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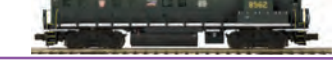
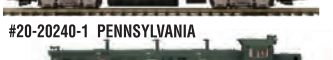
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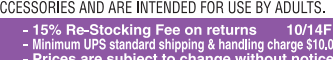
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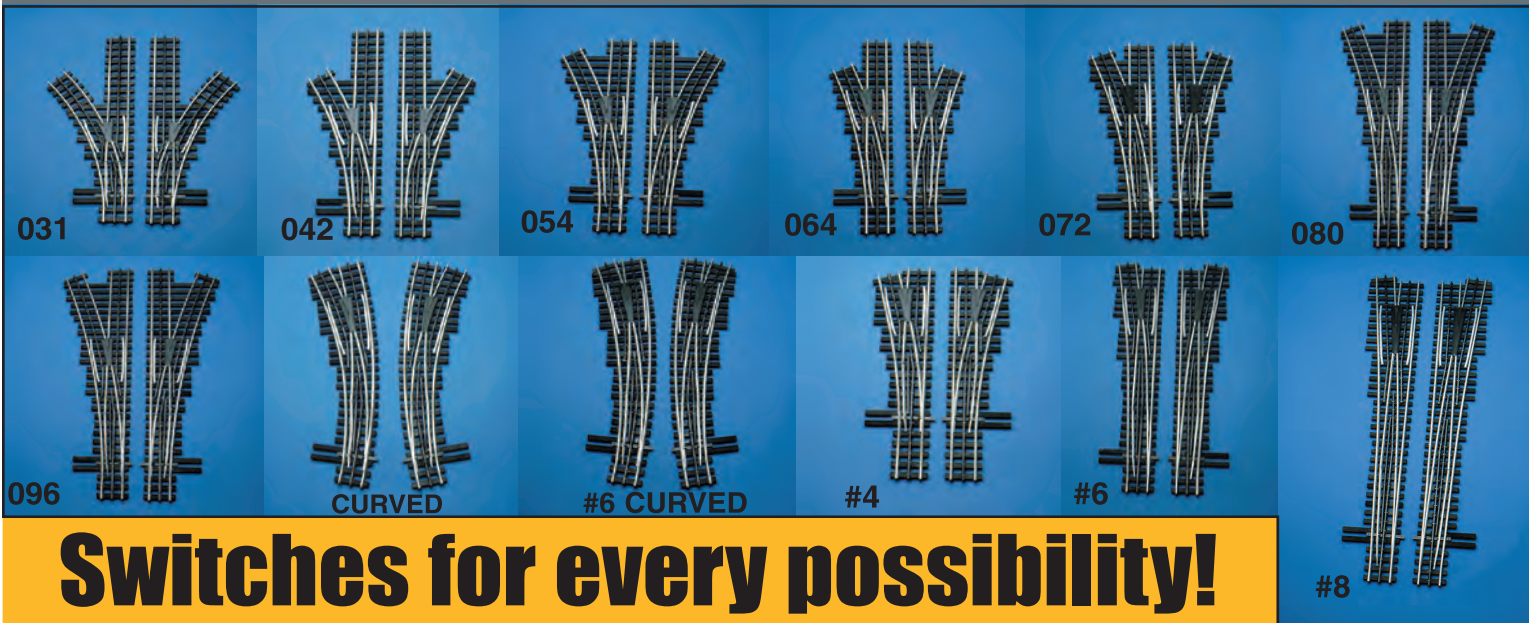
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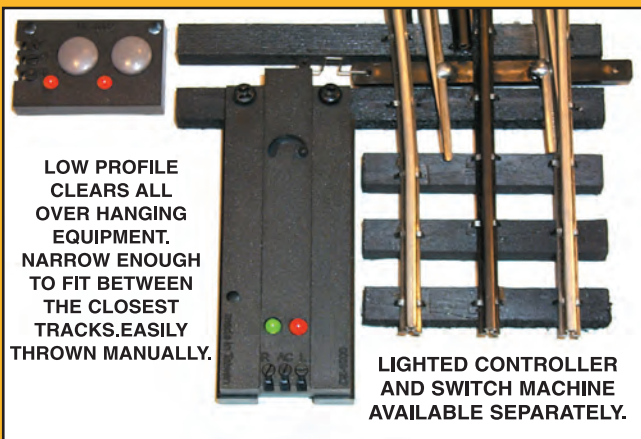
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Contents



PRODUCT REVIEWS

21 Atlas 0 Phase 2 F3s

31 MTH Streamlined
Pennsylvania K4 Pacific

39 Bachmann Spectrum
On30 Scale 18' Cars



FEATURES

42 Grand Adventure and a Tribute
Eliot Scher

54 Big Trees for Big Trains
John Sethian

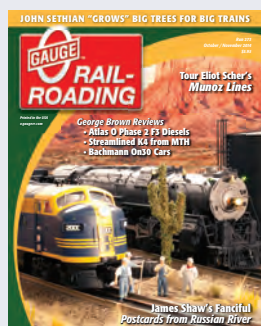
59 ProtoPhotos
Sam Hopkins

63 Postcards from Russian River
James Shaw



DIVISIONS

Editor's Corner	Streetcars I Desire	6
Smoke Signals	Product Announcements	11
Readers' Rails	Your Trains and Layouts	16
Collector's Gallery	Tinplate Reality	71
Rail Tales	Booming Business	78
Backshop	Building a Layout: Create a Removable River Gorge	83
The Helper Engine	Dummy A, Smart Coupler	92
Scheduled Meets	Shows to Attend	94
Dealer Roundhouse	O Gauge Shops	96
Observation Car	End of the Train	98
Advertiser Index	Advertisers in This Issue	98



ON THE COVER

A Lionel Legacy Santa Fe F3 freight engine waits alongside a 3rd Rail Santa Fe 2900-series Northern during a stopover on Eliot Scher's Munoz Lines O gauge layout. Eliot likes to run long trains, sometimes up to 30' and 40' in length, and his layout was designed to handle four or five very long trains in any operating session without removing trains from the tracks.

Photo by Eliot Scher



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Streetcars I Desire

In the world of 3-rail O gauge traction models—of which I am a big fan and avid collector—the two-truck trolleys produced by Walter E. Cameron under the Western Hobbycraft banner have long ranked as special favorites. Walt offered 1:48 scale models of the lightweight St. Louis Car Company cars built for the Johnstown (Pennsylvania) Traction Company (JTC), one of the last small U.S. cities to abandon tracked trolley service. JTC provided Walt's birthplace and childhood hometown with reliable streetcar service from 1910 through 1959, and it provided Walt with fond memories that would endure throughout his lifetime. Even though life's pathways led Walt away from Johnstown in his adult years, he never lost his abiding fondness for the town and the transit system that was such an ever-present part of his youth.

The 3-rail versions of Walt's all-metal trolleys could be purchased with optional sounds that included horn, bell, and

11 Johnstown-specific station stop announcements. Equipped with can motors, they could also be upgraded with command control capability by after-market suppliers. It's probably safe to say that these cars pretty much set the bar for commercial-market O gauge models of their type. The trolleys were also available in 2-rail versions for that segment of the market. Perhaps best of all, both 2-rail and 3-rail versions were available to hobbyists at very reasonable prices.

The 3-rail models in my collection are smooth runners and beautifully detailed to the point where they merit reasonable care in handling lest more delicate details such as poles and front and rear "people scoops" be damaged. These trams cannot really be classified as playthings, but are more properly considered fine models. My collection includes no fewer than six of the splendid Western Hobbycraft models in New Orleans, Chicago, San



Walter E. Cameron



OGR Associate Editor George Brown provided this photo of one of Walt's earliest JTC cars.

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Western Hobbycraft San Francisco (front) and Chicago cars were just two of the more than half-dozen two-truck trolleys offered by Walt.

Francisco, Los Angeles, San Antonio, and Johnstown liveries. I believe the Philadelphia car is about the only one I'm missing, but perhaps one of those will turn up at some point in the future.

I never had the pleasure of meeting Walt in person, but we chatted on the phone on a number of occasions and frequently exchanged correspondence via e-mail. He also participated on our OGR forum for a period of time. So I was naturally very sorry to learn from Walt's son, Scott, that his father, at 87 years of age, had passed away on June 11, 2014, in North Royalton, Ohio.

I had lost contact with Walt after progressively more serious

health issues impacted his life. Nevertheless, I unhesitatingly continued to recommend his Western Hobbycraft trolleys—a very few of which are still available at www.westernhobbycraft.com—to our forum participants and others when my advice relating to the purchase of O gauge traction equipment was solicited.

Walt is back “home” now, interred in his beloved Johnstown. His legacy will live on for years to come in the form of the colorful, beautifully designed, and reliable running Western Hobbycraft streetcars that operate on O gauge layouts around the country and worldwide. Thanks much, Walt! 



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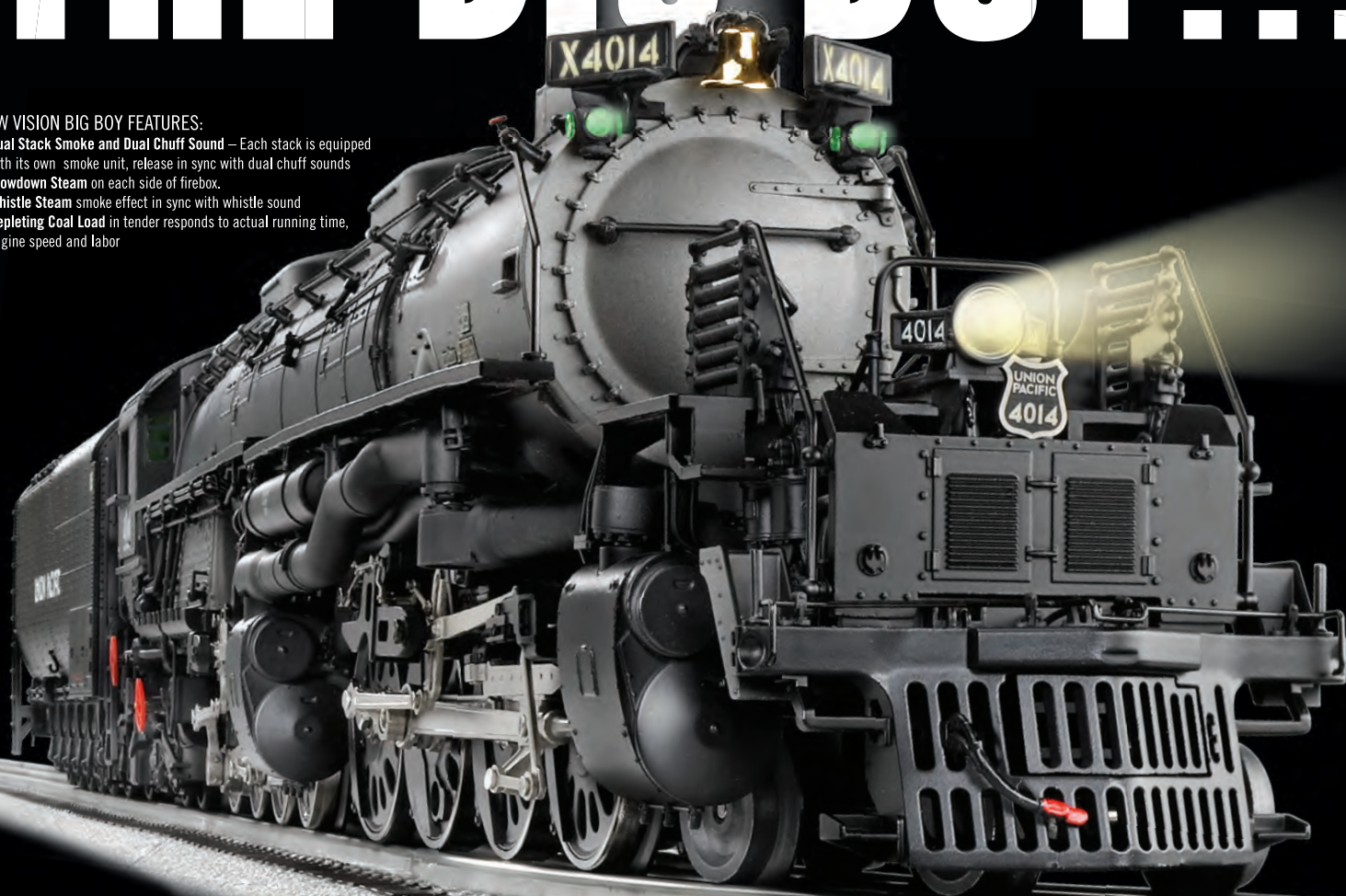
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Smoke Signals

Product Announcements



Terrific TOFC

The Canadian Toy Train Association is pleased to announce Weaver has manufactured the third car in the group's Canadian trailer on flatcar (TOFC) series: a scale Pacific Great Eastern Rly. The Pacific Great Eastern Railway was incorporated in 1912 and continued to operate until 1972 when it was renamed BC Rail. This limited-production O gauge car comes in three numbers in both 2-rail and 3-rail versions. Cost is \$80.00 plus \$10.00 shipping per car. For ordering information, e-mail mlhorne@shaw.ca, or call 604-560-4028.



Picture This

The Madison Poster Company is offering the first in a series of Lionel-licensed postwar dealer posters. The first reproduction in the series is the D-145 dealer display mural. The original work for that poster was created by a Lionel display department employee in 1954. The Lionel Corporation liked the work so much it created a 16' wide by 4' tall mural to be sold to Lionel dealers. The D-145 dealer display mural was never cataloged, but the few murals that were sold graced the walls of many of Lionel's larger dealers. This full-color reproduction measures 84" wide by 20" tall. The first 200 posters in the series will be individually numbered and come with a signed certificate of authenticity from Lionel and The Madison Poster Company. Each poster is printed to order and costs \$199.95. Order the poster at www.madisonposter.com.



Sweet LITTLE Stuff

The Long Island Toy Train Locomotive Engineers (LITTLE) and the Metropolitan Division Train Collectors Association (METCA) are producing a Lionel Entenmann's Commemorative tank car. Production is limited to those who purchase this car in advance. Profits will go towards the TCA 2015 National Convention hosted by METCA. To commemorate Entenmann's ties to Long Island, LITTLE and METCA created this 6-58597 Lionel factory-produced tank car in O gauge. It features die-cast metal sprung trucks and will come in a unique white box with blue trim like previous Entenmann's cars. Orders must be received by September 30. Anticipated delivery is summer 2015. Cost of the car is \$75.00 including shipping. Make check or money order payable in U.S. funds to METCA, and mail to 6 Packard Dr., Middletown, NJ 07748. For convention information, visit www.metca.org, or contact divisioncar@metca.org.

Prototypical Paints

Scalecoat paints from Weaver Models are a model railroader's and model builder's best friend when it comes to accurately matching colors used on prototype motive power and rolling stock. Scalecoat I



Paint is formulated especially for use on brass, other metals, or wood without the use of a primer. Scalecoat II Paint was developed especially for use on plastic materials without the need for a primer. Depending on the color, Scalecoat paints will cover in just one thin coat and will not chip or scrape off. Paints may be brushed or sprayed on, but for best results spray painting is recommended. The flat and gloss glazes are only available in Scalecoat I Paint, but those paints, with some thinning, also can be used on plastic. Both Scalecoat I Paint and Scalecoat II Paint are available in 1 oz and 2 oz bottles, 6 oz spray cans, and in touch-up paint pens. To see the full assortment, prices, and ordering information, visit www.weavermodels.com.



Let's Go Shopping

Independently owned grocery stores can be seen in cities and small towns throughout America. The J. Frank's Grocery includes a loading dock with dolly, large display windows, awnings, kiddie ride, and more. The Woodland Scenics #BR5851 store features interior and exterior LED lighting as well as printed interior and window treatment. It is custom-painted and weathered for \$149.99 and will be available in October 2014 at your local hobby shop.



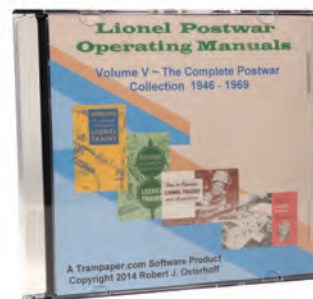
Smooth Running with Excelle and Mega-Steam

JT's Mega-Steam, long known for its wide variety of model train smoke fluids, is now a distributor for Excelle (XL) Lubricants. These plastic-compatible, synthetic oils and greases are designed specifically for model train use. Established in 1962, XL produces quality lubricants that are all developed, tested, and packaged in the U.S. JT's Mega-Steam is featuring a special package kit containing four of the most popular XL products for model trains. The kit contains everything needed to keep trains running smoothly: medium oil (conductive) for general use with motor wicks, wheels, and axles; heavy oil (conductive) for motor bearings and valve gear; gear oil (100% synthetic) that provides a thin film to protect gears, ways, and sliding parts; and PTFE grease, a tacky, water-resistant lubricant designed to cut friction by 50 percent. MSRP for the kit is \$28.00 plus shipping. Each product comes in a unique applicator bottle, and the oils all have convenient fine-point dispenser tops. See these and other products at www.megasteam.com, or call 434-589-2660 for further information.



Where the Cows Come Home

The Menards Dairy Barn is a fully assembled and realistically hand-painted representation of a classic Midwest dairy barn. Constructed of wood, this familiar scene will add a rustic, rural appearance to any O gauge layout. Measures 8"x 14"x 8" tall. Features include weathered roof with authentic rust patina accents, vintage advertising signs, two working yard lights, and four grazing Holstein cows that are guarded by Jack the German Shepherd. The barn is lighted using standard 4.5 volt power (sold separately). Made in limited quantity. Price is \$79.99 plus shipping. To order, visit www.menards.com, and search on Menards Collectables.



Postwar Primer

Bob Osterhoff at Trainpaper.com has a new DVD that is a must-have for any Lionel postwar collector or operator. *Lionel Postwar Operating Manuals, Volume V—The Complete Postwar Collection 1945-1969* provides a full-color reference to the complete collection of Lionel operating manuals published in the period. The DVD can be viewed on Windows and Mac-based computers, and it is packed with how-to information and tips for operating the full range of postwar Lionel trains and accessories. It includes over 1,800 *Lionel Operating Manual* pages from 32 original Lionel publications. Also includes a 1957 *What If* manual and a 1953 manual in Spanish for the South American market. The DVD costs \$18.00 plus \$2.50 shipping. Available from Bob Osterhoff, 1622 Garden Valley Dr., Wildwood, MO 63038. To order, visit www.trainpaper.com, or call 636-458-3659.



Lionel Triplets

Lionel is offering a line of newly tooled 50-ton twin bay hopper cars in both USRA standard and Pennsylvania GLA "1905 Common Design" versions. The scale hoppers feature die-cast metal sprung trucks, operating couplers, road-specific detailing of the hopper bodies, opening hopper doors, removable coal load insert, and a unique road number for each hopper. The Pennsy GLA Twin Hopper 3-Pack, number 6-81858, has a suggested list price of \$219.99. Contact your local Lionel dealer for details and availability, or visit the Lionel LLC website at www.lionel.com.



On30 Passenger Comfort

Bachmann's new On30 Convertible Passenger Cars with interior lighting include an observation railing with each car so you can easily convert from coach to observation car. The cars feature body-mounted E-Z Mate Mark II couplers and metal wheels. Available in two color schemes: 26201 painted/unlettered burgundy with gold lining and 26202 painted/unlettered olive with gold lining. MSRP is \$69.00 each. Visit your Bachmann Trains dealer, or order directly from www.shopbachmanntrains.com.



Plant 65 Candles on This Hopper

The Reading Society of Model Engineers (RSME) is celebrating its 65th birthday with a custom-run hopper car by MTH. The RailKing car comes in special RSME anniversary graphics and features die-cast metal trucks and couplers. The O gauge car sells for \$45.00 plus shipping direct from RSME at 2060 Mount Laurel Rd., Fleetwood, PA 19522, or call 610-929-5444. The cars are also available for \$49.95 at Rail Yard Hobbies, 1000 Heritage Dr., Elverson, PA 19520, www.railyardhobbies.com, 610-286-6875, and Ye Olde Train & Christmas Shop, 601 Jackson Rd. and Route 100, Boyertown, PA 19512, www.yeoldetrain.com, 610-369-0755.

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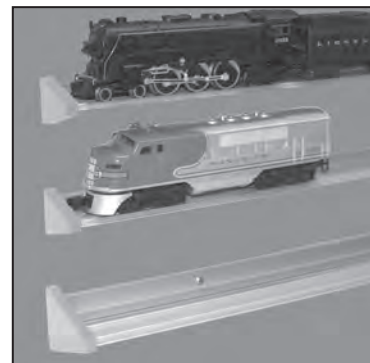


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How would you like to show your trains and layout to your fellow O gauge railroaders?

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

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



Point-to-Point Operation with a Switchback

Nearby campers observe the action as a Union Pacific SW9 grows its way up the 3 percent trestle grade to the switchback on Randy Bynum's Northwestern Railway. This 2-rail O scale layout is a point-to-point switchback operation modeled after the prototype Mount Hood short line east of Portland, Oregon. All rail on the layout is hand-laid steel. Randy says his original desire was not to model the Mount Hood Railroad exactly but to create a short line layout that would be reminiscent of that operation. His goal was to give the impression of railroading in the Pacific Northwest in the 1950s and 1960s and to offer a tribute to a favorite short line railroad. You'll see much more of Randy's work in a future issue.



Busy Day on the Arbor Valley

It's a sunny summer day, and a hard-charging eastbound BNSF unit coal train is seen exiting a mountain tunnel on Bill Teppenpaw's Arbor Valley Railroad. Two MTH AC6000 locomotives adorned in green and orange are on the point, and a lone MTH SD40-2 in Norfolk Southern livery is pulling road switcher duty. Having completed its tasks for this day, the switcher is rejoining the second main with its consist of steel pipe, while workers at the local sawmill load product for transport to a nearby lumberyard. Bill's railroad is controlled with DCS, and power is provided by an MTH Z-4000 transformer.



Western Grandeur

The father-and-son team of Tom and Christopher Masterson has a 3-rail O gauge railroad in its Jackson, Wyoming, holiday home that depicts the 1950 crossover era from steam to diesel. The layout features two reversing and interconnecting central lines that span three levels from mountains to grade to subterranean track, an independent line for a Shay logging train that skirts the mountains, a large servicing terminal with a five-bay roundhouse, and a six-track yard. The Masterson layout will be covered in detail in a future issue.

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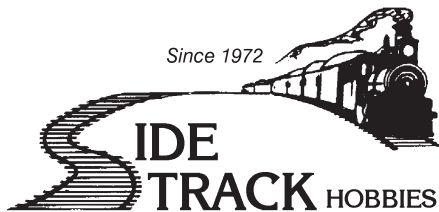
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Item Number	Item Description	OUR PRICE
M20-20003-2	NORFOLK SOUTHERN 3GS21B DIESEL W/PS2 (SW) 449.95 M10V2	\$329.00
M20-20005-1	UP AC 3GS21B DIESEL W/PS 2.0 (HRW) MSRP 429.95 M10V2	\$319.00
M20-20006-1	NRE DEMO 3GS21B DIESEL W/PS2 (HRW) MSRP 429.95 M10V2	\$319.00
M20-20055-3	SANTA FE F-7 B-UNIT DIESEL (NP) MSRP 159.95 M10V2	\$155.00
M20-21004-1	WESTERN MARYLAND V0 1000 DIESEL W/PS2 399.95 M10V2	\$299.00
M20-2161-3	ROCK ISLAND FT B-UNIT DIESEL W/P MSRP 159.95 M11V1	\$109.00
M20-2177-1	ELECTRO MOTIVE DIVISION S024 DIESEL W/PS3 429.95 M11V2	\$329.00
M20-22024-3	CANADIAN PACIFIC GP9 DIESEL ENGINE (NP) 199.95 M12V1	\$159.00
M20-22025-3	WESTERN MARYLAND GP9 DIESEL ENGINE (NP) 199.95 M12V1	\$159.00
M20-2214-1	PENNSYLVANIA RS-11 HIGH HOOD DIESEL W/PS3 429.95 M12V1	\$349.00
M20-2215-3	CATERPILLAR S070AC DIESEL (NP) MSRP 219.95 M12V1	\$179.00
M20-2223-1	UNION PACIFIC U25B DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) 449.95 M12V1	\$359.00
M20-2226-1	SANTA FE DL-109/110 DIESEL ENG SET W/PS3 629.95 M12V1	\$629.00
M20-2231-1	PA CENTIPED E A DIESEL SET W/PS3 MSRP 799.95 M12V1	\$669.00
M20-2237-1	RAIL AMERICA 3GS21B GENSET DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) 449.95 M12V2	\$365.00
M20-2239-1	ALASKA 3GS21B GENSET DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) 449.95 M12V2	\$375.00
M20-2240-1	PA 3GS21B GENSET DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) 449.95 M12V2	\$375.00
M20-2241-1	NASA 3GS21B GENSET DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) 449.95 M12V2	\$375.00
M20-2244-1	WESTERN MARYLAND S040-2 DIESEL W/PS3 449.95 M12V2	\$375.00
M20-2245-1	SANTA FE S040-2 DIESEL W/PS3 MSRP 449.95 M12V2	\$375.00
M20-2248-1	SOUTHERN PACIFIC GP-9 DIESEL W/PS3 MSRP 439.95 M12V2	\$365.00
M20-2252-1	CHESSIE GP-30 DIESEL W/PS3 MSRP 439.95 M12V2	\$350.00
M20-2253-1	ALASKA GP-30 DIESEL W/PS3 MSRP 439.95 M12V2	\$369.00
M20-2257-1	METROLINK F40PH DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) MSRP 439.95 M12V2	\$369.00
M20-2292-2	NORFOLK & WESTERN S045 HI HOOD DIESEL W/PS3 SW 479.95 M13V1	\$419.00
M20-2312-1	PENNSYLVANIA GP-30 DIESEL W/PS3 \$439.95 (UNCAT)	\$379.00
M20-2316-1	DCS #2013 E344AC DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) (UNCAT) MSRP \$459.95	\$399.00
M20-2318-1	BNSF DASH-9 DIESEL W/PS3 HRW MSRP 459.95 M13V2	\$379.00
M20-2341-1	BALTIMORE & OHIO E-6 ABA DIESEL W/PS3 729.95 M13V2	\$639.00
M20-2343-1	KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN E-6 ABA DIESEL W/PS3 729.95 M13V2	\$639.00
M20-2343-3	KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN E-6 B-UNIT W/P MSRP 199.95 M13V2	\$165.00
M20-2346-1	NEW HAVEN TURBOTRAIN PASS SET W/PS3 MSRP 799.95 M13V2	\$669.00
M20-2347-1	VIA RAIL TURBOTRAIN PASS SET W/PS3 MSRP 799.95 M13V2	\$669.00
M20-2350-1	TEXAS SPECIAL F-3 ABA DIESEL W/PS3 HRW 729.95 M13V2	\$629.00
M20-2350-3	TEXAS SPECIAL F-3 B-UNIT W/P MSRP 189.95 M13V2	\$171.00
M20-2544-3	CHESAPEAKE E6 B-UNIT (NON-PWR) MSRP 159.95	\$65.00
M20-2663-1	MD MIDLAND GP30-2 DIESEL ENGINE PS2 MSRP 399.95	\$329.00
M20-2675-3	BMT 2500 SERIES 3-CAR SUBWAY ADD ON (NP) MSRP 299.95 M10V1	\$219.00
M20-2884-1	WM SD-35 DIESEL W/PS2 (HI-RAIL WHLS) MSRP 429.95 M0V1	\$329.00
M20-2925-1	UP M1000 DIESEL PASS SET W/PS2 MSRP 699.95 M0V2	\$579.00
M20-2925-3	UNION PACIFIC M1000 COACH CAR MSRP 99.95	\$75.00
M20-2967-1	AMERICAN FREEDOM ALCO PA PASS SET W/PS2 MSRP 649.95 M0V2	\$629.00
M20-3040-1	NYC MILLENNIUM GOLD HUDSON W/PS	\$1,199.00
M20-4129	NYC 2 CAR 70' MADISON PASSENGER SET 18K GOLD PLATED	\$199.00
M20-3124-1	SO 0-0-0 USRA STM PS2 MSRP 599.95	\$359.00
M20-3133-1	Norfolk & West. 4-0-4 J PS2 MSRP 1099.95	\$899.00
M20-3216-2	NYC 4-0-4 DREYFUSS PS2 (SCALE SCULLIN WHEELS) MSRP 999.95	\$799.00
M20-3232-1	AQUIPPA&SOUTHERN 0-0-0 USRA PS2 (HI-RAIL) MSRP 599.95	\$449.00

M20-3247-2	B&O 4-4-2 ATLANTIC ENGINE PS2 (SCLEWHLS) MSRP 699.95	\$549.00
M20-3260B	C&O 2 CAR 70' MADISON BAGGAGE/OBS PASS SET MSRP149.99	\$89.00
M20-3286-1	PA 2-0-2 USRA LKT MGD0 STM W/PS2 (HRL) MSRP 899.95	\$699.00
M20-3290-1	CHIC NORTHWEST 4-6-4 E-4 W/PS 2.0 (HRW) MSRP 999.95 M0V1	\$749.00
M20-3310-1	PS&N 1-10-0 RUSSIAN DEC W/PS 2.0 MSRP 999.95 M10V1	\$749.00
M20-3311-1	W MD 2-10-0 RUSSIAN DEC STEAM W/PS 2.0 MSRP 999.95 M10V1	\$749.00
M20-3314-1	SOUTHERN 4-6-4 ROYAL HUDSON W/PS 2.0 (HRW) 999.95 M0V2	\$749.00
M20-3315-1	CAN PAC 4-6-4 ROYAL HUDSON W/PS 2.0 MSRP 999.95 M10V1	\$749.00
M20-3367-1	BRITISH RW DUCHESS CLASS STM W/PS2 (HRW) 1199.95 M13V1	\$999.00
M20-3369-1	BRITISH RW DUCHESS CLASS STM W/PS2 (HRW) 1199.95 M13V1	\$999.00
M20-3370-1	LONDON MIDLAND&SCOTTISH RW DUCHESS STM W/PS2 1199.95 M12V2	\$999.00
M20-3371-1	BRITISH RW DUCHESS CLASS STM W/PS2 1199.95 (HRW) M13V1	\$999.00
M20-3386-1	NYC 4-4-0 EMPIRE STATE EXP W/PS2 (70"HRW) MSRP 699.95 M0V2	\$599.00
M20-3412-1	PA 4-6-4 Q2 SPECIALITY FRIGHT SET W/PS2 1399.95 M10V2	\$1,149.00
M20-3427-1	PA 4-6-4 Q2 SPECIALITY FREIGHT SET W/PS2 1399.95 M10V2	\$1,149.00
M20-3430-1	PA 2-0-0 H-3 CONSOLIDATION STM W/PS3 (HRW) 699.95 M11V1	\$559.00
M20-3434-1	MD&PA 2-0-0 H-3 CONSOLID STM W/PS3 (HRW) 699.95 M11V1	\$559.00
M20-3444-1	HILLCREST LUMBER CO CLIMAX LOGGING W/PS3 HRW 899.95 M11V1	\$799.95
M20-3447-1	HILLCREST LUMBER CO CLIMAX SPEC FGT SET W/PS3 999.95 M11V1	\$849.00
M20-3449-1	ORIENT EXP 2-3-1 PACIFIC STM W/PS3 HRW 1199.95 M14V1	\$1,049.00
M20-3451-1	ORIENT EXP 2-3-1 PACIFIC STM W/PS3 HRW 1199.95 M14V1	\$1,049.00
M20-3456-1	PENNSYLVANIA STM FREIGHT SET W/PS3 MSRP 1299.95 M11V2	\$1,049.00
M20-3458-1	PA J-1 2-10-4 STEAM ENGINE W/PS3 (HRW) 1199.95 M11V2	\$1,079.95
M20-3459-1	PA 1942 WAR BONDS STM FREIGHT SET W/PS3.0 1299.95 DAP	\$1,149.00
M20-3460-1	JERSEY CENT'L P47 BLUE COMET STM PASS SET W/PS3 999.95 M11V2	\$849.00
M20-3467-1	PA K&S METROPOLITAN DELUXE STM PASS SET W/PS3 999.95 M11V2	\$799.00
M20-3468-1	PA K&S RED ARROW DELUXE STM PASS SET W/PS3 999.95 M11V2	\$799.00
M20-3469-1	PA 4-6-2 K-4s STM ENGINE W/PS3 (HRW) MSRP 899.95 M14V2	\$799.00
M20-3471-1	PA 4-6-2 K-4s STM ENGINE W/PS3 (HRW) MSRP 899.95 M11V2	\$729.00
M20-3474-1	SANTA FE TROOP TRAIN STM PASS SET W/PS3 1099.95 M11V2	\$899.00
M20-3479-1	CLINCHFIELD 4-6-6-4 CHALLENGER W/PS3 (HRW) 1399.95 M11V2	\$1,189.00
M20-3482-1	PENNSYLVANIA K-4 STREAMLINED PASS SET W/PS3 999.95 M11V2	\$829.00
M20-3483-1	SOUTHERN PACIFIC 4-0-4 GS-4 STM W/PS3 HRW 1099.95 M13V2	\$979.00
M20-3483-2	SOUTHERN PACIFIC 4-0-4 GS-4 STM W/PS3 SW 1149.95 M13V2	\$1,039.95
M20-3484-1	SOUTHERN PACIFIC 4-0-4 GS-4 STM W/PS3 HRW 1099.95 M13V2	\$979.00
M20-3485-1	SOUTHERN PACIFIC 4-0-4 GS-4 STM W/PS3 HRW 1099.95 M13V2	\$979.00
M20-3495-1	NORFOLK & WESTERN 4-TRUCK SHAY STM W/PS3 HRW 1099.95 M13V2	\$979.00
M20-3501-1	GREAT NORTHERN 4-0-4 STM LOCO W/PS3 HRW 1099.95 M13V2	\$979.00
M20-4058	Pennsylvania 5-Car Set MSRP 299.95	\$199.00
M20-4096	NYC 5-CAR 70' MADISON PASSENGER SET MSRP 399.95 UNCAT	\$279.00
M20-4149	Santa Fe 2-Car 70' Mad. Com/D. Pass. Set MSRP 189.95 M13V2	\$89.00
M20-4177	S02-CAR 70' MAD.COMB/DIN PASS. SET MSRP 189.95 M13V2	\$155.00
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M20-44005	NYC 2CAR 70' MADISON BAG/COACH PASS SET MSRP 159.95 M10V1	\$119.00
M20-44006	SANTA FE 2CAR 70' MADISON BAG/COACH PSET 159.95 M10V1	\$119.00
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M20-4495	NYC 2-CAR 70' MADISON BAG/COACH PASS SET MSRP 159.95	\$119.00
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M20-5573-1	VIRG. EF ELEC. W/PS MSRP 999.95	\$699.00
M20-5610-1	THE EAST WIND GG-1 PASS SET W/PS2 MSRP 799.95	\$649.00
M20-5663-1	VEOLIA TRANS GERMANY TRAXX P160 AC2 ELEC PS3 HW 449.95 M14V2	\$426.00
M20-56634-1	RAILION EUROPEAN TRAXX F140 AC2 ELEC W/PS3 (HRW) 449.95 M14V2	\$369.00
M20-56634-3	RAILION EUROPEAN TRAXX F140 AC2 ELEC (NP) 219.95 M14V2	\$189.00
M20-5663-1	TUSCAN CROCODILE ENG W/PS3 (HI) MSRP 899.95 M12V2	\$799.00
M20-5667-2	TUSCAN CROCODILE ENG W/PS3 (SCALE) MSRP 899.95 M12V2	\$779.00
M20-5669-1	PENNSYLVANIA GG-1 ELECTRIC W/PS3 MSRP 799.95 M13V1	\$679.00
M20-5641-1	PENNSYLVANIA GG-1 ELECTRIC W/PS3 MSRP 799.95 M13V1	\$679.00
M20-5642-1	PENNSYLVANIA GG-1 ELEC W/PS3 MSRP 799.95 M13V1	\$679.00
M20-5643-1	PA GG-1 ELEC W/PS3 MSRP 799.95 M13V1	\$679.00
M20-5644-1	PENNSYLVANIA GG-1 EXPRESS FGT SET W/PS2 899.95 M13V1	\$749.00

M20-5653-1	CARGO TRAXX F140 AC-1 ELEC W/PS3 (HRW) 449.95 M14V2	\$399.00
M20-5653-3	CARGO TRAXX F140 AC-1 ELEC (NP) MSRP 219.95 M14V1	\$189.00
M20-5654-3	CONNECT EUROPE TRAXX F140 AC-1 ELEC (NP) 219.95 M14V2	\$189.00
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M20-60002	PA 70' ABS RPO PASSENGER CAR (SMTH) MSRP 69.95	\$50.00
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M20-60004-2	ORIENT EXPRESS 5-CAR PASS SET (SW) MSRP 599.95 M14V2	\$499.00
M20-60006	LONDON/MIDLAND/SCOTT RW LMS STD BAGG CAR 109.95 M13V1	\$99.00
M20-60008	BRITISH RAILWAYS 4CAR LMS STD PASS SET 429.95 M12V2	\$339.00
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M20-60011	BRITISH RAILWAYS 4CAR LMS STD PASS SET 429.95 M12V1	\$339.00
M20-60012	BRITISH RAILWAYS LMS STD BAGGAGE CAR MSRP 109.95 M0V2	\$89.00
M20-60013	BRITISH RAILWAYS LMS STD PASS CAR MSRP 109.95 M12V1	\$89.00
M20-60016	PENN CENTRAL TURBO TRAIN CAR MSRP 99.95 M10V1	\$79.00
M20-60017	5-CAR RHEINGOLD STD PASS SET (HRW) MSRP 599.95 M14V2	\$499.00
M20-60018	5-CAR RHEINGOLD STD PASS SET (SW) MSRP 599.95 M14V2	\$499.00
M20-60020	ORIENT EXPRESS SCAR PASS SET (HRW) MSRP 599.95 M14V2	\$499.00
M20-60022	ORIENT EXPRESS SCAR ADD-ON PASS SET (HRW) 599.95 M14V2	\$499.00
M20-60024	ORIENT EXPRESS SCAR ADD-ON PASS SET (HRW) 599.95 M14V2	\$499.00
M20-61002	NEW HAVEN TURBOTRAIN PASS CAR MSRP 109.95 M13V2	\$89.00
M20-62020	B&O 64' WOODSIDED COACH CAR MSRP 89.95	\$65.00
M20-62024	PA 3-CAR 64' WOODSIDED PASS. ADD ON 259.95 M9V1	\$199.00
M20-62050	MD&PA 3-CAR WOODSIDED PASS SET MSRP 259.95 M11V1	\$199.00
M20-62054	NORFOLK&WESTERN 64' WOODSIDED COACH MSRP 89.95 M11V1	\$75.00
M20-65140	NJ TRANSIT 4-CAR BOMBARDIER PASS SET MSRP 439.95 M12V2	\$349.00
M20-65172	PENNSYLVANIA 5CAR 70' ABS PASS SET (SMOOTH) 429.95 M11V1	\$349.00
M20-65199	SANTA FE 5-CAR 70' ABS PASS SET RIBBED 429.95 M12V2	\$349.00
M20-65204	METROLINK 4-CAR BOMBARDIER PASS SET MSRP 439.95 M12V2	\$359.00
M20-65216	SOUTHERN PACIFIC 5CAR 70' ABS PASS (RIBBED) 449.95 M13V1	\$369.00
M20-65221	B&O 5CAR 70' ABS P SET (SMOOTH) MSRP 449.95 M13V2	\$369.00
M20-65222	KCS 5CAR 70' ABS P SET (SMOOTH) MSRP 449.95 M13V2	\$369.00
M20-65226	C&O 5CAR 70' ABS P SET (RIBBED) MSRP 449.95 M13V2	\$369.00
M20-65228	TEXAS SP 5CAR 70' ABS P SET (SMOOTH) MSRP 449.95 M13V2	\$369.00
M20-66049	Cal Train 2-Car Bombardier Pass. Set MSRP 199.95	\$145.00
M20-66204	METROLINK 2-CAR BOMBARDIER PASS SET MSRP 224.95 M12V2	\$189.00
M20-66215	AMTRAK 2CAR 70' ABS SLPR/DINER (RIBBED) 189.95 M13V1	\$159.00
M20-66216	SOUTHERN PACIF 2CAR 70' ABS SLPR/DINER (RIBBED) 189.95 M13V1	\$159.00
M20-66228	TEXAS SP 2CAR 70' ABS SLPR/DINER PSET(SMOOTH) 189.95 M13V2	\$159.00
M20-66234	PENNSYLVANIA 2-CAR 70' ABS SLPR/DINER (SM) 189.95 M13V2	\$159.00
M20-67184	PA 70' ABS FULL LENGTH VISTA DOME PASS CAR SM 99.95 M11V2	\$85.00
M20-67199	SANTA FE 70' ABS FL VISTA DOME RIBBED 99.95 M12V2	\$85.00
M20-67216	SOUTHERN PACIFIC 70' ABS FULL VISTA DOME (RIBBED) 99.95 M13V1	\$85.00
M20-67221	B&O 70' ABS FLVD (SMOOTH) MSRP 99.95 M13V2	\$85.00
M20-67222	KCS 70' ABS FLVD (SMOOTH) MSRP 99.95 M13V2	\$85.00
M20-67226	C&O 70' ABS FLVD (RIBBED) 99.95 M13V2	\$90.00
M20-67228	TEXAS SPECIAL 70' ABS FLVD (RIBBED) 99.95 M13V2	\$85.00
M20-68003	GE EVOLUTION 70' ABS RPO PASS CAR (SMI)(HRW) 99.95	\$75.00
M20-68119	PA 70' ABS RPO PASSENGER CAR SMOOTH MSRP 79.95	\$55.00
M20-68154	CP RAIL 70' ABS RPO CAR SMOOTH MSRP 99.95 M10V2	\$79.00
M20-68172	PENNSYLVANIA 70' ABS RPO PASS CAR (SMI) MSRP 99.95 M11V1	\$79.00
M20-68182	NYC 70' ABS RPO PASS CAR RIBBED MSRP 99.95 M11V2	\$79.00
M20-68184	PA 70' ABS RPO PASS CAR SMOOTH MSRP 99.95 M11V2	\$79.00
M20-68199	SANTA FE 70' ABS RPO PASS CAR RIBBED MSRP 99.95 M12V2	\$85.00
M20-68205	GE EVOLUTION 70' ABS RPO PASS CAR (SMI)(HRW) 99.95	\$79.00
M20-68216	SOUTHERN PACIFIC 70' ABS RPO PASS CAR (RIBBED) 99.95 M13V1	\$85.00
M20-68222	KCS 70' ABS RPO CAR (SMOOTH) 99.95 M13V2	\$85.00
M20-68228	TEXAS SPECIAL 70' ABS RPO CAR (SMOOTH) 99.95 M13V2	\$85.00
M20-69110	ILL. CENT 2CAR 70' ABS BAGG/COACH PASS SET (SMTH)159.95	\$119.00
M20-69138	VIA RAIL 2-CAR 70' ABS BAG/COACH PSET (RIBBED) 159.95	\$119.00
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Product Reviews



Atlas O Phase 2 F3s

Review and Photos by George Brown

Today the O gauge railroading hobby is interlaced with the continual advancement of microelectronics for control and sound systems. As a prime example, the recent release of the Phase 2 F3s from Atlas O highlights new TMCC and RailSounds electronics inside powered A and B units. Gone are the Lionel-licensed R2LC command receiver and RailSounds board set as well as the Train America Studios EOB motor driver used in prior releases of Atlas O Master locomotives. The new R4LC receiver from Lionel plus the innovative Cruise Commander motor driver from The Electric RR Co., a Lionel subsidiary, control the new Atlas O F3s

featured in this review. Replacing the obsolete RailSounds boards is the new RailSounds Commander board, also from Electric RR, along with enhanced sounds that I unofficially class as a subset of RailSounds 5.0.

Atlas O offers its 1:48 scale Phase 2 F3s in either powered or unpowered A or B units. An unpowered locomotive is colloquially called a dummy. Because the units are sold individually instead of in multiunit sets, a 3-rail or 2-rail hobbyist can buy the number of powered and dummy units wanted in a particular road name. This release includes the C&NW, CB&Q, CNJ, GN, MKT, UP, and undecorated as listed on the Atlas O website.

Our evaluation samples included the UP #900 powered A unit and #900B powered B unit along with the #900C dummy B unit and #901 dummy A unit. A second series of cab numbers is also available with the powered #902 and #902B and the dummy #902C and #903. Before I get into the details of the Atlas O F3 models, let's take a brief look at the real Phase 2 F3s from EMD.



Prototype Notes

Developed from the 1350-hp FT diesel locomotive, the F3 was built between late 1946 and the end of 1948 in four variations, commonly referred to as Phases 1 through 4. All phases used a 1500-hp version of the EMD 567 prime mover, which was designed specifically for railroad locomotives. The 567 drove a DC generator that provided the electrical power to the four traction motors, all built by EMD. One motor was geared to each of the four axles on the Blomberg-style trucks.



Phase 2 units had four fan housings with tall and flat shrouds on their roofs. On the sides of the carbody, the vent at the upper rear was considerably longer than the same vent on Phase 1 units. Additionally, wire mesh covered the full length of the upper body panels and openings on both sides, and the two portholes on each side of the A unit also had wire mesh screens between them. However, the Phase 2 B units had three portholes on each side with no vents or screens between them.

Major buyers of the F3s included the Union Pacific Railroad with 89 A units and 80 B units as well as the CB&Q with 58 A units and 52 B units.



Construction and Features

Master Line diesel locomotives from Atlas O are unique in several ways within the O gauge railroading hobby. The bodies are ubiquitous molded plastic, but the frames are die-cast rather than stamped from sheet steel. Although cast frames are expensive to produce, they are rigid and add weight for improved traction. Additionally, the design of the trucks and how they mount to the frame are exclusive to Atlas O. Each wheelset can be easily removed for lubrication or cleaning or, perish the thought, replacement if damaged. A #0 Phillips screwdriver is the only tool required.

However, the most visible differentiation of Master Line models is the varying of the details according to the railroad that bought the real F3s. For example, some roads bought units with steam generators for passenger service while other roads didn't.

Some roads used Mars lights; some didn't. Additionally, railroads bought and numbered A and B units in various combinations from single A units to A-B-B-A consists. Atlas O offers the correct mixtures of A and B units for each road name.

On our evaluation F3s, the powered A unit has a command-controlled coil coupler on the pilot and a visually convincing Mars light in the nacelle normally used for the headlight. This Mars light, which was popular on western roads such as the Union Pacific, is actually two LEDs that alternately turn on and off. As to the headlight, it is prototypically mounted in the door on the unit's nose. Red marker lights, common on real Union Pacific first-generation diesels, are also mounted on the nose. On the powered unit, these lights are directional in both command and conventional transformer-controlled operation.





Our dummy A unit also has a headlight and marker lights as well as a coil-operated coupler. Slide switches turn each of the lights on or off: one switch for the headlight, the other for the marker lights. Although the coil coupler is complete even to its electrical wires, there's no way to actuate it. To give command-controlled coupler operation, I installed a Mini Commander EX board temporarily in our sample dummy unit. Check out my "Helper Engine" column at the back of this issue.

A separate scale pilot and coupler assembly comes with each A unit for owner installation if wanted. This pilot mounts to the

frame instead of the front truck as does the 3-rail pilot and coil coupler. However, to convert the A unit to the scale pilot, the cast-in mount box for the coil coupler has to be cut off the truck. Thus the conversion is irreversible; that is, the F3 cannot be put back to its original 3-rail condition with a coil coupler.

As with other Atlas O Master diesels that have prototypical wire screens on the sides or top of the body, the normally open areas behind these screens are physically closed off with dark plastic panels. Completely covering all openings in the plastic body shell enhances the bass sounds from the speaker, which resides inside the fuel tank.

As I have come to expect from Atlas O products, the decoration of our four sample Union Pacific F3 units is flawless.

Atlas O Phase 2 F3s Features and Details

- Lionel TMCC with RailSounds
- Dual can motors with flywheels in powered units
- Fan-driven smoke unit in powered units
- Molded ABS body with metal screens
- Die-cast frame, fuel tank, pilot, and steps
- Die-cast trucks and side frames
- Separate brake cylinders, sand pipes, air lines, and speed recorder cable
- Command-controlled coil coupler on A unit pilot
- Close coupling of multiple units
- Dummy couplers and operating diaphragms between units
- Directional LED lighting on powered A unit
- Illuminated number boards
- Switch-controlled LED lighting on dummy A unit
- Separate fans inside see-through housing caps
- Wire handrails, coupler cut lever, grab irons, and lifting rings
- Separate train hoses
- Separate windshield wipers and horns
- Glazed windshield and windows
- Crew figures
- Owner-installed 9-volt battery with powered units
- A unit minimum curve 036 (3-rail) or 36" radius (2-rail)
- B unit minimum curve 072 (3-rail) or 36" radius (2-rail)

At Trackside

Running the four F3 units as a TMCC lashup on the editorial Carpet Central Railroad can be described in one word—awesome! The four close-coupled units with their operating plastic diaphragms between them make what I consider to be the most realistic F3 consist on O gauge rails. I have to admit that given the dummy couplers with their short shanks and the diaphragms, coupling and uncoupling the units took some dexterous finesse.

With the exception of a short run to verify the four units would run well in conventional operation, which they did, I ran them exclusively in command operation. Initially, my command equipment was a Lionel CAB-1L with a Base-1L, and I later switched to my Legacy base, again using the CAB-1L predominantly. Running the engines using my CAB-2 in CAB-1 emulator mode was equally successful.



Both powered units ran in perfect unison with each other when addressed with the same engine ID, such as the factory-default ID of 1, or assigned unique IDs and then programmed into a TMCC lashup. As I mentioned earlier, the powered A and B units are numbered #900 and #900B respectively with the dummy B unit numbered #900C. To spread the sounds of the prime mover across the TMCC lashup rather than concentrated at the front, I assembled the four units in the order of #900, #900C, #900B, and #901. The four-unit consist also ran well in reverse order with the dummy A unit in the lead, its headlight turned on, and the powered A with its command-operated coil coupler as the trailing unit.

Sounds from both powered units are excellent. The sound repertoire for the prime mover has the same idle and three run levels of the earlier RailSounds 4.0 release used in models of the EMD Geeps. Most of the sound system's responses to the various commands from any of the CAB remotes are similar or identical to those of RailSounds 5.0.

A pleasant change from the earlier Atlas O F3s is the Cruise Commander motor driver. Gone is the audible and irritating resonance that the EOB motor driver generated at low speeds. The only sound the locomotives generated on the CCRR, with the RailSounds muted of course, was a quiet whirring from the spinning flywheels and the motor drive gears. Aah yes, very nice! Noise emissions from the Cruise Commander motor driver were a pleasant zero.

Phase 2 B Unit and Tight Curves

Atlas O advertises O36 as the minimum 3-rail curve for its Phase 2 F3 A units and O45 for its B units. Well, releases of the Phase 1 B units negotiated O45 curves without a problem, but the Phase 2 units won't. For operation on any curve tighter than O72, the steps that hang down beside the default front truck of each B unit have to be either removed or relocated to an alternate position on the frame. The default front of the unit is the end with the dynamic brake vents in the roof. You see, as the unit enters a curve of less than 72" in diameter, the front brake cylinder lever on the front truck side frame contacts the die-cast step and stops the swing of the truck—a guaranteed derailment and possibly even the reprogramming of the R4LC. If this sounds like a voice of experience, it is. But fret not Bret because there's a reasonable workaround.

A self-tapping screw holds each step to the frame, and a #0 Phillips screwdriver is all that's needed to remove the step. I found it best to remove each side frame for clear access. A second slot for a step is available on each side of the frame, about 1/2" aft of the first one. This is actually the slot used on the A units. Yes, the A and B unit frames use a common design. Mounting each step in this second or alternate slot keeps the step with the B unit so it won't get lost. Personally, I felt the units looked better with the conflicting steps removed rather than in the wrong position. With the two conflicting steps removed, both of our evaluation B units negotiated curves and switches down to O36 right along with their matching A units.

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As part of my review, the four-unit TMCC lashup pulled different trains around the O72 loop of the editorial Carpet Central Railroad in addition to our standard test train. I found locomotive starts and stops with the factory default 100 speed steps to be as slow, smooth, and realistic as I wanted. At the first speed step, the two powered units pulled a heavy consist of 24 weighted steam-era freight cars or an 11-car train of scale heavyweight passenger cars at a dead-slow crawl without stalling or hesitating. Even the stops, such as when easing the heavyweights into a passenger station, proved to be smooth and slow, right down to a crawl at the last speed step. As to switching cars in and out of industrial sidings, especially with a command-controlled coupler on the trailing unit, it was a joy to behold.

At the End of the Run

By themselves, the four matching yellow and gray units present an exciting view on the display shelf or on the rails. Best of all, the four-unit consist runs as fabulous as it looks. 

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Atlas O F3 TMCC Performance

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

Length:

A Unit: 13-3/8" over couplers
12-1/2" pilot to diaphragm

B Unit: 12-5/8" over couplers
12-1/2" diaphragm to diaphragm

Distance Between Pickup Rollers:

1st and 2nd: 1-1/2"
1st and 3rd: 6-1/4"
1st and 4th: 7-3/4"

Weight:

Powered A Unit: 4 lbs, 4 oz
Powered B Unit: 4 lbs, 1 oz
Unpowered A Unit: 3 lbs, 1 oz
Unpowered B Unit: 2 lbs, 14 oz

Power Consumption at Idle @ 18 VAC: 0.1 A, 1.8 W

Tractive Effort One Unit @ 18 VAC: 1 lb, 12 oz @ 1.1 A, 19.8 W

Minimum Sustained Speed @ 18 VAC:

1 scale mph @ 0.4 A, 7 W

Maximum Tested Speed @ 18 VAC:

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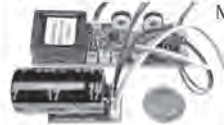


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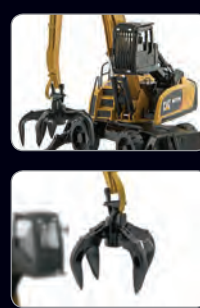
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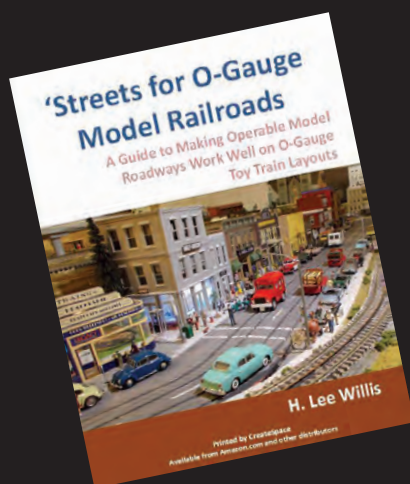
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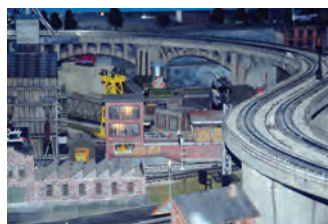
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MTH Streamlined Pennsylvania K4 Pacific

Review and Photos by George Brown

In the 1930s, major railroads from the New Haven on the East Coast to the Southern Pacific on the West Coast engaged in the streamlining of one or more steam locomotives to pull their prestigious passenger trains. Streamlined steam locomotives with specially decorated and enthusiastically promoted passenger trains were created primarily to attract interregional travelers away from the burgeoning private automobiles and airliners.

By 1936, even the conservative Pennsylvania Railroad joined the promotional fad with its first streamlined 4-6-2 class K4 Pacific, which turned out to be the only K4 fully encased in aerodynamic shrouds. Designed by Raymond Lowey of GG1 fame

and nicknamed the torpedo by the train crews, PRR #3768 was a standard 1920-vintage K4 beneath its shrouds. However, the 12-wheel 180-P-75 tender mated to the streamlined #3768 was unusually large for a K4. At the head of the road's esteemed Broadway Limited and other trains, the #3768 represented the state of the wind-splitting art in that era.

As with most streamlined steam locomotives, the removable steel shrouds hid from view most if not all the appliances, piping, and even the side rods that make steam locomotives mechanically cluttered yet fascinating. Although popular with the railroads' advertising departments and the traveling public, these shrouds



were a significant and expensive interference to any repairs or even routine maintenance the locomotive required. As a result, all shrouding was removed from #3768 during the rampant expansion of rail traffic resulting from WWII.

The 1:48 scale model of the Pennsy torpedo, resplendent in its formal livery of Brunswick green with pinstripes, captures the massive sleekness of the real Lowey-styled K4. Unfortunately, the shrouding limits the swing of the model's pilot truck in curves, so the MTH model of the streamlined #3768 is restricted to layouts with O72 or wider curves. But at the head of a passenger train with scale 80' cars, the streamlined Pacific is a particularly graceful locomotive on the essential wide curves.

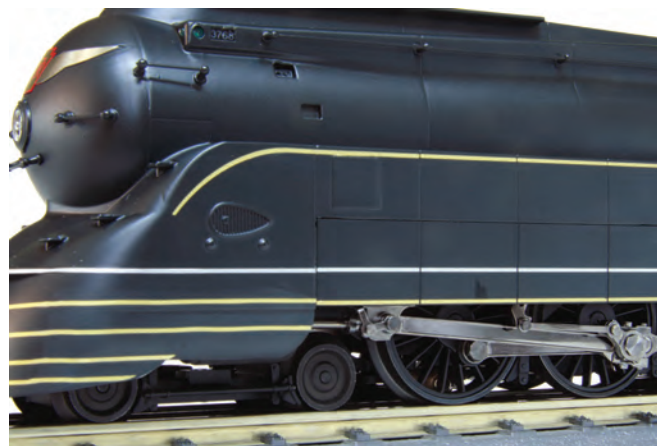
Construction and Features

As with other Premier steam locomotives from MTH, the locomotive boiler and the separate cab are die-cast. Inside the cab are a number of details such as pipes cast into the backhead, gauges with white-painted dials, and valves with red-painted handles. Of course, the requisite two figures representing the crew sit on their seat boxes behind windows that slide open or closed. A red glow emanates from holes in the firebox door, and when the engine is stopped, a white light illuminates the inside of the cab.

The die-cast frame has bronze bushings for the driver axles and easily accessed ports for lubricating the driver axles and gear box without major disassembly of the engine. While I was studying the drive train with the engine upside down, I initially pondered why MTH installed several cast appliances, such as an air pump and air tanks, behind the shrouding where they are hidden at all viewing angles. Then I spotted three small screws on each side behind the shrouds adjacent to the drivers. I suddenly realized that the shrouds covering the drivers and rods were actually removable panels. The boiler had to be removed to access a screw hidden by the crosshead on each side, but that was an easy process with only four screws holding the boiler to the frame. Six screws later, the side panels were off the engine exposing the drivers and rods as well as the appliances formerly hidden from view. As a side note, the six screws for the side panels on our evaluation sample were not ferrous, so they didn't stick to my magnetized screwdriver during removal or installation. A small dab of thick grease on the tip of my #0 Phillips screwdriver held each screw so I could install the side panels back on the engine.

Another removable shroud on the pilot covers a drop coupler. Spring clips on each side of the coupler shroud hold it in place so it can be removed and installed without a tool. The drop coupler is a scale dummy knuckle with an internal spring tab that holds it in the raised position.

Inside the die-cast body for the tender is the electronic DCS, Proto-Sound 3.0, and DCC receiver/decoder package. A printed circuit board that MTH calls the wireless drawbar electrically and mechanically couples the engine and tender together. This drawbar has proven to be effective in addition to being amazingly flexible on its torsional axis. A six-pin plug on the tender end of the drawbar fits into a matching receptacle in the tender. With the engine and tender on the tracks, a little experimentation revealed the technique necessary to connect and disconnect the drawbar.



MTH Streamlined K4 Pacific Features and Details

- DCS, Proto-Sound 3, and DCC receiver/decoder electronics
- Passenger station Proto-Effects
- Coil-operated Proto-Coupler
- Fan-driven ProtoSmoke unit
- Hi-rail wheels Proto-Scale 3-2
- Can motor with flywheel
- Metal drive gears
- Removable front coupler shroud
- Scale front drop coupler
- Die-cast pilot and trailing trucks
- Wire handrails and grab irons
- Brass-colored whistle, bell, and pop-off valves
- Traction tires on rear drivers
- Removable shrouds over drivers
- Detailed boiler backhead
- Illuminated cab when stopped
- Opening cab doors
- Crew figures
- Firebox glow
- Hinged step plate between cab and tender
- Real coal in tender bunker
- Die-cast tender trucks with all wheels flanged
- Swing limit chains on tender trucks
- Opening water hatches
- Directional backup light
- Red marker lamps
- Minimum O72 curve



Opening the water hatches on the tender exposes controls for the operator who runs trains using conventional transformer control. Two potentiometers manually adjust the volume ranges of the sound system and the smoke unit from off to full sound or smoke. As to the MTH smoke unit, I believe it's accurate to rate it as the most prodigious smoker in today's 3-rail O gauge hobby. Of course for the command operator, sound and smoke volume are both fully adjustable using the DCS remote controller.

My only criticism of the entire model is the tender sits about 1/16" too high on its trucks. With the engine and tender sitting on level track, such as on the section of MTH RealTrax that's behind my keyboard, the top of the cab and coal bunker shroud, the pinstripes, and also the bottom edges of the engine shrouds and tender body are all misaligned by the same amount. Okay, I'll admit I'm being somewhat picky, but an excellent model could be an outstanding one with the engine, tender, and decoration correctly aligned—all at no additional cost to manufacture.

To me, the streamlined K4 is equally handsome with or without the driver shrouds in place. The Brunswick green paint, gold and silver pinstripes, gold lettering, red cab window frames, and the red and gold PRR keystone are all impeccable. Lest I not forget, behind the coal bunker is the colorful red oxide water tank deck. On the front of the boiler, the simulated stainless steel winged PRR keystone sets off the entire effect—a tribute to the Raymond Lowey design of the real #3768 and also the model maker's art of today.





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At Trackside

When it comes to running the streamlined K4, I have to paraphrase a statement of years ago made by humorist and social commentator Will Rogers. I've yet to run an MTH Proto-Sound 2 or 3 locomotive that I didn't like. On the credit side of the K4's operating ledger, it proved to be more adroit at low-speed operation than most other MTH locomotives I've reviewed in the past, and even those I own. With our standard scale passenger train in tow, the K4 started and ran smoothly with a scale 1 mph showing on the display of my DCS remote. That remarkably smooth performance was out of the box with less than three minutes running time on the editorial Carpet Central Railroad. I was impressed! And throughout the rest of the time the K4 spent moving trains on the CCRR, I saw no reason to change my initial impression of it.



MTH Streamlined K4 DCS Performance

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

Length: 24-3/4" ~ over couplers
24-1/4" pilot to tender sill

**Distance Between Locomotive Pickup
Rollers:** 2-7/8"

Weight on Driving Wheels: 7 lbs, 3 oz

Tender Weight: 3 lbs, 13 oz

Power Consumption at Idle @ 18 VAC:
0.38 A, 6.8 W

Tractive Effort @ 18 VAC:
3 lbs, 1 oz @ 1.5 A, 27 W

Minimum Sustained Speed @ 18 VAC:
1 scale mph @ 0.52 A, 9.4 W

Maximum Tested Speed @ 18 VAC:
60 scale mph @ 0.87 A, 14.6 W

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The steam exhaust and whistle sounds seem to be improved over the earlier-release MTH locomotives I've worked...uh...played with. However, the sounds that respond to my pressing the labor or drift keys on the remote are still lacking in the realism department. Some of the crew chatter also seems to be new, but human voices have never been high on my list of preferred sounds from model locomotives. In fact, they're not even on the list.

In addition to the precise speed control and simulated Doppler effect, one of the other features I like about MTH locomotives is the smooth and predictable operation of the Proto-Coupler. As I slowly backed the K4 into a siding to pick up an express reefer, the coupler closed when it gently contacted the waiting car. But then, I suspect I'm preach'n to the deacon when it comes to extolling some of the MTH features.

At the point of my nine-car PRR express mail train, which is my only scale train decorated in PRR Tuscan red, the 1:48 scale PRR #3768 was as pretty as it comes. With the tender coupled unusually close to the engine for a 3-rail steam locomotive, the visual effect proved pleasing to me at all viewing levels from my lying on the floor at rail-height trackside to my standing up in the OGR test lab, otherwise known as my train room.

At the End of the Run

During one of this review's several running sessions, my wife pretty much summed up the overall appearance and operation of the K4 with wouldn't I like to have it to pull my express mail train. On that note, my assessment of the MTH streamlined K4 is the highest I can give any locomotive under review; that is, I'd like to own it. 

20-3473-1 Streamlined Pennsylvania K4

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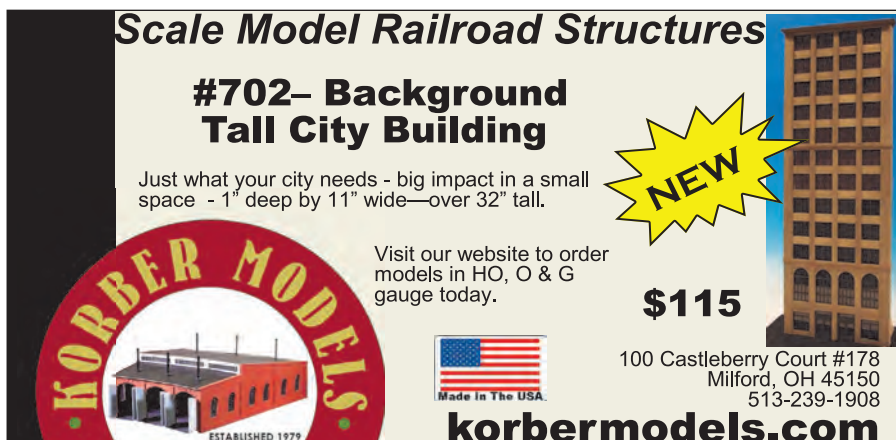
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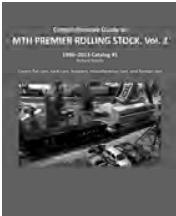


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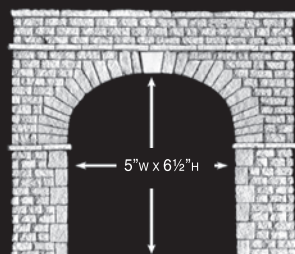
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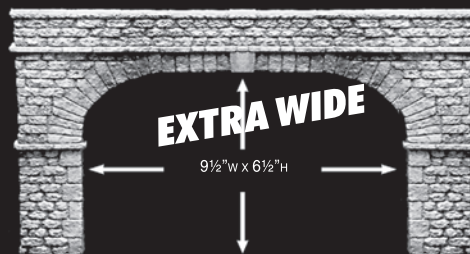
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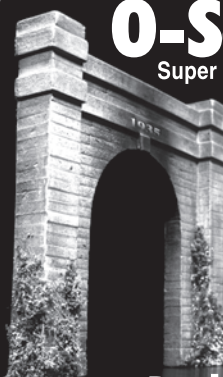
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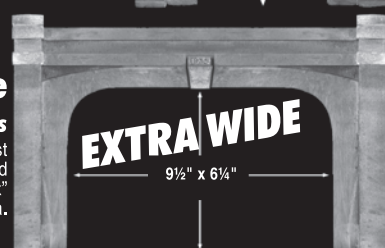
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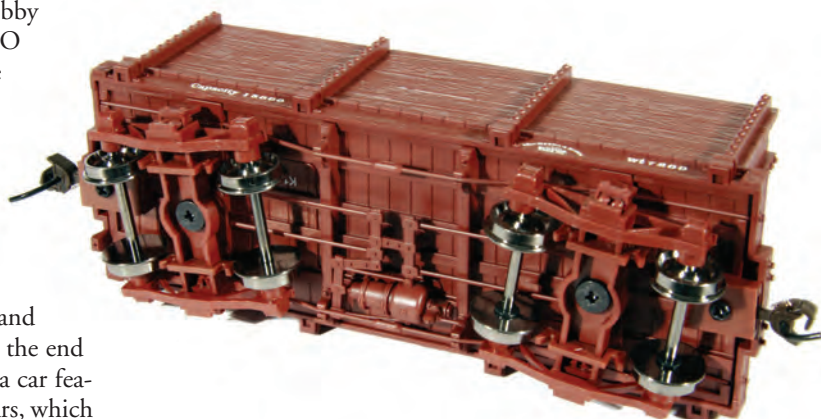


Bachmann Spectrum On30 Scale 18' Cars

Review and Photos by George Brown

An interesting subset of the O gauge railroading hobby is the narrow-gauge On30 trains that run on either HO gauge track or special track with light rails. Of course On30 locomotives and rolling stock are 1:48 scale, yet they are considerably smaller than their O gauge counterparts. Regardless of their reduced size, I find On30 rail equipment to be fascinating, probably because they portray trains and railroading scenes that are long gone from North America.

Bachmann Trains, a major supplier for the On30 railroading hobby, recently released several interesting and quaint freight cars based on 18' prototypes built before the end of the 19th century. The tank car and high-side gondola car featured in this review are the first two of several new 18' cars, which also include a boxcar with a planked wooden roof, a similar boxcar with a Murphy roof, flatcar, and low-side gondola. These 18' cars are sold in pairs with two identical cars packaged inside the luxurious-appearing Spectrum forest green box with gold lettering. As with the Bachmann Spectrum line of On30 locomotives that I've previously reviewed on these pages, these new cars are both attractive and detailed.



Construction and Features

On both of our evaluation models, the bodies are molded plastic with realistic arch bar trucks and Bachmann's operating E-Z Mate Mark II knuckle couplers. A pleasing feature is that each car rides realistically low on its trucks. As with other On30 trains from Bachmann, the metal wheels and couplers are the same size as used on the company's Spectrum line of HO trains.

The underside of each car has as much detail as the top side. With the car upside down, simulated wooden planks and frame beams are plainly visible. Also underneath are realistic truss rods with the rod ends and nuts molded into the car's end beams. Further enhancing the underside detail, bolt heads are also molded into the ends of the queen posts. Separate air brake equipment including the cylinder, valve, and mechanical rods are also fitted. Air pipes for the brake equipment are molded into the underside of the car.

A molded plastic load of coal rides in the gondola and is removable. The sides and ends of the car simulate five wooden planks held together by four riveted iron posts on each side with

Prototype Notes

The apparent prototypes for the 18' cars were constructed predominantly of wood. Our samples were lettered for the 19th-century manufacturer of railcars, Billmeyer & Small of York, Pennsylvania. According to the history of the company that I found on the website for the Midcontinent Railway Museum at www.midcontinent.org, Billmeyer & Small built passenger and freight cars for narrow and broad gauges until early in the 20th century. On the site's home page, scroll down to the heading "Wooden Car Builders" and follow the trail of links to Billmeyer & Small. Some fascinating reading that is beyond the bounds of this article awaits you.

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two riveted posts on each end. All the side posts are inserted into stake pockets on a basic flatcar. In fact, removing the individual sides and ends to convert the gondola into a flatcar is a snap both literally and figuratively. Making the car back into a gondola is equally easy.

The tank car is essentially a 1,500-gallon single-dome tank riding on a flatcar. The handrails and grab irons are wire with straps of a tensile-strength plastic band holding the tank to the separate, simulated wooden deck. Although I didn't try it, the molded plastic tank looks as if it can be removed from the deck for whatever purpose, such as weathering the car.

The overall mineral red finish on each car is excellent. Except for the lettering representing the builder, capacity, and weight, the Bachmann cars have no markings for a common carrier railroad or private owner. The way I look at it, this opens the opportunity to letter and weather the cars according to whatever their owner wants. I can easily envision a short train of these cars lettered for a whimsical On30 railroad that winds its way through a bucolic setting of the early 20th century. As to the power, a light four-driver On30 steam locomotive would complete the scene.

At Trackside

For their rail test, the cars followed a Bachmann steamer around a temporary loop of 18" radius Bachmann E-Z Track. As I expected, all four of our evaluation cars rode the HO rails without a problem. I especially liked the Bachmann E-Z Mate couplers that actually do mate easily. Bottom line, the 18' cars are handsome models of a unique group of freight cars that roll and roll and roll. 

26541 18' High-Side Gondola (two cars per box)

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26521 18' Tank Car (two cars per box)

Retail price: \$109.00 at Bachmann dealers

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A day of work for iron horses on the Munoz Lines starts at the coaling tower.



Anthracite from this blue coal facility keeps Munoz Lines motive power well fed.

Grand Adventure and a Tribute

Article by Eliot Scher Photos by Gustav Verderber and Eliot Scher

Trains have been a part of my life for so long I cannot even remember receiving my first set. I'm told by my mother that I was three years old and something magical happened when that Lionel outfit was presented to me. It must be true because all of those boyhood trains from 1952 are still in their original boxes with Lionel paper wrapped around them. They were played with a lot. I adored those trains and still do.

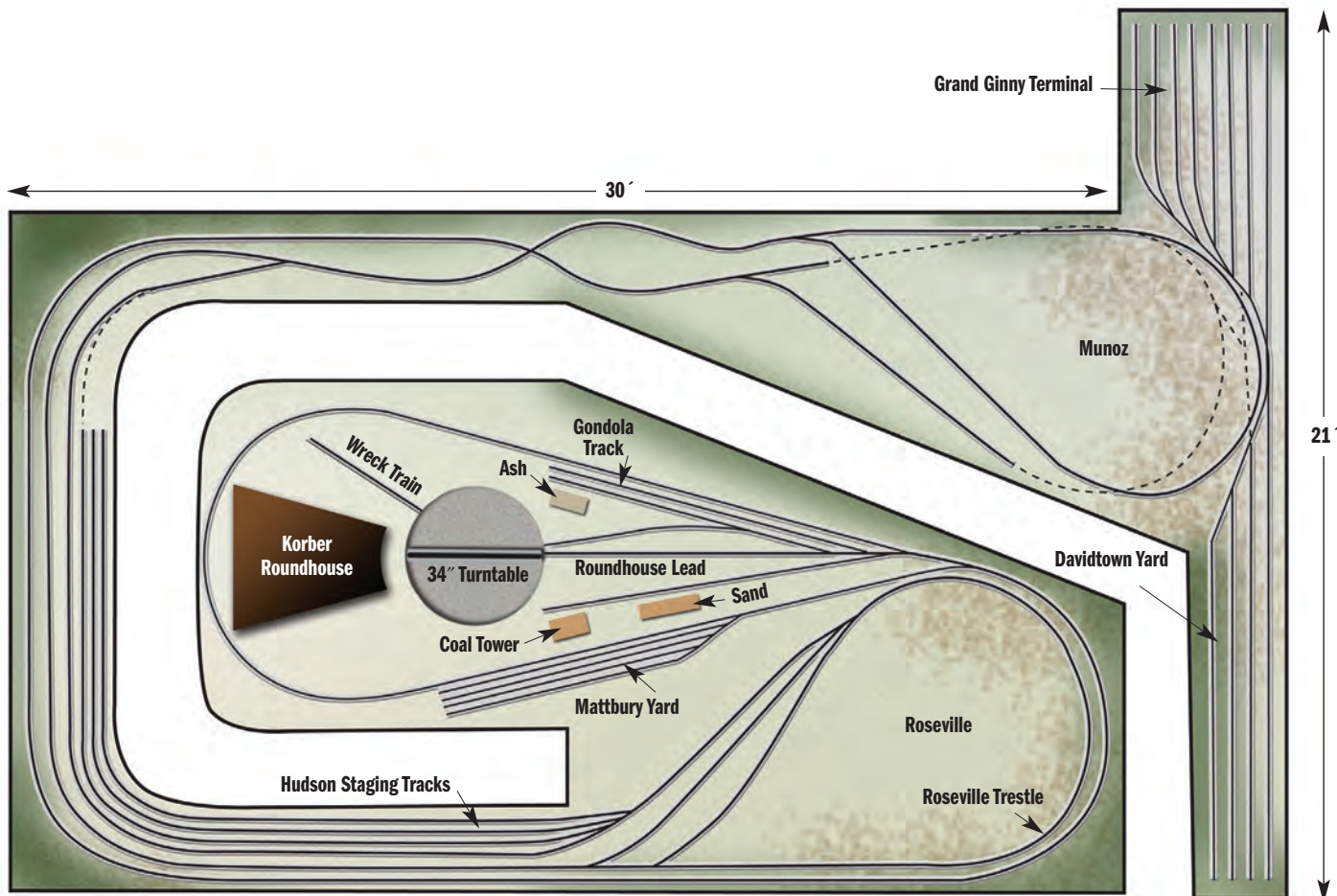
I was bitten by the "train bug" and became a lifetime fan. My fabulous wife, Ginny, has been my greatest cheerleader. I must be a blessed individual because I met Ginny on a bus—if our story were a movie, we would have met on a train—and several

years later after we were married, Ginny said we could buy a house, and I could build the layout of my dreams. It's very important to agree with your wife, so off we went in search of something special.

One year later, hammer and tools in hand, we were finishing our basement in preparation for a grand adventure. The layout would be dedicated to Ginny's father, an American hero and veteran of the Battle of Monte Cassino, Italy, in World War II. Fil Munoz came here from Mexico at the age of five, volunteered for service in the Army, and later became an attorney instrumental in founding the Kansas City chapter of the ACLU. Our railroad would bear

her father's name: the Munoz Lines.

It was important for us to complete our train room so a visit to the Munoz Lines would be as fulfilling as possible. We wanted our guests to have the comfort of a lounge, but the railroad setting also had to feature great lighting, access to the trains up close, and wonderful sound. We created additional circuits for extensive track lighting and installed 14 speakers and a sub-woofer for ultrarealistic surround sound with audiophile recordings and quality sound reproduction. Guests giggle when we say a real train is coming through. When we queue up the railroad sounds CD and turn up the volume, a "real" train



Santa Fe 4024 muscled its consist through a congested area near the power plant in Munoz.

blasts through replete with rumbling floor. Our guests will occasionally hold on to the benchwork.

Much time and effort was spent in the design phase of the railroad. I wanted the Munoz Lines to be a truly immersive experience. I had seen many model railroads where I viewed the trains from a distance. The amazing work of the builder was sometimes difficult to distinguish and fully appreciate. From the outset, we planned the Munoz Lines to be a railroad that could be circumnavigated completely, as well as entered and explored. I had one other caveat: no duckunders! Being a realist, I knew the time had come for me to leave duckunders to the younger generation.

I insisted that every locomotive and train on the roster had to be able to traverse every inch of track, not always easy with Big Boys, Challengers, and Alleghenys on the list. But I was a determined architect, so our minimum curves would be O72. Some of our best viewing areas would feature curves as wide as O99.

We are often asked if we actually built all of this. I then tell the story of how the Munoz Lines evolved. Sometimes our planned mountains actually became a bridge. A large model railroad takes on a life of its own. Even though we spent many months planning the construction, we could not anticipate meeting a new train friend like Bill Seader, who gave us the major components of a 2-rail O scale Heel Trunnion bascule bridge. The sections had been largely completed by an actual architect, and we reconfigured the design for 3-rail. Our operating 9' bascule bridge over Roseville Bay is a true show stopper.



A New York Central Geep arrives for some work in the diesel shop.

Most of our guests have never seen or heard what the latest 3-rail O scale electronic model railroad locomotives can do. Ginny and I adore seeing their amazed faces. It is also no surprise to us that visitors identify the many scenes surrounding our towns and cities.

We were determined to produce reliable track work so our trains would run beautifully each time the Munoz Lines was operated. The track had to be smooth with no kinks. We made soldering all electrical connections and carefully installing our turnouts a priority. Slowly but surely, testing the track as we built the layout, our work proved stalwart. Ginny was learning quickly how to create quality track work. As each section of the layout was built, she would come down to the train room to inspect and approve the construction.

The Munoz Lines was built as a two-track mainline modular design.



Santa Fe F units are on the high line along the outskirts of the city.



Some hombres and señoritas perform on the platform at Munoz station.



The best and most fondly remembered examples of Norfolk & Western steam power, the Class J #611 and the Class A #1218, rest in the roundhouse.



A freight crosses the imposing Seader Bridge based on a 2-rail bascule bridge by Heel Trunnon.



A railfan stands on the roof of the Kayla's Soap company warehouse to photograph passing trains like this N&W Y6b from Lionel.



Gleaming Santa Fe equipment pass each other in the wide-open spaces of the American Southwest.



Details make the difference as evident in this scene of activity at the Mattbury yard office.



A Hudson over the Hudson—not exactly, but it makes a nice photo.

When the day comes that the layout will have to come down, each module can be detached separately from the rest of the layout, and its scenery and structures can be preserved mostly intact.

Our Mattbury steam yard, named for our oldest son, was the first part of our construction done during my “terror” days. That was when I was buying turntables even though I had no experience installing them. I soon learned it is a great idea to make acquaintances with folks who know how to tackle such projects.



Crew change occurs at the subdivision office.



Downtown Roseville is an ideal place to view railroad action along the main line.



The town of Roseville glows at night.



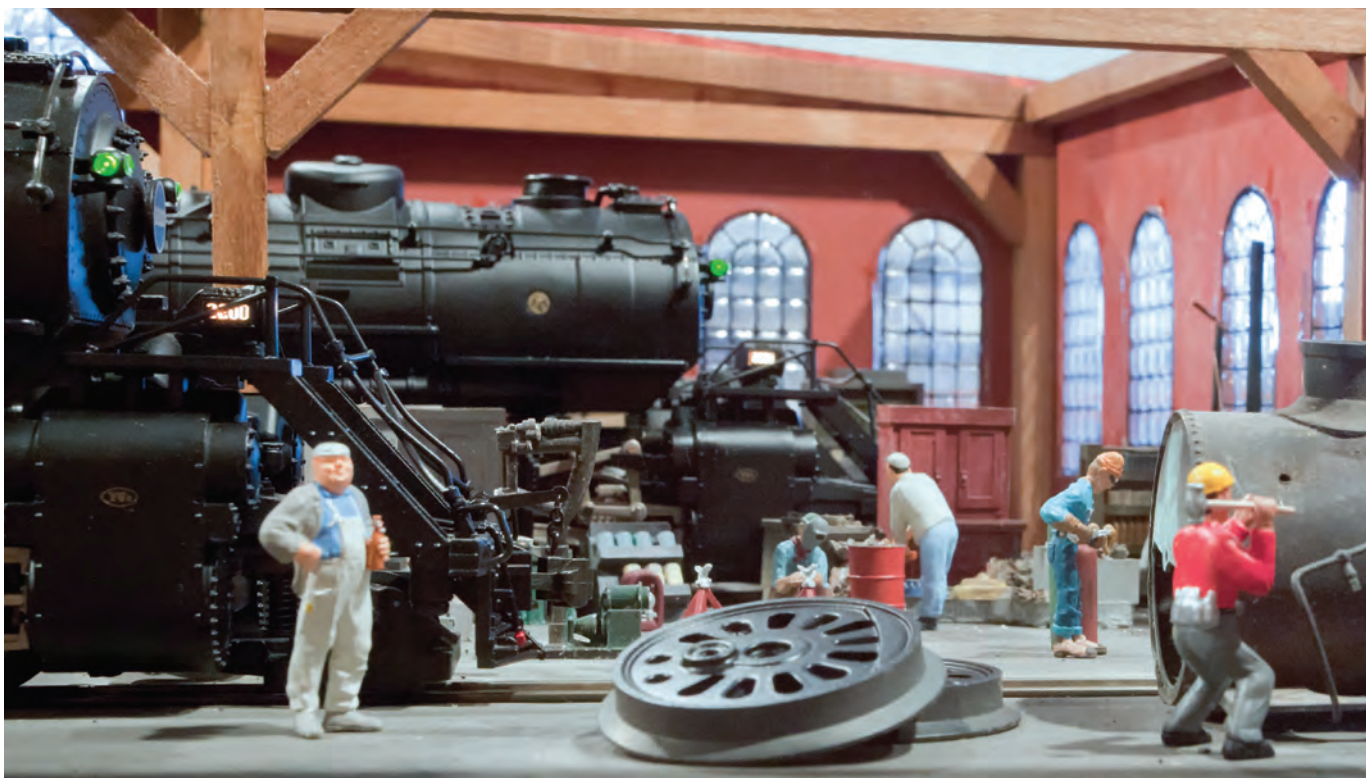
This view of benchwork in its early stages of construction shows how I incorporated storage shelves as part of the framework.

Along the way, our friends Mike Lauria, Bill Seader, Mike Thompson, Bill Fiore, Marty Fitzhenry, Dave Allen, Mike Reagan, Skip Natoli, Frank Knautz, Frank Mullen, and a host of others pitched in to lead me to success. Each provided invaluable assistance and also brought wonderful desserts, and I salute them all.

On the Munoz Lines we use Lionel Legacy and MTH DCS control. Most of our locomotives are Legacy. DCS controls our track functions, turnouts, and DCS-equipped locomotives.



Although they are scarce except in industrial areas, unguarded road crossings require extra time and effort from rail crews.



A couple of steam behemoths receive some TLC from the shop crew.



Mullen's Garage was named for friend and custom diorama builder Frank Mullen.



Three New York Central Geeps lead a string of military flatcars through the small town of Independence.




Pennsylvania 6498 dumps its fire after long hours of hard work.



Chances are these two hobos hitched a ride aboard the Buy War Bonds boxcar but are lacking the resources to actually follow its directive.

Legacy control is extremely reliable, and DCS control of turnouts is a joy. I became a two-fisted operator with a Legacy CAB-2 in my left hand and the DCS remote in my right hand.

The biggest challenge for us now that the Munoz Lines is mostly complete is how to store and operate long trains. We often run trains of 30' to 40' in length, both freight and passenger. To make things as easy as possible, we have developed long, straight storage tracks with decreasing radius curves so we can run four or five very long trains in any operating session without removing trains from the tracks.

The final goal for me was to design scenes that would enable photographing the trains and the railroad as if I were a railfan at trackside. There is so much more to photographing trains in a realistic setting than taking out a camera and clicking away. Each scene was designed with photography in mind. The photographs were taken from virtually every vantage point on the layout with scenes reminiscent of what might have been at trackside in the 1950s and 1960s. 



Consists of military cars are common sights on the Munoz Lines.



This entrance plaque designates the Munoz Lines.



About the Author

Eliot Scher taught Advanced Placement Economics for 37 years and, now retired, focuses on his fine art image business, Scaramouche Photography. His wife, Ginny, was once the highest-ranked female swimmer in the U.S. and currently teaches third grade in Westchester, New York. They share their zeal for trains and travel with their four sons, Matthew, David, Robert, and Alex, and also with their granddaughter Maia.

*More Pictures From
Eliot Scher's Munoz Lines*

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"All Aboard!" is the call from the conductor at Roseville.



A classic movie is showing at the theater in Munoz.

*More Pictures From
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This game of checkers goes on every day down by the railroad yard



There's always a crowd of hobos sitting by the fire near the freight house.

*More Pictures From
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Ray's Music, named for singer and musician Ray Charles, is always a busy place in downtown Munoz.

Down at the Roseville Freight house, a fragile shipment is sitting on the dock, ready to be loaded on to the next train.



*More Pictures From
Eliot Scher's Munoz Lines*



A flashy new Lincoln gets fuel and service at the Munoz Mobilgas station.



A street corner in Munoz. Hmmm...wonder what she's waiting for...

*More Pictures From
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Out in the desert, a Santa Fe F-unit holds the siding while the steamer goes by on the main.



Back in town, Santa Fe freight and passenger diesels are spotted side by side at the station.

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The bridge crew is doing a little maintenance on the Bascule Bridge across the river in Munoz.



Over at the end of the bridge, a few fellas are getting ready to go fishing.



Traffic keeps moving across the bridge while the work on the pier progresses.

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It's a bit congested in downtown Munoz today!
Traffic on Main Street is down to one lane due to some work being done on a switch on the main line.



A '55 Chevy and a '48 Chrysler - both missing headlights - sit next to Scherbear's Cycle Shop.

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Three men and a derrick



The "Soap Crew" at work at Kalyla's

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Two T-motors meet on the Bascule Bridge



The crew on these blue and yellow Santa Fe freight units gets ready to watch a train by on the main. They are "in the hole" waiting for a hotshot passenger train to go by.



A 3-train meet!

A passenger train roars by on the main while the freight units hold the siding and the steamer is on the house track.

The dispatcher will have his hands full getting these trains rolling again.

*More Pictures From
Eliot Scher's Munoz Lines*

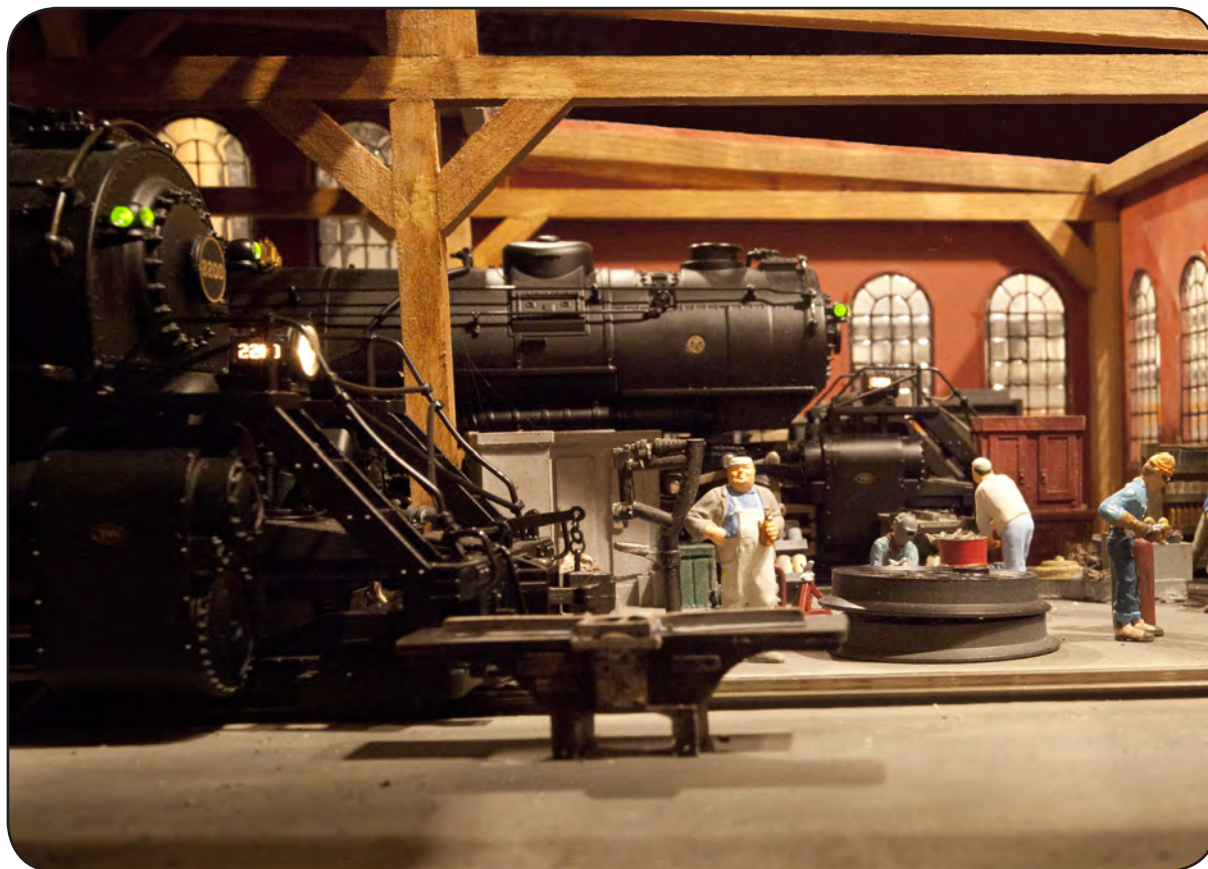


A beautiful New York Central Hudson leads a passenger consist across the Bascule Bridge in downtown Munoz.



The Mayor's Favorite Ice Cream Shop is right next door Munoz Election Headquarters. Evidently the Mayor spends a lot of time eating ice cream!

*More Pictures From
Eliot Scher's Munoz Lines*



Two big Y6b's rest quietly in the roundhouse, waiting for their next assignment.





BIG TREES FOR BIG TRAINS

Article and Photos by John Sethian

O scale is big, and that certainly is part of its appeal. But finding trees for an O gauge layout with its large trains and structures is kind of tough. The readily available 4" to 6" tall trees that suffice for HO and N scales are simply too small, barely clearing an O scale boxcar. I developed a method for using commercially available products to easily produce hefty trees that are 7" to 10" high, which is a respectable scaled-down 28' to 40' height for the prototype (Photo 1).

For this tree-growing project, I use plastic tree armatures available from Scenic Express. The EX0532 Easy Tree Kit comes in packs of eight. In some cases I extend the height of one armature by inserting a section of branch from another. I then glue EX0215 SuperTrees material bought in bulk to create a realistic branch structure.

I paint the tree with branch-like colors and then flock the SuperTrees material with Noch NH07150 Olive Green Leaf Flake and NH07152 Medium Green Leaf Flake.

Each tree takes about 45 minutes to make and costs about five dollars. A variation of this method cuts that time to less than 15 minutes at the expense of giving up some realism. But in each case I end up with a tree that has a realistic, delicate, leafy appearance that is grand enough to be worthy of O scale.

I did not use all of the tree products as they come in packaged form. The main reasons are that only a fraction of the contents of an Easy Tree Kit is tall enough for O scale. The plastic trees lack the bulk or shape needed to make substantial trees, and their trunks are too small. A further issue is the trees in the Easy Tree Kit invariably come curved and require a cumbersome heating or soaking step to be straightened. However, they do make great branches.

I also did not use Scenic Express Western Sagebrush provided with SuperSage tree kits for the armatures instead of the plastic ones. The sagebrush has a gnarly, twisted texture and shape that is very well suited for an interesting standalone foreground tree. I did not want to model an isolated tree. Rather, I wanted to depict



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the never-ending row of large tall trees that typically line the railroad right-of-way in most of the Middle Atlantic States. These trees are often crammed together side by side, forcing their limbs to climb to the sky as they compete with their neighbors for sunlight and water.

Making the Trees

Photo 2 shows a typical tree of the type I'm referring to. Here is how I made this example.

The Easy Tree Kit armatures come with four sets of branches randomly spaced along the trunk and fanning out parallel to the tree trunk (Photo 3). Twist those branches so they fan out perpendicular to the trunk and sweep upward. Using a hair dryer softens the plastic enough to make this easy to do. If you want a wide tree, bend the branches mostly outward. If you want a tree that has a more cylindrical shape, such as one

of many in a row, then bend the branches mostly upward. Simply heat the armature, grasp the branches, and squeeze them together in your hand. From this point on, use disposable gloves and adequate ventilation for all the following painting and adhesive steps.

Photo 4 illustrates the cutting steps used in creating a taller tree. The armature on the left is as it comes from the package. The armature in the center has the trunk cut off just below the last branch. The armature on the right shows how to make an even taller tree by cutting out an extender section from a second armature and grafting it into the first. To create the extender section, make two cuts: the first just below the last branch, as before, and the second about an inch or so above the last branch. You can also make a shorter tree by using the top section of the armature seen on the right. So this approach gives three different height trees.

Although the plastic armature is nicely detailed, it's tough to



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make plastic look like a real tree trunk. You can live with plastic branches because they get covered with leaves. But the lower portion of the trunk is out there for all to see. So you need to cut it off and replace it with a suitable stick from your backyard or elsewhere. Find a stick with a bark surface and several trunk features, like loose bark or branch holes. Cut off a piece about the length of the plastic trunk you just cut off. The stick can be slightly larger in diameter than the armature in order to give a heftier trunk.

The various plastic sections and the stick are solidly held together by 6 penny

(6d) nails inserted into holes that have been drilled into their ends (Photo 5). Use a cable cutter to cut off a 3/4" long segment from the 6d nails.

Start by drilling a 0.099" diameter hole about 1/4" deep in each end of the stick. Cut the head off a 6d finishing nail and secure it in one hole with CA. The opposite pointed end will facilitate planting the tree on the layout. Then spray the trunk with Dullcote to prevent the bark from coming off.

Next, drill 1/4" deep, 0.110" diameter holes (#36 drill bit) into the bottom end of the plastic armatures. Center the holes and

drill them along the section axis. Glue the nail's blunt end into the lower end of each section. Slow-setting CA, such as Zap-A-Gap, works fine for this.

To paint the plastic armature a branch color, mask off the wood portion of the trunk. Pick a color that is a close match to the color of the bark on the stick. A medium gray with dark overtones works best. I achieved that by spraying Rust-Oleum Dark Gray Primer, and while that was still wet, misting on Rust-Oleum Light Gray Primer (Photo 6).

Coat just the plastic with BO1526 ProStick 65 web spray adhesive from



Scenic Express. Coat both the top and bottom of the branches, avoiding the bottom trunk by using your gloved fingers as a mask (Photo 7).

Break off sections of the SuperTrees material and stick it to the plastic branches of the Easy Tree Kit armature. The ProStick 65 is quite tacky and will hold the SuperTrees material with minimal contact area or pressure. Make sure you remove the random petals that are sometimes on the SuperTrees material. Orient the material so the bud end goes outward and upwards, and the stem end is along the plastic branch. Note you are only using the “branches” from the SuperTrees material. After some practice, you should develop a feel for exactly how much to break off the bulk material to speed up the process. By the way, this is

where the natural curvature of the SuperTrees material works for you. If you are doing a cylindrical tree, mount the material's branches so they curve upwards. For a wider tree, mount them so they curve downwards. Apply the material's branches randomly, not symmetrically, and don't try to fill the entire tree. You want to be able to see through the branches, as seen in Photo 8.

During the preceding step, periodically shake the tree gently and look for anything that might be loose or flopping around. Secure those pieces with Zap-a-Gap and an accelerator, such as Zip Kicker.

Now paint your tree. Don't spray too much on the plastic armature and avoid painting the trunk. The color you choose will influence the overall color of the tree. I used a combination of Rust-Oleum Satin

Dark Walnut followed with Satin Nutmeg and varied the proportions to get natural coloring (Photo 9).

Apply Leaf Flake, which comes in a shaker bottle, while the paint is still wet. I used various combinations of Noch NH07150 Olive Green and NH07152 Medium Green. The effect of using two underlying colors of paint plus the two leaf colors gives natural and subtle color variations.

After the paint dries, use a pair of sharp scissors to trim any visually wayward branches of the SuperTrees material. Apply a coat of Dullcote and another application of Leaf Flake. I prefer Dullcote because it dries faster than matte medium and sticks better than hairspray. Photo 10 shows a close-up view of the leaves and branches from another tree.

Variations for Trees

A variation on the above technique makes a fuller tree that can serve to block a view. You might want this effect if you plant the tree against a backdrop. Make the armature as before, but apply wisps of MicroMark 84922 poly fiber between the branches before applying the ProStick 65 (Photo 11). Then apply the SuperTrees material and paint and flock as before. You get a much fuller tree on the interior that still shows leafy texture on the exterior (Photo 12).

For trees not generally intended for foreground use, I skip the step that replaces the exposed trunk with a stick, as described earlier. Trees made this way go together in less than 15 minutes since the SuperTrees material sticks easily and permanently to the poly fiber. In fact, you have just one shot at it! These trees are also less expensive because they require far less SuperTrees material. You can use short branches because they don't need to go all the way into the trunk.

I have also used SuperTrees material with Leaf Flake to foliate other tree armatures, including Woodland Scenics TR1123 5"-7" Armatures, which are priced right at \$15.00 a dozen. They are too short, and their branches are only in one plane, so it's hard to get a three-dimensional tree. Nevertheless, I have convincingly used these for background trees.

I have also used this technique on high-quality foam-based commercial trees such as Bachmann SceneScapes 32210 Aspen Trees. In this case you only need the tips of the SuperTrees material, so work goes very quickly. These trees look almost as good, but the \$23.50 retail price for two 8" trees can preclude going this route to populate any kind of serious forest.

Following the method described here does take some time. On average, you probably can complete about four trees in the course of a single evening session. Besides, I think it is worth it to achieve the realistic effect of individual leaves and branches and, most importantly, the size and heft of respectable O scale trees, like those shown in Photo 13.



Materials		
Description	Source	Part Number
CA accelerator (Zip Kicker)	Pacer Industries	PT715
CA gap-filling adhesive (Zap-A-Gap)	Pacer Industries	PT02
Dullcote	Testors	1260
Nails, 6 penny	Hardware store	N/A
Noch Medium Green Leaf Flake	Scenic Express	NH07152
Noch Olive Green Leaf Flake	Scenic Express	NH07150
Poly fiber, green	MicroMark	84922
Spray paint Dark Gray Primer	Rust-Oleum	2089
Spray paint Light Gray Primer	Rust-Oleum	2086
Spray paint Satin Dark Walnut	Rust-Oleum	257462
Spray paint Satin Nutmeg	Rust-Oleum	249070
SuperTrees material	Scenic Express	EX0215
Plastic armatures, 6"-8" tall, Easy Tree Kit	Scenic Express	EX0532
Web spray adhesive (ProStick 65)	Scenic Express	B01526
Tools		
Electric drill motor	N/A	N/A
Razor saw, 24TPI	Zona	35-520
Drill bit, 0.110" diameter (#36)	N/A	N/A
Cable cutter (to cut 6 penny nails)	N/A	N/A



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*Two More Pictures of
John Sethian's Beautiful Trees!*

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ProtoPhotos

Article and Photos by Sam Hopkins



The N&W Class J number 611 looks right at home in these surroundings, as well it should. These mountains were familiar to its real world counterpart.

While driving along a section of the scenic Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina one evening, I commented to my wife that a particular O gauge locomotive in my collection would certainly look great with that vista behind it. We tossed the idea around half-jokingly. I decided to build a small and easily transportable diorama just to try it out.

Using a section of common blue extruded polystyrene foam board bought from a building supply store, I cut two sheets about 4' long and then cut those lengthwise, one slightly wider than the other to provide a staggered platform. After gluing the two sections together, I added cork roadbed and two lengths of



The bare-bones diorama I made is small, lightweight, and versatile.



The scenery dominates the trains just as in real life. It is real life!



I often use the roof of our car as a platform for the diorama. Beanbags or other items can be used to steady the diorama on the car's curved roof if necessary.



The rear end of a caboose on one track frames the photo of the train on the opposite track, resulting in a more dramatic image.

MTH ScaleTrax, which I then ballasted. I used ScaleTrax for the best visual effect because it has the lowest rail profile of all the available 3-rail systems. This smaller profile gave the locomotives and rolling stock a more massive appearance. Two-rail track could have been used for even more realism, but I was okay with the ScaleTrax.

A little paint, lichen, ballast, and other scenic material finished the base. The blue foam board, double-layered and glued together, proved stiff enough to stay together through all our travels.

I gathered together several engines and cars, and we ventured out into our local area in search of suitable locations that we could use to good advantage. This proved to be more difficult than we first thought. Finding a good, safe place to park the car, set up a tripod, and have the light at a good angle often took time and many stops. We also had to look for power lines, buildings, signs, junk vehicles, and other obstructions and distractions that aren't usually noticed when driving through an area. These unwanted objects could ruin an otherwise great shot by killing the illusion of wide-open spaces. Sometimes they could be in the photo, but most often they were too far out of scale to appear realistic.

After much trial and error, we got the photos seen here. We had a lot of fun on our many trips around the area and met quite a few interested people who stopped and watched what we were doing. We would talk about our hobby of trains and, to a lesser degree, photography. One fellow was from Germany and was especially fascinated. He asked if he could take a few pictures of us doing our little modeling session. He had some professional photography gear, and I've wondered if we'll show up sometime in a European photo journal.

The rock faces along the roads in our area are beautiful and they varied in their colors and forms. We took several shots using them in the background, and while interesting, the sheer size of the rock was somewhat overwhelming for the models. I was not able to find a location where the background was far enough behind us to create a believable scene. There was not much level ground in the area, and the side



Here's a wider view, taken from a different angle, of the caboose and train setup.



The real C&O was certainly no stranger to mountain railroading.

of the road usually plummeted several hundred feet just beyond the edge of the blacktop. What worked best was to have the scenery fairly distant, with the model positioned close to the camera. Most of the time, we simply placed the diorama on top of our car and were able to shoot from a lower angle. By varying the focal length of the lens I used on my camera, I achieved different effects related to the distant scenery. Things in the distance could be clear or slightly out of focus depending on the effect I was trying to achieve.

Once set up on location, I found that taking a good variety of different shots of the subject at slightly different angles and positions yielded good results. Paying particular attention to the angle

and intensity of the available light when possible, I avoided the several hours on either side of noon when sunlight is usually too direct and harsh. To diffuse harsh sunlight, a simple piece of light, translucent material stretched over a frame or a semitransparent umbrella was beneficial.

Depicting our O gauge trains in realistic settings has been a lot of fun and opened a new area of interest in photography for my wife and me. We have had a great time on our little journeys of exploration and hope to continue these excursions through the passing seasons in an attempt to make our increasingly realistic trains look even more real. 📷



Southern power is dramatic on a sunny, early fall day.



Trains and scenery appear to perfect scale in shots like this.



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The 0-4-0 No. 730 leads its train around the layout.

Postcards from Russian River

Article and Photos by James Shaw

I created Russian River Rapids Short Line Railroad in 1990 from an around a Christmas tree track plan. Initially, the layout was used just during the holidays and was hung rather unceremoniously on a garage rafter the rest of the year. By 2001, though, there were so many beautiful locomotives, rolling stock items, and clever accessories available that I decided to take that next step and build a permanent hi-rail micro-empire layout.

Now sitting on barstool ball bearings atop a pedestal table tucked into a corner of my living room, the 4' diameter plywood pike is a magnet for any visitor who stops by. Main landscape

features are a pond, a tunnel, and a small waterfall. I built a billboard complete with flaking paint, which cast a hazy shadow over a nearby hobo encampment. There is also an old caboose converted to a cowshed complete with Bossy eating from a bale of alfalfa made from a wooden block and sawdust.

One of the two buildings on my layout is a bait shop with a sleepy backwater look to it. Nearby, Bullfrog Pond is enjoyed by Pete, the old codger fishing, and Bacon on the loose. A second building has a fall harvest theme.

My scenes aren't crammed together, and that helps to give this





Boo Bros., purveyors of wine, grapes, apples, and pumpkins, is located in the wine country near Cloverdale on the Redwood Empire Route.

tiny world the impression of wide-open spaces. The vignettes together with old ads and derelict automobiles date my rural railroad to sometime around World War II.

A steam railroad needs a water tank, and I have a beauty about the scale size of a hot tub. I prefer scale equipment but am limited by the O36 Atlas curved track to steam locomotives no bigger than a 4-4-2 Atlantic. My 0-4-0 switcher is nowhere near as imposing as a Big Boy, but it's still impressive with all the detail that went into making this little tea kettle. However, because of pleasant youthful memories of the fast San Joaquin Daylight passenger trains, I fudged and added a semi-scale 4-8-4 Daylight to my roster, but I don't run the two sizes together.

There's enough room on my short line pike for a flickering campfire using colored bulbs from Evan Designs, a Miller Engineering sign, and a dozen or so Artista figures.



The early morning sun shines on Espee No. 3000 as it storms through the San Joaquin Valley. The 4-4-2 Atlantic, adorned in Daylight colors, heads the appropriately named Sacramento Daylight.



Switcher No. 730 moves into position to take on water from the tank at Sweetwater Springs.



The Supreme Quart Dairy is situated in the shadow of Mount St. Helena and the Mayacama Mountains in northern California.



The dairy herd pauses for a water break on a warm afternoon along SP tracks near San Luis Obispo, California.



The Coast Daylight eases its way around a tight mountain curve.



Pete and his pet porker, Bacon, pay little heed to the “No Fishing” posting.

Rocks were cast using a Bragdon Enterprises latex mold and lightweight casting resin and then painted with the Bragdon method, which consists of six different watered-down acrylic colors over an absorbing artist’s white gesso coat.

As an operator, I marvel at the slow-poke scale speed of my command control locomotives, appreciate the realistic railroad steam sounds mimicking those so prevalent in my youth, and take pleasure in JT’s Mega-Steam Vanilla smoke fluid exiting the smokestack.

To those who think they don’t have enough room for an O gauge layout—nonsense! Small layouts are fun when the modeler enjoys taking photos that mimic old-time railroad postcards. What is especially neat, though, is that you don’t have to dig deep into your wallet to build one. 🐷



There's no better way to spend a relaxing summer day than at Bullfrog Pond near the Russian River. My Russian River Rapids Short Line Railroad is an O gauge layout that depicts life along the Southern Pacific and Northwestern Pacific rights-of-way.



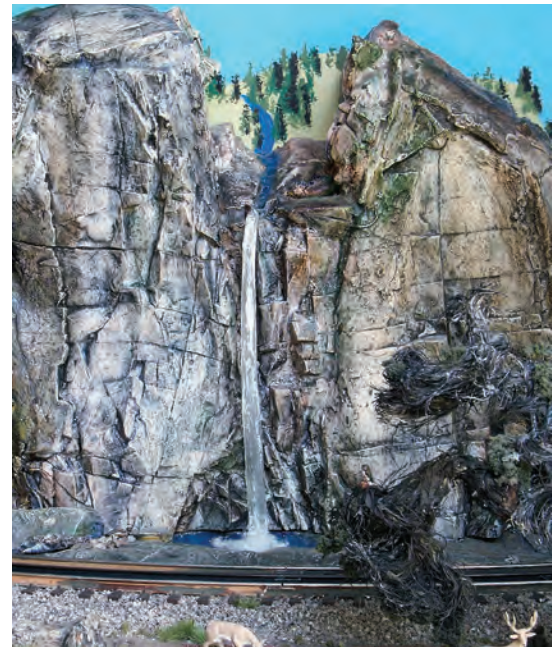
A reefer awaits the results of the September grape crush when it will participate in the parade of California commerce in motion.



My kitchen table layout is ample proof there is always space for an O gauge layout, even if it's small.



The Southern Pacific "Wildflower Special" passes through Toad Hollow Tunnel.



This tranquil mountain scene is disturbed only by the sound of falling water.



Catfish Camp lies west of Bullfrog Pond and marks the end of the peddler freight's journey to Duncans Mills.



Switcher 0-4-0 No. 730 creates a symphony of sound and steam in the high country.



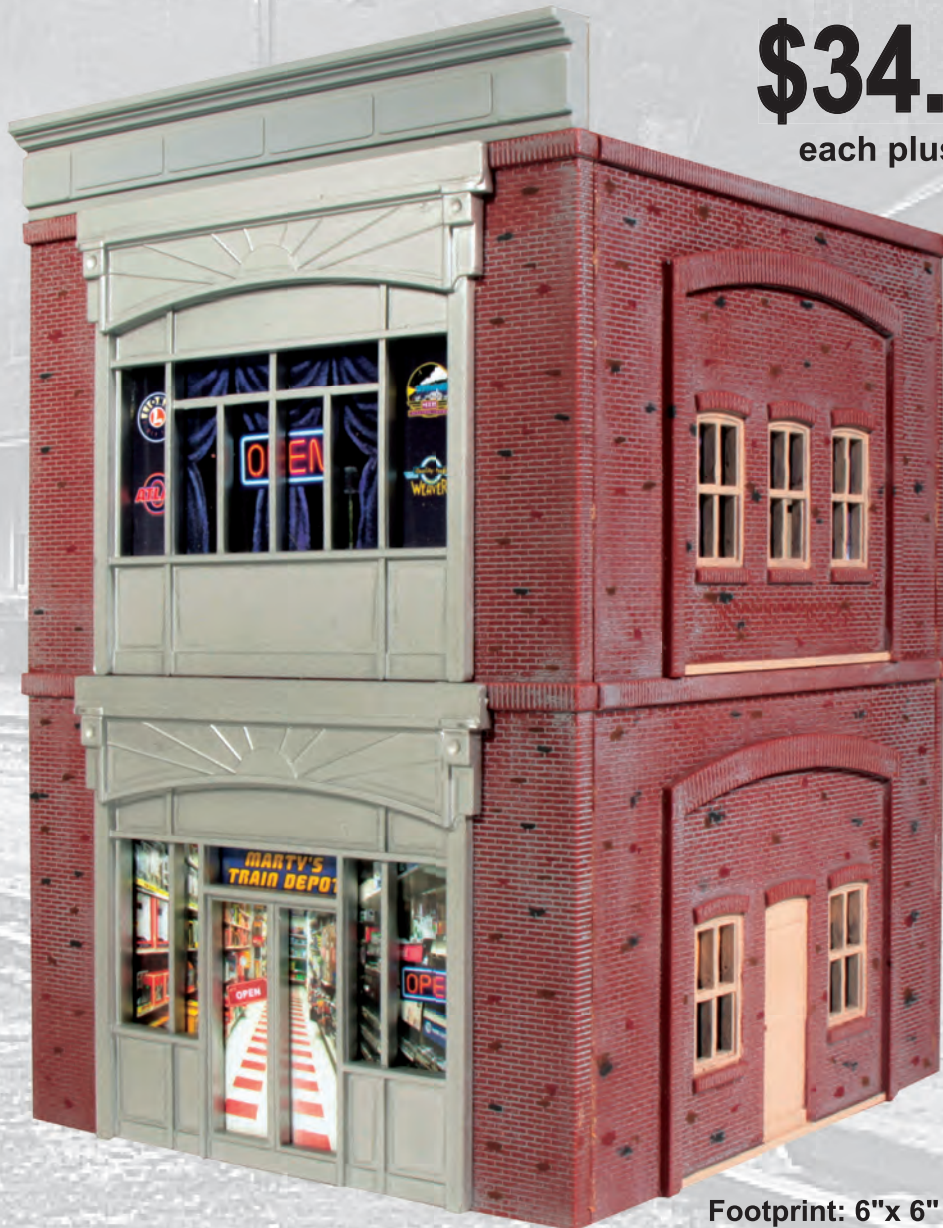
About the Author

James Shaw is retired in Russian River, California. He has been an active participant on the OGR forum for over seven years. When not engaged in things related to railroading, both model and real, he maintains the Present Arms! website at www.usmcpresentarms.com, which he developed as a salute to the U.S. Marine Corps and its members and traditions.

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Collector's Gallery

Ed Boyle

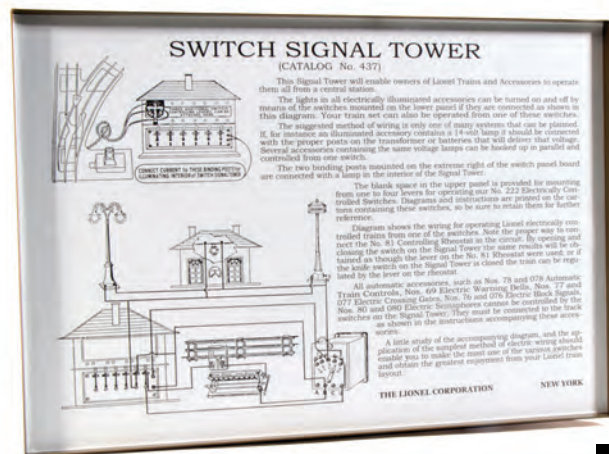


Tinplate Reality

Normally, when we think of tinplate toy trains, it calls to mind bright colors, shiny metal details, and toy-like shapes and proportions. But there are some tinplate accessories and structures that look quite realistic, and I am going to talk about one of these happy surprises for O gauge operators and collectors (Photo 1).

437 Switch Signal Tower

The 437 Switch Signal Tower was first cataloged in 1926 and remained in the Lionel line through 1937. The tower is aptly named because the 437 is a true operating accessory. The top half of the tower is illuminated, and the 437 has six knife switches in the back of the building that can control lights for lampposts, stations, houses, and other electrical devices on a layout (Photo 2). The blank space above the knife switches has a provision to attach controllers for two pairs of remotely activated switches. The contemporary Lionel Corporation Tinplate version illustrated here even has a vintage Lionel instruction sheet on the bottom of the structure that explains the basic capabilities of the 437 (Photo 3). In terms of operation, as my partner Rich Melvin pointed out, you can think of the 437 as an ancient analog version of the Lionel SC-2 Switch and Accessory Controller or the MTH Accessory Interface Controller.



Dimensions

The tower is nicely proportioned and looks pretty realistic from the front and sides (Photos 4 and 5). Our example has a base with a footprint that is a tad over 10" long, 7" wide, and about 9" high. I am defining tad here as 1/16".

Just for the heck of it, I measured the red door under the bay window dormer of the 437, and at 1/4" to the foot in O, it scaled out to 7-1/2', close enough to be called O gauge for most of us 3-railers. The dimensions listed in the 1926 catalog, the debut year for the 437, are pretty close to what I got with the Lionel Corporation Tinplate replica at 10-1/4" long, 7-1/4" wide, and 9-1/2" high. The dimensions were the same for the examples shown in the 1927 and 1928 catalogs, but the 1929 book had a significant change. The new measurements were 10-1/4" long, 8-3/8" wide, and 8-7/8" high, and they stayed that way until 1937 (the rest of the time the 437 was cataloged by Lionel). Reference works such as *Lionel, Standard of the World, 1900-1943, Second Edition* published by the Train Collectors Association's Lionel Book Committee in 1989 also repeated these dimensions. This goes to show that if you print something often enough, it becomes the accepted truth regardless of accuracy.

The size of the 437 is relevant because it was designed to be an operating control center wrapped in an attractive railroad structure. It was actually undersized for the Standard gauge world it entered in 1926 but was the perfect size for a control center for young engineers, as this illustration of a boy operating trains with the 437 demonstrates on the cover of the 1926 catalog (Photo 6).

Decoration

Part of the charm of tinplate is the vibrant colors the trains and accessories wear. The colors used for this "common" version of the 437 are especially attractive and, better yet, compatible with more realistic-looking modern layouts. The base is an unobtrusive Mojave green, and the lower walls are a dark red terra cotta with an ivory-hued stripe separating the upper walls that are cream with orange windows. The tower is topped with a pea green roof garnished with a shiny red chimney.

On a recent trip through southern Connecticut viewing control towers along the Metro North commuter line that are left over from the old New Haven Railroad, it became apparent just how compatible this color scheme was with the real thing, as long as you allow for a little toy train artistic license.

The colors painted on this Lionel Corporation Tinplate 437 reproduction are the "rare" combination of cream upper and lower walls, separated by a dark brown stripe with green windows on both floors, a red door, red base, and a gloriously orange roof topped by a cream chimney (Photo 7). In all the prewar Lionel catalogs I consulted, the only images of the 437 tower



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shown are of the common green roof color scheme, which may be one of the reasons why so few of the original 437s were made in the orange roof version.

The reason I put "common" and "rare" in quotes when referring to these replicas is that original 437s with the rare paint scheme fetch far more money than the more common ones. However, my understanding is that the Lionel Corporation Tinplate towers have been made in roughly even quantities. Since both Lionel Corporation Tinplate 437 towers cost the same, your choice comes down to which color combination you like best, or you can do what I did and buy both.



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Modern History

The Lionel-branded history of the 437 in modern times begins with this beauty shot of the orange roof version on the back cover of the Lionel 1991 Book Two Consumer Catalog (Photo 8). The tower was numbered 6-13804 and was part of the Lionel Classics Line made for Lionel by MTH from 1988 to 1992 in Korea from tinplate tooling Mike Wolf, owner of MTH, developed from the earliest days of his company. Incidentally, the dimensions listed were back to reality with length of 10-1/8", width of 7-1/8" and height of 8-1/8".

When that agreement with Lionel ended, MTH continued to make the 437 in both versions as part of its own Tinplate Traditions offerings. The cream and orange 437 was numbered 10-4038, and the terra cotta and pea green tower was numbered 10-4037. Both towers had a suggested retail price of \$249.95 in

the 2003 Volume II MTH catalog. In 2004, Tinplate Traditions got its own separate catalog, but the 437 is not listed in the catalogs from 2004 to 2008. When Lionel agreed to license its name for the Lionel Corporation Tinplate line, the first catalog in 2009 listed only the 11-90006 terra cotta and pea green version of the 437 for a suggested price of \$279.95, and it stayed that way for 2010 and 2011. In 2012, both color schemes returned to the Lionel Corporation Tinplate lineup with new product numbers: 11-90117 for the orange and cream scheme and 11-90118 for the terra cotta and pea green paint job. The 2014 Lionel Corporation Tinplate catalog continues to feature the 437 towers for \$299.95 each as a solid part of the accessory lineup. Not bad for a design that originally debuted in the toy train world almost 90 years ago, in 1926, with an initial customer cost of \$8.50.

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One Tower, Two Different Vibes


I bought both versions of the 437 because I had two very different uses in mind for each tower. I wanted the green-roof one for a detailed 3-rail layout that emphasized a realistic approach to scenery with a Northeastern flavor, and the orange-topped tower for a tinplate operating display that was defiantly and joyously toy-like in our increasingly realistic trending 3-rail hobby. As you can see from these images of the two towers, I think the 437 tower can fill the bill in both cases (Photos 9 and 10).

Epilog

The 437 tower was designed as a control unit that would be compatible with buildings and other accessories on a Standard gauge layout and could also be used for smaller O gauge trains. The end result was a well-proportioned structure that just happened to work well with O gauge 3-rail trains, as I have been trying to demonstrate in this column. It is also a railroad building that stands up well in looks and detail when matched against more modern towers (Photo 11).

Lionel ad copy writers did not have a catch phrase for what the 437 could do until they came up with “distant control” for its functions in 1928, two years after its debut. Their description in the 1928 catalog outlining the purpose of the 437 reads “...for operating Electrically Controlled Trains and Accessories at any distance from the track.” It was not until 1935 that Lionel started using the term, “remote control” for the 437 tower.

It took a few decades for modern technology to catch up with the basic concept behind the 437 tower, and it wasn't until recently that digital wireless control systems like Legacy, DCS, and LionChief could operate trains and accessories at some distance from the track. The new train control apps looming on the horizon will make the dream of running trains and accessories from just about any distance a reality.

In the meantime, I will celebrate the existence of a prewar-inspired switch signal tower that looks good in a variety of O gauge settings and is available as replicas I can afford (Photo 12). 



Why I Am Discussing Only Replicas in This Column

Since “Collector’s Gallery” is all about collecting trains, it is fair to ask why I am exclusively talking about replicas of the 437 rather than originals. Normally, I would talk about the originals and what they are worth and, perhaps, compare them with contemporary reproductions.

There are two reasons I did not do that this time, and they come down to two words that are driving today’s marketplace for both collectors and operators: affordability and accessibility. The first 437 towers are almost 90 years old, and finding even common versions in a condition you would want to display on your shelf is costly. For that matter, obtaining the rare version with an orange roof is pretty much out of the question for O-gaugers who don’t have a few thousand dollars to spend on one tin building, let alone attempting to authenticate the original piece being offered.

I try to write “Collector’s Gallery” to meet the needs of a variety of O gauge hobbyists, and that means discussing the place of replicas in the collector marketplace on occasion. The Lionel Conventional Classics line comes to mind in this context. It was my judgment that you could not get original 437s in the condition that most folks would want to own at prices that make sense for the vast majority of us.

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Booming Business

Article and Photos by Matt Bushong



Skeet and Poogan Co. is going strong.


World War II is over, and Southern Pacific passenger trains running between San Francisco and Los Angeles make stops in the small rural town of Beawslaiw. The town has a full-service depot that also serves a local short line named the Brisbane & Bushong Railway. The B&B provides local passenger and freight service in the central California area.

At Beawslaiw, tracks split off the Southern Pacific main line and head east, which is also the realm of the B&B. Along that route are the B&B rail yard and a number of businesses served by both railroads. About three miles off the main line is a siding with a lone building that houses the Skeet and Poogan Co. Both railroads deliver and receive freight at this bustling facility.

The Skeet and Poogan Co. was started by the husband and wife team of Andy “Skeet” and Jessica “Poogan” Duncan. The Beawslaiw couple has a knack for enterprise and they used their nicknames for the name of the company. Skeet is the salesman, and Poogan manages the office and warehouse.

The company’s good fortune began with a contract to ship refrigerators and automatic waffle bakers with the B&B. At first, the couple hauled the appliances in their pickup truck to a small B&B yard loading dock where they loaded the goods into waiting boxcars. A few years later, they bought the brick Freight Station and began shipping everything from refrigerators to radiators. Complementing their existing business, the Skeet and Poogan Co. is also a designated Railway Express Agency.

The trackside portion of the building has a long wooden dock for loading and unloading boxcars. Sometimes as many as three cars are spotted on the 1,500’ siding.

State highway 106 runs along the opposite side of the building. Three large roll-up freight doors provide ready access for trucks on the highway side. A constant flow of vehicles pick up and drop off rail freight. Teams of workers and forklifts are kept busy filling and emptying truck trailers. Business is booming! 



The busy loading dock lines the track side of the business.



The B&B Railway may be a small line, but it nevertheless is the proud owner of its own rolling stock. Apparently the painters who lettered the obsolete double-sheathed wooden boxcar didn't talk to each other.



Among the commodities handled are loads of appliances destined for various California outlets.



As many as three ancient or recent boxcars can be in line at the loading dock for loading and unloading.



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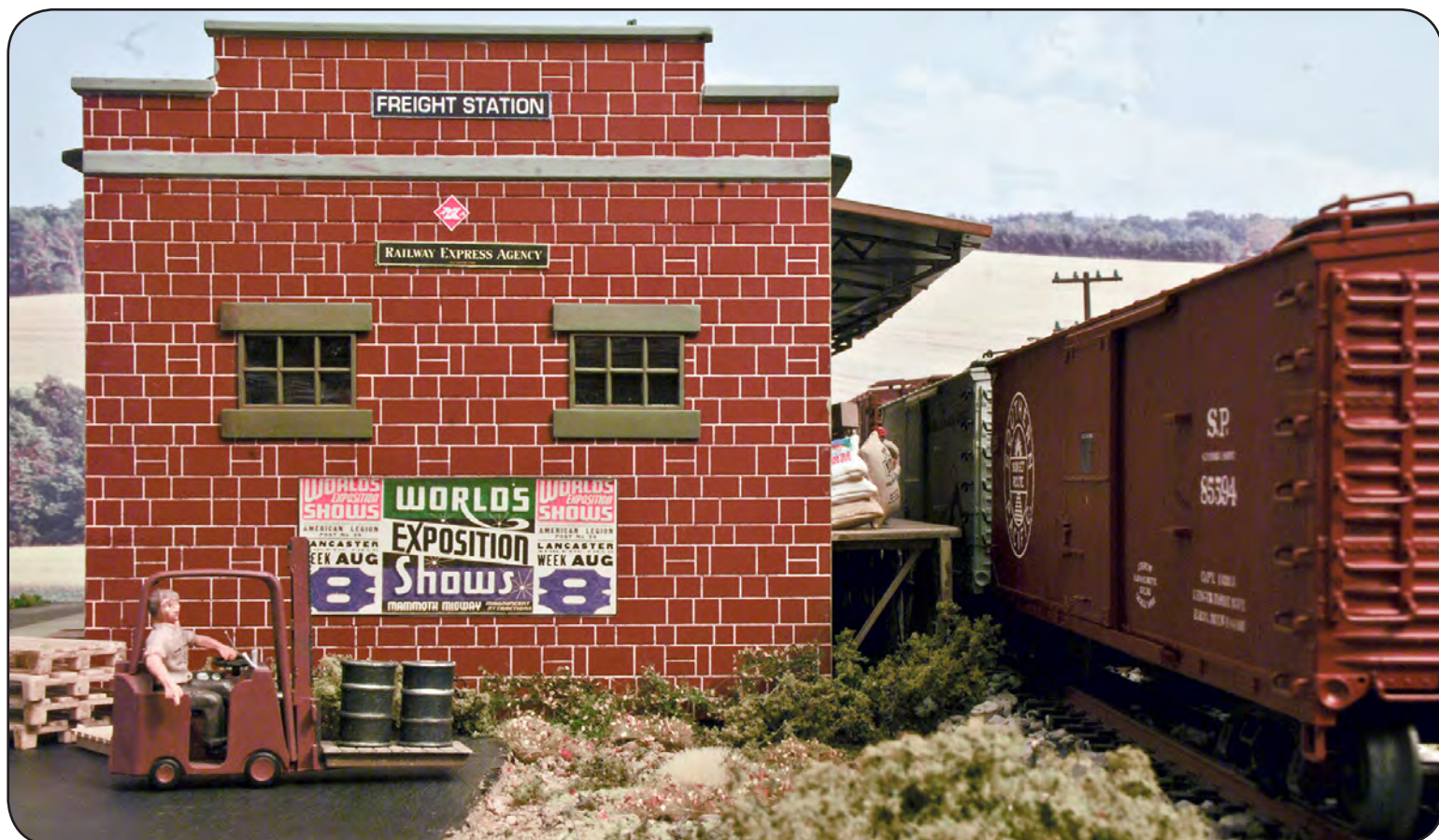




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Building a Layout: Create a Removable River Gorge

I have shown you how I found a way to turn trains around by going through a wall into the next room and thereby saving valuable layout space. To turn the trains on the other end of the layout, I'll show you another trick I've come up with to solve the space problem, as well as to create a way for trains to travel from one level to another.

At first I thought I'd just make a big mountain on the other end of the layout so all the tracks making the turnaround would simply go inside of it and come out at the back going the other way. With influence from some great layout builders, such as Bob Bartizek in southern Ohio and Bill Thompson in southern California, I decided to improve on the basic hidden

turnaround in a mountain idea and actually add a helix to go from the lower level of the layout to the upper level. That means you must have one O72 or greater turnaround for each level plus another O72 or greater climbing grade to connect the two levels.

Bob had a wonderful trestle on his layout, and Bill had a great way of using three trestles and a deep river gorge all in the same area. I liked that, but I wanted my gorge to be huge. In keeping with my design goal of never having to duck under or climb over any part of the layout to get to all the areas I would have to get to, I had to come up with a trick of my own to incorporate all of that plus include a hid-

den helix to allow trains to change levels.

Here's my solution. It is so easy! I can think of any number of uses for it near the ends of any layout. In Photo 1, hinged sections can gain you access to many areas both over and under the layout surfaces. But for what I wanted to do, hinged sections just couldn't be large enough to be practical.

In Photo 2, what I did was to build the layout with a gaping hole right on the front edge of the end of the layout where the trains needed to turn around. The upper level's cork roadbed is making its turn except for in the gaping hole area, and the lower level is making its sweeping turn through the gaping hole but at a much

greater radius than used on the upper level. At the far right of the lower level's turn you will see a switch right near the right wall. That is where the helix grade will begin climbing from right to left inside the mountain at the back of the layout. It will come out of the mountain through a future tunnel portal that eventually will be on the left side of the photo. Then, dramatically, it will continue its climb, crossing a future trestle between the two upper and lower level trestles, now represented by the gaping hole in the layout. On the right side of the photo in the back, it climbs on up and joins onto the upper level through another switch, not visible in the back of the photo.

The trouble is that this solution hides not only one but two switches inside the mountain along with other tricks like a grade track on a curve. These things are problematic. How is all this going to be easily accessible without ducking under or climbing over to get to potential problems?

How about a nice removable valley on rollers complete with breathtaking trestles! In Photo 3, I'm using a trick that dress-makers use but on a scale befitting O gauge train layouts. Using a wonderful product called foam core board, some masking tape, and a utility knife, I made a perfect fitting pattern, or template, for my future roll-around module.

Foam core board comes in many colors and sizes and is available from art supply stores. I have found it to be a layout maker's best friend, not only for this project but for many more uses. I like to use the computer and digital design tools, but sometimes, with all the odd angles this valley will turn out to have, nothing works better than a full-size pattern cut to fit exactly. This basic keystone-shaped design for the roll-around module will lend itself well to making it fit snugly and exactly with the gaping hole in the layout.

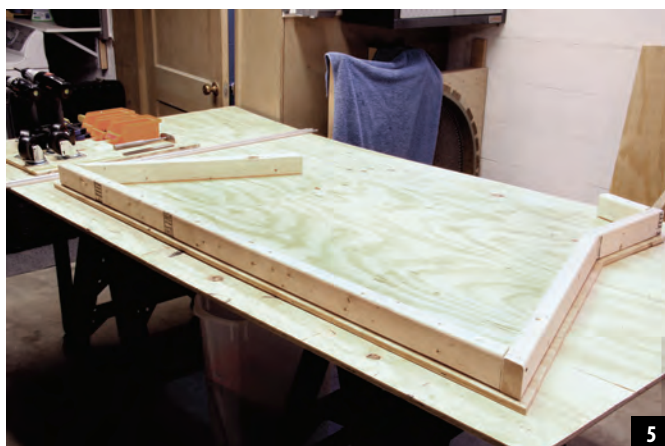
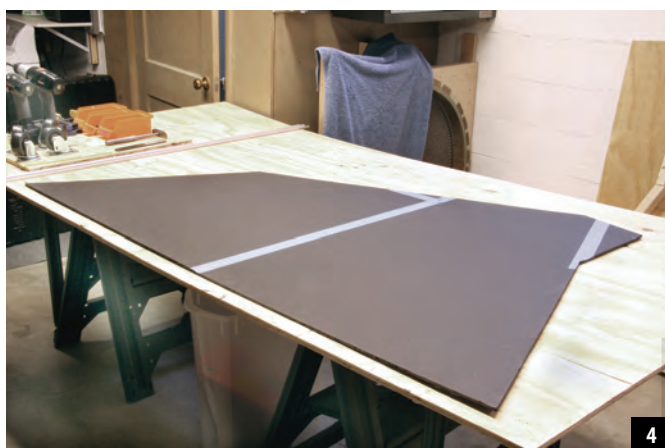
Photo 4 shows the template on a piece of 1/2" B/C grade plywood, where I will trace the cut lines onto the plywood. I will make two of these odd shapes: one for the floor of the valley and one for the bottom of the roll-around module.

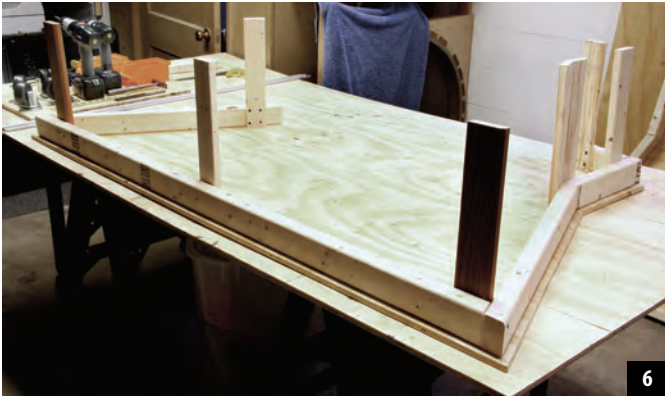
Photo 5 shows the 1x3 frame being built onto the bottom level of the roll-around module.

Photo 6 shows the support legs being attached at all the critical places with drywall screws through the 1x3 frame into the 1x3 connector legs.

In Photo 7, the mirrored image assembly for the valley floor is being trial fitted onto the legs. Before making this assembly, I decided to first attach the wheels onto the underside of the bottom of the module since weight and size were both becoming an issue.

Photo 8 shows the wheels being attached. The wheels are a critical part, so don't skimp on the size, weight, or cost. I ordered these wheels from a W.W.W. Grainger industrial catalog. They are capable of handling several hundred pounds on each wheel; the beefier the wheel, the smoother the function. This intricate module, no matter how heavy, must be able to roll around very smoothly and easily without putting undue stress on the future delicate trestles and scenery that will be built on the module. In my case, I used a 3" hardened-rubber, wheel swivel caster on a ball bearing mounting plate. A group of four should handle the load nicely. I mounted the plates with lag bolts to the plywood of the bottom of the module. Make sure when you do this that no part of the swiveling wheel will ever stick out beyond the edges of the module when finished.





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In Photo 9, the valley floor deck has been added along with plywood sides to fill the gap on each side of the layout. The plywood sides were added by attaching scrap plywood high enough to fill the gap directly to the ends and edges of both decks of the module. I

attached a scale drawing of the future trestle bent for one of the tracks to get a feel for the dramatic effect of the future trestle. Wow!

Notice I have attached a clamp to the side to more firmly locate the roll-around module for remaining work.

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place from now until the construction is finished. Remember a fragile set of trestles will fill this valley, and the trestles won't be able to put up with flexing side walls of this module while rolling it in and out of its home in the layout.

Photo 10 shows the use of some

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2x4s and some 1x2 braces capped off with a small amount of plywood layout or track bed floor, which will stay with the valley module when it is rolled away. The brighter and cleaner plywood shows what is attached to the module as compared to what is attached to the layout table.

Note in Photo 11 that the whole deep canyon wall will eventually pull out with the module, including some amount of terrain at the top of the layout. By designing this into the roll-around module, removal of the module will let me gain direct access to all areas under the layout's upper deck because the side walls of the valley are part of the roll-out module.

Photo 12 shows the left side matched up between the side of the module and the side of the layout table. The cut line in the three levels of cork roadbed show exactly what will come out with the module when it is removed.

In Photo 13 you can see the beefed-up side of the module wall at all three levels. When the 2x4s and 1x2 bracing are complete, I could easily roll the whole module around by just holding onto the track levels at two points.

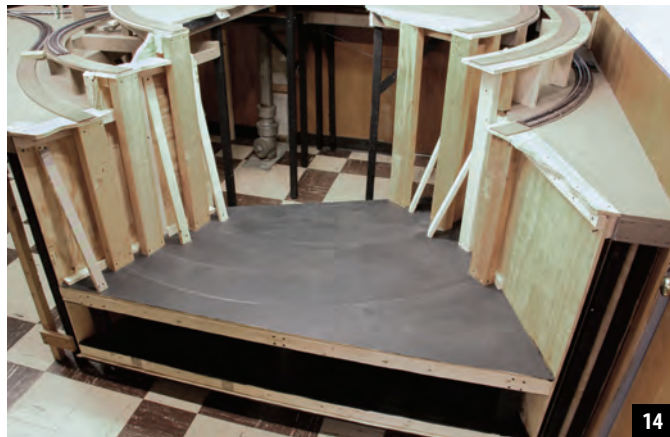
Photo 14 shows the nearly complete roll-around module snugly locked into the layout at its match points. The area behind the module will be more canyon area with scenery on the sides and on the valley floor. I plan to make the valley floor in the canyon hinge down and out to allow me to go all the way to the back of

the layout if anything needs attention back there. The other reason for a removable roll-out section is that it will make finishing scenery at the back of the layout much easier to get to.

Photo 15 shows how easy it is to gain access to the back. I am preparing to roll the future valley and trestles out of the layout. In Photo 16, the module is easily glided out.

Note in Photo 17 how strong the end panels need to be once you see them rolled away from the layout that they fit into. Compare it to the right side of Photo 14. If need be, the module can also be rolled to another part of the room or even into another room, assuming doorway space permits it.

Hmm...that means that when it becomes trestle-construction time, I can actually roll the whole module right over to my workbench and access the trestle from both sides while I sit and build. The more I think of ways to hinge and roll parts of this layout around, the better I like it. 🛠️





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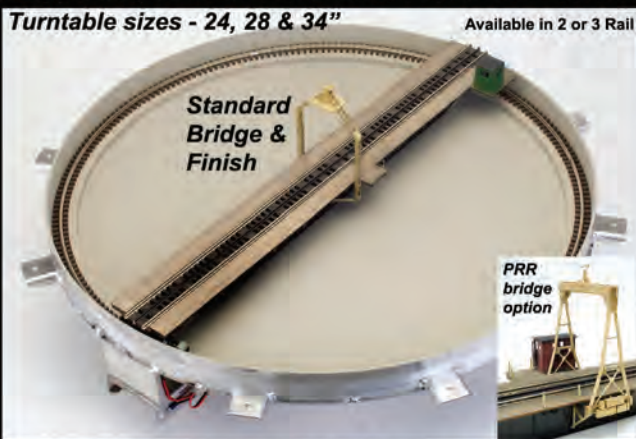
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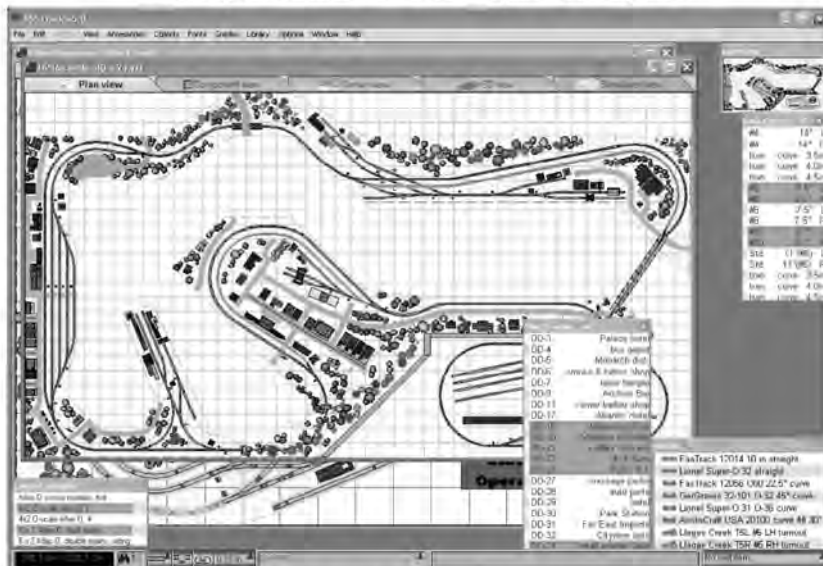


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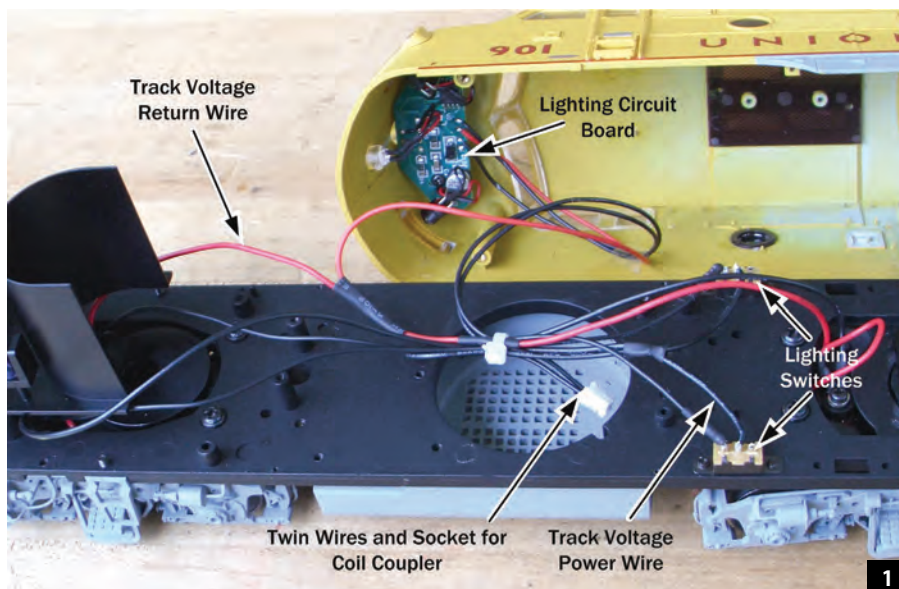


Dummy A, Smart Coupler

As I explained in my review of the Atlas O Phase 2 F3s in this issue, the dummy A unit is equipped with a headlight, marker lights, and a coil coupler. A circuit board mounted in the nose of the unit provides the correct DC voltage to the LED headlight and marker lights (Photo 1). This board actually includes two separate circuits: one for the headlight and the other for the markers. Each of the two lighting switches gates the AC track voltage to the lighting circuit board to illuminate its specific light(s). On our evaluation dummy unit, black wires carry the AC hot voltage from the pickup rollers on the trucks, through the slide switches, and to the light circuits on the board. Red wires serve as the AC common or return circuit from the board back to the wheels on the trucks.

However, as the unit is shipped from the Atlas O factory, there's no way to operate the coil coupler. The twin wires and socket for the coupler are in the unit, but they connect to nothing. This is where a Mini Commander EX board from The Electric RR Co., a subsidiary of Lionel LLC, makes its entrance into the world of dummy Master Line diesel units from Atlas O.

The Mini Commander EX board has been recently reengineered to incorporate the latest in surface-mount microelectronics



technology. This 1" by 2" printed circuit board, which was designed specifically for use in dummy locomotives, has outputs for coil couplers, directional lights, and ditch lights. These outputs can be reconfigured as needed to drive a smoke unit, strobe, or cab lights. Additionally, the EX board supplies serial signals for connection to sound electronics such as the recently reengineered RailSounds Commander from Electric RR.

The installation kit I ordered directly from The Electric RR Co. included the EX board and the components shown in Photo 2. Retail price is \$34.95 plus shipping. However, only the abbreviated quick start guide came with the kit, so I downloaded and printed the PDF file of the installation manual from the company's website at www.electricrr.com.

As I mentioned earlier, electrical input to the lighting circuit board is AC voltage from the track, nominally 18 volts for command operation. However as I learned from studying the installation manual, the electrical outputs from the EX board's light drivers are half-wave rectified at half the track voltage. Since my primary intent for this project was to gain command operation of the dummy A unit's coupler, I opted to just connect the coil coupler to the EX board and leave the lighting control to the factory-installed switches.

Photo 3 shows the EX board installed with the coupler and power wires connected to it. Not that the installation was simple, but it took longer to take the body shell off the frame than to install and connect the board. Four screws hold the shell to the frame as do two retaining tabs molded into each side of the shell.




To power the EX board, I tapped into the AC track power wiring by soldering a short, black 24-gauge wire into the wired Y for the lighting switches. A piece of heat shrink tubing insulated the soldered joint. The AC return circuit was again a short length of 24-gauge red wire spliced into the factory red wire and also insulated with heat shrink tubing. As a side note, if a heat gun is not available, a hair dryer works great with heat shrink tubing and beats an open flame or radiant heat from the tip of a soldering iron or gun. The socket on the wires from the coupler simply plugged into the EX board at plug HC-2 for the rear coupler.

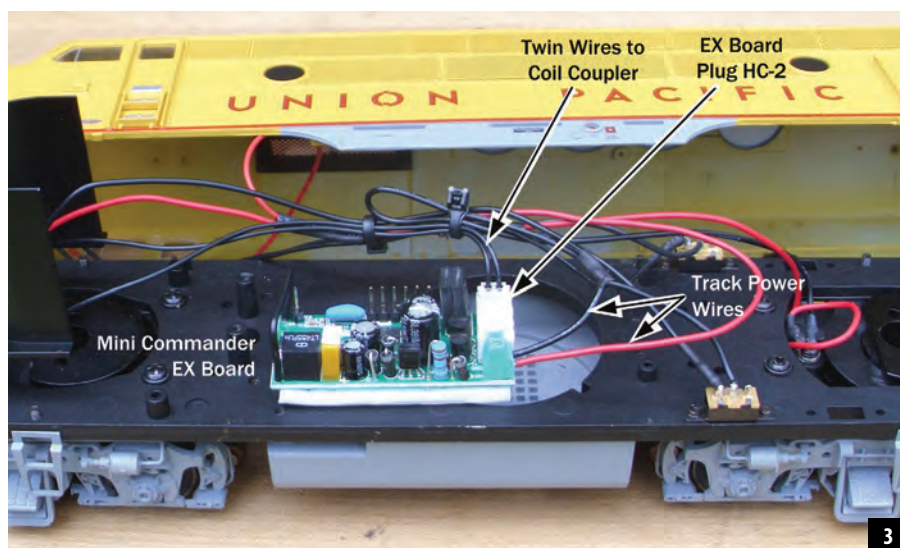
An on-board loop antenna for receiving the radio-frequency TMCC signals is at one end of the EX board. A separate antenna wire with the appropriate connector is also supplied with the installation kit, but I didn't need to employ it. With the body shell installed back on the dummy A unit, the EX board received and acted on every command to open the unit's rear coupler.

A jumper plug is included for programming the EX board to any two-digit engine ID number and to also set the board's operating code, as described in the installation manual and quick start guide. To change the ID and code, I simply installed the plug on the correct two pins and keyed in the pertinent command sequence on my CAB-1L. Optionally, the soft set technology from Electric RR is also available to change the engine ID and operating codes without having to use the jumper plug or a separate program-run switch. A separate program-run switch, which includes the necessary wiring, is available for \$2.00 from Electric RR.

With the rear coupler operational on the dummy A unit, running the four-unit consist took on a new and much

improved dimension. With the command-operated coupler on the trailing A unit, I was able to switch freight cars into or out of industrial sidings on my layout. It was quite a sight to see the lead units moving on the main line while the trailing units glided into or out of the sidings. To me, the modest cost for the smart coupler on the dummy A was well worth it.

Epilog: *Because the F3s had to go back to Atlas after my reviewing them, I had to reverse the upgrade before the dummy A unit could go home. The board came out of the unit as easily as it went in, and the unit's wiring was also easily restored to its as-manufactured condition. As to the orphaned Mini Commander EX board, it'll soon be controlling the factory-installed coil couplers and lights on an Atlas O dummy GP60B.* 



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October 4, 2014

DELAND, FL – 49th Florida Railfair, Volusia County Fairgrounds, Tommy Lawrence Bldg., SR 44 and I-4 (Exit 118). Adm: \$7, under 12 free. Info: Charles Miller, 3106 N. Rochester St., Arlington, VA 22213, (703) 536-2954, www.gserr.com, rrshows@aol.com.

October 4-5, 2014

CLEVELAND, OH – Great Berea All Gauge Train Show, NMRA MCR Division 4, Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds, 164 Eastland Rd., Berea. Sat. 10a-5p, Sun. 11a-4p, 300 tables. Info: (419) 684-5833.

October 12, 2014

HAWLEY, PA – Hawley Fire Dept. Model Train Show & Sale, 17 Columbus Ave. 9a-3p, Adm: \$3, under 12 free w/adult. Info: Bill Delleng, 618 Fern St., Hawley, PA 18428, (570) 226-3206.

ALTOONA, PA – Alto Model Train Museum Assoc. Model Train Swamp Meet, Blair County Convention Center, 1 Convention Center Blvd. 9a-2p, Adm: \$5, under 12 free. 150 tables of toy trains and parts. Info: Ron Kennedy, (814) 696-9671, ronjane@atlanticbb.net.

November 1, 2014

KIRTLAND, OH – Cleveland 2-Rail O Scale Train Meet, Lakeland Community College Auxiliary Gym, 7700 Clocktower Dr. 9a-2p, Adm: \$7, under 12 and active military w/ID free. Tables \$37, layout tours after show. Info: Sam Shumaker, (440) 248-3055, jld464@yahoo.com, www.cleveshows.com.

November 2, 2014

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

November 9, 2014

DALTON, OH – C J Trains Fall Wayne County Train & Toy Show, Buckeye Event Center, 624 Henry St. 10a-4p, Adm: \$5, 2 and under free. 550 tables 8 ft. \$25 each. Info: Jon Ulbright, 941 Buchholz Dr., Wooster, OH 44691, (330) 262-7488 (after 6p EST), cathijon@sssnet.com, www.cjtrains.com.

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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: Dave Hoverstock, (520) 909-0722, Gadsden Pacific Toy Operating Museum, trainshow@gpdtoytrainmuseum.com, www.gpdtoytrainmuseum.com.

November 15, 2014

ST. CLOUD, MN – Granite City Train Show & Sale, National Guard Armory, 1710 Veterans Dr. 10a-3p, Adm: \$6, 10 and under free. Buy/sell, displays, children's play area, food/refreshments. Info: (320) 255-0033, edwardolson@cloudnet.com.

ROCHESTER, NH – Great Northern New England Train Show, sponsored by Northern Chapter NETCA, American Legion Post #7 Hall, 94 Eastern Ave. 9a-3p, Adm: \$5 per family. Dealer tables, operating layout, train set raffle, food on premises. Info: Ed Martin, (603) 362-4300, efminter@aol.com.

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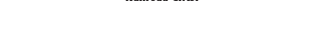


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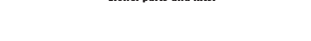


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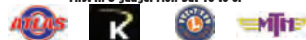


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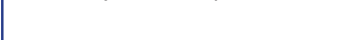


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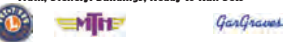


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Happy Halloween to all!—*Allan*



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AAA Turntables - National Magnetic.....	Henning's Trains77	OGR Publishing, Inc.14, 69, 81, 95
Servors, Inc.....87	Highball Products27	Patrick's Trains.....76
Aaron's Trains29	Hikel Layouts & Trains74	Plasticville Collectors Association94
Affordable Model Railroads.....76	J & A Hobbies.....41	Public Delivery Track29
Allentown Train Meet Associates41	J and W Electronics.....41	R & S Enterprises91
Altoona Modelworks77	J&R Trains34	R. Bishop Model Crafters28
Angela Trotta Thomas19	Just Trains86	R&L Lines LLC87
Arkansas Traveler Hobbies.....76	K & P Brick & Building Company28	Rainy Day Hobbies77
Atlas O, LLC.....70	Korber Models, LLC35	Ready to Roll, Inc.....89
Bart's Pneumatics Corp.....25	L.O.T.S.19	RMT Direct76
Berkshire Valley, Inc.25	Lee Willis28	Ross Custom Switches3,82
Birdhouse Holdings/Choo Choo Bob ..87	Legacy Station29	Roundhouse South40
Brennan's Model Railroad Products87	Lionel, LLC8-9	Roy's Trains, LLC41
Brentwood Antiques36	Mario's Trains76	S & W Parts Supply.....87
Bridge Boss77	Mega-Steam / Proto Locos.....29, 41, 90	Scale Models Arts & Tech.....24
C T McCormick Hardware27	Menards37	Scenic Express38
Caboose Industries76	Mercer Junction Train Shoppe.....77	Side Track Hobbies20
Catocin Mountain Trains & Hobbies..24	Mianne-Foley Woodworking Co.77	Star Hobby/H&K Management36
Charles Ro Supply Company.....10	Miller Engineering.....19	Stockyard Express86
Dallee Electronics28	Millhouse River Studios.....90	Sunset Models - 3rd Rail100
DHS Die-Cast28	Model Building Services87	Thomas A. Yorke Design Studio35
Die Cast Direct, Inc.38	Model Rail Scenes76	TM Books & Video19
Dixie Union Station34	Model Railroad Custom Benchwork93	Todd's Train Depot77
Dunham Studios30	Model Tech Studios.....29	Train City37
East Coast Enterprises28	Model Train Store of NJ26	Train Electrics, Inc.41
Eastern Depot29	Modern Toy Train Parts.....77	Train World.....2
Everything O Scale / Harry Heike.....27	Mr. Muffin's Trains34	Trainz.com91
Flexxbed - Hobby Innovations.....27	MTH Electric Trains, Inc.79	True Scene Modeling.....41
Gargraves Trackage Corporation86	Nassau Hobby Center, Inc.80	Weaver Models75
Glenn Snyder Display Systems13	Nicholas Smith Trains18	Western Depot35
Grzybowski's Train Store15	NJ International, Inc.76	Williams By Bachmann99
Harrison Trains41	O Gauge Connection27	Z Stuff.....25



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