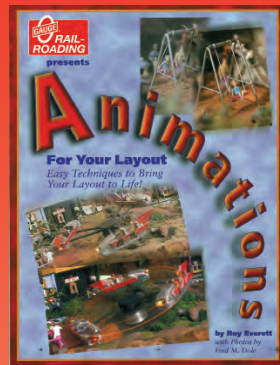
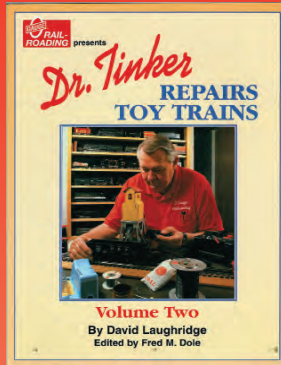
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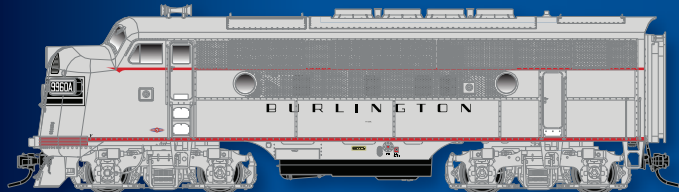


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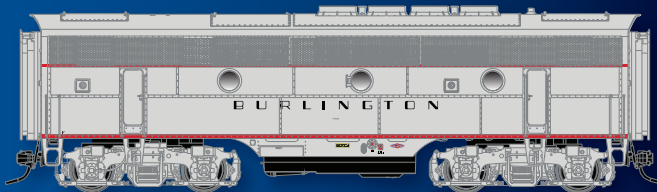
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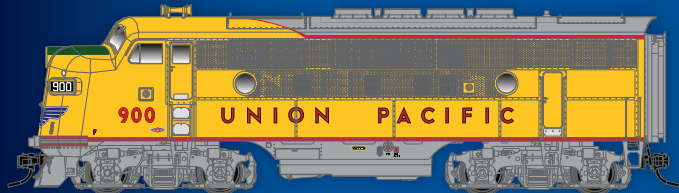
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Lionel Legacy GP35

Review and Photos by George Brown

When Ed Boyle offers one of his new toys for review on these pages, I always agree to it if for no other reason than he typically buys locomotives with colorful liveries. Of course, the striking and handsome Lionel Legacy GP35 in the Erie Lackawanna paint scheme was no exception. And since Ed is an even bigger fan of the Legacy command system and Legacy RailSounds than I am, if that's possible, I knew I'd be reviewing Lionel's latest and hoped I wouldn't be disappointed by it. I wasn't.

The real EMD GP35 was part of what came to be called the second generation of diesel motive power on North American railroads. Its turbocharged EMD 567D3A prime mover developed 2500 hp, which gave a number of railroads cause to buy new GP35s to replace their lower horsepower early F and GP units. Between 1963

and 1966, 1,250 new GP35s went to work pulling freight trains across America while 26 were employed on Canadian roads. The three largest buyers of new GP35s were the Santa Fe with 161, Southern Pacific with 160 plus 22 more to its Cotton Belt subsidiary, and the Pennsylvania with 119 units. As to the Erie Lackawanna, it bought 36 of the 2500-hp Geeps.

Construction and Features

Physically, the 1:48 scale GP35 follows today's common architecture for O gauge models of road diesels. A molded plastic body shell mounts on a stamped steel frame and covers the Legacy, Odyssey II, and RailSounds electronics as well as the motors and smoke unit. Underneath the frame are the die-cast trucks and pilots plus the fuel tank, which houses the speaker

and an infrared communications transceiver. At this writing, which is early February 2013, the IR transceiver has no function for the hobbyists, but I'm reasonably sure that development of a future product using the device is in the works at Lionel.

The features and details sidebar lists most of the physical attributes for the GP35, with the photos showing most of the external details and finish.

As I understand from the Lionel 2012 Signature Edition catalog, the GP35 is offered in eight road names including the Erie Lackawanna. The other liveries are Canadian Pacific, Conrail, Milwaukee Road, New York Central, Pennsylvania, Southern Pacific, and Union Pacific. For the multi-unit enthusiast, such as me, two powered units are offered plus a dummy unit in each color scheme. In the Erie





Lionel Legacy GP35 Features and Details

- Legacy control system
- Odyssey II speed control
- Legacy RailSounds
- Fan-driven smoke unit with adjustable output
- Command-controlled die-cast ElectroCouplers
- On-board diagnostics with trouble codes visible to operator
- Die-cast truck side frames, pilots, and fuel tank
- Metal trucks and drive gears
- Four traction tires
- Dual can motors with flywheels
- Wire handrails with stamped steel stanchions
- Wire grab irons
- Separate windshield wipers, horns, and clear wind wings
- Working drop-down steps
- Separate train lines, hand brake, safety chains, and sand fill caps
- Wire lifting rings
- Separate fans visible inside their housings
- Nonslip tread pattern on walkways
- Directional LED headlights and marker lights
- Illuminated cab interior and number boards
- Painted crew figures
- O31 minimum curve

Lackawanna paint scheme, powered units have cab numbers 2555 or 2558 while 2561 is on the dummy unit. At full retail list, getting all three units of a particular road name would be a significant investment but could likely prove to be worth it both visually and audibly.

At the back of the body shell, the upper section with the three cooling fans lifts off to reveal not only configuration switches but also a plug and retaining clip for an owner-supplied 9-volt battery. This battery is only needed for conventional transformer-controlled operation. Its sole purpose is to keep the RailSounds going through the power interruptions needed to change the locomotive's direction. Instructions for setting the switches and installing a battery are in the owner's manual that accompanies the engine.

Also included with the engine is a memory module that simplifies setting up the Geep in the Legacy command system. Again, the owner's guide includes instructions for both command and conventional setup and operation.

A tube of smoke fluid, a small plastic funnel, and a spare set of traction tires are also packed with the engine. If replacement of one or more traction tires becomes necessary, the task is relatively easy. All that's necessary is a number 1 or 0 Phillips screwdriver to remove and install the die-cast side frames from the trucks. A straightened paper clip works well to slip the new tire into position on the grooved wheel.

For the most part, the paint and decoration is first class on the Erie Lackawanna model I reviewed. The only imperfections I could find were on the edges of the steps and footboards where the yellow paint was obviously painted by hand. But on the other





side of that coin, the simulated black rubber gaskets painted around the cab windows were flawless as were the stripes on the body and the lettering.

At Trackside

At the initial power-up of the Geep in command mode, I was pleasantly surprised and pleased with the prime mover's startup sounds, which was a sound set I'd not heard before from a Lionel diesel. I could easily imagine the roar from the startup of a second GP35 in a Legacy or TMCC lash-up of two powered units.

With our standard test train coupled to the GP35 and the Legacy momentum control set to medium or even high, the motion of the virtually heavy train and the sounds of the prime mover were convincing. Of course, Legacy RailSounds now features the realistic eight run levels of real diesel locomotives and the quilling horn.

Crew and dispatcher dialogs along with various other spoken announcements or sound sequences are also included in the Legacy RailSounds repertoire. Although I'm not a big fan of these sounds, I can readily see a lot of entertainment value especially when showing off trains to visiting friends.

Regardless of the weight of the train coupled to it, the GP35 ran without a fault on the editorial Carpet Central Railroad. Although Lionel advertises the engine for operation on O31 minimum diameter curves, I ran it exclusively on my Atlas O54 and O72 main lines and O72 switches.

Power for both conventional and command operation was from the ZW-L also under review in this issue, and I used both my Legacy and original TMCC systems for command operation. When the time came to test the engine with the original TMCC system, I set the CAB-1 to medium momentum primarily so I could run the Geep with 100 speed steps instead of the system's default of 32 steps—big improvement.

Under power with the speed control turned on, the GP35's flywheel-equipped can motors were whisper quiet, even with the sound system shut down. Although the realism factor dictates that I modulate the throttle to keep the train at the speed I want it to run, I prefer to just sit back and watch them run at a constant speed with the speed control electronics doing all the work. On the CCRR, the Odyssey II system did a great job



compensating for minor fluctuations in the track power as well as dealing with curves and slight grades.

At the End of the Run

The Lionel scale GP35 looked at home pulling just about any era of freight train with cars ranging from a scale 40' to 70' or even longer. It proved to be a smooth runner and showed a right respectable pulling power. And best of all to this ferroequine audiophile, it sounded great! 🎧

6-38548 Erie Lackawanna GP35

Retail prices: \$499.99 (powered) or \$259.99 (nonpowered) at authorized Lionel dealers

Lionel LLC; www.lionel.com

Lionel Legacy GP35 Performance

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

Length: 14-5/8" over couplers; 13-5/8" between footboards

Distance Between Locomotive Pickup Rollers: 1st and 2nd: 3"; 1st and 3rd: 8"; 1st and 4th: 11"

Weight on Driving Wheels: 4 lbs, 2 oz

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

Tractive Effort @ 18 VAC: 2 lbs, 4 oz @ 1.4 A, 25 W

Minimum Sustained Speed @ 18 VAC: 2 scale mph @ 0.4 A, 7 W

Maximum Tested Speed @ 18 VAC: 60 scale mph @ 0.9 A, 16 W

Test Train

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





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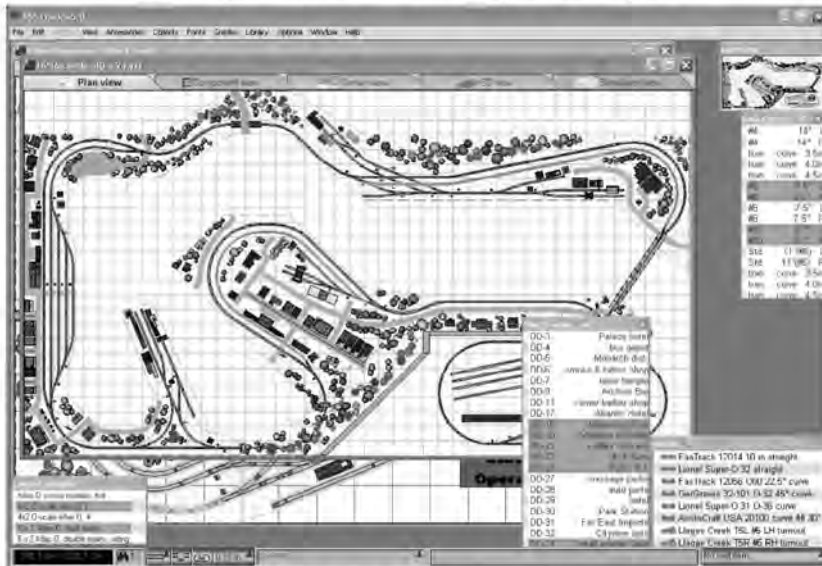


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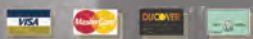
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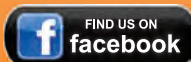
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Lionel ZW-L

Close Encounter of the Second Kind

Review and Photos by George Brown



The ZW-L appears similar in shape to the traditional postwar Lionel ZW, but about 1-1/2 times larger. Illuminated meters display the voltage delivered to the track and the current in amps that the train or accessories use.

Our previous issue, Run 263, April 2013, hosted my initial review of the new Lionel ZW-L transformer. To briefly recap some of the operating specs for the ZW-L, it is rated at an aggregate total of 620 watts from the unit's four output channels with each channel capable of supplying a maximum of 10 amps at 18 volts AC. In other words, each channel can supply up to 180 watts. If all four channels are set for maximum output, dynamic load balancing automatically occurs within the transformer to keep the maximum combined output at the regulatory mandated 620 watts.

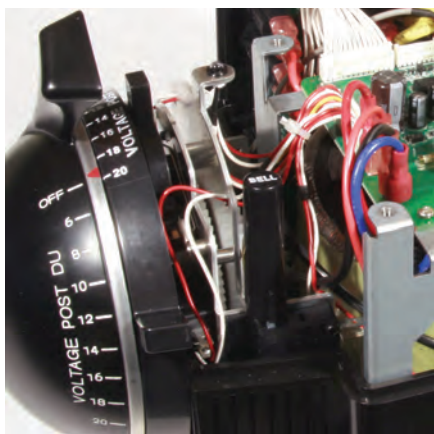
Should an overload or short circuit occur on any output channel, fold-back current limiting reduces the output of the affected channel to a maximum of 10 amps within 1 to 1.5 cycles, which on a 60 Hz AC line is between 16.7 and 25.0 milliseconds. A millisecond is 1/1000th of a second. The channel is held in this current-limited state for three seconds, and if the overload persists, it is automatically shut down. However, the remaining three output channels are unaffected and continue to function normally. According to Jim Rhode, who did much of the ZW-L design work at Lionel, 0.1uF filter capacitors on each output help suppress

voltage spikes that can result from short circuits.

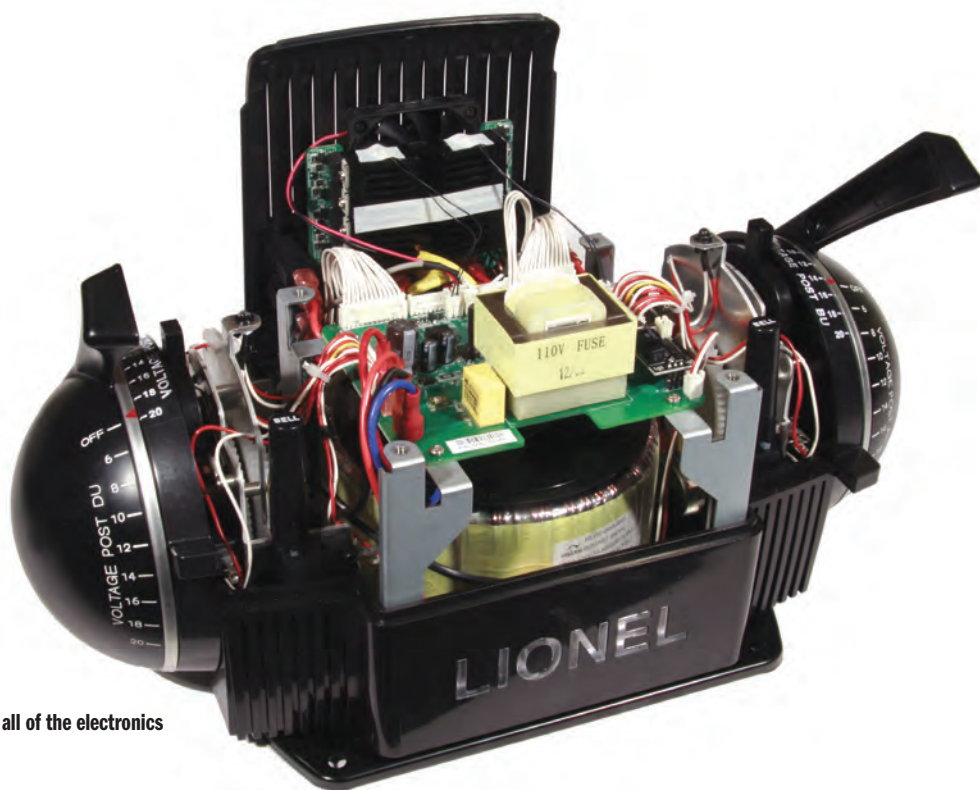
Because the new ZW-L arrived with just a few days to go before Run 263 was scheduled into production, I didn't get to spend much time running it. So as I promised in that initial review, let's get into how the ZW-L performed on the Editorial Carpet Central Railroad with a wide cross section of locomotives from current and past manufacturers.

Testing Paradigm

The hardware configuration for testing the ZW-L consisted of command bases for both TMCC and Legacy connected together with the Lionel Y-cable. The requisite command signal wire connected the Legacy base directly to the tracks rather than through the Base or U terminals on the ZW-L. For most of the testing, a DCS TIU also was in the power circuits between the transformer and the tracks. The ZW-L simply replaced my two postwar ZWs on the power bench for the CCRR.



The handles on the left side of the transformer select the voltage delivered to output channels DU and CU.



With the upper case removed, all of the electronics and mechanisms are visible.

Power channel AU and its associated throttle handle ran the inner main line with channel DU and its throttle powering and controlling the outer line. Channel and handle CU provided the power for the TMCC ASCs that controlled crossover switches between the two tracks and also switches for the sidings and yard.

After wiring the ZW-L into the power bench, I ran the transformer as just about any hobbyist would who had plopped down up to eight C-notes for the device, which is a lot of money in most circles including mine. Basically, I treated the transformer like it was mine and I naturally would want it to last.

But that's not saying that I ran the ZW-L once a week on Sunday evening with a light train that pulled no more than an amp or two. To me, a transformer is to run trains, and some of those trains can pull a lesser power supply to its knees, which is why the CCRR had a pair of 275-watt ZWs, one for each track. I have several trains that pull a lot of amps—enough to turn either of my old ZWs into virtual space heaters. So one of my testing goals was to see how well the new ZW-L would handle one or more current-hog trains.

My testing paradigm also included determining which of the current and past locomotive-resident direction control and sound electronics were compatible or not with the pulse width modulated power the ZW-L puts on the rails. Every locomotive I have, which range in ages from 65 years to just a few months, runs on the pure sine wave power from my postwar ZWs. So I chose these old transformers as my benchmark to measure the ZW-L against rather than contemporary units such as the Z-1000 that output pulse width modulated power in one form or another. Is it fair to measure a new product against an old one? I think so if it means the new power supply might not run locomotives that an old one will. After all, there are still a lot of old to ancient locomotives in regular use on today's O gauge layouts. Therefore I feel it is essential I determine if the ZW-L will run them.

As a lesser planned action and one that turned out to be surprisingly enjoyable was running conventional locomotives using my TMCC and Legacy command systems to control the transformer outputs in both single-channel and four-channel operation.

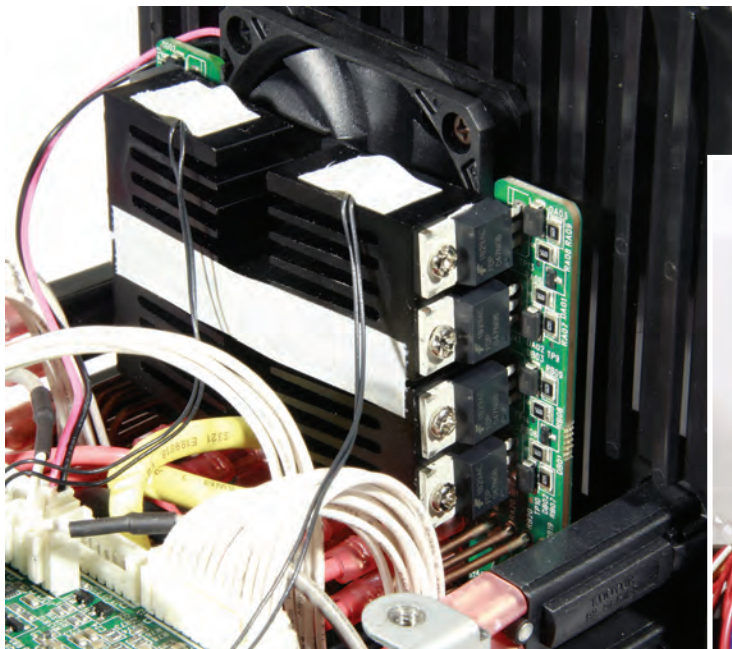
Powering Command Locomotives

All of my command control Lionel and MTH locomotives ran great on power from the ZW-L in both command and conventional modes. These engines included all releases of TMCC, Legacy, RailSounds 2.5 through RailSounds 5.0, and Legacy RailSounds. The same held true for DCS with Proto-Sound 2.0 or Proto-Sound 3.0. I'll get into engines equipped with the original Proto-Sound later.

Engines running under TMCC with Commander or Cruise Commander motor drivers from the Electric RR Co. also proved compatible with the ZW-L. With a few exceptions, TMCC engines with an Engineer on Board motor driver board also ran normally. These included units from Atlas O, 3rd Rail, and Weaver.

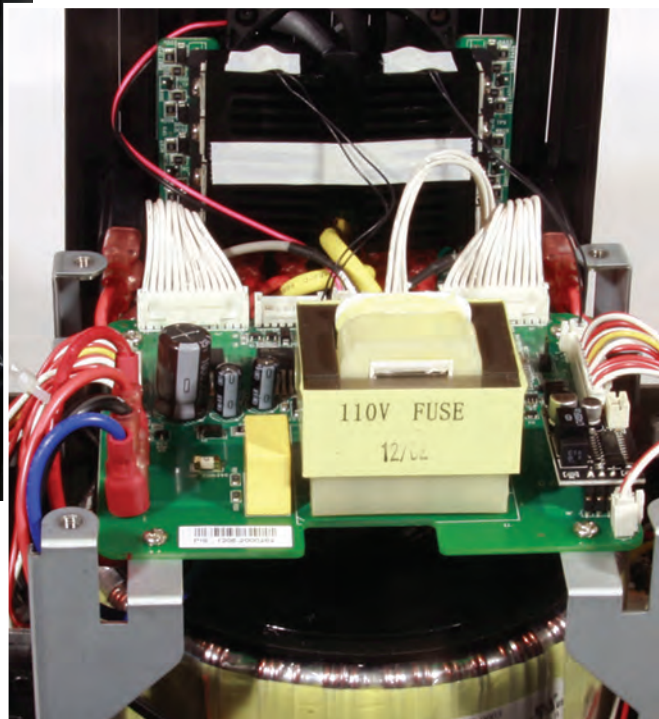
The exceptions were three EOB-equipped MP15 diesel switchers from Atlas O that would not run properly with less than approximately 18 volts from the ZW-L. All three behaved identically. At track power of 12 to 15 volts according to the meter, the engines ran normally in forward. However, when I simply pressed the reverse key on the CAB-1 with the throttle closed, the subject engine would inch forward, stop, inch forward again, stop, and so forth until I turned the throttle knob just slightly. Then the engine would run as commanded in reverse until I stopped it, at which time it would begin inching forward again. Raising the track power to 18 volts negated the problem.

As a side test, I set up a temporary loop of track with an old ZW for power. All three of the switchers ran well on the ZW



The transformer's electronics include the large toroid in the base of the ZW-L and the electrical control circuit board mounted on the metal frame

At the back of the case, the output voltage driver devices are mounted on each side of a massive heat sink with the cooling fan located behind it



regardless of the voltage. I left this setup in place through the rest of the review just in case I needed to verify how one or more engines ran before the ZW-L arrived.

An audible AC hum was noticeable from RailSounds 4.0 systems in engines containing ERR, EOB, and even Lionel DCDR boards. This hum was prominent at track power of 8 to 16 volts but would diminish to a more tolerable level at 17 to 18 volts. The hum only occurred with power from the ZW-L, but not from sine wave power from my postwar ZWs.

One particular event caused me some concern. On initial power-up of an Atlas O GP7 with EOB, the red indicator on the ZW-L lit momentarily, probably indicating a transitory short circuit within the engine. Unfortunately, the engine has not run right since then. I don't know if the failure was merely a random one or if it was caused by its first power-up on the chopped sine wave power from the ZW-L. For the present, I'll go with the random failure scenario and will troubleshoot the failure at a later date.

Low speed throttle control on several engines seemed to be noticeably better with the ZW-L than what I experienced with my old ZWs. One notable example was a Lionel Archive F3 A-B-B-A set with TMCC and series-wound Pullmor motors. Another was a trio of Atlas Trainman diesels that I upgraded with ERR Cruise Commander motor drivers. They ran really great in the slow speeds of switching duty.

Powering Conventional Locomotives

Conventionally controlled locomotives with DC can motors and electronic reverse units from Lionel, MTH, Williams, and Williams by Bachmann all ran without any problems. These included MTH RailKing and Williams engines from the 1990s.

My only two original Proto-Sound locomotives are GP60M diesels, both with battery eliminators installed. As a side note, the original Proto-Sound was actually a reduced-feature QSI product that MTH installed in its early engines. Both Geeps ran as I hoped they would; that is, without any problems. However, with the small sample of only two identical original Proto-Sound locomotives, I can't say with any assurance that all of the early Proto-Sound products from MTH will be compatible with the ZW-L.

Lionel locomotives with series-wound brush motors ran well but were unusually noisy on the chopped sine wave power from the ZW-L. Engines tested with the ZW-L included modern-era steamers and diesels from MPC and LTI as well as postwar examples.

To be candid, I only ran my postwar engines one loop around the CCRR, if that far. Since all of these engines are old enough to sign up for Medicare, I didn't want to submit their armature, field coil, and E-unit coil wiring to the stress of contemporary pulsed AC power. To me, these old Lionel locomotives from the late 1940s and early 1950s are not unlike a Cadillac of the same era. They were structurally bulletproof and mechanically reliable in their day, but that day is long past. Bringing them out for a short display run once in a while is fine, but I'll leave the daily running to the modern trains.

Both the whistle and bell buttons on the ZW-L worked every time on locomotives equipped with the necessary hardware for generating these sounds, including those in my postwar Lionel collection. Throughout running conventional locomotives with the ZW-L, one of my delights was the velvet-smooth operation of its throttle handles.

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Compatibility Issues

My brass steam engines equipped with QSI control and sound systems would not run properly on power from the ZW-L, including the best QSI had to offer at that time: the QS-3000. These engines ran without problems on the full sine wave power from my old ZWs, but they were balky with unpredictable sounds when running on pulse width modulated power. Because the QSI boards had a history of problems with this type of power, I was not at all surprised but was still somewhat disappointed with the performance, or rather the lack of it from these engines. Perhaps it's time to upgrade my brass engines to TMCC with the Cruise Commander and RailSounds Commander board sets.

Another problem was nearly catastrophic for a favorite set of diesels from the early 1990s, specifically a Weaver FA-FB pair with chain drive. On full sine wave power, they are some of the smoothest running engines I own. To my dismay, both of the pair's electronic reverse units almost fried within a few minutes of running at

approximately 7 to 8 volts from the ZW-L. As hot as the rectifier and power transistors got, I was surprised they didn't go up in smoke. Additionally, the motors growled aggressively with the pair under way, which I should have heeded and stopped the run immediately. Hindsight is 20-20. In prior operations with my original ZWs, those boards never got beyond warm even during a prolonged run, and the motors ran nearly silent. After letting the boards cool, I put the Alco pair on the ZW powered temporary loop to see if their reverse units were toast. Eureka! The pair still ran great together and seemed no worse for the experience. Gee, whoever built those reverse boards used some mighty tough components.

The examples in the preceding paragraphs are the incompatibilities I noticed with locomotives I own. Additional compatibility issues might be out there with other locomotives, especially the geriatric ones. So to loosely paraphrase the mileage statements in automotive advertising today, your experiences may vary from mine...to the good or otherwise.



The switches on the back of the ZW-L are set to run in conventional operation where each of the four handles controls its respective output channel. Each output channel has an operator-resettable circuit breaker.

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Pushing the Envelope

I like running multiple-unit conventional and TMCC lash-ups, but depending on the number and type of motors, they can draw a lot of current. Add a long and heavy passenger train with several incandescent light bulbs in each car and watch the ammeter needle head for its red line. Each of my old ZWs powered only one track, and either one would get hot rather quickly powering just such an amp-eater train. In fact, I'd always closely monitor how hot the transformer got and limit the run time to keep from overheating it. So to push the envelope on the ZW-L and see how it would deliver in a prolonged high-current duty cycle, I coupled together my longest passenger train. It included not one but two Lionel F3 A-B-A sets, each with dual series-wound motors. The ancient and power hungry RailSounds II electronics was in each dummy A unit. Fourteen Lionel illuminated aluminum passenger cars plus an express reefer made up the train. Oh, as a side note, all the engines and the cars matched with their orange, silver, and black livery of the TCA 25th Anniversary passenger train.

My running the train at a moderate speed put the ammeter for output channel DU at the ragged edge of 10 amps, and occasionally fold-back current limiting kicked in with the overload indicator flashing. Backing off the throttle slightly would terminate the current-limiting with the train staying more or less at the same speed through each event.

The results of the run were surprisingly good with the ZW-L remaining cool. So I set up a second juice hog train on the CCRR's other main line. The motive power for this train was a four-motor Lionel F3 A-B-B-A set with TMCC, two RailSounds 4.0 B units, and seven matching aluminum passenger cars—the Texas Special. The diner in this set also has RailSounds electronics. This train ran at a pretty good clip with about 8 amps showing on the meter for channel AU.

Throughout the whole exercise, the ZW-L showed no sign of heat stress after nearly 30 minutes of powering these two sets of juice hogs. Its case was cool to the touch, and the fan-driven air moving out of the back of the case was...well, remarkably cool. I was duly impressed! I understand from Jon Zahornacky, the chief technology officer at Lionel, the power output MOSFETs used in the ZW-L are highly efficient with little heat-generating internal resistance. These power devices essentially pass electrical current through them much like straight-through switches.

As to the powered F3s, their motors and trucks got characteristically hot, which is why I limited their run to about 30 minutes.

Single-Channel Operation

On occasions, I'll run just one train on the CCRR and switch it between the inner and outer main lines via the crossovers. When a conventional locomotive or even a multi-unit

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consist was the power of choice, exactly matching the voltage on each of the two tracks was for all intents a hit or miss proposition with my old ZWs. As a result, the train almost always increased or decreased its speed as it passed from one track via the crossover and encountered the slightly different voltage on the other track.


One evening early in the road testing of the ZW-L, I configured it for command operation as track 1 with single-channel output; that is, both AU and DU put out the same voltage to each of their respective tracks. My command controller of choice was initially a CAB-2, but I later switched to a CAB-1 just for grins. A pair of Williams U33C diesels was at the point of a moderate length freight train that I planned to run on both main lines.

Many years had passed since I last ran conventional locomotives using a command remote to control the track power, so this experience was a relatively new one for me. In all candor, I had a ball running the conventional U-boats with

my command remotes. As the engines and their train passed gracefully through the crossovers from one track to the other, their speed was unchanged. The transformer responded predictably to changes in throttle settings of even just one speed step as I lay on the floor several feet from my power bench and the ZW-L. The only glitch was that I had to throw the switches manually. With all channels set to output the same level, and that was usually less than 10 volts, the voltage from channel CU was not enough to throw the switches, which was no fault of the ZW-L. If I wanted to use the ZW-L extensively for command-controlled conventional running with single-channel output, I'd have to power my switches using a separate accessory transformer.

Setting up the ZW-L for four-channel command operation was a whole different ball game and still a bunch of fun. Then I could control the power of each channel individually including CU at the level needed to throw the switches.

At the End of the Run

Over the past couple of months supplying power to the CCRR, the ZW-L proved to be a powerful, reliable, and cool running power supply for today's command and conventional O gauge trains. In spite of a few incompatibility issues with some locomotive control and sound systems, I found the new transformer's operating features and capabilities easy to understand and to use, and its technology-rich safety features appear to be outstanding. Its 620 watts of continuous output places the ZW-L as the highest capacity AC transformer on today's O gauge railroading market. 

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KLI761-1592 GN Boxcar	\$34.99
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KLI762-8014 White Rock Wood Reefer	\$31.99
KLI6253-1331 CB&Q Die-Cast 2 Bay Hopper.	\$39.99

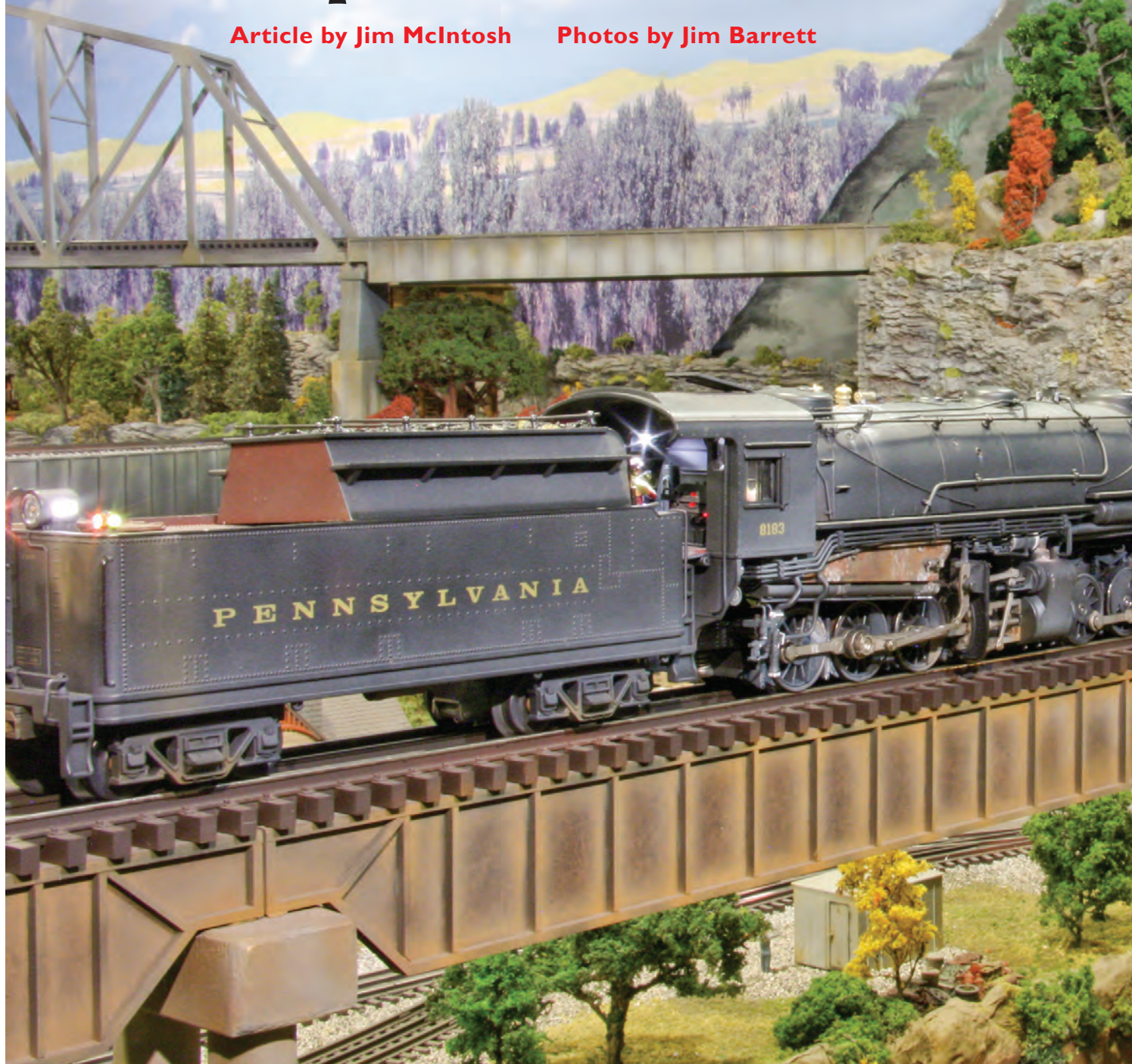
www.nicholassmithtoys.com

Multiple levels for more fun

Empire Builder

Article by Jim McIntosh

Photos by Jim Barrett



A Lionel Vision Line Pennsy CC2 traverses one of the many high-level bridges on my layout.



It's night at the massive coaling facility.

Sometime in 1999, I started in O gauge by purchasing a steam engine here and there, even though I had no space for a layout. Later that same year, my wife, Michele, and I decided to add a double garage to our home with an attic above, a pull-down staircase, and enough room to stand up in the center. At the time I thought that would do just fine for my train layout, but that turned out to be only the beginning.

I first built a layout in this original space, which measured about 24' x 24', but in just a few years, I found I really didn't have enough room. I developed a solution to the problem that involved extending the upstairs level of the garage. In unused space underneath the addition would be a nice shaded pond, complete with waterfall, and an attractive garden area under the add-on train room. I figured about 28' x 40' of shade would be nice, and, somewhat amazingly and not coincidentally, that same area could then be added to the layout. This gave me the space I needed to build the layout I had long dreamed of. Empire building begins!



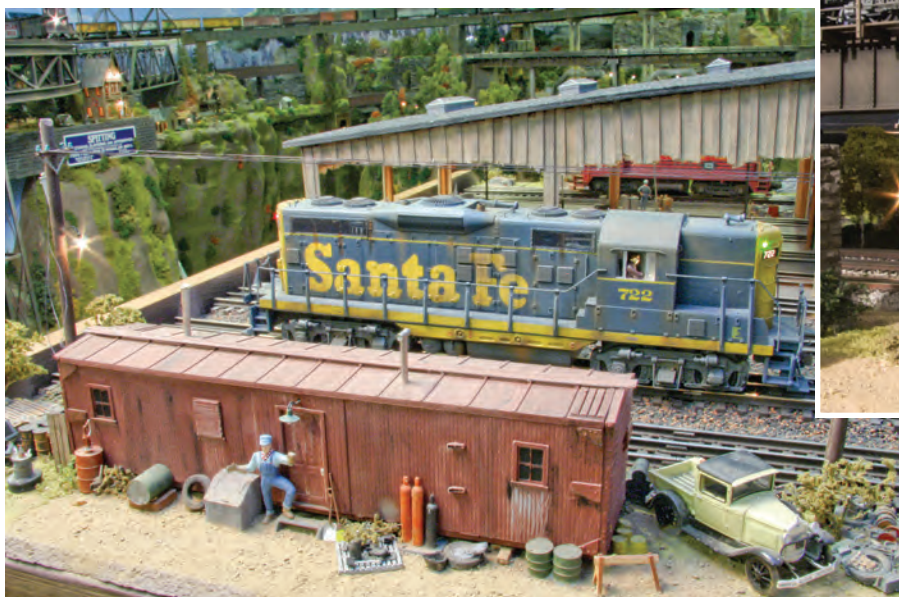
Giants of the rails rattle the ground as they pass on two levels. A Lionel Union Pacific Big Boy and Vision Line Challenger are double-headed on the bridge and are above the Lionel Vision Line Santa Fe 3000.



A Lionel Southern Pacific S2 inches up to the diesel service facility's pit.



Lionel's Vision Line NYC Hudson crosses a custom girder bridge.



An MTH Santa Fe Geep awaits its turn for a ride aboard the Ross transfer table.

I wanted the layout to incorporate a number of different track levels complete with lots of mountains and bridges, so I started on the benchwork. I didn't work with a preconceived track diagram. I'm pretty handy when it comes to carpentry and electrical work, so progress moved along smoothly for a few years with visions, trials, and a few errors of design until I ultimately came up with the track plan you see here. I eventually got to a point where operation of the trains, acces-

sories, and the layout in general worked out very well.

I had it in the back of my mind how the scenery should look, but the task appeared so overwhelming I just didn't know where to start. I called on Brian Sheffield, proprietor of the Legacy Station train store in Lilburn, Georgia. Brian had long been an invaluable asset to me, and his hobby shop was where I had made most of my train purchases in recent years.

Brian and I discussed where I was in the construction stage of my layout. He knew Richard Ruggles who had experience with building other layouts and a good understanding for trains and their appearance. I met with Richard, and he visited my home nearly every other week for approximately the next four years. One of the great things about this hobby is that one person knows another, who knows yet another, and very soon you have met and made great friendships with people who are always glad to help. Richard brought in Elaine Oye, who is the artistic painter of my backdrops.



Western Maryland #830 rumbles by several section gang workers who are working on their handcar.



Residents on the small rural town nestled beneath these bridges are accustomed to the sight and sounds of double-headed heavy freights crossing overhead.



The Pennsy CC2 passes a Weaver brass switch tower.



The team left to right: Brian Sheffield, owner of Legacy Station; me; Elaine Oye, the artist who painted all of my backdrops; and Richard Ruggles, the layout builder and modeler.



A 3rd Rail Z8 Challenger emerges from a tunnel near the large and highly detailed coaling facility.



The Korber roundhouse was modified and weathered by Richard Ruggles.



A 3rd Rail Pennsylvania Atlantic and its passenger consist are departing the modified Lionel Rico station.



An Atlas SW9 and billboard reefer pass a picturesque waterfall.



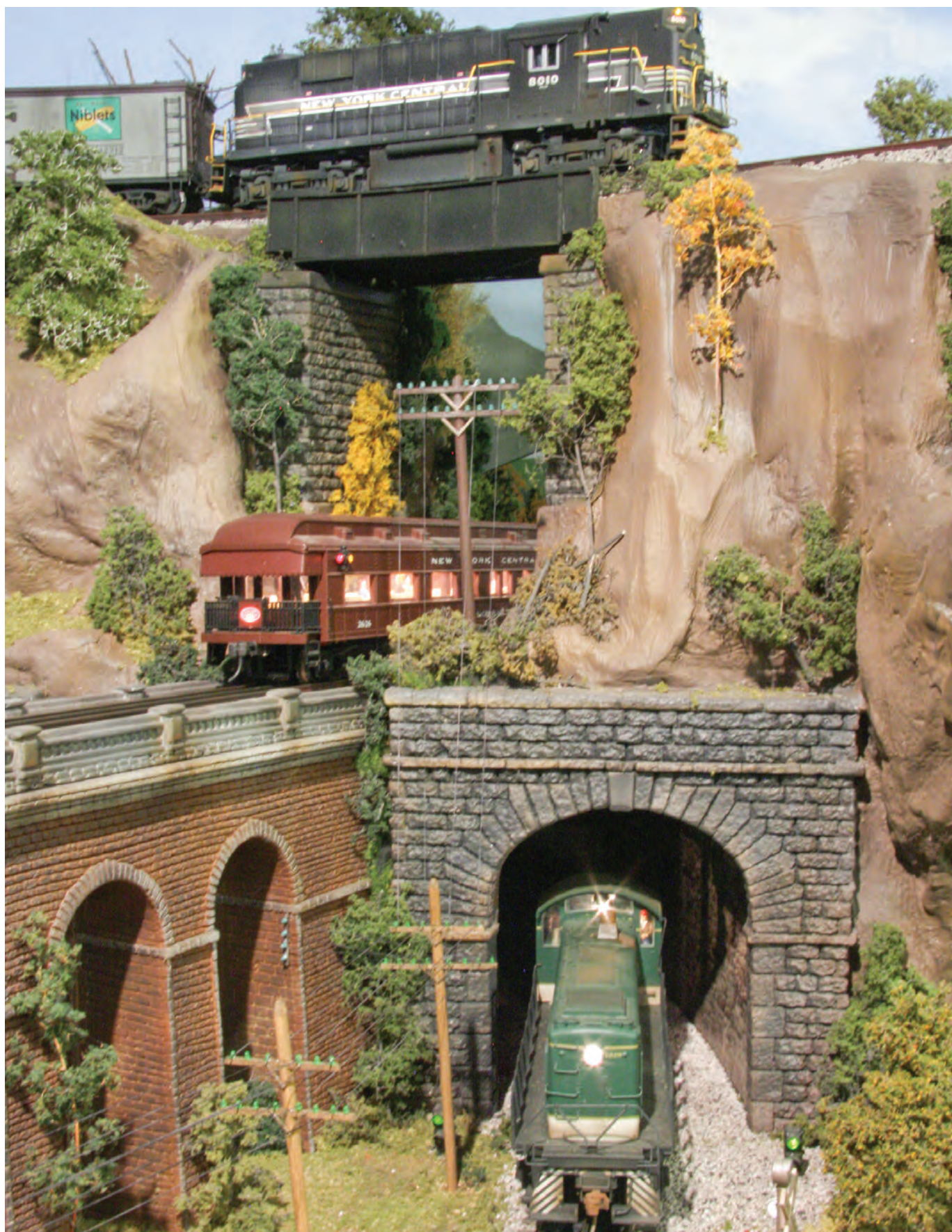
The fireman of an N&W Y3 tends to a thirsty tender. The brass caboose is from Weaver Models.



This Bucyrus crane was modified to include lights and smoke, and weathered by Richard Ruggles.



A Southern S2 switcher gets some attention at the diesel servicing facility.



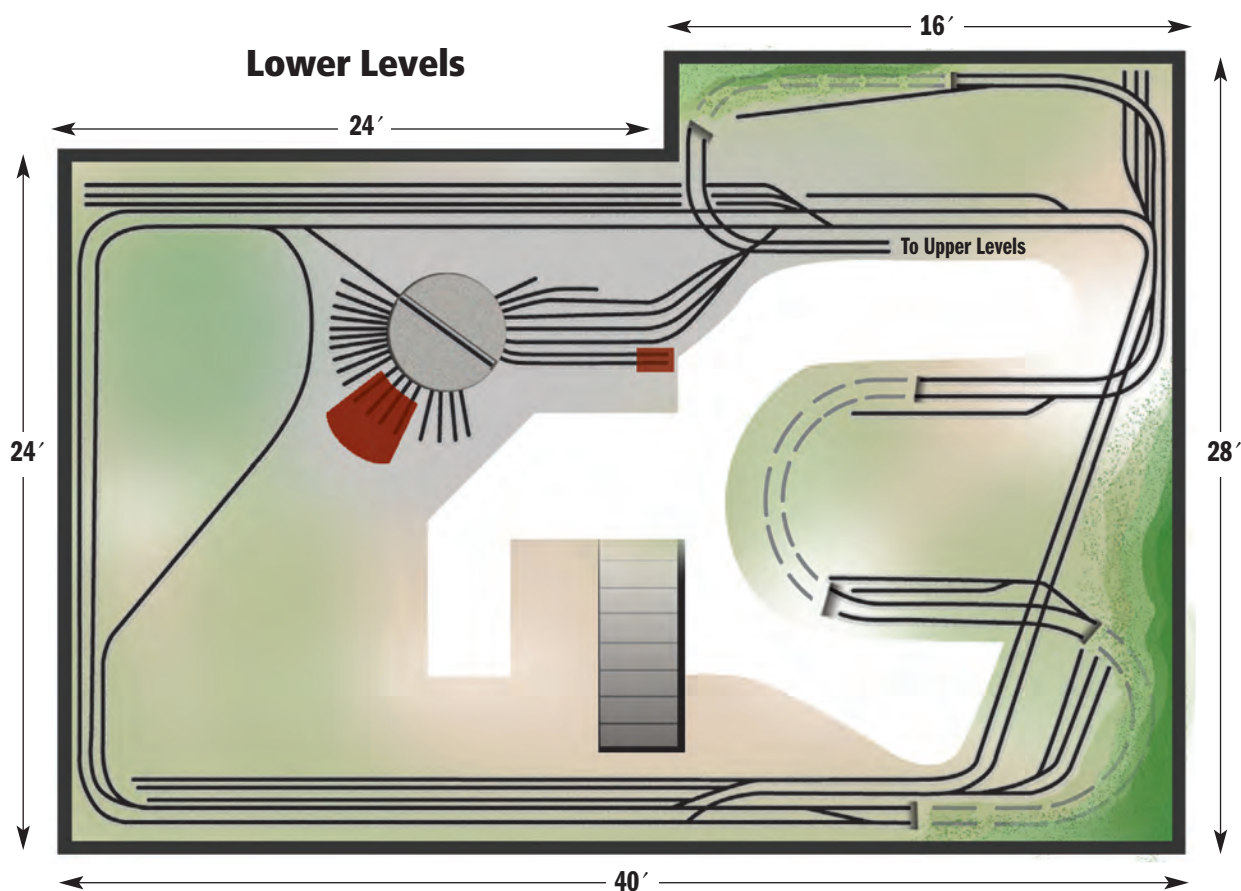
The Lionel RS11 in NYC livery passes over a passenger train while an MTH Southern S2 emerges from the tunnel on the lower level.



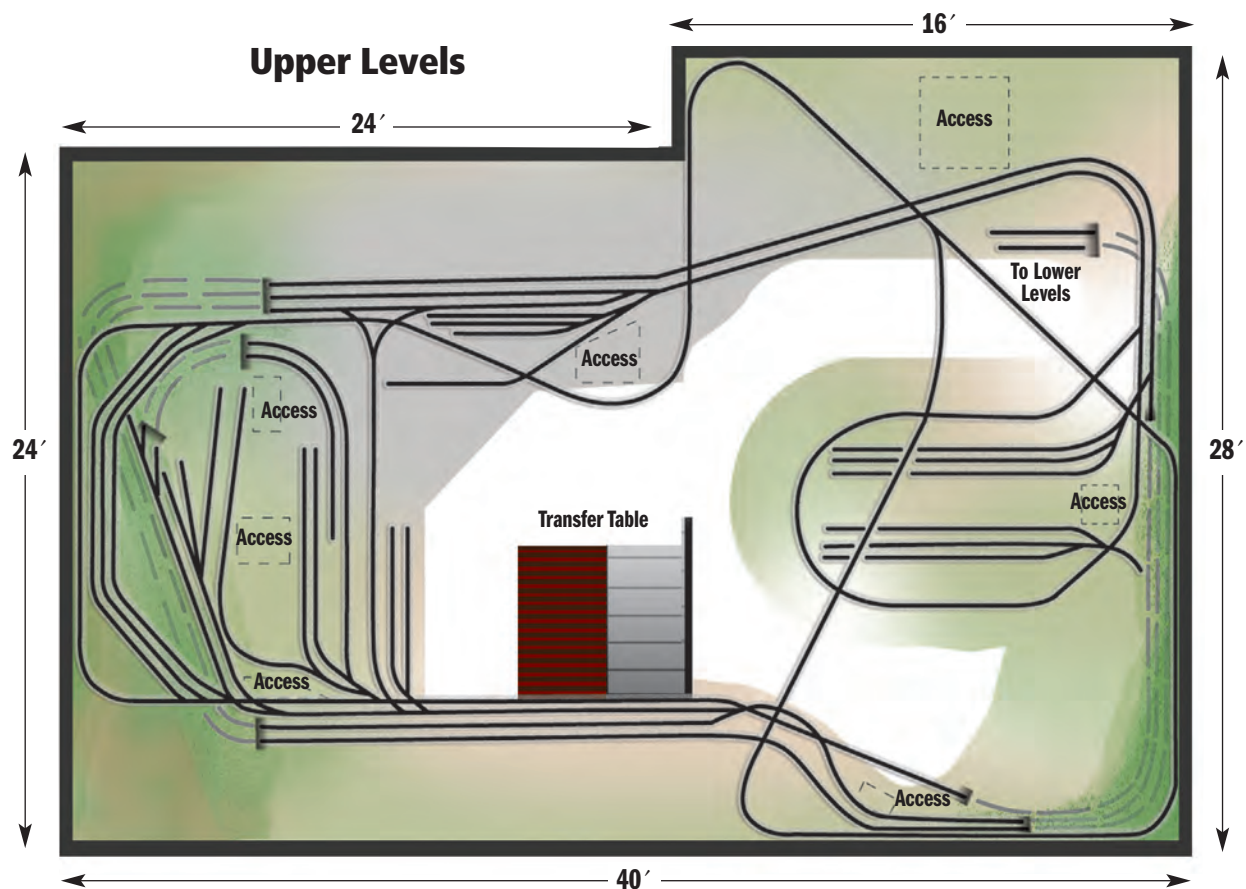
Jim's Pool Room is a highly detailed structure inside and outside.



A Z gauge train circles the playground.



This BNSF diesel, an Atlas model, is parked under the shed adjacent to the transfer table.



The rail line serves many small rural towns.



This steam engine service facility features a Korber roundhouse and Ross turntable.





The Atlas Lehigh Valley SW9 waits its turn to ride the transfer table.



The walkway beneath this Bridge Solutions truss bridge was painted by Elaine Oye to resemble a river.

My layout is now going through another phase of more and better detail. Eventually, seeing my trains run through such highly detailed and weathered scenery makes me want to see that same aged, weathered effect in my trains as well. This approach is not for everyone, but it represents the direction I have taken in recent years.

I was amazed to see the nice work Richard had done with other trains, so he now weathers many of mine as well. But I didn't stop there. Over time, I had Richard weather and detail many things on my layout. He is a remarkable modeler, and I was very lucky to find someone with his skills to help me. I always try to leave myself open to ideas and suggestions offered by others. I like to get together with other model railroaders along with their families and friends and hold operating sessions—the more the better. Every time guests view my layout, I just might get ideas for a whole new direction.

In my case, what I have gained is a much better layout than I had ever imagined. Along with Richard and Elaine, we have managed to put together what I feel is a wonderful layout. We certainly have had fun building it.

But the journey isn't over yet. Who knows? There just might be a more shaded area for that garden...an even bigger garage. 🚗



About the Author

Jim McIntosh was born in Hamilton, Ohio. His family moved to Tampa, Florida, which is where Jim spent the next 33 years. He met Michele in 1964, and they married in 1968. They have three children: Jimmy Jr., Krissie, and Hollie. They moved to the mountains of north Georgia in 1986. Jim and Michele currently live on an 80-acre farm very near the homes of their three children and six grandchildren. Grandson, Eli Cooper, shown here with Jim and Michelle, is an avid model railroader.



Running Under the Wire

Article, Photos, and Diagram by Don McCuaig

I model the Milwaukee Road as it looked in the early 1950s. It was an amazing Tom Swift type of electric railroad. In the future all railroads in America were going to be electrified, or so thought many planners of the day. Of course that turned out to be wishful thinking.

One problem in modeling the Milwaukee Road is creating an O gauge overhead wire or catenary system (Photo 1). It's always bothered me to see model electric locomotives running down the right-of-way with their pantographs reaching for a wire that isn't there. I was determined this was not going to be the case on my layout. And you certainly don't have to be modeling the Milwaukee Road to build a catenary system. There were hundreds of trolley, interurban, and mainline electric railroads that used similar systems.

Before getting started, you need to consider track curvatures. I model a minimum of O72. Like most model railroad projects, the larger the curve diameter, the easier the job. I can't even imagine running overhead wire in anything under O31. There is currently only one ready-made O gauge catenary system sold today,

but it is costly and designed after what was commonly used on eastern roads. So my only real option was to build my own. With my fairly large layout, I figured I would need about 100 poles.



The Milwaukee Road's catenary system had a simple design. Non-croseted cedar poles were fitted with single cross arms. The poles and cross arms were going to be easy to build, but what to use for wire? There are valid reasons to not use real wire on a model system, including the tension problem. Brass wire will expand and

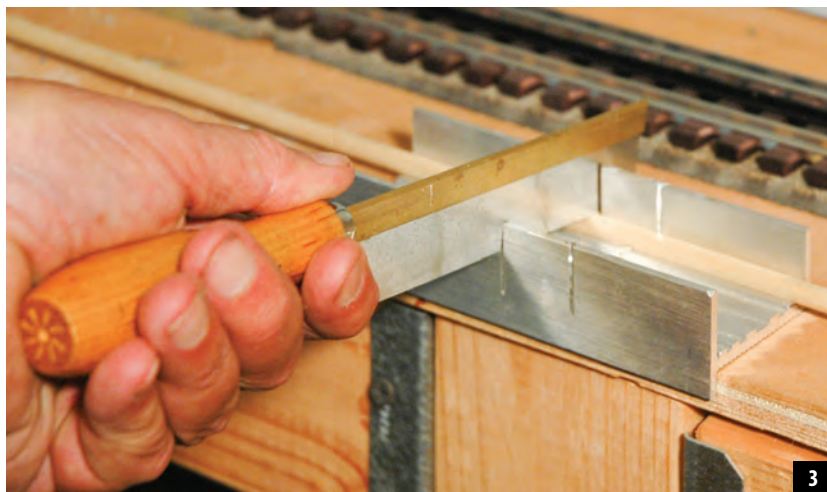
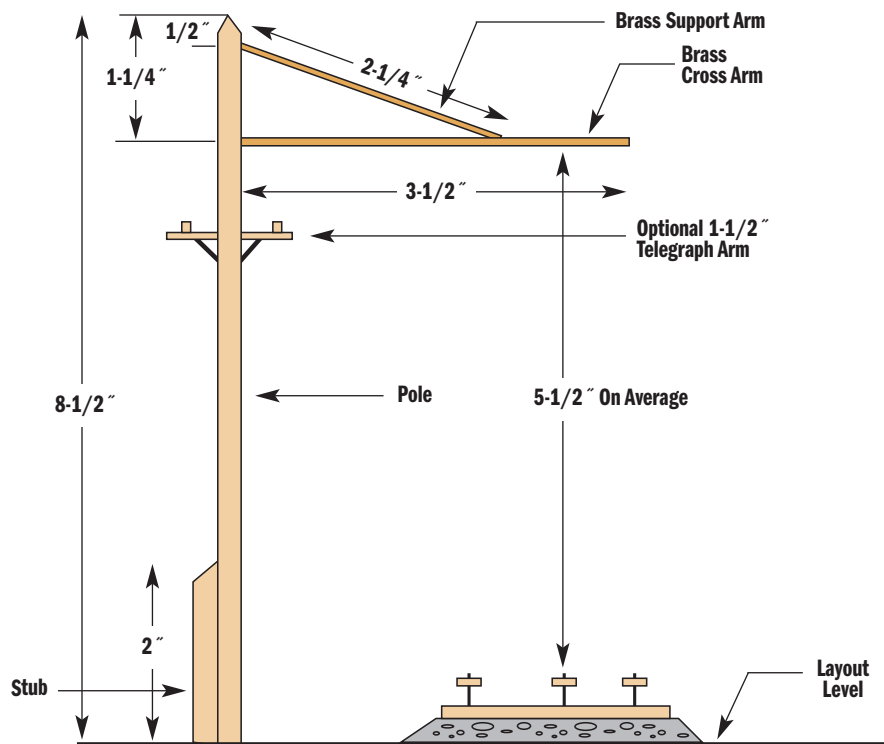
contract with temperature changes, making for uneven operation. Also, all pantographs are not alike, and some will force the wire up harder than others.

I wanted a system that would be strong and reliable. Luckily, I happened to visit a friend who was installing a catenary system on his new Marklin HO layout. It worked, but I thought the Marklin wires looked too large for HO. Then I realized they would be perfect for O gauge. This older wire from Marklin is no longer produced, but you can find plenty of it on eBay or at local train meets. It's available in three different lengths: 14-1/4", 10-3/4", and a short adjustable 7-3/4" (Photo 2). For most layouts, you will need all three.

For demonstration purposes, I constructed a three-span catenary test track. The first step was to construct the poles as shown in the diagram. I used 1/4" dowels found at just about any hardware store and cut them 8-1/2" in length (Photo 3). If you don't use roadbed on your layout, the length of the poles can be shortened. At this point, you might think the poles are too long, but the extra length will allow you to adjust them up or down to get the proper height from the top of the rails. Like the prototype Milwaukee Road poles, they should have two-sided points on top. I ground them down quickly with a powered grinding wheel (Photo 4). Then I drilled two holes using a 1/16" drill bit about halfway through the dowels. The top hole will be 1/2" from the top of the pole. The second will be 1-1/4" from the top. Use a pencil to mark where the holes are to be drilled. I used my Dremel drill press to make the work go much faster (Photo 5).

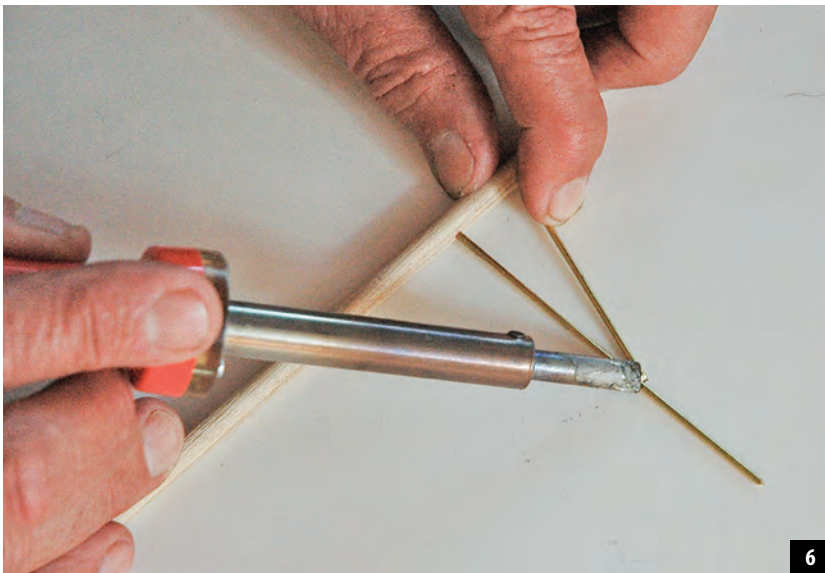
Next, I needed some solid brass rods. Don't use brass tubing as it tends to bend. I used 1/16" K&S stock #1626 for the cross arms and the arm supports. Cut the cross arms 3-1/2" long and the arm supports 2-1/4" long. The cross arms will most likely be longer than you need, but you can cut them down after you have the poles in place on your layout. This will give you some leeway on curves to adjust the Marklin wire over the center rail.

To attach the brass arms to the poles, I put a tiny drop of cyanoacrylate extra-thick glue on the brass arm ends and inserted them in the holes at a 90-degree angle to the pole. The shorter support arm goes in the top hole at an angle to meet with the longer cross arm. Push the support arm down to meet the cross arm

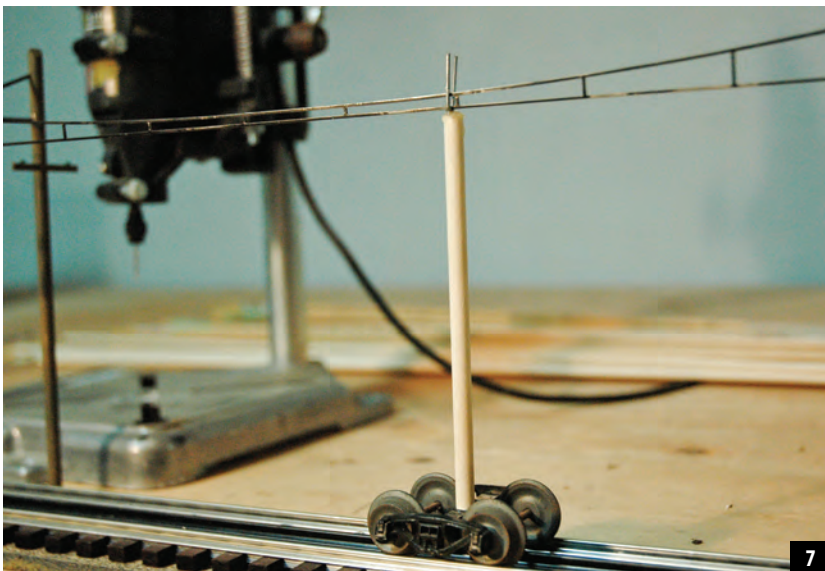




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before the glue sets. Solder the end of the angled arm to the longer cross arm (Photo 6). Save any extra dowels that are too short for poles.

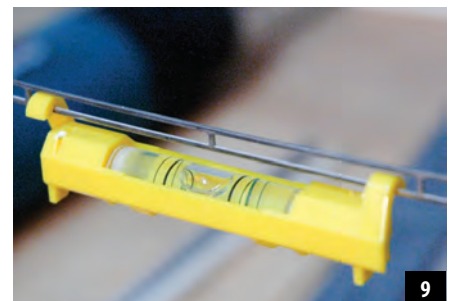
By 1915 the first phase of Milwaukee Road electrification was complete. The poles were intended to last about 30 years. By the mid-1940s, most were in need of replacement because the bottom of many poles had rotted. But the Milwaukee Road had another problem: they were bankrupt.

The solution was to stub the poles. They simply dug a hole next to a pole and placed a new creosoted fir short pole in the hole and then bolted it to the old pole. I wanted some stub poles also, so I just cut a piece of dowel 2" long and glued it to the side of the primary pole. The top of the stub should be cut at a 45-degree angle. The stub doesn't have to be planted in the ground; you can attach it so it just sits on top of the layout after your primary poles are adjusted for height and secured in place.

If you want to add a telegraph arm to the poles, cut some small balsa wood cross arms 1-1/2" long and glue green bead insulators on each side. You can find suitable



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insulators at most craft stores. You can add the telegraph arms at a later time, but it's easier to do before the poles are in place.

I completed the 100 poles I needed in a week. I thought it was going to take much longer and be a very tedious and boring task, but it went much faster than I thought. First thing I did after sitting down at my workbench was to put on some good music and start cutting. I cut all the necessary materials before I assembled them. The poles were all cut and finished in two nights. Then I cut all the brass rods. Actual assembly took three nights.

At this point, stain or paint the poles. I used Floquil #130007 Rail Brown spray to paint the poles. Do not paint the brass arms yet because you still need to solder the Marklin wire in place.

Placement of poles is important. Long engines and passenger cars need to clear the poles around curves and through switches. As a general rule, the Milwaukee Road did not place poles on the inside of curves, but sometimes you might have to. I use my MTH scale Little Joe electric as a guide. It's the longest engine I have, so if it clears everything along the line, that's good.

There's one more handy device you can make to help center your wire properly. You want the overhead wire to be directly over the center rail and also at the correct height above the rails, and this simple tool I devised will make your work much easier. I took an old freight car truck and screwed a dowel straight up from the center top of the truck. I glued a V made of brass to the top of the pole. This will not only hold the loose Marklin wire in place when soldering but also keeps it at the correct height and centers the wire directly over the middle rail (Photo 7).

The height of your poles will vary depending on the type of locomotives and track you use. I use ballasted GarGraves track with Ross switches and run MTH scale Milwaukee Road electrics. They have high-reaching scale pantographs, so I needed 6" from the top of the rails to the long cross arm. After the wire was hung, I had 5-1/2" from the top of the rail to the bottom of the wire. The bottom of the wire will be 1/2" lower than the arm. For example, if you are using semi-scale GG1s with no roadbed under the track, the height will be less. The height should be adjusted so the pantograph makes firm contact with the wire but not so low that it might make the pantograph snap down.

To set your first pole, start on a straight section of your line because that's easiest to work with and will give you confidence. On a straight section, you can set the poles fairly close to the rails. I placed the center of my poles 1-1/4" from the outside rail. Drill a hole straight down using a 1/4" bit (Photo 8). That's the same

size as the dowel. The pole should fit snugly, but it should be able to move up and down. If it is too snug, I use a small round file to make the hole slightly larger so I can raise or lower the pole to the correct height before gluing it in place. Ideally, the pole should be able to slide but still remain in place. If your grade is level, you can also use a string level hung from the bottom wire to adjust the second pole up or down (Photo 9).

To drill the hole for your second pole, measure the Marklin wire from end round hole to end round hole on the bottom part of the wire. For the long wire, it's 14". The medium wire will be 10-1/2", and the short will be 7-1/2" or less depending on how it's adjusted. Drill the second hole for the next pole and place a pole in position. Place your Marklin wire onto the brass V on the rail-wire holder, and the wire is automatically centered. Now you can solder the wire to your first pole, but do not solder it to the second pole until you install a third pole. I use a small clamp to not only hold the two wires tightly together but also to make sure the bottom of the wires match (Photo 10).

When you come to a curve, you will most likely need to start using the medium length wires. The center of this wire is 5-1/4" from the ends. At that center point, the wire should be directly over the center rail. The ends of the wire will be off center, but not out of reach of the pantograph. If it is, use the short wire. Do not, however, bend the wire to match the rail. The real railroads can't do that, and it just looks silly on a layout. You may have to





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use a few sections of the short adjustable Marklin wire in some cases. Because the wire isn't bent and the rails are, there will generally be some compromise involved in centering the wire. Use a test electric engine to make sure your pantograph makes good contact with the wire around all curves. This is where you may have to adjust a solder joint or two, but that's just a matter of heating and moving the wire in or out. On curves, place your poles a little farther from the rails to clear any overhang from engines. Always test using your largest and longest engine.

Switches are another place that you will likely have to solder short 7-3/4" overhead wire. You may have to cut the wire and solder directly to the other wire. If you plan in advance and are able to space your poles, it's possible to end up with a pole right over the switch. This makes things much easier. Once the catenary is in place, you can glue your stubs to the poles.


Test your locomotives at different speeds to make sure everything works well. At higher speeds the locomotives will tend to sway out, so take that into consideration when testing. At some solder joints, you may have to file some solder off the bottom of the wire if the pantographs tend to snag.

All pantographs are not created equal. Some are not as wide as others, some don't reach as high, and some have weaker tension springs (Photo 11). Since different locomotives may have different pantographs, use the narrowest for all testing. Make sure all your pantographs will reach the wire with good contact. For example, the imported brass pantographs don't reach as far as those on Lionel models. I found both Williams and K-Line pantographs have somewhat weaker springs. They tend to sway back when running. On my first overhead system, I ran Williams EP5s and

had a real sway problem. I had to switch them out with Lionel pantographs to correct the sway.

After all testing is completed, trim down the cross arms that are too long and paint the wire black. This makes the wire look smaller and more like the prototype. I brushed on Floquil's Grimy Black and then sanded the bottom of the wire with a sanding block. Even better, you might do this sanding with a battery-powered Dremel tool fitted with a grinding wheel attachment (Photo 12). This will assure that no paint is interfering between the wire and the pantograph—particularly important if you plan to power the wire. If you're running your trains in conventional mode, there's a real advantage in using powered overhead wire. You will be able to run two trains on the same track independently of each other, one getting rail power, the other getting power from the overhead.

If you're a Milwaukee Road fan as I am, you know from old photographs that most of the overhead wire system was in poor condition by the 1950s. For this reason, I didn't set my poles perfectly straight. I set them in so there is a slight difference in angles from pole to pole. Of course, you can also weather the poles and add more detail.

This may appear to be a difficult system to build, but it's really not. You don't have to complete the entire layout at once. I didn't electrify many of my sidings for months after I had finished the main line. When you're done, your model railroad will be something not many other railroaders have, and your big electric motors will be running the way they were meant to under overhead wire (Photo 13). 



Today's work includes the delivery of a load of rock.

Picture Postcard Narrow Gauge

Article and Photos by Randy Bynum

A few years ago I had to dismantle my 2-rail O gauge layout because it was taking up too much of our garage, and there was hardly any room to stack junk. Actually, the 8' x 16' layout was just too impractical for the garage, especially if we wanted to park our vehicle inside.

So I began to think of what I could do next to have O scale trains. Because there had been a small narrow-gauge section on my former layout, I began to dream up various optional designs for a much smaller exclusively narrow-gauge layout. I wanted some-

thing big enough to have plenty of action with a number of interesting features, but small enough to be portable or even to fit in the back of my Jeep in case I wanted to take the layout to a train show. I finally settled on a "picture postcard" On30 layout of 3' x 5' with an added 18" x 5' staging area.

I started with 1/2" roof sheeting on a 2' x 2' frame. For the back and sides, I used a scroll saw to cut panels that would give the impression of background hills. They set off the staging area and gave the layout a sense of enclosure. With those side

panels fastened on with drywall screws, I then spray-painted the whole thing a reddish-brown earth-tone color reminiscent of places I had seen in central Wyoming where I grew up. Then I set the new layout on top of a 1-1/2" scale trestle that someday may become part of a backyard railroad.

Now came designing a track plan. After I was satisfied with the sketch, the next step was to use a ruler and compass to draw the diagram on the board. A main line entered the layout from the staging area through a tunnel and connected to an oval. The tunnel gave more depth and offered a sense of connection to the outside world beyond the layout. From the main oval, one turnout provided a short siding for an industry. Another turnout lead to a



Small motive power and rolling stock is readily available and suits a small layout very well.

A string of empty ore cars begin their journey up the grade to the mine.

spur outside the oval and up a 3 percent trestle grade to a small plateau area that provided room for another industry.

The era modeled is 1940s and 1950s at the end of narrow-gauge steam. The setting is high in the western mountains with two industries served by the railroad: cattle ranching and mining. The short turnout leads to a cattle loading chute, and the spur leads to a mining operation. The mine is an open pit, and the loads are real mercury vanadium ore from an abandoned Idaho mine. The power shovel to load the ore is a Hubley antique from the 1950s I restored to working condition. This is one of a very few toys that somehow miraculously survived my childhood.

Track and turnouts were laid by hand. Code 100 steel rail and switch components were ordered from Right-O-Way. Having had a gun enthusiast for a dad, I knew that gun bluing would work well to bring the rails from shiny steel to a darker and more



A shovelful of real mercury vanadium ore from an abandoned mine clunks into the first car. The power shovel is a vintage Hubley toy.



This overview of the layout is looking north.

prototypical color. I have been very happy with the decision for steel. It looks good, and nothing quite matches the clank of steel wheels on steel rails. In the dry Idaho climate where I live, rust is not a problem.

Minimum radius for curves is 15", which works well with my locomotives and rolling stock. Ties were lightly stained to represent some weathering in the era before they were soaked in creosote. The ties on the final section of the mining spur were left unstained to represent newly laid track. All switches are manual to represent the era, and they are easily reached on such a small layout. I have enjoyed doing each stage of the layout, but I have especially enjoyed putting down hand-laid track. The prototypical detail is satisfying.

I built the tunnel portal, trestles, cabin, and cattle pen with loading chute. Most recently, I added a windmill I built from looking at old prototype photos. Trees are mostly pines from Grand Central Gems. To some of them, I added wooden trunks from real limbs to add realism and variety in height.

Bushes are dried moss and live air ferns picked up from craft



Headed by a Bachmann Shay, the daily local exits the tunnel from the staging area.



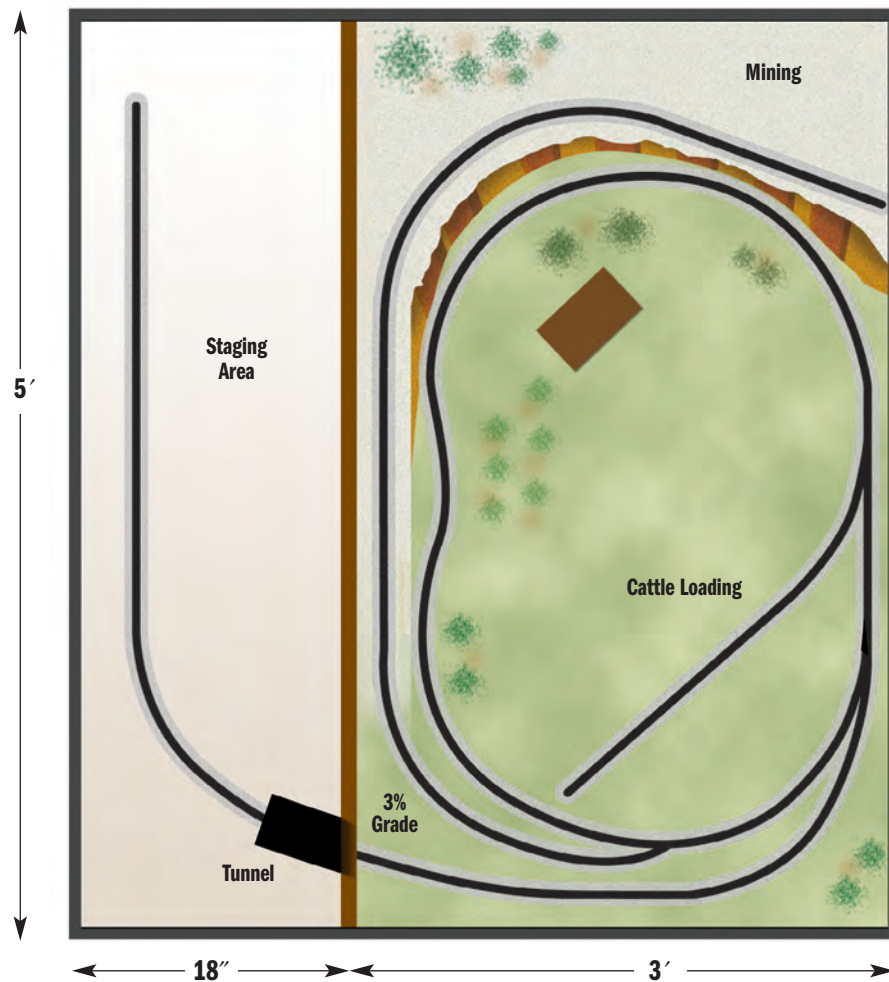
Granny is knitting while taking in the action provided by the trains and cattle ranch.

stores. Grass is Fine Turf - Green Grass from Woodland Scenics. People figures include a couple of cattle ranchers, hands for the mining operation, a granny sitting and knitting in front of the cabin, a little boy watching the trains go by, and various workers. There are lots of farm animals as well as wild deer and buffalo.

Locomotives are a Bachmann Shay, Porter 0-4-0, and Davenport switcher. They have good detail, run well, and are reasonably priced. Rolling stock, also from Bachmann, consists of a boxcar, tank car, four cattle cars, five gondolas, six wood-side dump cars for ore, two log cars, and a caboose.



The easily transportable On30 layout measures 3'x 5', which are the same proportions as a standard postcard. It is seen here sitting atop a 1-1/2" scale trestle that will eventually be used for an outdoor railroad.



Visitors enjoy seeing the animals in and around the cattle pen and loading chute. The John Deere tractor sits idling while the cattle mill around.



The staging track and control center is located behind the layout.



The track and switches are laid by hand.



A little boy watches all the excitement from his vantage point on a nearby rock.



A loaded ore train heads to a smelter.

Wiring is traditional. There are two blocks. The main line, oval, and cattle loading siding are on one block, and the mining spur is on another to allow shunting of ore cars while other operations are taking place elsewhere. The two blocks also share a common ground so locos can move smoothly from one block to the other. Loaded ore cars can be brought down the mining spur and taken all the way to the staging area or set out to be picked up by another locomotive. Two Tech II Railmaster 2400 transformers provide plenty of power for the Bachmann locomotives.

The layout, though small, offers lots of interest and quite a few switching possibilities. A lot of fun for me has come from just laying a section of track at a leisurely pace or putting scenery on a section, then looking at it long enough to imagine myself there in the scene. For a little while, I am in the mountains, walking along the tracks, watching the old narrow-gauge trains going by, and forgetting for the moment that I have an office, a career, and a few problems. This layout has brought countless hours of relaxation and enjoyment.

Future plans and dreams include spiking the rail at every tie, adding more trees and more wild animals, adding more details to existing scenes, and maybe even going for DCC. Recently, I have also thought about looping the main line on both ends to the staging area since my grandchildren and other children who visit ask if I can make the train go through the tunnel. That would provide continuous running through two tunnels and add lots of interest.

In building and using this layout, I discovered that On30 is great for O-scalers like me who want to have an interesting layout for a reasonable cost in a limited space. 🐾

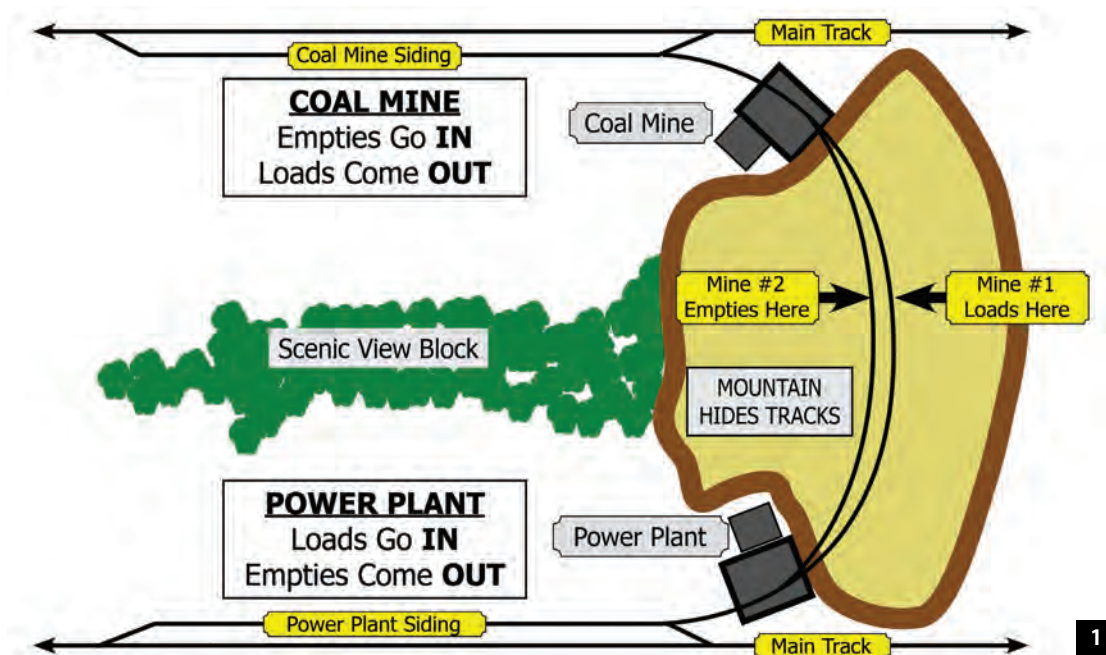


About the Author

Randy Bynum and his wife, Kathy, live in Nampa, Idaho, where Randy is a bivocational pastor for a multicultural congregation. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Manchester, United Kingdom, and also teaches part-time at Northwest Nazarene University.

The Empty-Load Trick

Article and Figures by Rich Melvin



How can you tell if a car on your model railroad is a load or an empty? If it's a boxcar or a tank car, that's easy. It's whatever you say it is. But what if it's an open-top car like a gondola or a hopper? Now what do you do? Are you going to shove empties into the power plant or loads into the coal mine? Hmm...that's probably not going to be good for business. I'm going to show you a little trick that will set you up so you can always put empties into the coal mine and loads into the power plant.

The concept I'm going to introduce is one you can apply all over your layout. It is a concept based on *producing* and *consuming* industry pairs. For example, if you have a sawmill on your layout, it produces lumber. The consuming industry to pair up with your sawmill could be a lumberyard or a furniture factory or anything that consumes lumber. And since the lumber can

move in boxcars, empties and loads look the same. The same holds true for an oil well and a refinery. Tank cars can be loads or empties, and no one can tell just from looking at them. So, no trick is needed to identify the empties and the loads. They are what you say they are.

But what about a coal mine? Many of us have a coal mine on our layouts because it is an industry unique to railroads. But coal moves in open-top hoppers, so it is very easy to tell whether a car is loaded or empty. You can't fake it with hoppers. So how do we set up a producing and consuming industry pair with a coal mine? The consuming industry in this pair could, for example, be a coal-fired power plant. Think for a moment about the cars that move to each industry. The coal mine will always get *empty* hoppers in and will always ship *loads* out. At the other end of the

cycle, the power plant will always get loads in and send *empties* out. Is there a way to always put empties into the mine and loads into the power plant? There sure is, and it's known as the "Empty-Load Trick."

Take a look at the diagram in Figure 1. It is the heart of how the Empty-Load Trick works. Your two industries, the mine and the power plant, are separated by a

Track Numbering

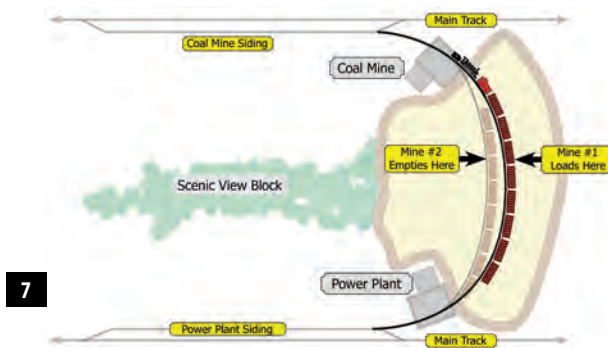
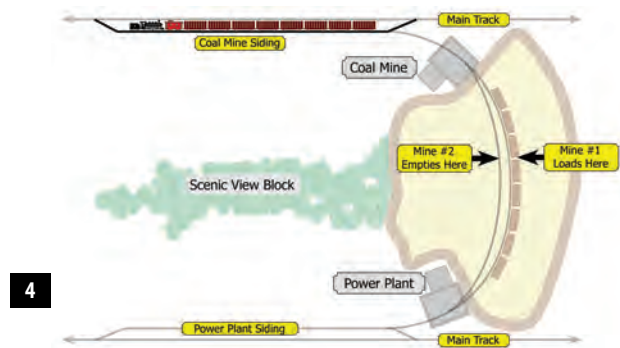
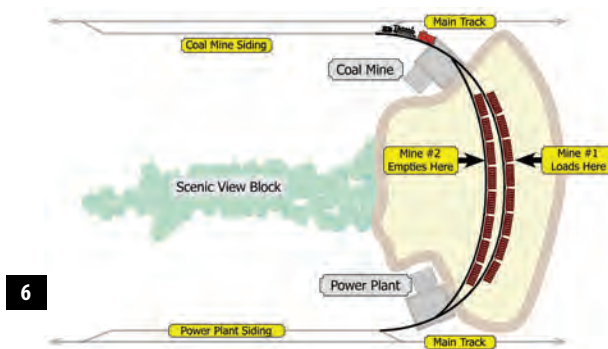
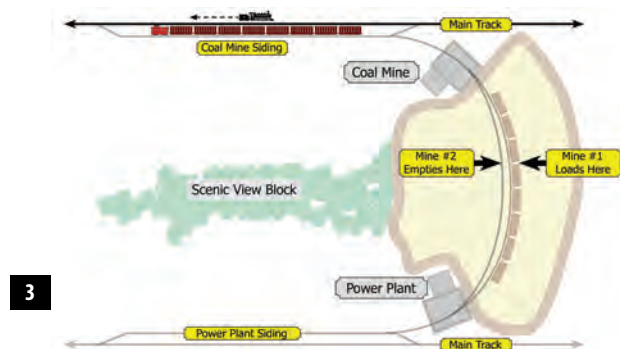
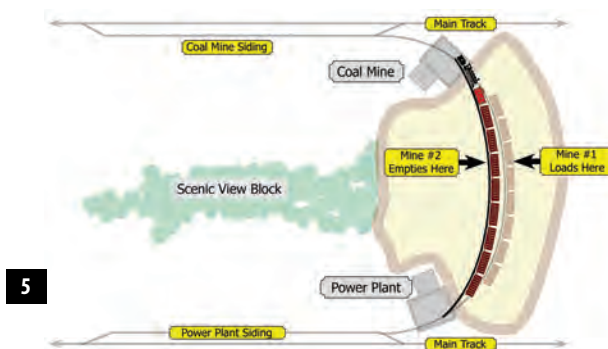
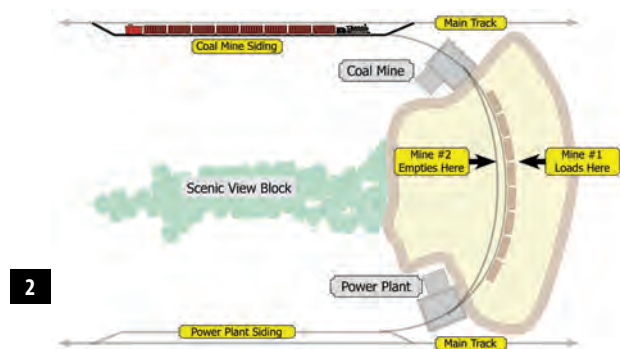
Here's a fact about railroad track numbering. Tracks are usually numbered upward as they move away from the main track. Therefore, left-hand track going into the mine would be Mine #1, and the other would be Mine #2.

scenic divider or view block. If you are standing near the coal mine, you can't see the power plant and vice versa. Consequently, they don't appear to be very close together on the railroad, when in fact they are actually connected together via two hidden tracks. Look at the coal mine depicted at the top. From the outside it looks like there is only a single track going into the mine, but it actually has two tracks in it. A switch is hidden inside the mine. The power plant is set up the same way. Only one track is visible outside, but a switch to a second track is hidden inside.

You need two matched hopper trains to make this operation work most effectively. One train is a set of loaded cars, while the other trainset is all empty hoppers. Each train should have the same number of cars, sized to fit in the coal mine and power plant sidings and between the switches on Mine #1 and Mine #2. When designing this part of your layout, be sure to measure the space you have available and then build the tracks so your trains will fit in the passing sidings and on the hidden tracks inside the mountain. Be sure to include space for the locomotive(s) and the

caboose when you are figuring the length of the passing sidings. In this illustrated example, I'm using eight cars.

Traffic on a real railroad moves in a cyclical fashion, where loads and empties move back and forth between producing and consuming industries. Let's begin the analysis of our Empty-Load Trick with the arrival of a train of empties for the mine. Loads from the previous cycle are already hidden inside the mine on Mine #1. When the empty train arrives, it has to make these moves to spot the empties at the mine:



- 1) The empty train arrives on the coal mine siding (Figure 2).
- 2) The engine uncouples and uses the main line to run around the train (Figure 3).
- 3) The engine couples to the rear of the train (Figure 4).
- 4) The engine shoves the empties into the mine, making sure the hidden switch is lined for Mine #2, the empty track (Figure 5).
- 5) When the empty cars are in the proper spot, the engine with the caboose backs out of the mine (Figure 6).
- 6) The engine goes back into the mine, only this time the hidden switch is lined for Mine #1, the track where the loads are spotted (Figure 7).
- 7) The engine pulls the loaded cars out of the mine to clear the switch to the main line (Figure 8).
- 8) The crew uses the main line to run around the train again and couple to the head end of the train. Now the crew is ready to head back to the yard with the loads for the power plant (Figure 9).

At this point in the cycle, Mine #1 is clear because we just pulled the loads off that track, and Mine #2 holds the train of empty hoppers we just shoved into the mine.

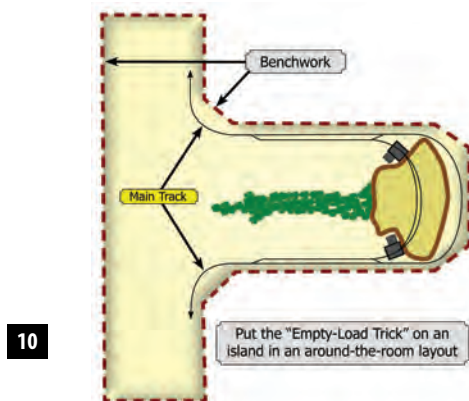
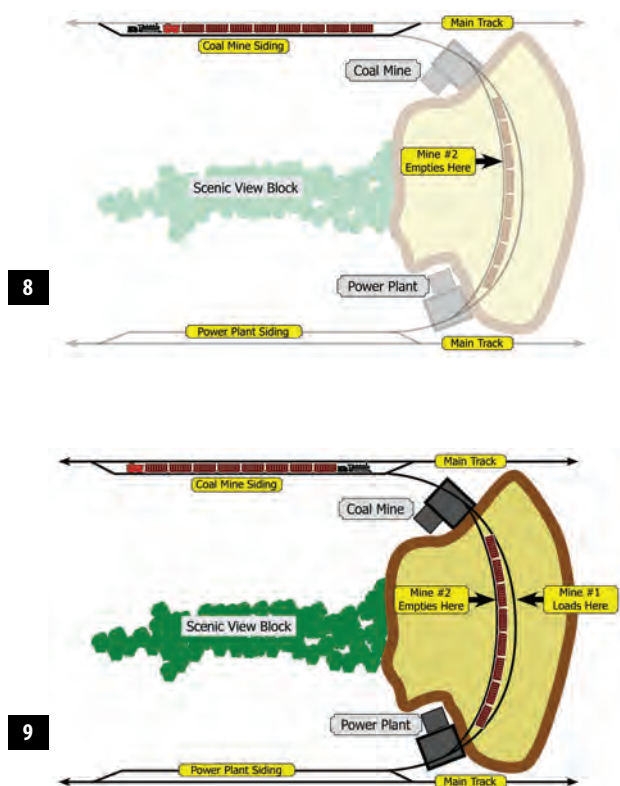
When the train of loads arrives at the power plant, the crew shoves the loads into Power Plant #1, which is actually the same track they came from earlier. Then the crew pulls the empties from Power Plant #2 and heads for the yard to start the cycle all over again.

If you are really tight for space, the main line could circle around behind the mountain and connect back to itself, forming a big curve around the two industries (Figure 10). However, if you can make a longer run between the two industries to give your crews more to do and more miles to run, the whole operation becomes even more interesting. If you run diesels, build a two-unit consist with the engines facing in opposite directions. Then instead of continuing on the main line in the same direction after finishing the work at each customer's site, the train could go back to the yard before heading out in the opposite

direction to the power plant. This adds the complication of getting the caboose onto the other end of the train, which adds time and interest to the moves. Anything you can do to maximize the over-the-road distance between these two industries will add to the operational enjoyment of using the Empty-Load Trick.

This trick works best with around-the-room layout designs. You can put the whole setup on an island coming out from the wall. A scenic divider is easy to build on an island and can look very natural when the whole scene is finished. This is tough to do on a layout in the middle of a room because it is hard to hide the two industries with an appropriate scenic divider. It's not impossible; it's just more difficult to do.

If this kind of operation interests you, look for ways to design or reconfigure your track plan to accommodate a few producing and consuming industry pairs. Giving your model trains something to do can bring a whole new level of enjoyment to the operation of your model railroad. 🚂



The Road to Munoz Station

Article and Photos by Eliot Scher

Little did I realize when I designed the Munoz Station archipelago three years ago that our fascination with the American Southwest would one day change our O gauge hi-rail Munoz Lines so dramatically. Our railroad is dedicated to my father-in-law, Fil Munoz. On our layout the City of Munoz needed a station complex. My wife, Ginny, and I designed an area about 2'x 10' and placed a popular two-story station at one end. The entire station area lies above a four-track staging yard, and although we felt it was a decent design, it still left us feeling unsatisfied. Then as luck would have it while I was reading a modeling magazine one day, I spied a fabulous HO scale mission-style station built by a master craftsman. I scrambled up the stairs and waved the photo at Ginny and stated I was going to build this for the Munoz Lines. Ginny liked the idea, but I knew it was going to be difficult to create an O scale version of what that talented fellow

accomplished in HO. But fate and fortune were about to change.

Barely a week later, Dorcie Farkash of TW Trainworx announced a newly designed mission-style station. I took one look at the Trainworx design and rushed to the computer to e-mail Dorcie. She not only happily agreed to provide us with their first station, she also promised to have it lettered for Munoz. This was going to be an incredible scene.

We mapped out the exact size needed for our new Munoz Station, and I quickly realized we would need a radical redesign (Photo 1). The station would be a centerpiece, and everything around it would need an upgrade to maintain a high level of realism. We knew that the Santa Fe Super Chief was going to stop in Munoz, and I recalled a fabulous photograph from years ago of the Super Chief being serviced in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I knew what I had to do. I would replicate that photo as

best I could, and we would need to provide an access road and a large parking area. It was a great idea, except realistic roads are not easy to build in O scale, and I was going to need one that covered a large area. Thus began the road to Munoz Station.

There are some proven methods for modeling credible roads on train layouts, but none of those appealed to me when I thought of the amount of roadwork and parking area I needed. I wanted a very realistic asphalt look. I ruled out commercial asphalt sheets because of their appearance, and they didn't come in the size and shape needed. I could not bear the thought of water putty or spackle over so large an area, and ordinary foamcore board would never do. However, I did have some Gator foam board and decided to try that.

Gator foam board is a very tough material that sandwiches a sheet of approximately 1/4" stiff foam between two very rigid exterior sheets (Photo 2). Gator foam



board can be painted with water-based paints and it will not warp, bend, or dent as foamcore board tends to do. Its hardness causes the board to respond much like Masonite.

I decided to cut it to shape and paint it with black primer, mark it with painter's tape, and follow up with a powdered weathering application. It was a reasonable plan, but cutting Gator foam board is not especially easy to do. I had used a sharp hobby blade before to cut it for my road crossings, but it took a very long time and was difficult to do accurately. A new and better approach was needed.

Several years prior, I had purchased knife-edge cutting blades for my jigsaw, which I used for cutting Homasote with less mess. I tried those blades with the Gator foam board, and the knife-edge blades cut right through it quickly and cleanly. Even better, the blades made a very accurate cut. By the end of the day, I had cut almost all of the pieces needed for the Munoz Station road and parking area.

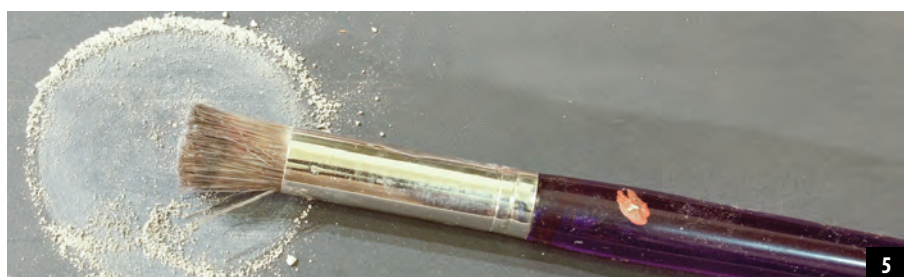
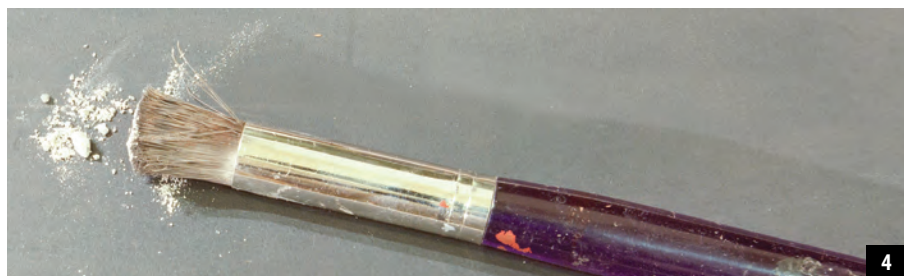
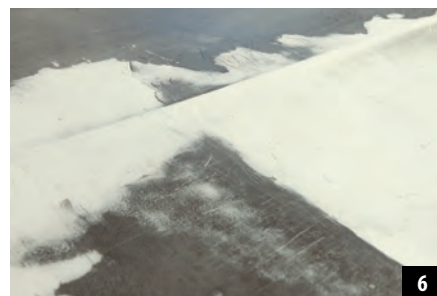
I donned a mask and grabbed my can of dark gray Rustoleum auto primer, which dries flat black. The paint adhered smoothly. The painted Gator foam board had a pleasing look, but I needed to test my Bragdon Enterprises weathering powders to get the desired road asphalt appearance. I selected light, medium, and dark charcoal. I was confident that some combination of those three would result in a realistic surface. I began with a stiff bristle brush and light gray and worked the powder into the Gator foam

board with circular motions (Photos 3, 4, and 5). I then added some dark charcoal and was satisfied with the result.

Before I could complete the weathering process, however, I had to apply some road markings. The plan was to use white painter's tape, but the tape would not adhere to a powdery surface. I cleaned the painted Gator foam board with glass cleaner. Gator foam board is tough and moisture resistant, and I was about to find out just how moisture resistant. I needed a smooth, clean, dry surface to apply the road marking lines.

I sprinkled a small amount of the glass cleaner on a paper towel and gently wiped the area where the road markings would be placed. I ran my finger over the area I had cleaned, which resulted in nothing transferring to my finger. Even better, my road was still just as black as when I started. Now I had to place all of the Gator foam board and fill in the seams.

I had already measured carefully to put the station platform next to the two access tracks, so I knew the size of the area under and around the station. I cut the Gator foam boards to go under the station and provide a parking lot immediately to the right of the station complex. The side of the parking lot would meet the third access track exactly, so I knew the dimensions of the remaining boards. The access road would go from the station area all the way into the city of Munoz, about 10' away. The access road boards would be 4" wide. Once the road boards were in place, the seams had to be mended.



I would never use ordinary spackling compound with foamcore board, but I had more confidence in the Gator foam board. I glued down the Gator foam board with yellow carpenter's glue and weighted the boards down for several hours to ensure a good, level fit at the seams. The seams were still visible, so I reached for the spackle. Feathering the spackling compound and hitting it with very fine sandpaper when dry worked (Photos 6 and 7). I then mixed some black acrylic paint with water and blended in the spackled area with a black tone to match the painted Gator foam board. With some weathering powder, the seams virtually disappeared.

White painter's tape is sticky, but, as I noted earlier, the surface must be dry and clean. Road markings are difficult, so to create them to scale takes patience. Many roadway dividing lines are about 4" wide, but the length varies with type of road. I cut 10" strips of painter's tape about 1/8" wide. My first tries were too thick. In O scale, 1" equals 4'. To cut tape a scale 4" wide was scary, so as a compromise, I found a 1/8" wide strip to be visually acceptable (Photo 8).

I began by taping a sheet of wax paper to a Masonite board. The painter's tape would stick to the wax paper but could be



easily removed. I used a carpenter's square at the edge of the Masonite board, and using a very sharp hobby knife blade, I sliced off a 1/8" strip from the 2" wide painter's tape roll and removed it from the wax paper. I moved to my painted Gator foam board and applied the strip using a straightedge in the area where my dividing line would be. I then used the hobby knife blade to cut the strip into 1/4" pieces. By removing every other piece, I had my centerline dividers. I followed with straight, uncut strips for the road section line edge and used 3" strips for the parking space dividers (Photo 9).

The final step was to weather the entire area using Bragdon Enterprises weathering powders. A little powder went a long way, and soft tissue paper blended all of the dust into a smooth, even surface.

Ginny told me the scene looked just like the photo.

Munoz Station is our star attraction, but its aura is clearly enhanced by a realistic asphalt road and parking area (Photo 10). I cannot wait to see the Super Chief arrive at Munoz Station. I can hear the announcement now. The bell will be ringing, and the passengers will be ready to board.



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Conventional Confection The LCCA Lakeshore Limited Tinplate Passenger Set



Shiny paint, lots of bright trim and detailing, and toy-like looks are a major part of the appeal that tinplate toy trains have for today's collectors. Tinplate trains with traditional, original-style innards harken back to a simpler age of open-frame motors, electromechanical reverse units, and air whistles that many 3-rail O gauge collectors find more authentic than the same trains with modern mechanisms. A major plus for traditionalist tinplate lovers is the ability of operators to service them without taking advanced courses in solid-state electronics. Running original-style locomotives also produces that wonderful smell of ozone, which modern hi-tech features simply cannot duplicate.

When these good things are combined with the knowledge of vintage toy trains and creativity that Lou Caponi, head of product development at the Lionel Collectors Club of America, brings to designing products for the LCCA, the end result can be pretty spectacular, like the New York Central Lakeshore Limited passenger set seen in Photo 1. The components of this set are thoroughly traditional for a prewar Lionel passenger set of 1935 vintage, and include a 265E Commodore Vanderbilt streamlined steamer with 265W whistle tender and three 613-series passenger cars: 615 baggage, 613 Pullman, and 614 observation. However, the decoration of the set breaks new ground in the use of automotive metallic paints, color choices, and other decorative elements that have made the New York Central Lakeshore Limited set a desirable collectible from the get-go.



The Commodore Vanderbilt

If you are going to do a New York Central tinplate set, the iconic Commodore Vanderbilt streamlined steam locomotive is an ideal choice to head it. The shape is distinctively NY Central, and it really doesn't matter that the prototype was a 4-6-4 Hudson and the prewar Lionel version has a 2-4-2 wheel arrangement. That is the beauty of tinplate; you are not chained to prototype accuracy, but the modern tooling has to produce replicas that look just like the original tinplate to make it work. Since the LCCA Lakeshore Limited is made with Lionel Corporation Tinplate tooling, that is not a problem. Shown in Photo 2 is an original 1935, 265E in satin black finish

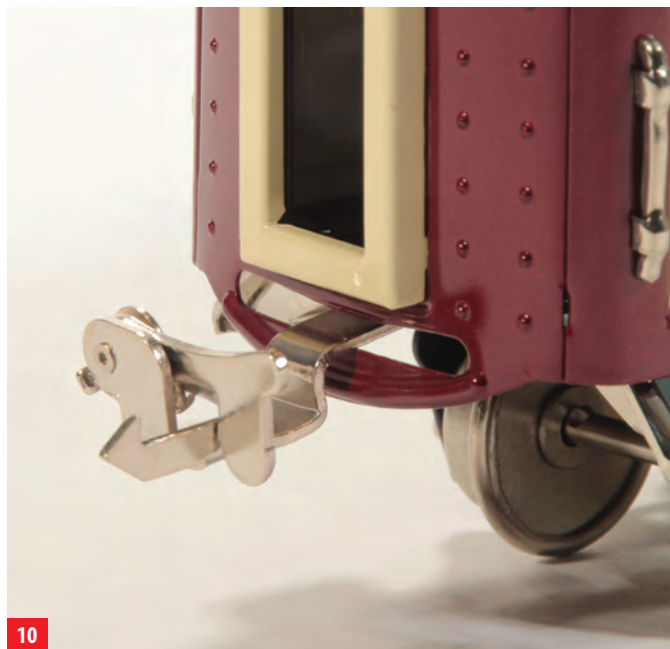
compared with the new LCCA Commodore Vanderbilt in Photo 3, which is done in firemist black metallic with silver accents. Frontal views of the two locomotives also highlight the differences in paint schemes (Photos 4 and 5). The original finish is nice, but the metallic paint with silver trim adds an exciting new dimension to the looks of the Commodore Vanderbilt locomotive and tender.

A neat touch is the BILD-A-LOCO nameplate on the bottom of the 265E with Lionel O Gauge above and Patents Pending and The Lionel Corporation-NY below on the nameplate (Photo 6). The nameplate adds authenticity to the



replica and contrasts with what is stamped on and attached to each piece of the set (Photo 7).

Now that my 265E locomotive, the 265W tender, and the cars had been taken out of their boxes for photography, I no longer had a sealed, mint set, so what the heck...I ran the engine. Two happy discoveries came out of that. The first was the wonderful ozone smell the traditional motor produced. The second was the rediscovery of the haunting sounds a metal air whistle can make when actuated. It has a depth of tone that can't be reproduced by the later postwar versions built with plastic as part of their mechanisms.



The Set Cars: Mixing Traditional and Innovative

As you can see from the side-by-side comparison with an O gauge Blue Comet car (Photo 8), the Lakeshore Limited paint scheme follows a traditional prewar application of colors for 613-series passenger cars, including the two-tone roof, sides, ends, diaphragms, windows, doors, number plates, nameplates, and bottoms. The view of the extra 613 Madison Avenue Pullman in Photo 9 shows off the visual impact of the firemist metallic red paint decorating the sides and ends of each car, along with the two-tone firemist black and red treatment on the roof. A close-up in Photo 10 gives details of the earlier-style prewar latch couplers chosen for the set.

The basic Lakeshore Limited set consisted of three cars, but hardly anybody ordered them that way (Photo 11). Almost all the 230 sets sold were delivered with the additional 613 Madison Avenue Pullman. There were supposed to be 250 sets made, but the factory only produced 230, which meant there were no extra sets to be had and precious few pieces in stock to replace broken locomotives or cars. All this was good news for more investment-minded collectors, but bad news for LCCA members who missed the set and had to try and buy one on the secondary market.

The 615 baggage car from the set demonstrates that the traditional cream color on the baggage doors works well with the flashier firemist red tinted body (Photo 12). The same holds true for the windows, doors, nameplates, and number plates on the 613 Times Square Pullman and the 614 Broadway observation car (Photos 13 and 14). Fortunately, Lou stopped short of specifying metallic paints for all the parts of the Lakeshore Limited engine and cars, and I am grateful for his artistic restraint.

The Smudge Factor and Metalwork

One of the things I quickly found out about the shiny metallic finish of the engine and the cars was how prone the paint was to noticeable finger smudges. If the set is going to be a shelf piece, a good way around this is to use white cotton gloves when handling each piece. If you are going to run the set, other measures need to be taken to preserve the finish. My first thought was to use old-fashioned automobile wax without any cleaning agents in it, but the thin, white paint used for the New York Central lettering on the cars would have to be treated with extreme care to prevent the lettering from being rubbed off.

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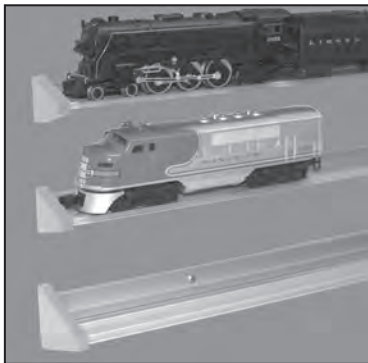
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12



13



14

The unpainted metal for the couplers, removable roof levers, and other pieces is bright enough, but a careful examination reveals a roughness to the surface finish that was not present in the originals made by American workers 75 years ago or on previous replicas made in Korea and China. The overall effect is still good, but earlier workers here and overseas did it better.

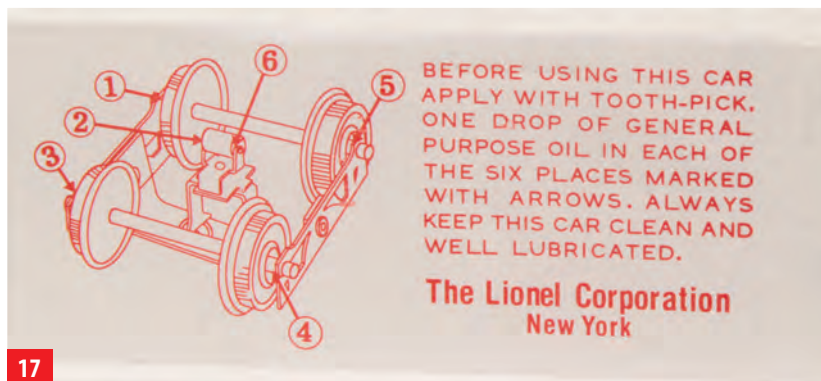
Packaging

There were several significant delays in getting the New York Central Lakeshore Limited out to LCCA members who ordered it, so aside from the outer packaging (Photo 15), Lou decided to use standard Lionel Corporation Tinplate packaging for the set to avoid any further delays that approving and making custom packaging would incur (Photo 16). Still and all, it was fun looking at the vintage instructions for lubricating the cars that are glued to the three-car foam cradle for the set cars (Photo 17).

15



16



17

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20-20224-3	Indiana Railway GP-38-2 Dummy w/lights	\$175.00
20-20242-1	Florida East Coast SD40-2 w/3.0	\$413.00
20-20243-1	Wheeling & Lake Erie SD40-2 w/3.0	\$413.00
20-20245-1	Santa Fe SD40-2 w/3.0	\$413.00
20-20247-1	Cleveland Union Terminal GP-9 w/3.0	\$399.00
20-20248-1	Southern Pacific GP-9 w/3.0	\$399.00
20-20249-1	Nickel Plate Rd GP-9 w/3.0	\$399.00
20-20265-1	NYC F7 Diesel w/3.0	\$689.95
20-20266-1	Milwaukee Rd F7 Diesel w/3.0	\$689.95
20-20267-1	Long Island F7 Diesel w/3.0	\$689.95
20-2900-1	NYC GP35 #6137 w/2.0	\$389.95
20-2965-3	GN U25B Dummy w/lights	\$175.00
20-2966-3	SF U25B Dummy w/lights	\$175.00
30-1563-1	Northern Pacific 4-8-4 w/ 3.0	\$409.95
30-1566-1	Lehigh Valley 4-6-4 Imp Engine w/3.0 w/ 30-69127/28/29 Passenger Set	\$750.00
30-1568-1	NYC 4-6-4 Imp. Pass. Set w/3.0 w/30-69124/25/26/\$750.00	
30-20061-1/3	Amtrak RDC 4-car Set w/3.0	\$499.95
30-20035-1	Jersey Central F3 ABA w/3.0	\$479.95
30-20041-1	UP Alco AA w/Silver trucks w/3.0	\$309.95
30-20057-1	Santa Fe Dash 8 w/3.0	\$289.95
30-20085-1	CSX C30-7 w/3.0	\$289.95
30-20086-1	Norfolk Southern C30-7 w/3.0	\$289.95
30-20087-1	Santa Fe C30-7 w/3.0	\$289.95
30-2952-1/3	Southern AA w/2.0 and B unit	\$389.99
30-4219-1	NS SD70Ac Freight Set w/3.0	\$378.00
30-4220-1	BNSF SD70Ac Freight Set w/3.0	\$378.00
30-5117-1	PRR GG-1 w/3.0 5-stripes Green w/operating pantographs ..	\$350.00
30-5118-1	PRR GG-1 w/3.0 5-stripes Tuscan w/operating pantographs ..	\$350.00
30-5123-1	Conrail E33 Electric w/3.0	\$279.95
30-5125-1	N&W E33 Electric w/3.0	\$279.95
30-5126-1	PRR E33 Electric w/3.0	\$279.95
30-5128-1	Penn Central E33 Electric Fruit Train Set w/3.0	\$379.95
30-67538	NYC 60' 4-Car Pass Set (Silver)	\$209.95
30-67554/55/56/57	BN 60' 8-Car Strm Pass Set	\$425.00
30-67608/09/10/11	RF&P 60' Strm. 8-Car Pass Set	\$420.00
30-69073/74/75	GN 7-Car Madison Set	\$300.00
30-69124	NYC 4-Car Madison Set (Two-tone Brown)	\$209.95
30-69127/28/29	Lehigh Valley 7-Car Madison Set	\$385.00
30-69142	NP 60' 4-Car Madison Set	\$209.95
30-69142/43/44	NP 60' 7-Car Madison Set	\$385.00

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18



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Other Comments

We thought it would be appropriate to pair the LCCA set with the work of another toy train creator and artist, the late John Davanzo of Pride Lines. In this scene, the Lakeshore Limited is pulling into John's beautiful interpretation of a Lionel 124 station that is sized down to O gauge, complete with a decorative terrace and an American flag (Photo 18), making it a perfect scenic complement to the colorful Lakeshore Limited.

Given the attractiveness of this set and the limited numbers that were available for purchase, it was not hard to predict that the Lakeshore Limited would increase in value over its initial \$800.00 price, and that is what has happened. Premiums asked have ranged from moderate to ridiculous, which just goes to show that when it comes to toy trains, the laws of supply and demand are still going strong. 🚂

American Flyer Billboards Revisited



In Run 263, the April/May issue, we discussed the American Flyer Whistling Billboards and operating Diesel Horn Billboards made by A. C. Gilbert in the postwar years. At the time, we did not have a usable image of the 1947 Foxmart department store billboard, which was made from 1946 production No. 577 Whistling Billboards. This billboard with its blue and white sign was made for the Connecticut-based G. Fox & Company as part of a small production run of American Flyer train sets. The Foxmart billboard is considered the rarest of the rare by AF collectors when it comes to A. C. Gilbert operating whistles and is priced accordingly. Here is a high-quality replica Foxmart billboard sign we purchased recently to show you what the sign looks like, and it cost all of \$2.00. It demonstrates that modern digital copiers, combined with the right paper stock, can produce convincing copies of just about anything that is printable. This has serious implications for collectors seeking originals of toy train paper and cardboard pieces. Careful scrutiny and detailed research into the provenance behind a rare item offered for sale is now more important than ever.

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11210	NEW YORK CENTRAL HUDSON (GUN METAL GRAY) L10V1	\$1,199.00
11258	LOUISVILLE & NASHVILLE #2121 0-8-0 CONVENTIONAL L11V1	\$399.00
11251	PERE MARQUETTE #1300 0-8-0 LEGACY L11V1	\$499.00
11268	STRASBURG 2-6-0 MOGUL CONVENTIONAL L11V1	\$399.00
11299	C&O (USRA SCHEME) 2-6-6-2 MALLET	\$999.00
11303	CHESAPEAKE & OHIO #3011 2-10-4 LEGACY L11V1	\$999.00
11317	SOUTHERN 4-4-2 ATLANTIC CONVENTIONAL L11V1	\$399.00
11321	CHESAPEAKE & OHIO 2-6-6-2 MALLET	\$1,049.00
11322	NICKEL PLATE ROAD 2-6-6-2 MALLET	\$1,049.00
11323	W&LE 2-6-6-2 MALLET	\$1,049.00
11327	PREWAR PENNSYLVANIA K4 #3667 LEGACY L11V1	\$729.00
11330	POLAR RAILROAD K4 LEGACY STEAM LOCO L11C	\$729.00
11331	POLAR RAILROAD K4 CONVENTIONAL STEAM LOCO L11C	\$599.00
11332	ATSF #3751 4-8-4 NORTHERN	\$1,029.00
11333	ATSF #3759 4-8-4 NORTHERN	\$1,029.00
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11381	CHRISTMAS SWITCHER 0-4-0 LC12	\$339.00
11382	TRANSYLVANIA #12 0-4-0 "SHIFTER" STEAM L21V1	\$339.00
11385	UNION PACIFIC #206 0-4-0 "SHIFTER" STEAM L21V1	\$339.00
11843	BOSTON & MAINE GP-9 A-B-A SET W/ RAIL SOUNDS	\$399.00
11956	UNION PACIFIC GP-9 POWERED & DUMMY	\$299.00
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14558	B&O F-3 NON POWERED B-UNIT	\$125.00
14559	DENVER & RIO GRANDE WEST F-3 AA COMMAND CONTROL	\$479.00
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14599	NEW HAVEN ALCO PB	\$99.00
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18009	NEW YORK CENTRAL 4-8-2 "3000"	\$499.00
18011	CHESIEE T-1 484 STEAM LOCOMOTIVE	\$549.00
18022	PERE MARQUETTE 2-8-4 BERKSHIRE STEAM LOCOMOTIVE	\$499.00
18030	FRISCO 2-8-2 MIKADO STEAM LOCO W/RAILSOUNDS	\$595.00
18034	SANTA FE MIKADO STEAM LOCO & TENDER	\$559.00
18053	LCC #726 BERKSHIRE STEAM LOCO	\$799.00
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18219	C. & N.W. DASH-40C W/RODS	\$199.00
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18847	SANTA FE H-12-44 SWITCHER	\$279.00
18952	ATSF RAILWAY ALCO PA-1 #2000 CC-SS	\$149.00
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24503	DENVER RIO GRANDE WESTERN ALCO PB	\$119.00
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28297	SOUTHERN PACIFIC GP9 DIESEL L9V2	\$299.00
28311	UNION PACIFIC #70 DOUBLE DIESEL LOCO D035A L10V2	\$449.00
28327	UNION PACIFIC #7050 AC6000 DIESEL L9V2	\$549.00
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28357	CSX #8797 S060 DIESEL L10V2	\$379.00
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28883	THOMAS AND FRIENDS "DIESEL" L12RTR	\$75.00
28900	THOMAS AND FRIENDS "ARRY AND BERT" DIESELS (2-PK)	\$149.00
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34569	SANTA FE ALCO PA B-UNIT (POWERED) L10V2 LEGACY	\$249.00
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34623	THE TEXAS SPECIAL #6340 S070ACE L11V1	\$429.00
34624	THE TEXAS SPECIAL #6344 S070ACE L11V1	\$549.00
34671	C&O LEGACY SCALE GP-9 #6243 L12V1	\$389.00
34681	UNION PACIFIC LEGACY #256 GP9 DIESEL L12V1	\$399.00
34682	UNION PACIFIC LEGACY #261 GP9 DIESEL L12V1	\$399.00
34689	WESTERN MARYLAND F7 AA DIESEL L12V1	\$579.00
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34695	L&N F7 POWERED B-UNIT DIESEL L12V1	\$315.00
34698	L&N F7 NON-POWERED B-UNIT DIESEL L12V1	\$199.00
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34704	PENNSYLVANIA RF-16 POWERED B-UNIT L12V1	\$315.00
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34743	CHESAPEAKE & OHIO #6249 GP9 NON-POWERED L12V1	\$179.00
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34775	N&W #6106 NON-POWERED S040-2 DIESEL L12V1	\$185.00
34776	N&W LEGACY #6121 S040-2 DIESEL L12V1	\$419.00
34777	N&W LEGACY #6109 S040-2 DIESEL L12V1	\$419.00
34778	CSX #8023 NON-POWERED S040-2 DIESEL L12V1	\$179.00
34780	CSX LEGACY #8033 S040-2 DIESEL L12V1	\$419.00
34787	C&NW #6816 NON-POWERED S040-2 DIESEL L12V1	\$179.00
34789	C&NW #6832 S040-2 DIESEL L12V1	\$419.00
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38161	MKT FB -B UNIT	\$99.00

38204	SANTA FE FT B-UNIT L10V1	\$99.00
38210	PENNSYLVANIA ALCO A-A L9V2	\$299.00
38215	SANTA FE FT W/RAILSOUNDS L11RTR	\$199.00
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38386	WABASH #2367 FE AB SET (TRADITIONAL) L12V2	\$419.00
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38408	CSX HERITAGE WESTERN MARYLAND #2659 L11V1	\$449.00
38410	CSX HERITAGE CLUNCHFIELD #3620 AC6000 L11V2	\$449.00
38411	CSX HERITAGE FAMILY LINES #4825 L11V1	\$449.00
38412	CSX HERITAGE FAMILY LINES #4837 L11V1	\$449.00
38413	CSX #607 AC6000 L11V2	\$449.00
38414	CSX #654 AC6000 L11V2	\$449.00
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38430	POLAR GP-7 (POLAR RAILROAD) L10E0Y	\$399.00
38453	PENN CENTRAL #7808 RS-11 L12V1	\$389.00
38454	PENNSYLVANIA LEGACY #9622 RS-11 L12V1	\$389.00
38455	PENN CENTRAL #7825 RS-11 N-PWR L12V1	\$199.00
38457	N&W LEGACY #318 RS-11 L12V1	\$389.00
38459	N&W #330 RS-11 NON-PWR L12V1	\$199.00
38462	PENNSYLVANIA #8639 RS-11 NON-POWERED DIESEL L12V1	\$199.00
38464	ALASKA LEGACY #3602 RS-11 DIESEL L12V1	\$389.00
38465	ALASKA LEGACY #3604 RS-11 DIESEL L12V1	\$389.00
38467	ALASKA NON-POWERED #3607 RS-11 DIESEL L12V1	\$199.00
38494	CANADIAN PACIFIC #3864 STD 'O' DIESEL L12V2	\$499.00
38495	CANADIAN PACIFIC NON-POWERED #9868 STD 'O' DIESEL L12V2	\$389.00
38529	UNION PACIFIC #780 GP35 NON-POWERED DIESEL L12V1	\$219.00
38537	PENNSYLVANIA LEGACY #2302 GP35 DIESEL L12V1	\$419.00
38538	PENNSYLVANIA #2305 GP35 NON-POWERED DIESEL L12V1	\$219.00
38546	KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN GENSET SWITCHER L11V2	\$639.00
38547	SANTA FE GENSET SWITCHER L11V2	\$639.00
38563	BALTIMORE & OHIO RF-16 AA SET L12V1	\$589.00
38566	BALTIMORE & OHIO RF-16 POWERED B-UNIT L12V1	\$319.00
38567	BALTIMORE & OHIO RF-16 NON-POWERED B-UNIT L12V1	\$199.00
38568	NEW YORK CENTRAL RF-16 AA SET L12V1	\$589.00
38571	NEW YORK CENTRAL RF-16 POWERED B-UNIT L12V1	\$319.00
38572	NEW YORK CENTRAL RF-16 NON-POWERED B-UNIT L12V1	\$199.00
38573	SOUTHERN PACIFIC RF-16 AA SET L12V1	\$589.00
38576	SOUTHERN PACIFIC RF-16 POWERED B-UNIT L12V1	\$319.00
38577	SOUTHERN PACIFIC RF-16 NON-POWERED B-UNIT L12V1	\$199.00
38579	SANTA FE #744 GP9 NON-POWERED DIESEL L12V1	\$199.00
38583	CSX S080MAC #804 (NP) DIESEL L12V1	\$219.00
38585	NORFOLK SOUTHERN LEGACY #7203 S080MAC DIESEL L12V1	\$429.00
38588	CONRAIL LEGACY #4129 S080MAC DIESEL L12V1	\$429.00
38597	BURLINGTON F3 AA SET L12V1	\$589.00
38610	NICKEL PLATE ROAD BERKSHIRE WITH TMCC	\$250.00
38626	HOLIDAY GREEN MIKADO	\$159.00
38644	TEXAS & PACIFIC MIKADO W/TMCC	\$250.00
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Haunted Power Station Faces Demolition

Article and Photos by Steve Phetterplace

Dateline: March 20, 1953, *Staten Island Advance*


The sound of voices emanating from inside a Staten Island Rapid Transit (SIRT) Railway Co. electrical power station several miles outside South Beach are still being heard long after the plant was closed and abandoned. During the many years when it was active, the facility provided power for the railway's electrified commuter service line to the beach destinations. The abandoned building has since become a popular spot for railfans, vandals, bats, and pigeons...and perhaps a ghost or two.

Strange sounds were reportedly heard again last month by a local couple out riding their bikes nearby. Mary and Tony Ronzoni of South Beach said they frequently visit the site to watch the afternoon freight train pass by once a week. Mr. Ronzoni reported that he and his wife have heard voices coming from inside the building on several occasions, but whenever he approaches the doorway, the sounds always go silent. Mr. Ronzoni claims he has tried to inspect the decrepit structure to the best of his ability but never found anything out of the ordinary.

The power station's local reputation as a haunted site resulted

from a tragic accident with the high-voltage equipment back in 1933, which led to the instant and violent electrocution of two workers. The cause of the accident was never determined, but some blame was placed on the two deceased workers. According to local lore, the ghosts of these two employees will inhabit the facility until their good names are fully cleared.

An abandoned VW bus parked on the property also remains a mystery to this day and is yet another source of strange noises. Officials said the vehicle's registration number and license plates may have been removed by vandals, and no connection has ever been made to the owner. The VW bus has been there for a number of years, according to an anonymous bystander at the scene who said, "This place has always been haunted. You don't want to mess with that car or go inside the building...ever!"

But this advice is going unheeded. The VW will be hauled out of the marsh next week, and the power plant structure is scheduled to be torn down on April Fools' Day. Nearby B&O freight operations will also cease by the end of the year as the line is scheduled to close completely. 



The long-abandoned Staten Island Rapid Transit power station near South Beach is home to many critters. The population may also include a couple of ghosts.



Railfans Mary and Tony Ronzoni frequently enjoy biking in the area, and both are convinced that something unusual is inside.



Two workers died in a tragic accident at Substation No. 4 in 1933, and many believe they still haunt the structure.



The adjacent rail line is slated for abandonment late in 2013. Mystery also surrounds the abandoned VW bus, which has been on the site and untraceable for a long time.

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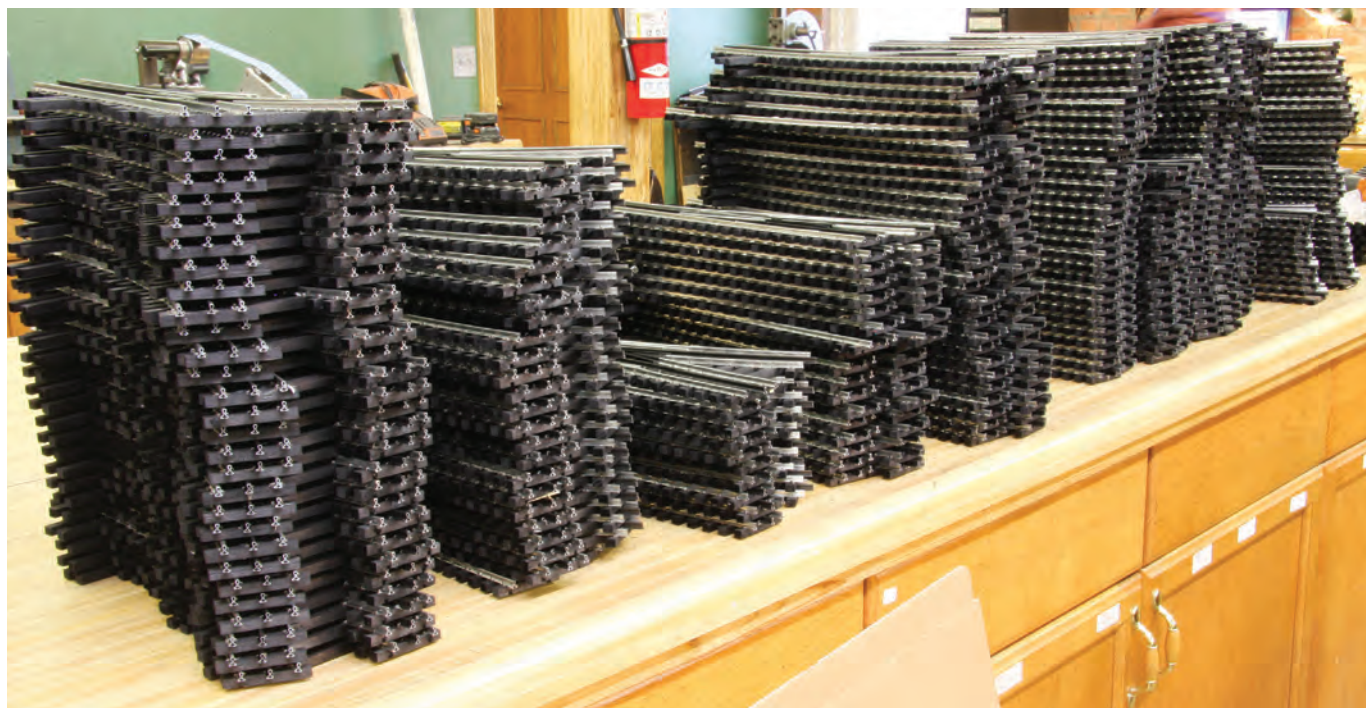
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At a dinner during the recent fall TCA Eastern Division York Train Meet, I heard a presentation that made me realize our hobby had achieved a milestone. It was pointed out that Ross Custom Switches had reached its 40th anniversary. Forty years! What was even more astounding to me was that I could remember when it had all started. I decided it was time I sat down with its founder, Steven Ross Brenneisen, and got the whole story.

Steve Brenneisen grew up in Chebanse, Illinois, about 70 miles south of Chicago. He was born in December 1957 and says he had quite an upbringing. “The town had three bars and three churches, and you worshipped in the house of your choice.”

He grew up on a farm about a mile across a cornfield from the Illinois Central main line. “We never had a lot of money, but we had enough to get by. We had a decent car and an adequate house, but certainly no extra money for things like potato chips or Cokes or that sort of thing. Those were luxuries in my home. Those were things that only spoiled kids had.”

Steve describes his dad as a jack-of-all-trades, master-of-some type of person. His dad built his own house, literally from scratch as Steve puts it. His dad bought a well drilling rig and ran his own business drilling water wells on farms along the Iroquois River in Illinois. “This was an era in America when if times were tight you

became your own entrepreneur out of necessity, like starting a well drilling business to get the family by economically,” Steve says. These proved to be life lessons for Steve. While cutting firewood, his dad suffered a fatal heart attack when he was 73.

But Steve’s working life began much earlier. He began working right alongside his dad in the well drilling business, picking up lots of mechanical know-how along the way. By necessity, Steve also did all kinds of other farm work as well. Somewhere along the way, he also became interested in minibikes. “I learned most everything from watching my dad do mechanical maintenance on farm and drilling machinery.” Even at an early age, Steve was doing things like just about any kind of engine work, as well as doing tune-ups on ignition points, condensers, spark plugs, and any other related mechanical maintenance on machines. “Dad was always the quiet type. I learned mostly from just watching him.”

As far back as age five, Steve remembers wanting a train set, but was told he was just too young. He accepted this at the time, but he never forgot the desire for trains. “It seemed that trains were always beckoning to me one way or another when I was young, like watching and listening to trains on the Illinois Central across our farm field. Then one day our milkman left a copy of *Model Railroader* magazine with the milk delivery. He knew I was interested in trains. That first issue really got me hooked. But during

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that time in my life, trains were a financial luxury you just didn't go out and buy." He began with HO trains at the age of nine when he finally got a set of trains for Christmas.

"When you worked on a farm, you learned to drive all sorts of machinery even by the time you were only old enough to see over the steering wheel," Steve points out. "By the time I reached 11, I looked very mature for my age, even to the extent of being able to grow a beard of sorts. Not that I'd recommend this to anyone else, but by that time I had long ago learned to drive from being around all the farm equipment. Heck, I was even able to drive myself to a hobby shop in a nearby town to buy train parts. Yeah, I said parts. I got started buying parts here and there so I could build a train of some kind."

His purchases would also include track and other things, allowing him to begin a small but adequate HO train layout. He even dabbled a little in N scale, driven by the fact he could get a larger layout in the same space.

"Most people in O gauge don't realize that back then when you started out in HO, things like altering and building your own track switches just comes naturally. I was either building or altering my own HO switches at a very early age to make my HO layouts. Besides, it was cheaper than buying new ones," Steve says.

"My dad wasn't really interested in trains until he was 60 years old. Then one day he came home with a marvelous box. In it I discovered Lionel trains, like big old O gauge trains! Sure, they were used, but they were just beautiful. Here was a Texas Special B unit, some track and switches, a Jersey Central bell ringer switcher, a U.S. Army switcher, a 2025 steam engine and tender, some cars, and a cheap 90-watt transformer. It may not have been what all the rich kids had, but that didn't matter. They were just beautiful to me. I was a poor kid; not like those rich kids in the Lionel catalogs with ZW transformers.... probably like Jim Barrett here." (I could not afford a ZW until I was 35 years old.)

Not many days after that, Steve came home from work to find his dad had built a table and already had the trains running on it. "I think my dad was about 60 or 61 by that time. I was overwhelmed. All I remember is thinking I've got to get rid of my HO and N gauge trains and talk Dad into getting some more of this O gauge stuff."

Steve and his dad started following yard sales while chasing jobs here and there. Steve slowly began to amass more and more O gauge stuff. Also during this time, his dad had moved the family into a 40' x 60' ranch house with the all-important basement. He and his dad built a train table consisting of three 4x8 pieces of plywood for a new layout.

"I got disgusted with all the wasted space no matter what layout I built. I was big on making a layout with all kinds of yards for switching operations. I wanted lots of freight sidings to store all the rolling stock." He quickly discovered that by using Lionel O22 switches, he had this problem with tons of wasted space between the sidings. "No matter what I did, I still couldn't make a decent layout.

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Steve Brenneisen

All we had to choose from back then were O22 and O72 switches. There just wasn't a good selection of switches available like there is now."

Steve had learned that in the world of HO or N, he could construct switches to come up with very minimal distances between sidings. "So I just naturally tried that same thing with O gauge tinplate switches by cutting off the curved turnout side of the switch to space the sidings up closer. That's all I knew at the time."

That all changed when Steve had the opportunity to meet Sam Griffith from Kankakee, Illinois, who collected trains. On first glance, Steve thought he was in Heaven. Sam was one of the top 50 collectors in the country at the time. He had a 12' x 12' layout, which was huge for that era. But more importantly, Sam's layout was built using something he'd never seen before. That was his introduction to GarGraves track.

"Wow," Steve says. "Here was flexible track, bendable to nearly any sized curve you wanted. That stuff would let you design in O gauge like I had experience with in HO and N gauge." Steve found that by stripping off the wooden ties of a piece of GarGraves track, he ended up with long pieces of pre-formed rail. "But the rail had long flanges on the bottom that allowed it to slide into the wooden ties to form the track sections. I found I first had to grind off the flanges on the bottom of the rail pieces with a bench grinder to come up with flat rails I could spike down to wooden ties."

Using HO spikes, Steve began making his own switches, fashioning them out of flat bottom rail he made from GarGraves rails. He formed the curves by hand, cut and ground the rail pieces, and spiked the formed rails down to new wooden ties. He also found that he had to make his own new ties out of pine instead of the bass wood that GarGraves made their track ties from. "Bass wood is great for cutting slots into to hold the rails on, but bass wood just won't take spikes without frequently splitting," Steve points out. "I found that aspen works much better for driving spikes into."

Steve realized that switches of different turnout radii also needed switch frogs that were slightly different from one size to



The exact gauge between the point rails is carefully checked with dial calipers.

another. "I made my new switch frogs by grinding individual rail pieces to the shapes I needed and then soldering them together to make my new switch frog designs."

He bought more track from Sam, slipped all the ties off, and ground off the bottom flanges to form flat contoured rails. Then he ran into the first of many new problems. Many times the holes in the wheels on postwar freight cars were worn out where they spun on the axle, randomly making some of them very wobbly. Many of these wobbly wheels fell into the grooves at the frog of his handmade switch. In addition, when they wobbled through the frog, they tended to pick the points of the frog and derail.

"I was constantly improving, making design and fabrication changes until I found fixes for all these little subtle differences," Steve says. "Then along came MPC-style fast-angle wheels mounted right on the axle. That brought a whole new set of problems. The spacing was not the same between the wheel flanges as the spacing on postwar wheel sets, which created new problems in the switch frog openings. Also, fast-angle wheels did not have the same flange height as postwar wheels. By again changing the design of the frog, I made the new fast-angle wheels ride through the frog on a solid floor at the bottom of the flange. That design would still let wobbly postwar wheels work too."

Sam had been seeing the constant progress of Steve's designs and approached Steve to build him some switches specifically for his layout. Others in Sam's circle of train friends began to take notice of Steve's work and asked Steve to make switches for them, too. The word was getting out.

"My first switches were simple manual-throw types, which could be made to operate remotely by attaching a dual coil switch machine," Steve says. "At the time, the most popular ones were sold in 2-rail O scale under such names as Kemtron, PFM, and later NJI and others."

During the mid-to-late '60s, there just weren't a lot of new O gauge trains for sale in stores around the country. Since the new Lionel was all but gone, to find O gauge 3-rail trains, you had to

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This is the Ross Standard gauge tinplate switch.

attend flea market train shows to see any decent quantity or variety. The flea markets were a constant source for new trains, such as the one his family attended regularly in Cedar Lake, Indiana.

In 1972 Steve met Owen Byrne at a train show in LaSalle, Illinois, at the Kaskaskia Hotel. Owen really encouraged Steve to continue to develop his switch line. By this time, Steve was making some switches for himself and for a few friends, but that was all. On a whim he decided to take a couple of his standard turnouts, called the "regular" switch, and one of his curved turnouts to the show. He was not prepared for what happened next. "Wow," Steve says. "The small crowd there went nuts." It really made an impression on him. "Complete strangers were impressed with something I had done. I sold my first switch to a total stranger named Tony Lewandowski from Rockford, Illinois."

Steve began to think that just maybe he had something here. Complete strangers were impressed with his abilities to make O gauge switches. He found that personally very rewarding. "The biggest motivator was that somebody wanted something I personally built more than anything else they could buy."

He saw the beginning of a possible entrepreneurial idea. "Man, I could sit in a cool basement making switches instead of working outside in the hot, dry Illinois summers doing farm work, mowing lawns, drilling wells, and putting up hay. The possibilities for a real income might be there," Steve muses.

"Then somewhere I heard about a train show at something called the DuPage County Fairgrounds just outside of Chicago. I talked my girlfriend, Tina, who was old enough to legally drive a car, into taking us to this show. Initially, I just wanted to see what an O gauge, 3-rail-type train show was like. I wanted to see what everybody else

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wanted to see, and why." He began going to the DuPage train show and regularly buying more track, cutting it up, and selling more switches.

That was good, but that didn't pay all the bills. He was still drilling wells or doing anything else that brought in some income. "My first real visible gain from the switch business was my '69 Plymouth Road Runner I bought in 1975. It was used, but that didn't make any difference. It was my pride and joy and something I bought with my own hard-earned money. Sure, it had 100,000 miles on it, but it may as well have been a new limousine. It cost all of 350 bucks."

Steve continued to do most anything he could think of to bring in money. He even tended bar at 17,

mostly due to his much more mature appearance for his age. His mother approached him about this time and revealed to him that she had saved up around \$4,000 over the past years as a surprise investment for his future. Steve decided he wanted to use the money to open a hobby shop in their basement selling Lionel trains out of his train room. He even set up an account with a wholesaler in Chicago to buy product to sell in his store.

Our editor reminds me our space is limited even for stories like this one. I argue with him that there is so much more information to pass on and that the reader interest is definitely there. So he told me to cheer up; I already had my column written for our next issue. See you soon. 



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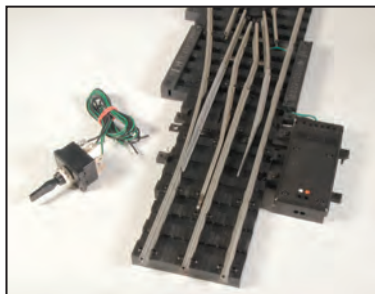


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When I first saw a trio of the Lionel MPC 9600 series hi-cube boxcars for sale at a train show several years ago, they immediately appealed to me. They were even prettier than the cars shown in my copies of Lionel catalogs from 1976 and 1977. Here were Lionel cars that were big enough to look right behind my postwar and MPC-era Lionel Geeps. To me, most of the traditional size Lionel cars look good behind O27 Alco FA-FB diesels or a traditional size steam locomotive. But when coupled to the quintessential Lionel Geeps, which are close to 1:48 scale, traditional size cars are just too small.

My first three hi-cube cars were the colorful 9605 New Haven, 9607 Southern Pacific, and 9626 Santa Fe (Photo 1). I knew the vendor at the show as he also supplied parts for my restoration projects at that time, so he offered all three cars to us at an enticing price—dirt cheap actually. A couple of hours later, they were on the rails in my train room and were even prettier than I had anticipated. Immediately, my search was on for the rest of the hi-cubes decorated in liveries of real railroads. A lot of sellers at subsequent train shows seemed to have hi-cube cars that not many buyers seemed to want, so for the most part, the hunt proved to be an easy one where I bagged most of the cars at prices I liked.

Lionel initially released nine hi-cube cars sequentially numbered from 9600 and decorated as 9600 C&O, 9601 ICG, 9602 AT&SF, 9603 PC, 9604 N&W, 9605 NH, 9606 UP, 9607 SP, and 9608 BN. Each of these cars had a new plastic frame, Symington-Wayne style of plastic trucks with metal wheels, thumbtack style of operating couplers, and sliding doors. Even today, the doors don't seem to like staying closed as the cars roll along the rails.

Car number 9610 StL&SF was also released in 1977 as part of the 6-car Rocky Mountain Special set. Since this car had to come out of a set break-up, it proved to be the hardest of the hi-cubes to find...well, it really wasn't all that difficult. I called my favorite mail order train dealer who just so

happened to have one left. Funny, he almost always seemed to have just one left of whatever I was looking for. Of course, whatever the car or engine was, I always went for the deal, and since he had my credit card on file, each transaction was painless, that is until the bill arrived at the end of the month. Besides, Rick was always fun to visit with on the phone, but I digress.

As a side note, Lionel also released a series of 9600 hi-cube cars decorated in Walt Disney cartoon characters for the Mickey Mouse Express set. However, I had less than zero interest in them back then and as well as today.

Three more hi-cube cars appeared in the 1982 Lionel catalog: 9626 AT&SF, 9627 UP, 9628 BN with a fourth hi-cube,



the 9629 C&O introduced in the 1983 catalog. These four cars were of unbelievably cheap quality with one-color decoration, plastic wheels, one dummy coupler on the BN car, and translucent plastic bodies on the AT&SF and UP cars. The UP car was particularly bad (Photo 2). To simply call them ugly would be giving them undue credit, but regardless, I bought all four of them at another train show. After all, I needed them to complete my collection, or at least that was the rationale at the show.



Each of the 9600 through 9608 and 9610 cars had the realistic white extra height car banner on top of the car ends. Oddly, only the 9600, 9601, and 9602 cars had the road name and car number printed on the banner (Photo 3). On the later 9626 through 9629 cars, the excess height banner was missing.

As I understand it, the 9600 series hi-cubes have been shunned for years by many O gauge railroaders and generally maligned

as too light and somewhat top heavy. According to our resident toy train aficionado, Ed Boyle, knowledgeable collectors have been known to go screaming out the door whenever hi-cubes are mentioned. Oh well, I have to agree these cars are unusually light, but this detraction, or attribute depending on the point of view, proved beneficial with what soon became a train of all 14 hi-cube cars.

Just about any of my 3-rail locomotives can easily haul the hi-cube train around the editorial Carpet Central Railroad's more-or-less level track. Each of the original ten cars weighs a scant 8.6 ounces, and with their needle-point axles and fast-angle metal wheels, they produce minimal rolling resistance, even in tight curves. The four cheap cars with plastic wheels are even lighter at 6.4 ounces each, but


because of their cheap wheels, they didn't roll well at all. Fortunately, the plastic wheelsets were easy to replace with metal ones, which is what I did soon after acquiring the cars.

In spite of the hi-cubes' lackluster reputation, I found them to be amazingly stable even on my rather uneven roadbed. In one of two caveats, the plastic trucks riveted to the plastic frame result in a lot of slack action on startup and stop, so

jack-rabbit starts and stops can result in some spectacular derailments. The other caveat is the necessity of a light caboose at the end of the train. A heavy caboose or one with noticeable rolling resistance can pull some of the train's cars off the rails in a tight curve. A traditional SP or even a free-rolling N5c Lionel caboose has worked fine with my string of hi-cubes.

When the CCR was a traditional toy train layout of tubular track and postwar O22 switches, the train of hi-cubes tracked reliably even through my train-killing S-curve of point-to-point O22s. And that was also at a pretty good clip with a pair of MPC-era GP7s at the point. Today, on my two main lines of Atlas track, the colorful train of Lionel hi-cubes slams through the O72 crossover switches with the panache of a BNSF high-priority freight speeding across the road's main line through eastern New Mexico.

With the possible exception of the 9610 StL&SF car, the MPC-era hi-cube boxcars are about as rare as dirt, but they can make for a colorful, fun, and complete collection of cars. Because they have little to no value to the serious toy train collector and even some operators, they are also about as cheap as dirt, too. Best of all, the hi-cubes can be run without a thought about diminishing their value.


As an epilog, Lionel released additional hi-cube boxcars soon after the turn of the century, 21st century that is. Other than the die-cast trucks and couplers plus the improved graphics on these more recently issued cars, they are the same delightful hi-cubes as their predecessors from the mid-1970s. 

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Scheduled Meets

May 11, 2013

MIAMI, FL – TCA Southern Division National Train Day at Gold Coast RR Museum & Toy Train Show, 12450 S.W. 152nd St. 11a-4p, Adm: Free. Food available. Info: Richard Tashjian (954) 581-5778, rjtash@bellsouth.net, or Bob Mintz (954) 404-8207, bobmintz@comcast.net.

May 31-June 1, 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, www.gpdtoyrainmuseum.com.

June 1-2, 2013

TAMPA, FL – 9th Tampa Model Train Show, Florida State Fairgrounds, Special Events Center. June 1, 9a-5p, June 2, 10a-4p, Adm: \$8, under 12 free. Info: Charles Miller, 3106 N. Rochester St., Arlington, VA 22213, rrshows@aol.com, www.gserr.com.

June 8-9, 2013

PITTSBURGH, KS – Pittsburgh Model RR Club 35th Annual Show & Swap Meet, Meadowbrook Mall, Centennial and Broadway. Sat. 8a-9p, Sun. 8a-4p, Adm: Free. Info: Bill or Norma Feagins (620) 231-9674, 5pm-9pm.

June 22, 2013

CHARLOTTE, NC – 10th Annual Railfair & Model Train Show, Metro Lina Expo Center. 9a-4p, Adm: \$7, under 12 free. Operating layouts, over 250 tables. Info: Charles Miller, 3106 N. Rochester St., Arlington, VA 22213, (703) 536-2954, rrshows@aol.com, www.gserr.com.

July 13, 2013

DELAND, FL – 44th Florida Railfair, Volusia County Fairgrounds, Tommy Lawrence Bldg., SR 44 and I-4 (Exit 118). 9a-4p, Adm: \$7, under 12 free. Info: Charles Miller, 3106 N. Rochester St., Arlington, VA 22213, (703) 536-2954, www.gserr.com, rrshows@aol.com.

July 20, 2013

LA CROSSE, WI – 23rd Annual Railfair RR Show & Swap Meet, Copeland Park at Rose and Clinton St. 10a-4p, Adm: \$5, under 12 free w/adult. Info: 4000 Foundation, P.O. Box 3411, La Crosse, WI 54602, (608) 781-9383.

August 17, 2013

PLANO, TX – Train Collector's Association Summer Train Show, Plano Holiday Inn, 700 Central Parkway East, Hwy. 75, Plano, TX 75074. 10:30a-4p. Adm: \$6 adults, \$9 per family. Info: Pat Halpin (210) 661-4238, pathalpin@aol.com.

August 24-25, 2013

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

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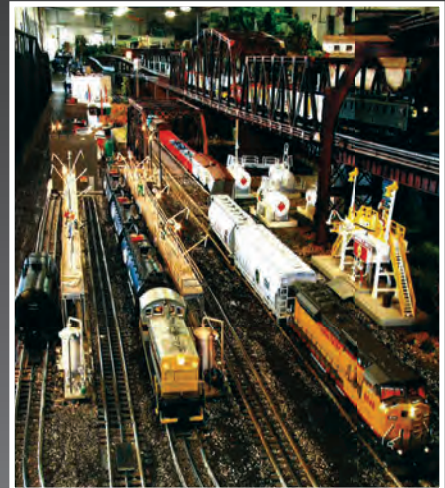
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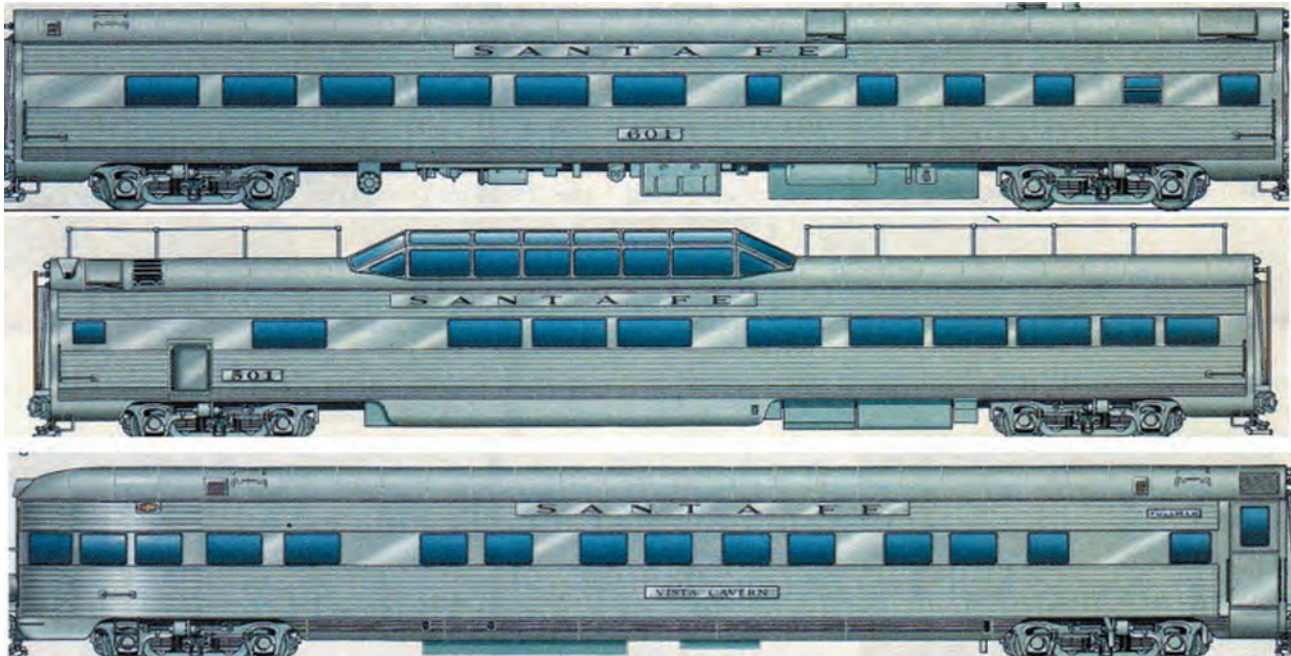
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