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in O Gauge**

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Builds an
Out of This
World Diorama**

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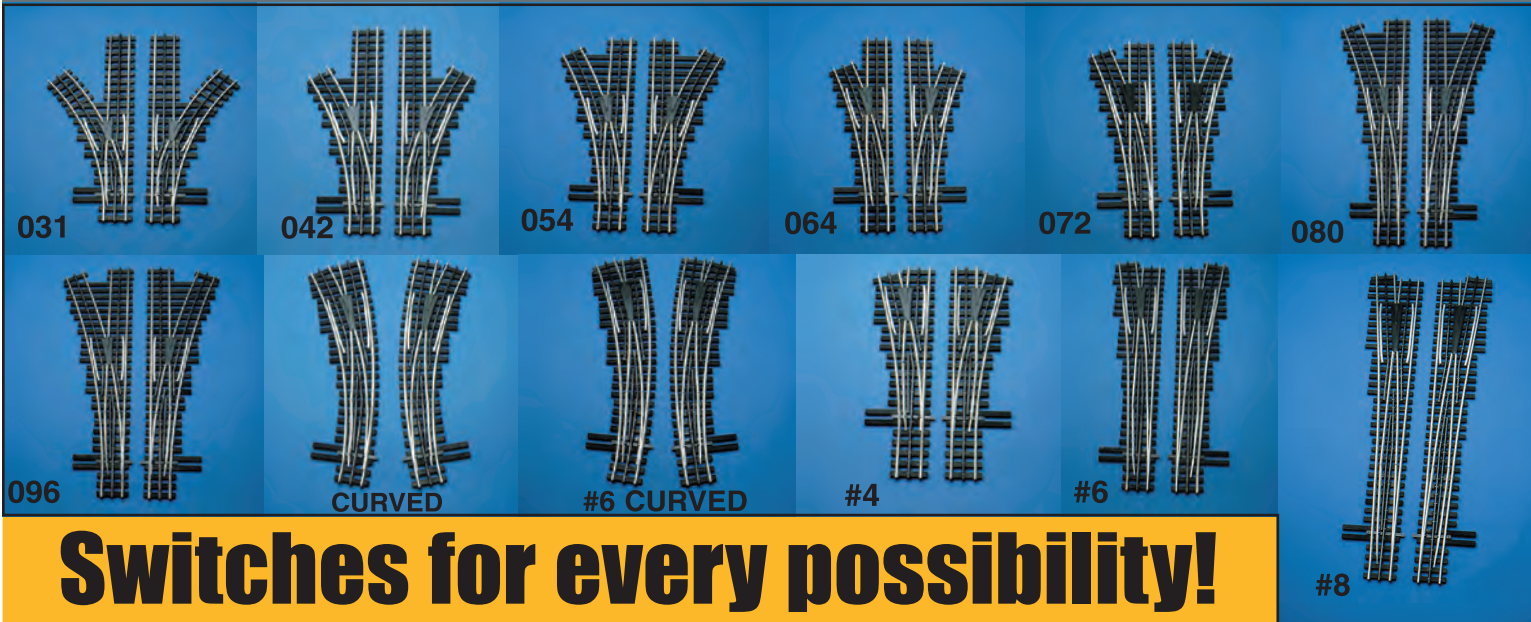
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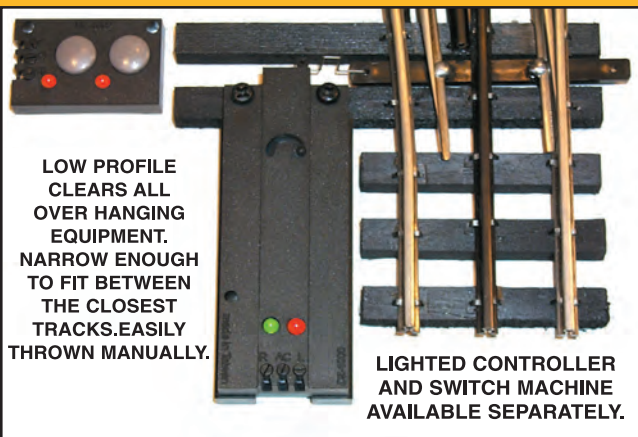
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ON THE COVER

A Pennsy G5 from MTH eases through a curve in an industrial area adjacent to a small harbor on Greg Annett's 3-rail O gauge layout. A harbor scene occupies one corner of the layout and is one of many detailed scenes. As Greg sees it, a model railroad is really just one big artistic composition.

Photo by Norm Charbonneau



Publisher

Richard P. Melvin
publisher@ogaugerr.com

Editor-in-Chief

Allan Miller
editor@ogaugerr.com

Special Projects Editor

Ed Boyle
ed@ogaugerr.com

Associate Editors

Jim Barrett
jim@ogaugerr.com

George Brown
george@ogaugerr.com

Kathryn Brown
kitty@ogaugerr.com

Advertising Sales Manager

Alan Arnold
adman@ogaugerr.com

Advertising Production Manager

Don Pedicini, Jr.
don@ogaugerr.com

Design & Layout / Pre-Press

W-Graphics Digital Services, Inc.
ogaugerr@teamwgraphics.com

Subscription Manager

Linda Melvin
linda@ogaugerr.com

Merchandising Manager

Cari Fanta
cari@ogaugerr.com

Section Gang

Bill Bramlage
John Ciccarelli
Don McCuaig
Alex Müller
Jim Policastro
Eliot Scher

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The LHS Experience

If you're lucky enough to have a local hobby shop, or LHS as it's known in Internet parlance, where you make the majority of your train purchases, you already know what a valuable resource this place is. A shop that's relatively close by and operated by folks you know and trust is, in addition to being your convenient go-to source for the things of the hobby, also a great place to spend a bit of relaxing leisure time. It's kind of like a visit to the tavern in "Cheers," the long-running popular TV series.

There are a number of real advantages to dealing with brick-and-mortar train stores. For example, these establishments provide the opportunity to interact face-to-face with others from your area who share your hobby interests. That type of direct interpersonal interaction simply isn't possible in the virtual world of cyber communications even via social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and the like.

A local hobby shop is also the very best place to see and closely examine new products up close and personal. Most well-equipped train stores have an operating layout so you can test run your purchases, which is always a very good idea in this era of locomotives jam-packed with sophisticated electronics. Furthermore, you can be confident that a reputable local dealer will make sure you receive after-sale service, if needed, on items you purchase at the store. Try getting that from an Internet dealer or auction site seller!

I believe that local train stores rank among the very best places to be educated about the hobby. Novices can explore options, and seasoned model railroading veterans can learn or share tips and techniques from fellow hobbyists that can be used to enhance the hobby experience.



Dave Minarik, owner of Mercer Junction Train Shoppe, demonstrates scenery building techniques on a module being constructed for the Fort Pitt Hi-Railers club.

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During a recent visit to my LHS, Dave Minarik's Mercer Junction Train Shoppe in Mercer, Pennsylvania (a full 45-minute drive in each direction), I spent time chatting with a fellow who was visiting the store to check out the latest and greatest in today's O gauge world. Just getting started in the hobby, he had already decided that O gauge railroading was for him. But before jumping in with both feet, he was devoting time and effort to exploring and comparing track systems, transformers, command control systems, motive power capabilities, rolling stock, and even accessory options. Examining hands-on alternatives before opening his wallet was, in my opinion, a very prudent approach.

Dave is a train dealer who goes a good bit further in promoting involvement in the hobby. In addition to having a continually evolving store layout that is as fine as most any home layout, he also sponsors on-site workshops and clinics that are open to anyone who might care to participate. My photos show a couple of these events as well as a portion of the store layout.

I realize, sadly, not everyone has access to a full-service train store. I also know that the number of stores is decreasing as longtime owners retire and as more people turn to the Internet for their purchases. That's really a shame! But if you are fortunate enough to have a fine train store within an hour or so commute, I strongly encourage you to support it to the best of your ability. Make yourself a regular visitor, friend, and, above all, a customer! 



Mike Reagan, director of Project Management and Customer Service for Lionel, paid an earlier visit to Mercer Junction where he demonstrated the prototype for the new CAB-1L command control system.



The large and finely detailed store layout features broad curves capable of handling long consists.



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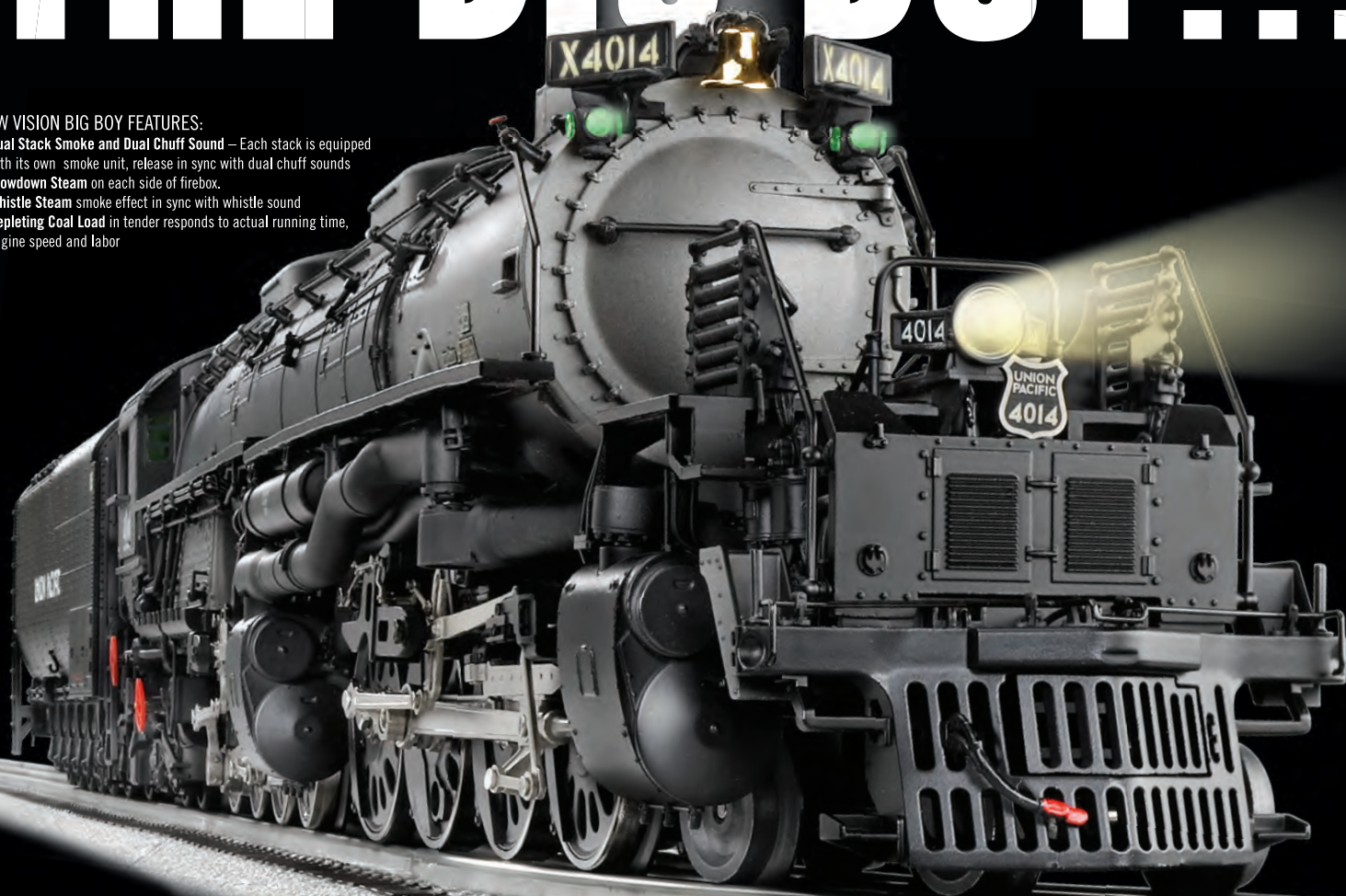
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Product Announcements

Army on the Move

R. Bishop ModelCrafters is offering built-to-order WWII U.S. Army forward area railhead dioramas that feature real wooden end ramps used to offload rolling stock. The example 12" wide main line and siding diorama shows an M4A3 Sherman tank being offloaded from a flatcar. Any size diorama base is available.

A turnout can be added onto the siding at its opposite end, or a single-track diorama can be set alongside a layout's main line. A base board includes the track, an off ramp, and realistic ground cover for shelf display or layout insert. Flatcars and other rolling stock can be added per customer order. Additional vehicles can also be added to the roadway alongside the track. The purchaser can specify the type of 3-rail or 2-rail track. Price is based on size and features. R. Bishop, ModelCrafters, P.O. Box 2325, Jenkintown, PA 19046; 802-310-6815; modelcrafters@yahoo.com. See photos at www.modelcrafters.com or www.flickr.com/photos/modelcrafters.



Details, Details, Details

American Heritage Models is offering a series of Authentic Detail Accessories packs for enhancing the realism of various O gauge model railroad scenes. The unique contents of these accessory packs complement the current line of AHM layout detail products. Examples shown include five sacks, a soft drink machine, and a handcart. Other offerings not shown include milk cans, two different garage accessory sets, service truck set, carpenter building set, track gang set, soft drink bottles, and more. These accessory packs are available exclusively from Diecast Direct. Visit www.diecastdirect.com to see the full line of available accessory packs and prices.

Kustom Krafted Kits

Korber Models has launched Korber Komplete, a turnkey service that delivers custom-built layout-ready structures to your doorstep. This new service lets modelers include Korber Models structures on their layouts when time or desire to build kits may not be available. The Korber Komplete service starts with a currently available Korber kit that is then constructed by an expert craftsman who assembles, paints, and adds optional lights while also weathering the structure. Finished products are packaged and delivered directly to the buyer. Manufactured in Ohio, Korber Models proudly continues its long legacy of Made in America. Go to www.korbermodels.com to find prices and complete information.



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Bachmann's exclusive and popular snap-together E-Z Track for other gauges is being offered for the first time in 3-rail O gauge. Three-rail E-Z Track features tinplate steel rails and gray plastic roadbed. Currently available in 10" straight (4 sections per box, 00280, \$26.95), 36" diameter curved (4 sections per box, 00281, \$26.95), terminal track (1 per card, 00282, \$13.95), transition track that connects to O gauge track from Bachmann or other manufacturers (1 per card, 00283, \$11.95), 10" straight, bulk (24 sections per carton, 00284, \$149.95), and 36" diameter curved, bulk (24 sections per carton, 00285, \$149.95). Visit your Williams by Bachmann dealer or order directly at www.bachmanntrains.com.

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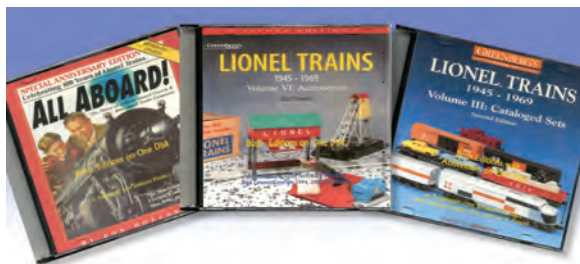
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Canadian Pride

The Canadian Toy Train Association announces that Atlas O is to manufacture the second car in the club's Canadian tank car series.

This 1:48 scale 8,000 gallon tank car is to be lettered for Imperial Premier Gasoline and Imperial Marvelube Motor Oil. The limited-production tank car will be available in four numbers for either 3-rail or 2-rail track. The cost is \$75.00 plus \$12.00 shipping per car. For full ordering information, e-mail mlhorne@shaw.ca or call 604-560-4028.



Santa Fe on the Hudson

Currently available from M.T.H. Electric Trains is a massive Santa Fe 4-6-4 steam locomotive that is available separately or heading a special troop train passenger set. The full-featured Proto-Sound 3.0 Hudsons are finely detailed models of the AT&SF Class 3460 oil-burning locomotives that were delivered to the railroad in 1938. The MTH Premier line locomotive bearing road number 3465 is included as part of a troop train passenger set and accompanied by an R50B refrigerator car, two 70' heavyweight Madison coaches, and a 70' heavyweight Madison observation car. These 4-6-4 locomotives are also available separately with road numbers 3461 and 3462 in versions equipped with either hi-rail or scale wheels. MSRP for the troop train set is \$1,099.95, and the individual engines are listed at \$995.95. For full details, see your MTH dealer or visit www.mthtrains.com.

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L15086	Alaska Wood Sided Reefer	29.95
L17683	Chessie System Northeastern Style Caboose	61.95
L17752	Polar Railroad Round Roof Boxcar	50.95
L17769	Rio Grande PS-1 Boxcar	50.95
L17771	Central of New Jersey PS-1 Boxcar	50.95
L17773	Detroit & Mackinac Round-Roof Boxcar	50.95
L17774	D&M PS-1 Boxcar	50.95
L17775	Sav & Atl/NC/Vrgn 3-Bay Op. Hpr. (3 Pk)	172.95
L17779	DLW/CNJ/Erie 3-Bay Open Hopper (3 Pk)	172.95
L17783	Reading/Wabash/Milino 3-Bay Op. Hopper (3 Pk)	172.95
L17791	PRR/N&W/Interstate Hopper (3 Pk)	171.95
L17795	Conrail/LV/GA Hopper (3 Pk)	171.95
L26473	Lackawanna NS Heritage ACF 2-Bay Hopper	39.95
L26474	NYC NS Heritage Quad Hopper	39.95
L26495	Poultry Car	43.95
L26677	Long Island RR Gondola w/Canisters	29.95
L26696	NJ Transit@ Gondola with Wood Ties	54.95
L27094	BNSF PS-2 Hopper (2 Pk.)	99.95
L27095	KCS PS-2 Hopper (2 Pk.)	99.95
L27259	Pennsylvania ACF Stock Car	59.95
L27282	Union Pacific Double-Door Boxcar	44.95
L27440	Burlington Northern Cylindrical Hopper	57.95
L27455	Amtrak Exp. Train Reefer	61.95
L27457	Norfolk Southern 3-Bay Open Hopper	57.95
L27473	Conrail 89 Auto Rack Car	79.95
L27682	Conrail Extended Vision Caboose	68.95
L27686	Lehigh Valley Ca-4 Caboose	68.95
L27858	Missouri Pacific Double-Door Boxcar	50.95
L29314	SP DD Boxcar w/End Doors	54.95
L29320	CNJ DD Boxcar w/End Doors	54.95
L29345	Santa Fe 89' Auto Carrier	79.95
L29376	Conrail 89' Auto Carrier Car	79.95
L29382	Union Pacific 89' Auto Carrier Car	79.95
L29387	Great Northern PS-4 Flatcar w/Stakes	50.95
L29649	Lionel SP Smoke Pellets Mint Car	49.95
L29654	Boston Federal Reserve Mint Car	50.95
L39360	Cub Scout™ Boxcar	43.95
L39364	2013 Lionel O Gauge Christmas Boxcar	43.95
L39391	Army Flatcar	46.95
L39398	Santa's Flyer Reefer	30.95

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L25178	Cal Zephyr Streamline Baggage w/TrainSounds	\$114.95
L25962	Thanksgiving Poultry Car	50.95
L29321	Ice Skating Aquarium Car	57.95
L29322	Koi Aquarium Car #2	57.95
L37069	Strasburg Rail Road Crane	46.95
L37073	U.S.M.C. Cannon Car	54.95
L37075	Boy Scouts Crane	54.95
L37076	Bethlehem Steel Coal Dump Car	35.95
L37083	Strasburg Rail Road Coal Dump Car	35.95
L37086	Lionelville Aquarium Co. Fish Aquarium Car	57.95
L37087	New Haven Walking Brakeman Car	53.95
L37094	Wizard of Oz Aquarium Car	61.95
L37097	Where The Wild Things Are Aquarium Car	61.95



AMERICAN FLYER STEAM LOCOMOTIVES

AF48090	Northern Pacific Challenger (L) Ltd SALE	\$699.95
AF48091	WP Challenger (L) Ltd SALE	699.95
AF48094	SP&S Challenger (L) Ltd SALE	699.95

AMERICAN FLYER DIESEL LOCOMOTIVES

AF48146	Southern Pacific U33C (Legacy)	\$319.95
AF48173	KCS SD70ACe (Grey) (Legacy) SALE	299.95
AF48174	Southern Pacific SD70ACe (Legacy) SALE	334.95
AF48176	C&NWD SD70ACe (Legacy) SALE	334.95
AF48189	IC U33C (Legacy) SALE	279.95
AF48185	Santa Fe U33C (Legacy) SALE	299.95
AF48193	Penn Central U33C (Legacy) SALE	334.95
AF42519	CNJ SD70ACE #1071 (Legacy)	399.95
AF42521	DLW SD70ACE #1074 (Legacy)	399.95
AF42523	Erie SD70ACE #1068 (Legacy)	399.95
AF42527	NYC SD70ACE #1066 (Legacy)	399.95
AF42529	Penn Central SD70ACE (Legacy)	399.95
AF42535	Virginian SD70ACe (Legacy)	399.95
AF42537	Wabash SD70ACe (Legacy)	399.95
AF42544	Conrail ES44AC (Legacy)	444.95
AF42554	Penn ES44AC (Legacy)	444.95

AMERICAN FLYER ROLLING STOCK

AF48386	NYC Pacemaker Stock Car	\$50.95
AF48387	AIRCO Boxcar	50.95
AF48391	Timken Boxcar	50.95
AF48393	Keystone Camera Boxcar SALE	44.95
AF48437	Gilbert Chemicals Oil 3-Dome Tank Car SALE	44.95
AF48540	Baltimore & Ohio Flatcar with Girder	38.95
AF48561	Jersey Central Flatcar w/Boat	50.95
AF48569	Buttermilk Bay Creamery Flatcar w/Milk Conts.	50.95
AF48828	Mr. Goodbar Reefer	44.95
AF48835	Cub Scout® Boxcar	39.95
AF48836	Boy Scouts of America® "Eagle Scout"® Boxcar	39.95
AF48838	Penguin Seafood Reefer	35.95
AF48839	Smoke Cartridge Transport Boxcar	39.95
AF48440	27 Track Clearing Fluid 3-Dome Tankcar	35.95
AF48442	AF Lines "Air Service" Single-Dome Tankcar	35.95
AF48647	#23 Artificial Coal 3-Bay Hopper	35.95
AF48662	#22 Scenery Gravel 3-Bay Hopper	35.95
AF48846	Gilbert Mines Mint Car	43.95
AF48847	New York Federal Reserve Mint Car	43.95
AF48848	San Francisco Federal Reserve Mint Car	43.95
AF48639	Canadian National Cylindrical Hopper	57.95
AF48640	Burlington Northern Cylindrical Hopper	57.95
AF48642	Saskatchewan Cylindrical Hopper	57.95
AF48646	UP "Building America" Cylindrical Hopper	57.95

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Item No.	PREMIER DESCRIPTION	Our Price
20-1006-1E	NYC #35318 J1e HUDSON AMERICAN LEGACY W/PS2	\$599.00
20-20001-1	BNSF 3GS21B DIESEL W/PS2 (HRW) M10V2	\$349.00
20-20002-2	NORFOLK SOUTHERN 3GS21B DIESEL W/PS2 (SW) M10V2	\$369.00
20-20005-1	UNION PACIFIC 3GS21B DIESEL W/PS2 (HRW) M10V2	\$349.00
20-20006-1	NRE DEMO 3GS21B DIESEL W/PS2 (HRW) M10V2	\$349.00
20-20016-1	WESTERN MARYLAND GP-35 DIESEL W/PS2 M10V1	\$349.00
20-20016-3	WESTERN MARYLAND GP-35 DIESEL NON-POWERED M10V1	\$155.00
20-20030-1	EMD SD-9043MAC DIESEL W/PS2 M10V1	\$349.00
20-20030-3	EMD SD-9043MAC DIESEL NON-POWERED M10V1	\$155.00
20-20033-3	NEW HAVEN GP-9 DIESEL NON-POWERED M10V1	\$155.00
20-20237-1	RAIL AMERICA 3GS21B GENSET DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) M12V2	\$405.00
20-20055-3	SANTA FE F-7 B-UNIT DIESEL NON-POWERED M10V2	\$155.00
20-20056-1	WESTERN MARYLAND F-7 ABA DIESEL SET W/PS2 M10V2	\$599.00
20-20056-3	WESTERN MARYLAND F-7 B-UNIT (NON-POWERED) M10V2	\$125.00
20-20104-1	WESTERN MARYLAND VO 1000 DIESEL W/PS2 M10V2	\$329.00
20-20142-3	WESTERN MARYLAND SD70Ac DIESEL N/P M11V1	\$155.00
20-20158-1	SEABOARD F-3 ABA DIESEL W/PS2 (HRW) M11V1	\$599.00
20-20161-3	ROCK ISLAND FT B-UNIT DIESEL (NON-POWERED) M11V1	\$129.00
20-20164-1	UNION PACIFIC VERANDA TURBINE & TENDER W/PS2 M11V1	\$819.95
20-20177-1	ELECTRO MOTIVE DIVISION SD24 DIESEL W/PS3 M11V2	\$359.00
20-20177-3	ELECTRO MOTIVE DIVISION SD24 DIESEL (NP) M11V2	\$155.00
20-20204-3	CANADIAN PACIFIC GP9 DIESEL ENGINE NON-POWERED M12V1	\$165.00
20-20205-1	WESTERN MARYLAND GP9 DIESEL W/PS3 M12V1	\$369.00
20-20205-3	WESTERN MARYLAND GP9 DIESEL (NON-POWERED) M12V1	\$165.00
20-20214-1	PENNSYLVANIA RS-11 HIGH HOOD DIESEL W/PS3 M12V1	\$359.95
20-20215-2	CATERPILLAR SD70Ac DIESEL W/PS3 (SW) M12V1	\$423.00
20-20215-3	CATERPILLAR SD70Ac DIESEL (NP) M12V2	\$198.00
20-20219-3	UNION PACIFIC SD70Ac DIESEL W/PS2 (HRW) M12V1	\$198.00
20-20220-1	CHESIEE U2B DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) M12V1	\$379.00
20-20222-1	NORFOLK & WESTERN U2B DIESEL W/PS3 (NP) M12V1	\$379.00
20-20223-1	UNION PACIFIC U2B DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) M12V1	\$379.00
20-20226-1	SANTA FE DL-109/110 DIESEL SET W/PS3 M12V1	\$549.00
20-20231-1	PA CENTIPEDE AA DIESEL W/PS3 M12V1	\$719.95
20-20237-1	RAIL AMERICA 3GS21B GENSET DIESEL W/PS3 M12V2	\$405.00
20-20238-1	PACIFIC HARBOR LINES 3GS21B GENSET DIESEL (HRW) M12V2	\$405.00
20-20239-1	ALASKA 3GS21B GENSET DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) M12V2	\$405.00
20-20240-1	PENNSYLVANIA 3GS21B GENSET DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW)	\$405.00
20-20241-1	NASA 3GS21B GENSET DIESEL W/PS3 M12V2	\$405.00
20-20244-1	WESTERN MARYLAND SD40-2 DIESEL W/PS3 M12V2	\$405.00
20-20245-1	SANTA FE SD40-2 DIESEL W/PS3 M12V2	\$405.00
20-20248-1	SOUTHERN PACIFIC GP-9 DIESEL W/PS3 M12V2	\$396.00
20-20250-1	NORFOLK & WESTERN GP30 DIESEL W/PS3 M12V2	\$396.00
20-20252-1	CHESIEE GP-30 DIESEL W/PS3 M12V2	\$396.00
20-20253-1	ALASKA GP-30 DIESEL W/PS3 M12V2	\$396.00
20-20257-1	METROLINK F40PH DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) M12V2	\$389.95
20-20262-1	NICKEL PLATE ROAD ES44C DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) M12V2	\$409.95
20-20263-1	SOUTHERN ES44C DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) M12V2	\$414.00
20-20263-3	SOUTHERN ES44C DIESEL (NP) M12V2	\$243.00
20-20266-1	MILWAUKEE ROAD F-7 ABA DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) M12V2	\$639.00
20-20266-3	MILWAUKEE ROAD F-7 B-UNIT DIESEL (NP) M12V2	\$144.00
20-20282-1	FLORIDA TRI-RAIL F40PH DIESEL W/PS3 HRW (UNCAT)	\$396.00

20-20292-2	NORFOLK & WESTERN SD45 H HOOD DIESEL W/PS3 SW M13V1	\$432.00
20-20312-1	PENNSYLVANIA GP-30 DIESEL W/PS3 (UNCAT)	\$396.00
20-20313-1	GE DEMO #2011 ES44AC DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) (UNCAT)	\$432.00
20-20316-1	DCS #2013 ES44AC DIESEL W/PS3 (HRW) (UNCAT)	\$414.00
20-2242-1	UNION PACIFIC DC 3 RAIL INSPECTION VEHICLE	\$189.00
20-2544-3	CHESAPEAKE E-6 B-UNIT (NON POWERED) C	\$75.00
20-2663-1	MARYLAND MIDLAND GP-38 DIESEL W/PS2	\$329.00
20-2714-1	CSX F40PH DIESEL ENGINE W/PS2	\$269.00
20-2744-1	CNW FT ABA DIESEL W/PS2	\$469.00
20-2884-1	WESTERN MARYLAND SD-35 DIESEL W/PS2	\$329.00
20-2884-3	WESTERN MARYLAND SD-35 DIESEL (NP) C	\$139.00
20-2966-1	SANTA FE U2B DIESEL W/PS2 (HRW) M10V2	\$349.00
20-3035-1	CHESAPEAKE & OHIO 4-6-4 GREENBRIER	\$749.00
20-3040-1	NYC MILLENNIUM HUDSON W/PROTO SOUND	\$1,099.00
20-3063-1	GOLD SPIKE 2-8-4 BERKSHIRE	\$649.00
20-3124-1	SOUTHERN 0-8-0 USRA STEAM W/PS2	\$349.00
20-3133-1	NORFOLK & WESTERN 4-8-4 W/PS2	\$749.00
20-3136-2	JERSEY CENTRAL 4-6-2 P47 BALDWIN PAC 2-RAIL PS	\$599.00
20-3167-2	UP 4-6-4 CHALLENGER W/PS2 (SCALE WHEELS)	\$899.00
20-3181-1	PITTSBURGH & ALVA 2-8-2 USRA LT W/PS (HRAIL WHEELS)	\$599.00
20-3182-1	CHI & ALTON 2-8-0 USRA LT MIKADO W/PS (HRAIL WHEELS)	\$599.00
20-3216-2	NYC 4-6-4 DREYFUS W/PS2 (SCALE SCULLIN WHEELS)	\$699.00
20-3232-1	AQUIPPA&SOUTHERN 0-8-0 USRA W/PS2 (HRWHEELS)	\$449.00
20-3247-2	B&O 4-4-2 ATLANTIC W/PS2 (SCALE WHEELS)	\$499.00
20-3257-1	GRAND TRUNK 4-6-2 BALD, PAE W/PS2 (HRWHEELS)	\$699.00
20-3286-1	PA 2-8-2 USRA LGT MK STEAM W/PS2 (HRW)	\$699.00
20-3287-1	PERE MAR 2-8-2 USRA LT MK STEAM W/PS2 (HRW)	\$699.00
20-3298-1	CHICAGO NORTHWESTERN 4-6-4 E-4 W/PS2,0 (HRW)	\$799.00
20-3299-1E	PENNSYLVANIA 4-6-2 K-4s STREAMLINED STEAM W/PS2	\$699.00
20-3305-1	MISSOURI PACIFIC 0-6-0 USRA STEAM W/PS2 C	\$449.00
20-3310-1	PS&N 2-10-0 RUSSIAN DECAPOD W/PS2 M10V1	\$799.00
20-3311-1	WESTERN MD 2-10-0 RUSSIAN DECAPOD W/PS2 M10V1	\$799.00
20-3314-1	SOUTHERN 4-6-4 ROYAL HUDSON W/PS2,0 (HRW)	\$799.00
20-3315-1	CANADIAN PACIFIC 4-6-4 ROYAL HUDSON W/PS2,0 M10V1	\$829.00
20-3363-1	NORFOLK & WEST J STEAM LOCOMOTIVE (HRW) W/PS2 M10V1	\$949.00
20-3367-1	BRITISH RW DUCHESS CLASS STEAM W/PS2 (HRW) M12V2	\$1,049.00
20-3369-1	BRITISH RW DUCHESS CLASS STEAM W/PS2 (HRW) M12V2	\$1,049.00
20-3370-1	BRITISH RW DUCHESS CLASS STEAM W/PS2 (HRW) M12V2	\$1,049.00
20-3371-1	BRITISH RW DUCHESS CLASS STEAM W/PS2 (HRW) M12V2	\$1,049.00
20-3386-1	NYC 4-4-0 EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS W/PS2 (70" HRW) M9V2	\$579.00
20-3391-1	LEVATHAN 4-4-0 AMERICAN W/PS2 (HRW) M10V1	\$579.00
20-3401-1	KBAYSTB BR 18 EXPRESS STEAM LOCO W/PS3 HRW M12V1	\$1,049.00
20-3403-1	SCNF EST ERA II CLASS 241A STEAM W/PS3 HRW M12V1	\$1,049.00
20-3404-1	SCNF EST ERA II CLASS 241A STEAM W/PS3 HRW M11V2	\$1,049.00
20-3405-1	SCNF EST ERA II CLASS 241A STEAM W/PS3 HRW M12V1	\$1,049.00
20-3417-1	SOUTHERN 2-8-4 K-4 KANAWHA STEAM W/PS2 M10V2	\$1,049.00
20-3426-1	SNCF ERA II 241A STEAM W/PS3 (HRW) M12V1	\$1,049.00
20-3430-1	PENNSYLVANIA 2-8-0 H-3 CONSOLIDATION STM W/PS3 M11V1	\$649.95
20-3434-1	MD&PA 2-8-0 H-3 CONSOLIDATION STM W/PS3 (HRW) M11V1	\$649.95
20-3435-2	SANTA FE 4-6-4 BLUE GOOSE HUDSON STM W/PS3 SW M11V1	\$899.95
20-3453-1	PA 0-6-0 USRA STEAM ENGINE W/PS3 (HRW) M11V2	\$580.95
20-3465-1	SOUTHERN 4-6-2 PS-4 STEAM ENGINE W/PS3 M11V2	\$810.00
20-3469-1	PA 4-6-2 K-4s STM ENGINE W/PS3 (HRW) M11V2	\$810.00
20-3471-1	PA 4-6-2 K-4s STM ENGINE W/PS3 (HRW) M11V2	\$810.00
20-3472-1	PA 4-6-2 K-4s MODERN STEAM ENGINE W/PS3 (HRW) M11V2	\$810.00
20-5509-1	CONRAIL 3R W/PR E-3 ELEC RECTIFIER ENGINE W/PS2	\$189.00
20-5556-1	CAN NATL EP-3 ELECTRIC ENGINE W/PS2 (H R L WLS)	\$599.00
20-5558-1	NEW HAVEN EP-3 ELECTRIC ENGINE W/PS2 (HRW)	\$599.00
20-5571-3	GREAT NORTHERN ELECTRIC ALX B+ B (NON POWERED)	\$189.00
20-5573-1	VIRGINIAN EF ELECTRIC W/PS	\$799.00
20-5633-1	VEOLIA TRANS GERMAN TRAXX P160 AC2 ELEC PS3 HW M12V2	\$405.00
20-5634-1	RAILION EUROPEAN TRAXX F140 AC2 ELEC PS3 (HRW) M12V2	\$405.00
20-5634-3	RAILION EUROPEAN TRAXX F140 AC2 ELEC (NP) M13V1	\$197.95
20-5637-1	TUSCAN CROCODILE ENGINE W/PS3 (HRW) M12V2	\$819.95
20-5637-2	TUSCAN CROCODILE ENGINE W/PS3 (SCW) M12V2	\$819.95
20-5653-1	CARGO TRAXX F140 AC-1 ELEC W/PS3 (HRW) M13V2	\$399.95
20-5653-3	CARGO TRAXX F140 AC-1 ELEC (NP) M13V2	\$189.95
20-5654-3	CONNECTING EUROPE TRAXX F140 AC1 ELEC NP W/PS3 M13V2	\$189.95
20-5661-1	NJ TRANSIT ALP 46 ELECTRIC ENGINE W/PS3 HRW M12V2	\$419.95
Item No.	RAILKING DESCRIPTION	Our Price
30-1271-1	CHICAGO NORTHWEST 0-6-0 USRA STM SWITCHER W/PS2	\$329.00
30-1278-1	VIRGINIA TRUCKEE 4-6-0 STEAM ENGINE W/PS2	\$329.00
30-1407-1E	MTHRC 4-6-0 TEN WHEELER STEAM ENGINE W/PS2,0	\$249.00

30-1568-1	NEW YORK CENTRAL 4-6-4 HUDSON STEAM W/PS3 M12V2	\$379.00
30-1569-1	RF&P 4-6-4 HUDSON STEAM ENGINE W/PS3 M12V2	\$379.00
30-1574-1	BALTIMORE & OHIO 4-4-0 GENERAL STM W/PS3 M13V1	\$359.00
30-1576-1	W.A.R.R. 4-4-0 GENERAL STEAM W/PS3 M13V1	\$359.00
30-1580-1	PA 4-8-2 IMPERIAL M1-a MOUNTAIN STM W/PS3 M13V1	\$405.00
30-1581-1	PA 4-8-2 IMPERIAL M1-a MOUNTAIN STM W/PS3	\$405.00
30-1585-1	GREAT AMERICAN CIRCUS 4-8-0 TEN WHEELER W/PS3	\$405.00
30-1586-1	PENNSYLVANIA 4-6-0 TEN WHEELER STM W/PS3 M12V2	\$389.00
30-1587-1	NY&NE ENGLAND 4-6-0 TEN WHEELER STM W/PS3 M12V2	\$389.00
30-1590-1	GEORGE WASHINGTON 4-6-0 TEN WHEELER W/PS3	\$405.00
30-1591-1	ABRAHAM LINCOLN 4-6-0 TEN WHEELER W/PS3	\$405.00
30-20009-1	ROCK ISLAND GP-7 DIESEL ENGINE W/PS2 M11V1	\$249.00
30-20009-3	ROCK ISLAND GP-7 DIESEL ENGINE (NP) M11V1	\$125.00
30-20013-1	WISCONSIN SOUTHERN MP15AC DIESEL W/PS2 M11V1	\$249.00
30-20020-1	WESTERN MARYLAND RS-3 DIESEL W/PS2 M11V1	\$249.00
30-20020-3	WESTERN MARYLAND RS-3 DIESEL N/P M11V1	\$125.00
30-20050-1	ALASKA SD70Ac IMPERIAL DIESEL W/PS2 M11V2	\$270.00
30-20067-1	PITTSBURGH & LAKE ERIE SW-9 SWITCHER W/PS2 M11V2	\$249.00
30-20075-1	ILLINOIS CENTRAL E-8 AA DIESEL W/PS2 M11V2	\$289.00
30-20075-3	ILLINOIS CENTRAL E-8 B-UNIT (NON POWERED) M11V2	\$99.00
30-20085-1	CSX C30-7 DIESEL ENGINE W/PS3 M12V1	\$288.00
30-20087-1	SANTA FE C30-7 DIESEL ENGINE W/PS3 M12V1	\$288.00
30-20088-1	UNION PACIFIC C30-7 DIESEL W/PS3 M12V1	\$288.00
30-20097-1	MD & PA SW-1 SWITCHER DIESEL W/PS3 M12V1	\$259.00
30-20102-1	CHICAGO NORTHWEST E-3 AA DIESEL ENGINE W/PS3 M12V1	\$324.00
30-20103-3	SEABOARD E-3 B UNIT (NP) M12V1	\$108.00
30-20104-1	SOUTHERN E-3 AA DIESEL ENGINE W/PS3 M12V1	\$324.00
30-30104-3	SOUTHERN E-3 B UNIT (NP) M12V1	\$108.00
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Happy Union

The Union RR is kept busy on 13-year-old Mike Killgallon's 8' x 12' layout. Joe, Mike's dad, lends a hand to keep things running and handles the financing of new equipment. Mike's layout is controlled with MTH DCS powered via a Z-4000 transformer. The Union RR switchers crossing the bridge were custom-painted by Dave Minarik at his Mercer Junction Train Shoppe. The layout features four running trains with the Union RR and Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad dominating the action. Joe took this photo.

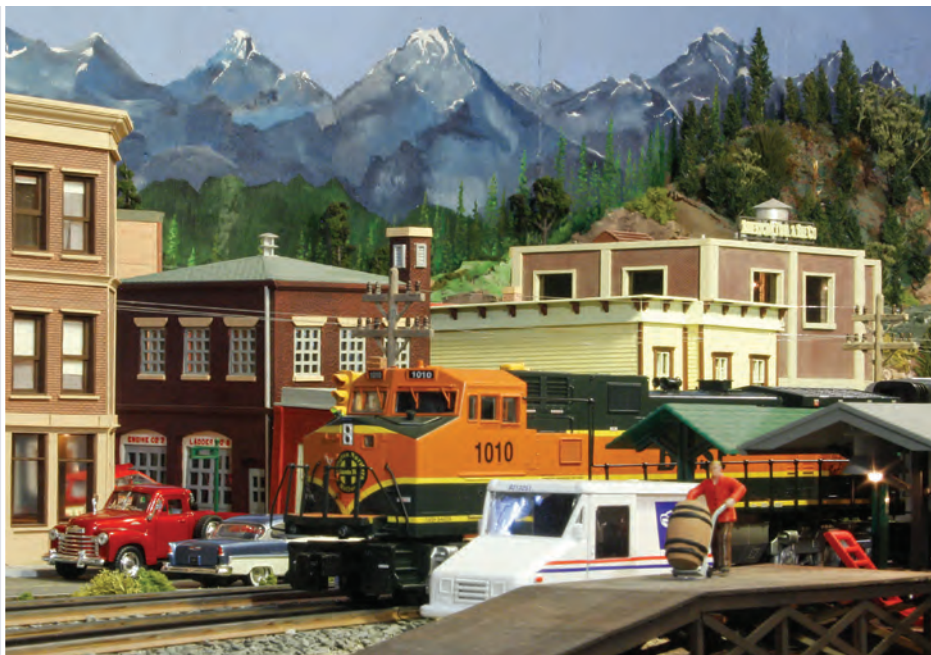


Foggy Morning Runnin'

SD40 No. 7536, sporting barely visible C&O livery, encounters a thick morning fog as it approaches the Taylen Coal Company's Raccoon Run Mine. With poor visibility due to the morning fog, the engineer will be extra cautious as he nears one of the grade crossings along the line. The locomotive is a Lionel model, and the scene, complete with fog generated by the type of fog generator sold for Halloween displays, is on Joseph Cassiday, Jr.'s 3-rail layout, which you'll see much more of in a future issue.

Great Pumpkin Comin' Through

A freight headed by BNSF motive power in green and orange “great pumpkin” livery rumbles through the outskirts of town on Bill Laughland's 8' x 23' 0 gauge layout. Bill says his layout continues to be a work in progress that has evolved over a period of 37 years. The earliest structures Bill used were Plasticville, which gradually gave way to the OGR Ameri-Towne line. These days he's devoting more time to custom replicas of buildings that have a personal and special meaning to him.



Barrels of Fun

Mark Solakian says he's well on the way with construction of his 22' x 35' layout in his nicely appointed and fully finished basement. Where possible, he takes advantage of one of the long-standing and distinctive characteristics of the 3-rail 0 gauge world by incorporating operating cars and accessories in various scenes on his layout. Here, a Lionel operating barrel car is used in conjunction with an operating barrel loader to provide a couple of interesting operating scenarios.



Railroading as a Family Affair

Jim LaCalle and Lynne, his wife, with their two grandsons, Nathan and Zachary Weller, constructed an 8' x 20' layout that includes a scene representing the Lehman Lake Hunting and Fishing Club in Pennsylvania where boys hunt and fish. A Santa Fe passenger train is seen here making a stop at the lake-side station to detrain passengers seeking a bit of fun in the sun. Jim's layout includes six different scenes with seven trains running simultaneously. For the past seven years, the LaCalle family has created a Christmas train garden that is open to the public. In addition to viewing trains, visiting children can do seasonal crafts, take a train quiz, get a Christmas scene face painting, and receive a small gift as they leave.



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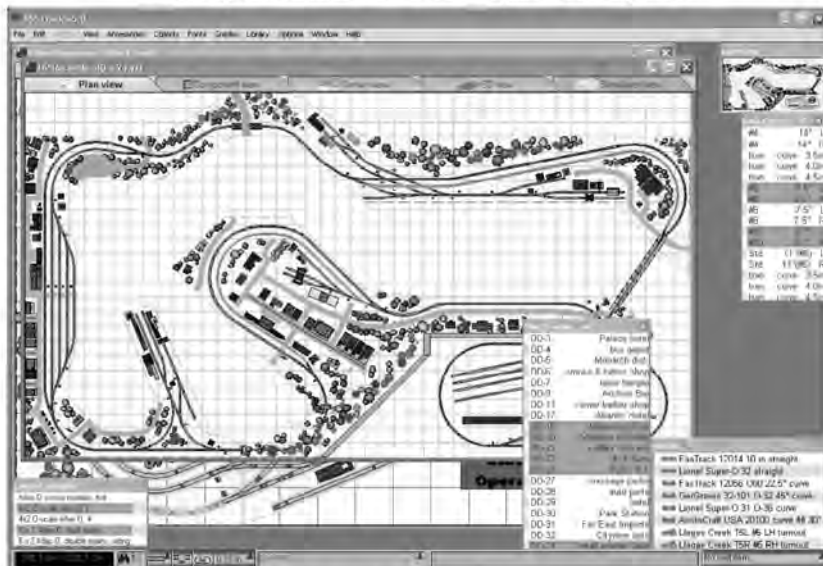


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Weaver B&M Class P4a Pacific

Review and Photos by George Brown



In the contemporary world of mass-produced model trains, one type of model stands alone as a survivor from the early days of 1:48 scale O gauge railroading. It's the steam locomotive hand-fashioned from stacks of brass sheets, bar stock, wire, and lost wax castings. These labor-intensive models are always built in small quantities, usually numbering in two or low three digits, and as a result they are not inexpensive. But for the owner of a brass locomotive, each model has an aura of exclusivity that's unmatched by most die-cast models. In the case of the Boston & Maine Class P4a Pacific from Weaver Models, I reviewed one of only 40 models built for 3-rail operation.

Prototype Notes

The prototype 4-6-2 for our sample was cab number 3713, which was one of five locomotives built for the Boston & Maine by the Lima Locomotive Works in 1934. A second group of five heavy Pacifics was built in 1937 and classed as the P4b because of variations from the first group. Engines of both groups rode on 80" drivers and had booster trailing trucks for starting heavy passenger trains. The P4a used a boiler pressure of 260 psi and generated a tractive effort of nearly 41,000 pounds without the booster, or just under 53,000 pounds with it. In fact, the oblong-shaped smokestack was actually two exhaust flues with the main one carrying the usual smoke from the firebox and expended steam from the cylinders. A smaller flue, which was cosmetically blended into the stack, was for the expended steam from the booster truck cylinders.



A coal load of 180 tons plus 12,000 gallons of water rode in the tender. With a train of 14 passenger cars on its drawbar, the P4a had a range of about 120 miles before it needed more water and 250 miles before it needed more coal.

In 1937 after taking delivery of the P4b Pacifics, the B&M sponsored a contest where school children submitted names for the ten Class P4 locomotives plus ten others. The name chosen for the 3713 was *The Constitution*, with the name of the submitter and school also inscribed on the engine's name plate.



The Weaver model represents the P4a as it existed after WWII with two air pumps on the pilot deck and what was called speed lettering on the cab and tender. As built, the P4a had one air pump, smoke lifters, and a streamlining shroud or skyline casing that faired the sand and steam domes into the turret cover and cab. During WWII, the second air pump was added, and the smoke lifters and skyline casing were permanently removed. Additionally, the speed lettering replaced the traditional B&M rectangular herald and numbering at some time after WWII.

Fortunately 3713 escaped the scrapper's torch and became part of the locomotive collection at the Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Today the locomotive is undergoing restoration by the Lackawanna & Wyoming Valley Railway Historical Society as described on the group's website at www.project3713.com.

Construction and Features

From its scale dummy coupler and boiler tube pilot to the coil-operated tinplate coupler tucked in under the tender beam, the brass 4-6-2 was a handsome 3-rail scale model. Basically I found it to be a delight to study on my desk or to watch pulling passenger trains on my layout. Most of the model's features and details are listed in the side bar and shown in the photos.

Rivets and other details, such as an access door on the tender and nonslip tread patterns on the walkways, are etched brass and have a good relief. As part of my study of the engine, I checked a few measurements that I gleaned off of the Internet. All were accurate or reasonably close. Using a caliper micrometer, I found the driver diameter measured at a scale 78" instead of the 80" of the real P4a. To me, the actual .041" difference between the two diameters is visually undetectable, and no matter how I look at them, the drivers are realistically tall.

The mechanical drive mechanism inside the engine includes a respectable size DC can motor with a flywheel, but no tach reader is required for the speed control. The Cruise Commander uses feedback from the motor to hold the engine at whatever constant speed the operator sets. A metal drive shaft and universal joint transfer the mechanical power from the motor to an enclosed gearbox with a metal worm and gear.

On top of the tender, the pile of real coal was unusually realistic-appearing with an uneven mounding. Inside the tender is the sound system speaker along with the R4LC receiver-controller, Cruise Commander motor driver, and RailSounds Commander electronics from The Electric RR Co., which is wholly owned by Lionel. An 8-wire cable connects the electronics in the tender to the motor, smoke unit, and lights in the engine.

The speaker is a low-profile unit that sits between the stamped steel tender frame and the electronics stack. Unfortunately no room exists for a bass enhancement enclosure on the back of the speaker, but I found the sounds to still be excellent.

Opening the tender to see what was inside or to install an owner-supplied 9-volt alkaline backup battery for the sound system was a simple undertaking using only a #0 Phillips screwdriver. By the way, if you run the locomotive exclusively under TMCC, the backup battery for the sound electronics is not needed, and I recommend not installing one.

Weaver B&M P4a

Features and Details

- TMCC and RailSounds from Electric RR
- ERR Cruise Commander cruise control
- DC can motor with flywheel
- Fan-driven Turbo Smoke unit
- Switch-actuated four steam exhaust chuffs per driver revolution
- See-through spoke drivers
- Traction tires on rear drivers
- Driver brake shoe hangers
- Sprung journals for driver axles
- Articulated side rods
- Detailed Walschaert valve gear
- Spoke wheels on booster trailing truck
- Wire handrails, grab irons, and coupler cut levers
- Lifting rings on boiler and tender
- Brass bell, whistle, and pop-off valves
- Legible builder's plate
- LED lighting
- Smoke unit on-off switch
- Detailed boiler backhead with crew figures on seat boxes
- Cab windows
- Opening cab roof vent
- Coil-operated rear coupler
- Real coal in tender bunker
- Opening water hatch for sound and program controls
- Two cab numbers available
- O54 minimum 3-rail curve

A subtle feature on the P4a, as well as on other recent passenger locomotives from Weaver, is the unusually close mounting of the coupler. On our evaluation sample, the pulling face of the closed knuckle is about 3/32" from the rear face of the tender frame, creating realistically close coupling with the train's lead car.

A couple of details that surprised me by their absence were lanyards for the bell and whistle. Although I have to admit that not having to watch out for these lanyards along with their guide stanchions protruding up from the boiler made servicing the engine a lot easier; I could simply set it upside down in my padded engine cradle.

On our sample, the soldering and assembly exuded a high level of craftsmanship. As to the model's overall satin black finish, it was flawless as were the pinstripes and lettering. As I look at the scale model of B&M 3713 sitting on my desk, its red trim with the yellow and red shadow lettering are the *pièce de résistance* for an already handsome locomotive.

At Trackside

Running the P4a at the head of several different passenger trains was a pleasant treat. The lithe Pacific tracked my Atlas O54 and O72 curves and turnouts with complete aplomb running in either direction. One of my favorite play scenarios was uncoupling the engine from the train on my O72 loop, backing it through the O72 crossovers to the O54 loop, and coupling to a waiting train. This routine went back and forth between running the two trains over the course of several evenings.

With a Lionel ZW-L as the AC power source and a Base-1L and CAB-1L handling the command processing, I ran the Weaver P4a in command operation almost exclusively. The only exception was a few minutes of a conventional transformer-controlled run just to confirm the locomotive would perform well. It did. And no, I did not install a battery to support the sound system during direction change and the shutdown after the conventional run.

I thoroughly enjoyed what is apparently now the steam locomotive sound repertoire used in the RailSounds Commander sound system. Basically, this sound set has several features that were part of RailSounds 5.0 that I wrote about in my review of the Great Northern Class O8 in Run 269.



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Another feature that I liked was the nearly silent motor driven by the Cruise Commander motor driver electronics. Gone are those irritating times when the motor in a brass steam locomotive growled and whined because of the power pulse frequency from the EOB motor driver board. Between the Cruise Commander board and the model's low final drive ratio, every engine start was realistically slow and smooth. And if I wanted to ease the engine and its train into a realistic arrival and stop at a station, I got the performance I wanted every time.

Coupler operation was also predictable and opened every time upon command. Best of all, I didn't need to run the engine into its awaiting train at ramming speed just to get the tender's coupler to close. The coupler even worked great for picking up a single express reefer from a siding and also for setting it out on a different siding.

Even though I understand why a locomotive like the P4a runs with such a low current draw, it still amazes me. With a current draw this low comes a cool-running motor along with its control and drive electronics, which should lead to improved reliability and longevity.

At the End of the Run

For modelers or fans of Boston & Maine steam power, the Weaver P4a could be the quintessential passenger locomotive. From my perspective, it's probably the prettiest and smoothest running Pacific I've had the pleasure to play with over the past several years. 

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Weaver B&M Class P4a TMCC Performance

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Length: 22-1/4" over couplers; 22" pilot to tender sill

Distance Between Locomotive Pickup Rollers: 3-3/8"

Distance Between Tender Pickup Rollers: 4-1/8"

Weight on Driving Wheels: 5 lbs, 1 oz

Tender Weight: 1 lb, 13 oz

Power Consumption at Idle @ 18 VAC: 0.3 A, 5.4 W

Tractive Effort @ 18 VAC: 2 lbs, 4 oz @ 1.1 A, 20 W

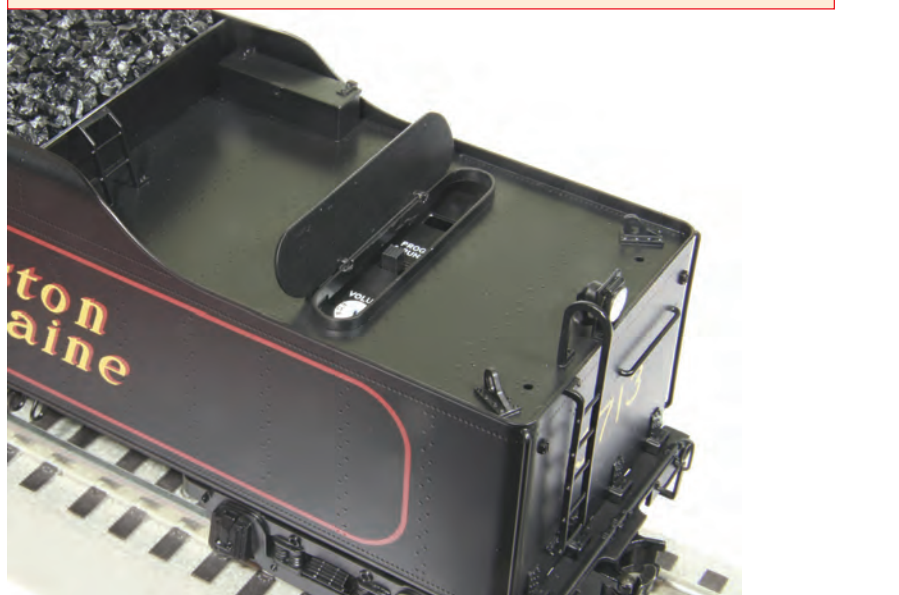
Minimum Sustained Speed @ 18 VAC: 1 scale mph @ 0.4 A, 7 W

Maximum Tested Speed @ 18 VAC: 60 scale mph @ 0.6 A, 11 W

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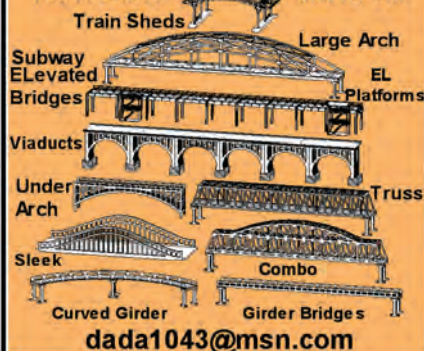
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Pennsylvania Flyer and Area 51 LionChief Sets

Review and Photos by George Brown

Our review of two new Lionel starter sets features the company's new LionChief remote control system that, according to the Lionel advertising, offers simple plug-and-play operation. What's new about the LionChief system is that each set's train is actually radio-controlled. The handheld remote sends control signals directly to the locomotive, much like the control systems for R/C airplanes, motor vehicles, or boats. The set's handheld remote controls the locomotive's direction and speed and also activates the various sounds.

Both LionChief sets include nearly everything needed to run the train within a few minutes of opening the box. The only item I had to supply was a trio of AAA batteries for each remote.

The Pennsylvania Flyer set features a USRA 0-8-0 steam locomotive, while the Area 51 set includes an Alco RS3 diesel. The train in each set consists of three plastic cars with plastic trucks and operating knuckle couplers. Of course, the wheels and axles are metal. Spare traction tires for the locomotives are included with each set, and the steam set also contains a bottle of smoke fluid.

An oval of O36 FasTrack that measures 40"x 60" overall is packaged with each set along with a 36-watt DC power supply that plugs into a wall outlet and connects to the track. The UL-listed compact power source is labeled as a switching mode power supply rated for an input of 100–240 VAC, 50 or 60 Hz, and 0.85 A. It supplies an output of 18 VDC with a maximum capacity of 2 A. Each LionChief locomotive runs on this DC power and can also run on any 3-rail O gauge layout that uses 18 VAC power.

Pennsylvania Flyer Freight Set

Because of the low price tag for an O gauge starter set, I expected a plastic boiler on the 0-8-0 with a separate weight inside. Wrong! Instead the boiler is die-cast with a rather pleasing amount of cast-in detail along with separate brass-colored pop-off valves and bell. Unlike many low-cost steam locomotives, the inside of the cab is surprisingly realistic with profuse details cast into the backhead, figures of the crew riding on seat boxes,

and even a separately applied back of the cab. Up front are the illuminated headlight and a self-centering dummy plastic coupler. Since the 0-8-0 is a switch engine, an operating front coupler would have been a nice addition to a right respectable model.

Riding on a plastic frame and located inside the boiler cavity are the DC can motor with a flywheel, LionChief electronics, and the smoke unit. All four driver axles turn in bronze bushings, which also pleased me. Side and main rods are stamped metal with a tab on the front of the main rod holding it to the stamped crosshead—a commonly seen assembly technique on low-cost steam engines. On one of the rear drivers is a traction tire. Underneath the frame, two center-rail pickup rollers are spaced 3" apart.

The tender also has a good amount of detail including the coal pile molded into its plastic body. Its plastic frame carries the speaker for the LionChief sound and rides on plastic trucks, so the whole unit is understandably light. At the front of the tender, electrical connections for the speaker are integrated into the plastic



drawbar. At the back is an operating plastic coupler along with a separate but nonoperating backup light.

My only criticism was a manufacturing goof where one end of an axle was not inserted into its journal on the side frame. Because the plastic side frames can be flexed slightly without damage, the problem was an easy fix for me. But I question whether a first-time owner of the set would attempt such a fix, or would something akin to the misassembled tender truck be a showstopper and a disappointment.

I was especially pleased with the set's traditional-sized cars. Separate metal ladders plus a full-perimeter metal handrail enhance the three-dome tank car, and the doors slide open on the boxcar. As to the caboose...well, it's the quintessential Pennsy N5c caboose that has ridden at the back of Lionel trains since the 1940s.

On our evaluation set, I found the decoration on the locomotive and cars to be as good as it comes. The paint was smooth and unblemished while the lettering, graphics, and pinstripes were crisp.

Area 51 Railroad Set

Without a doubt, the whimsical Area 51 Railroad set is in a class by itself. The train's artistic, multitone green and black color scheme with some white lettering and trim can be right at home on a layout depicting the desert southwest, such as the fantasy alien diorama John Ciccarelli created for this issue.

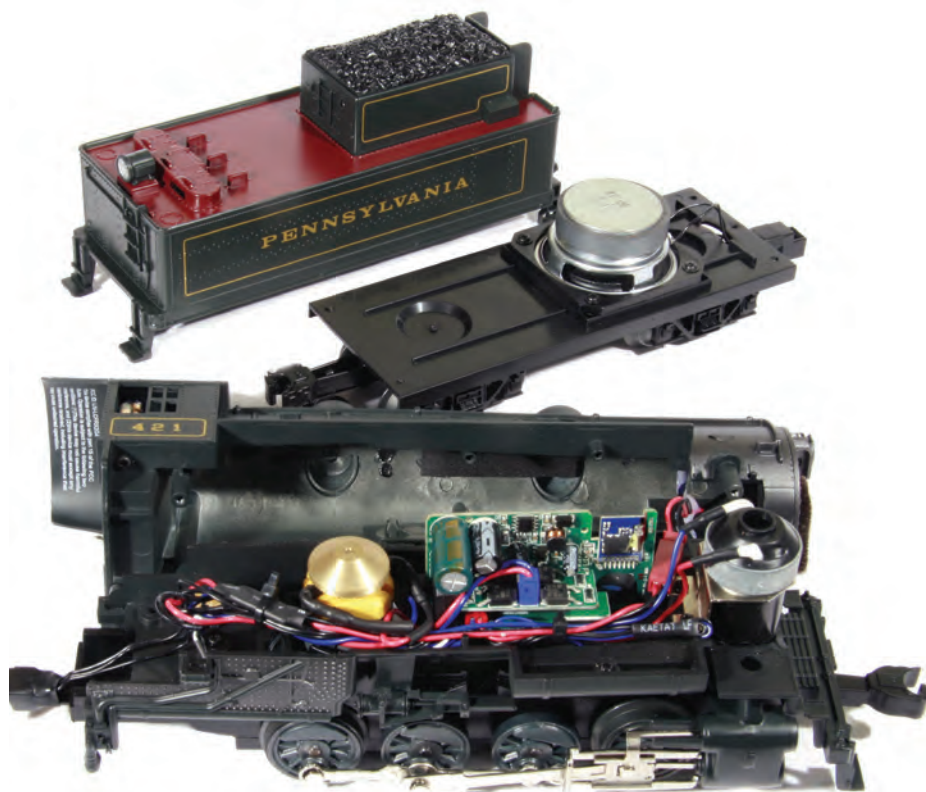
At the head of the train is the RS3 that is equipped with one motor, the LionChief

electronics, and the speaker. The body shell and handrails are molded plastic as are the frame, trucks, pilots, and operating couplers. Painted figures representing the crew are visible through the clear windows of the illuminated cab.

The front truck, which is under the short hood, is powered by a small can motor mounted transversely between the axles. Plastic spur gears transfer the

mechanical torque from the motor to the wheels. Two pickup rollers mounted 2-7/8" apart are on both powered and dummy trucks. For traction, two rubber tires are on the wheels of the powered truck, and a stack of metal weights is on the frame immediately above the truck.

The three cars are interesting with their fantasy lettering and decoration. For the youngsters, the waffle-side boxcar and





work caboose offer the traditional play value of carrying small objects such as plastic or wooden figures and other toys around the loop of track. Elastic tie-downs and a wire spreader hold the removable space capsules to their transport car, or Recovery Unit as it is marked. Decoration of the Area 51 set is novel to say the least.

LionChief Remote Control

As shown in the photo of the remotes, each one is visibly labeled according to its locomotive, such as the Pennsylvania 0-8-0 with cab number 421. Each remote features the prominent throttle knob shaped like a steam locomotive's driver wheel, which is turned either clockwise to move the engine forward at whatever speed the operator wants or counterclockwise for reverse. Above the throttle knob is a red LED power and speed indicator that illuminates when the power is on and flashes to visually report the speed setting of the throttle knob. The lower or higher the speed setting, the slower or faster the LED flashes. Buttons labeled with the appropriate icons actuate the bell, engine-specific miscellaneous sounds from the speaker, and steam whistle or air horn. An on-off switch is located on the upper right side of the case.

A remote only controls the type of locomotive included in its set—in our case the cab number 421 Pennsy 0-8-0 or the Area 51 RS3. Basically, the remote for the engine in one set, such as our Pennsylvania Flyer, will not run the engine for a different set, our Area 51 Railroad in this example.

However, if I had a second 421 Pennsy 0-8-0, the controller labeled as Pennsylvania 421 would work with it.

At Trackside

Track power and thereby the sounds from the locomotive came up immediately after I plugged the DC power supply into the wall outlet. Sounds from both locomotives emulated their steam or diesel prototypes sitting at a stop and ready to move out. I simply turned on the remote's power switch and rotated the throttle knob to run the train.

Running the trains on the FasTrack using the set's 18 VDC power supply was enjoyable. However, after the first 20 minutes of running the RS3, its sound system and motor cut on and off at random. I cleaned what appeared to be some type of coating from the rails, and afterwards the RS3 ran great.

I also let the trains stretch their legs, so to speak, on the O54 and O72 loops of Atlas track on the editorial Carpet Central Railroad with a ZW-L supplying 18 VAC. On the wide curves of the CCR, I ran both trains at nearly a wide-open throttle, but I chose not to let them go all out and run the risk of a ballistic launch off the curves.

Sounds from the LionChief system have a fixed volume and consequently cannot be adjusted up or down. Pressing the bell or whistle-horn button on the remote for the steam engine initiated the railroad warning sounds I expected. Additionally, pressing the button marked with a speaker icon activated one of several simulated two-way radio dialogs between the virtual engineer and dispatcher, as described in the owner's manual.

With the RS3 generating sounds of the diesel prime mover, my pressing the remote's bell or whistle-horn button resulted in the expected bell or air horn sounds. But pressing the speaker button initiated electronically generated howlings and wailings that were straight out of a vintage space alien B flick. These sounds were novel and rather cute, at least at the first





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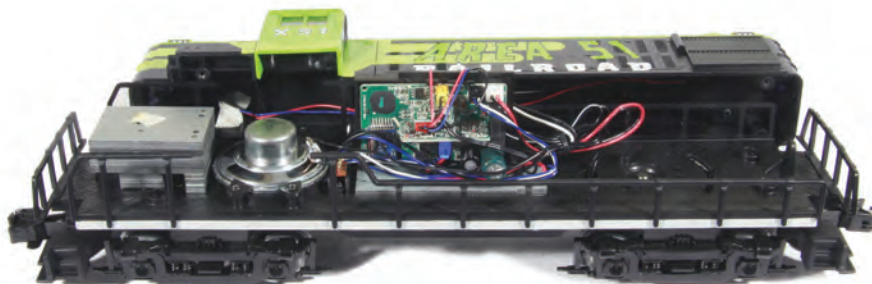


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encounter of the close kind. While the train is trundling around its loop of track wailing and howling, my pressing the bell or whistle-horn button kicked off additional alien sounds that overlaid simultaneously with the one already playing.

One of three different alien sound arrangements played sequentially with each press of the speaker button. With these plus the equally alien overlay sounds from the bell and whistle-horn buttons, I orchestrated a symphony, or cacophony depending on the point of view, of weird alien sounds that proved to be a bunch of fun, at least for me. I can't predict how a casual listener, such as my next door neighbor, might have reacted to them...well actually, I can.

At the End of the Run

The LionChief sets are definitely targeted for the entry-level O gauge train market. Should the owner of a set want to move deeper into the hobby with the LionChief train as the starting point, Lionel also offers a 3-car expansion pack for the Pennsylvania Flyer set and a single-car expansion for the Area 51 set. To expand the layout, there are add-on track packs and individual pieces of FasTrack. Additionally, Lionel offers a range of locomotives in its new LionChief Plus line as well as the company's full range of traditional size or even scale rolling stock.

If a new O gauge railroading hobbyist gets additional LionChief sets or LionChief Plus locomotives over a period of time, obviously there will be several remotes on or near the train table. To be candid, I don't see where a separate remote for each locomotive would be a problem, especially if the number is small such as two or three. The LionChief system could prove to be a low-cost remote control alternative for a new and aspiring O gauge railroader whose focus and purchases are more toward creating a scenic layout rather than acquiring an expensive command set and command-equipped locomotives. 

6-30233 Pennsylvania Flyer Remote O Set

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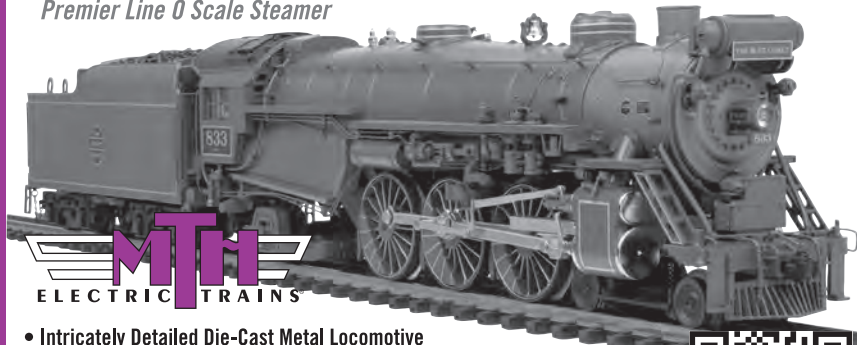
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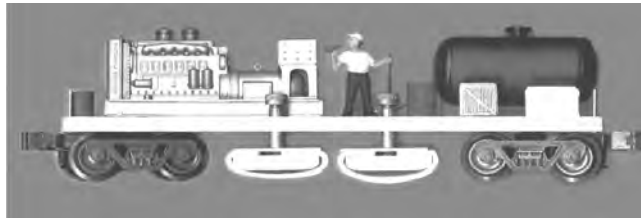
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Standing trackside is a crewman as the New York Central RS3 No. 8225 slows on its approach to the yard area.

Finding the Realism Threshold

Article by Greg Annett Photos by Norm Charbonneau

Reflecting back to when I was young, I was fascinated with the train tracks running through the town where we lived. My parents would take me where the railroad passed local factories, and I was intrigued with what I saw. About that same time, I got an old postwar Lionel set that had belonged to my older brothers and had been stored away.

As a teen in the 1970s, I built HO layouts to reproduce the railroads I typically saw, but I eventually became attracted to O gauge because the trains aren't as fussy about the rail joints and they really hold onto the track. So in 2006 I built a 4'x6' portable layout for that family heirloom Lionel postwar train that had been passed down to me. After I got it running, I realized that watching it go around in circles wasn't enough.

Soon thereafter, I stopped by a local train store and ended up going home with a set of MTH New York Central F units. I found I didn't like the look of scale-size engines mixed with my older postwar O27 cars. That's when I decided to go with O scale.

My current layout evolved into what it is today because I wanted to model an urban environment you might see in a typical town. I bought a couple of MTH buildings and started creating the town. I liked those buildings because they could be weathered to look even better. I didn't have time to build kits and I wanted to get this town going. I was being careful to realistically model just one road name, the New York Central. I dropped by the hobby shop twice a week buying buildings. I bought everything I wanted or felt I needed and I

really had a great time arranging those structures on the layout.

I noticed the train store also had some nice Pennsylvania Railroad engines in stock that I admired every time I visited, but I couldn't figure out how to incorporate them into my New York Central Railroad. Then the idea hit me to model my version of New Jersey since both railroads were all around that area years ago. That plan justified my purchase of Pennsy power.

I was happy for a while trying to run a realistic railroad by keeping it limited to NYC and Pennsy, but I weakened one day and bought a camelback engine and some Jersey Central passenger cars for it to pull. Over time I saw some guys just running anything they cared to. That appealed to me, so I broke away from trying to restrict



NYC Mikado No. 5136 rolls through a factory area.



Lee Bakery displays a finely detailed interior.

my layout to New Jersey and just modeled this layout as a typical town. I could run whatever roads I cared to.

Now I just put on the road engine I want and add the proper corresponding caboose. I have to do at least that much to keep it realistic. I now own an SD70M from Lionel and run it with a flashing rear-end device on modern rolling stock. This train from the future traveling through a layout set in the early 1950s works for me. So much for that conventional definition of realism!

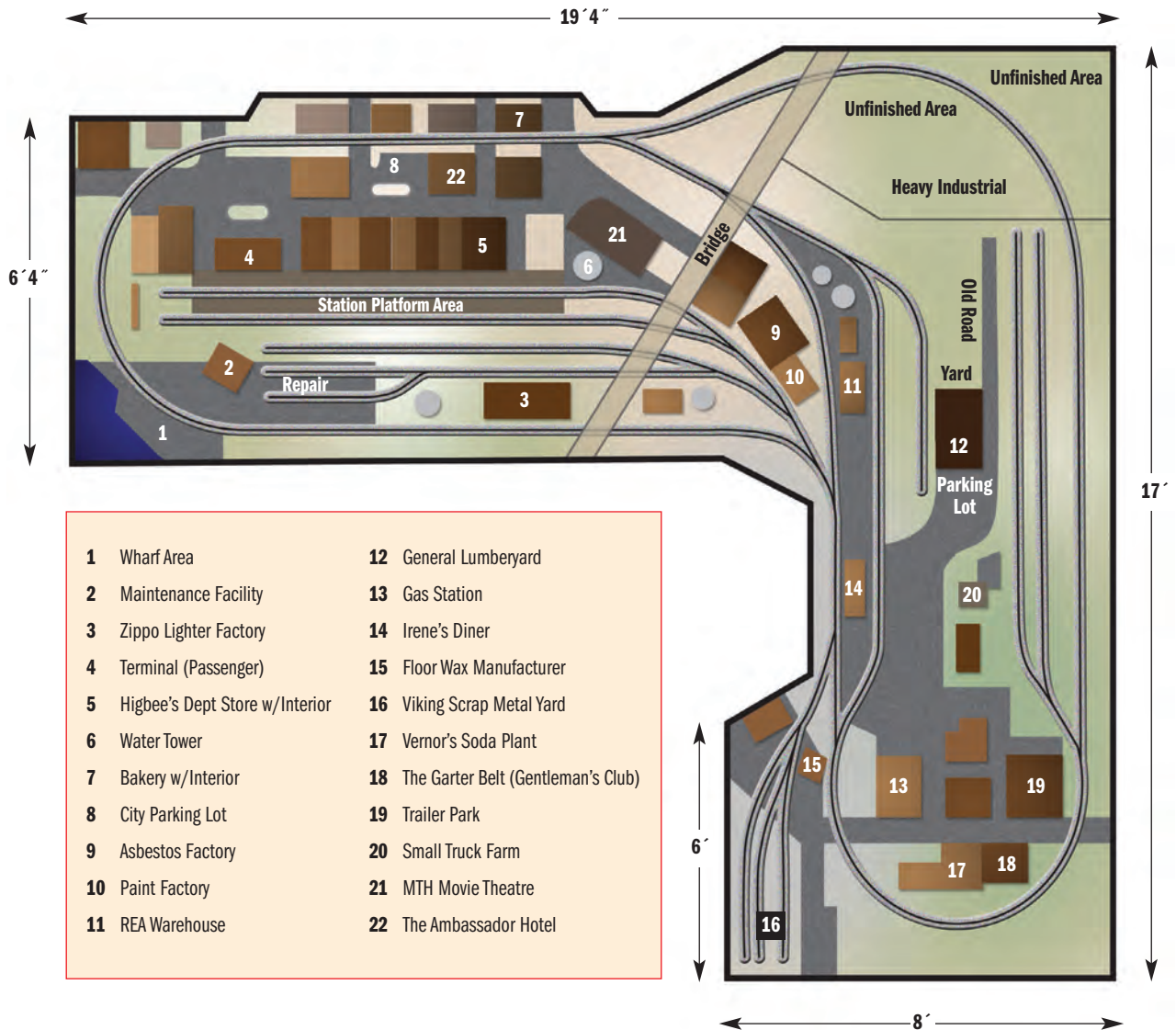
When I placed those first MTH buildings, I just had an olive-painted layout board with a shiny plastic postwar look. Then I needed a more realistic and convincing appearance with a look typical of what you would probably see during the late 1940s and early 1950s. I was inspired by a few layouts I read about in *OGR* at the time. Some hobbyists were doing alleys and streets with different shades of gray. I wanted dirt on my streets and litter in the back alleys. I wanted tipped over garbage cans and old asphalt with potholes and cracks. I wanted a slum area where you could find some pretty unsavory people.



A Birney trolley winds its way through the downtown area.



Viking Scrap Metal is served by several sidings.





Once their shift is complete, the crew of this Jersey Central camelback will be downing a few cool ones at Welsh Tavern.



In a scene straight out of the 1950s in America's heartland, establishments like Irene's diner could be found in most towns and cities. Isaly's dairy was a familiar presence in the area stretching from Pennsylvania to Iowa.

I would eventually weather everything. I think it's a good idea to move around the layout with weathering and aging so you don't try to complete one full area at a time. It's an evolutionary process that will unfold somewhat naturally if you just keep at it. I recommend weathering in levels, starting

out with what is comfortable for you.

My track plan evolved over time starting with a loop within a loop. I wanted to see multiple trains running at once. However, with my small layout, that was not very successful. I now have an L-shaped loop with a single main line and the ability

to turn a train around without having to physically pick it up. I have a passenger terminal with some sidings where passengers board cars bound for several different destinations. A few sidings provide switching opportunities, but I mainly just like to see the trains run.



New York Central VO1000 No. 9306, fresh from the shops, arrives to supplement the switching roster.



Several months later, the weathered No. 9306 shows the effects of many days of hard labor.

My layout is fitted with MTH RealTrax. The main line has O54 diameter curves as a minimum, with some O42 curves used on the sidings. To give the track a more realistic appearance, I sprayed it with Polly Scale SP Lark Dark Gray on most areas, and in places where I wanted

more of a cinders and oil look, I used Engine Black. Painting was accomplished with an airbrush, thinning the paint about 50 percent.

My rolling stock consists of MTH, Lionel, K-line, Weaver, and Atlas cars. They run behind Lionel and MTH

engines that receive their power from an MTH Z-4000 transformer.

Creating the downtown area didn't happen in one step. I tried different things and experimented with different groupings of buildings—rearranging and reexamining the combination of structures I



A Pennsy passenger train glides slowly through the downtown area.



Passenger service is still an important part of this 1950s operation, and the rolling stock is kept clean and properly maintained.

had sitting in front of me on the layout. A method I sometimes used was to get an old box approximately the size of a building that I was considering buying and position it on the layout in various places, thereby creating a mockup of a building to see how it looked.

The buildings I use are typical of any big town; however, I use some specific names from the Michigan area. Vernors soda pop, for example, appears on one building, and a PCC trolley sports Woodward on the destination sign. Even the milkman's delivery is a Detroit-based dairy from that time period. In the downtown business district, I even have a department store with a completed interior called Higbee's, named for and modeled after the Cleveland store in the movie *A Christmas Story*. My friend Linda finished the interior of that building complete with elevator and attendant in the back. It even has Ralphie in the toy section looking at the Red Ryder BB gun.



Grandma, Grandpa, and Fido have a 24/7 trackside view of railroading. The granddaughter on her red tricycle can also enjoy the action.



Scenes within a scene at the Paradise Park have many small details that require more than a passing glance.



An old truck farm still operates at the edge of town.

Linda also completed the interior of a bakery, and it includes a counter, shelves with cakes, and a backroom with ovens that include bread baking inside.

Adjacent to the maintenance shop area is a wharf with a Lionel tug boat, a Berkshire Valley gas pump, and a number of Arttista figures, which I feel are the most realistic on the market. I also use a lot of Miller Engineering signs to give everything that old town look.

I eventually want to install some kind of sound system for sirens and background noise typical of a big town. There is a long bridge that runs across the town, which recently inspired me to name the town Bridgevue.

One area remains at the edge of town where an old truck farm still operates even though urban growth is encroaching on it. Some things I created on my own such as Viking Scrap Metal, a metal scrap yard I




The Shark is coming!

made by gluing a variety of scrap plastic pieces together. Around the scrap yard I built my own fence made from window screen, nails, and Plastruct rod material. The sign was made with the help of my computer.

My structures are ready-built from Lionel, MTH, Weaver, and the relatively new and nicely detailed Woodland Scenics structure series. Sometime in the future, I plan to start replacing some of the store-bought buildings with my own scratchbuilt stuff. I have already added a lot of extra details to my buildings, especially the rooftops. Rooftop water tanks are HO scale. I have also added some air conditioning units and created ductwork from sheet styrene for the MTH movie theater roof. The Ambassador Hotel is made up of several MTH buildings stacked on top of one another with some HO building portions added to create a skyscraper look.

I still have to finish interiors and storefront signs on a few buildings in downtown. I plan to photograph and build my own signs. Most stores will have different signs and interiors than what they originally came with.

The back corner of the layout is still not finished and is undergoing some changes started this past winter. That section will have a heavy industrial look to it when it is complete. Like most of my fellow hobbyists, I am always making changes. 



An SD70M diesel like this Lionel Legacy model was not even dreamed of in the era I model, but I'm a member of the model-what-you-want school.



The setting sun strikes the city's skyline.



About the Author

Greg Annett lives 30 miles west of Detroit where he also works for a local power company. Prior to building his current layout, he had some experience with acrylic and oil painting on canvas, which has been helpful in creating model railroad scenes since a layout really is just one big composition. Recently he has taken a few breaks from modeling long enough to attend a meet or two with a newly formed group called The Thursday Bunch on the west side of Detroit. It's a mixed group of 3-rail and 2-rail O gauge modelers along with HO, G, and N scale railroaders.



PRR G5 No. 5736 heads home for a well-deserved rest after a full day of labor.



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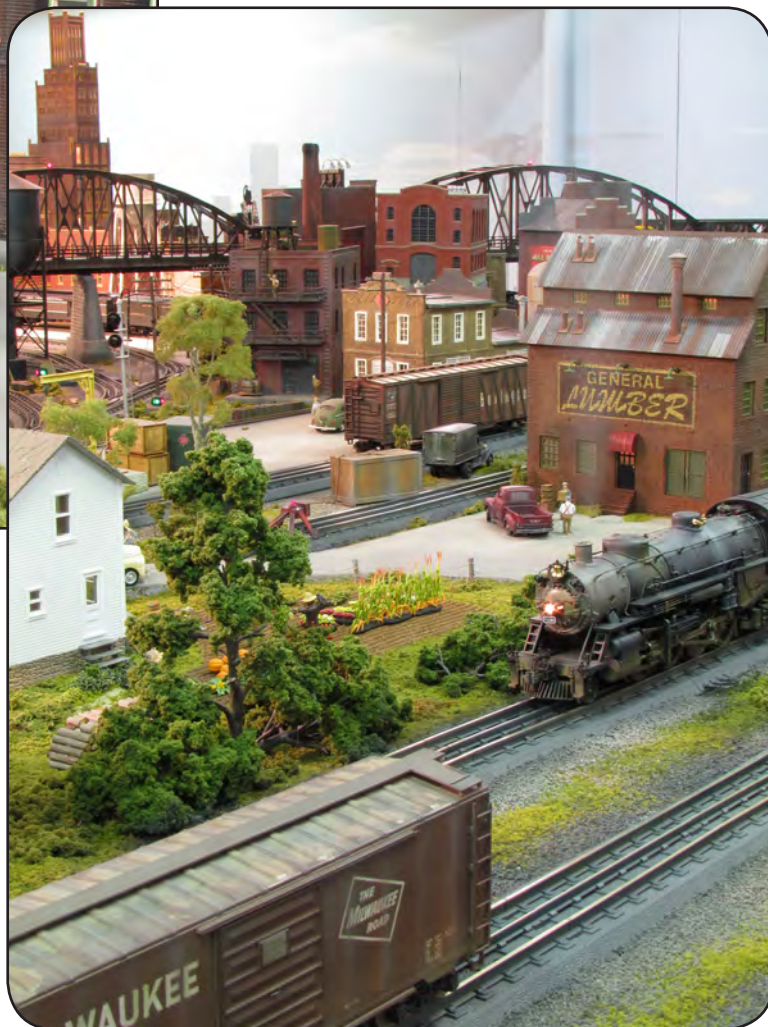




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OGR Digital Library *VIDEO!*

Here are two short video clips from Greg Arnett's O-gauge layout!



Memories Kept Alive in O Gauge

Article and Photos by Mike Bennette

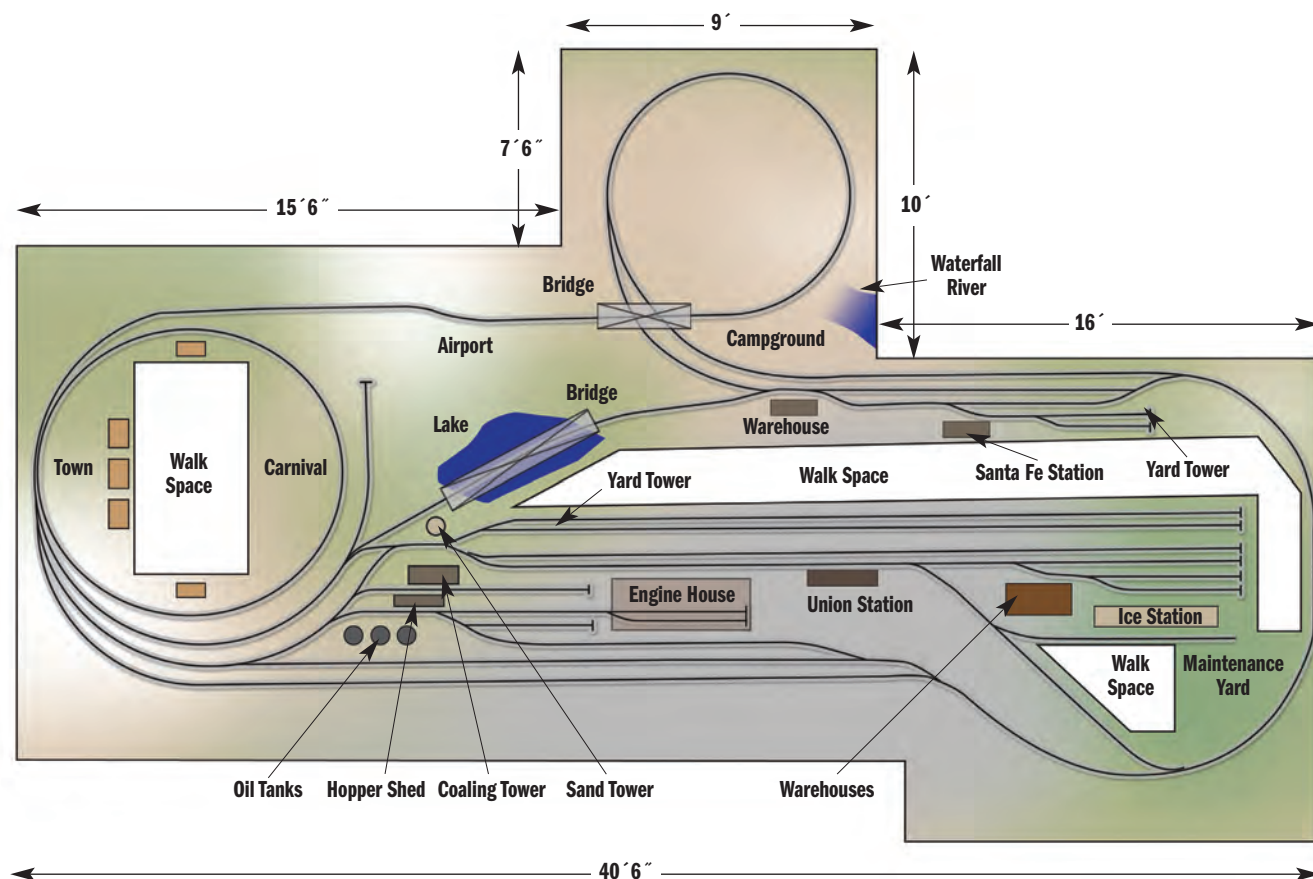


An A-B-B-A consist of F3 units in UP livery passes over a competing streamliner equipped with Alco PA units and adorned in Santa Fe warbonnet colors.

Building an O gauge layout has been a dream of mine ever since I started collecting trains at the age of ten. This interest was sparked by my family's vacation train travels on the Santa Fe Super Chief and the Union Pacific City of Los Angeles trains from Los Angeles to Chicago and then on to Massachusetts back in the early 1950s.

Back then, I started with Lionel O gauge. Over the years, I have acquired a collection of MTH Proto-Sound 2.0 and 3.0 motive power and rolling stock that I run and thoroughly enjoy. I changed to MTH due to the authentic sounds and the overall quality and scale proportions of the models.

Today my layout includes O gauge models of both of the Santa Fe and Union Pacific trains I rode plus all of the appropriate cars to complete each consist. I named my layout the Eastern Washington Pacific Railroad for the part of Washington I moved to after retirement and where I currently live. The layout incorporates my vision of the region's forests, lakes, campgrounds, and small towns. It is somewhat unique in that it is a diorama of areas and specific places I know and like in real life. Scenes along the line tend to flow from one diorama into another. My layout is a



A passenger train headed by Alco PA units in Santa Fe colors is idling at Santa Fe Union Station awaiting passenger boarding and clearance to depart.

period piece with the buildings, cars, and trains from around the early 1950s when passenger rail service was still a preferred way to travel.

My layout started with the basement being professionally completed by a contractor to finish the room with walls, lighting, and flooring. I built the benchwork next, which basically consists of 2x6 and 4x4 legs, a 3/4" plywood platform, and a top layer of 1/4" Homasote. The benchwork is 54" high for easy access beneath it for the wiring and other electrical components. A short rolling stool fits under the layout nicely and allows for smooth and comfortable movement under the whole layout. Seated on this stool, I find it easy to look up and trace the wiring or complete any additional wiring and connections that may be needed for new accessories and other additions.



An imposing and powerful Union Pacific DDX40 hauls freight across a bridge that spans the lake.



T-34 and P51 aircraft are preparing to taxi for takeoff at the airport while UP E8s and Santa Fe F3s guide their trains along the main lines.

The UP train exiting the tunnel is about to enter the 3 percent grade that starts adjacent to the carnival site.

The entire layout can be viewed and accessed from various cutouts and open areas that I included in the initial design. Because of the height of the benchwork, the layout is viewed at eye level for me and most of my family and visitors. This provides a more realistic trackside view. Also, while I was still in the process of building major portions of the layout, the overall height made it unnecessary to bend over to place, build, or work on anything. It took about four months to complete the layout to the stage where serious work on top could begin. A total of 30 recessed lights operating on a dimmer system were incorporated into the ceiling, which made working on and viewing the layout easier.





Here's the view as you enter the train room. The 3 percent grade visible at lower center is bracketed by MTH buildings on the left and the Union Station yard entrance on the right.



The town and carnival at one end of the layout are accessible via the cutout space.



This Union Pacific animated maintenance yard was built by Greg Balmas of Action Animations.

The track, switches, and roadbed listed below were all from Ross Custom Switches, and the ballast was obtained from Brennan's Model Railroading.

- O88 curves: 4
- O96 curves: 27
- O128 curves: 44
- 4-way switch: 1
- O80 switches: 4
- O96 switches: 8
- O120/O96 curve switches: 3
- No. 100/101 switches: 9
- Total feet of track: 700

I purchase most of my train supplies from Eastside Trains and Side Track Hobbies.

The layout is powered with an MTH Z-4000 transformer and a TIU. Accessories are powered by a Lionel ZW, three 1.8-amp Lionel accessory transformers, and a few 120-volt accessory power supplies.

Scenery was made from cardboard strips, plaster wrap, and insulating foam spray to create the mountains and various terrain features. Silicone forms were used to create plaster rocks. The layout



Definitely a handsome trio! A UP DDX40 waits patiently at the right while Santa Fe PAs and F units prepare to depart Union Station yard.



A Union Pacific F3 from MTH heads its consist through the mountain gorge.



These views show platform and passenger activity around the Santa Fe Super Chief as it prepares to depart Union Station.

mostly features MTH buildings, all of which have been painted and weathered. A few buildings are Atlas kits. The airport and Union Pacific supply yard were built by Greg Balmas of Action Animation based on a design diagram I submitted to him. The water tower, fuel tower, and pump house were built by Joseph Fauty of Model Structures for Model Railroads. Trees are a combination of 730 pine trees I made and 100 miscellaneous other trees from Woodland Scenics.

The layout was recently updated with suggestions from friends Dave Thomasson and Bob Pike, both instrumental in helping with the layout's initial design. They


subsequently inspired me to add a second train station, which I named Santa Fe Union Station. Having a second stop on the layout enhanced operations.

Also added to the layout was a small yard with a yard tower and a small warehouse. The new yard has five switches and sidings comprising approximately 25' of track. The sidings provided additional storage space for rolling stock.

Dave also created the scenic backdrop painting on the walls. Bob along with John Shook helped with designing a functional and operating track plan. All of these friends have operating O gauge 3-rail layouts of their own and help each other.

The layout was originally designed to accommodate just one train running at a time, which was simply a personal preference. Though I do not generally operate multiple trains at any one time, the layout will easily accommodate three trains running simultaneously due to the number of long sidings available. To me, running one train from station to station and back again for the return trip is the most realistic. Though passenger trains are my favorites, I also operate freight trains that must give way to the passenger trains.

I recently received a new MTH 4-6-6-4 Union Pacific Challenger that has created a few challenges of its own due to its size, length, and the fact that it is an articulated engine. The type of problems this engine created involved the mountains with the necessary clearances through and around them. So the mountains will have to be modified and reshaped to accommodate the size and articulating movement of this locomotive in areas where the scenery is close to the track.

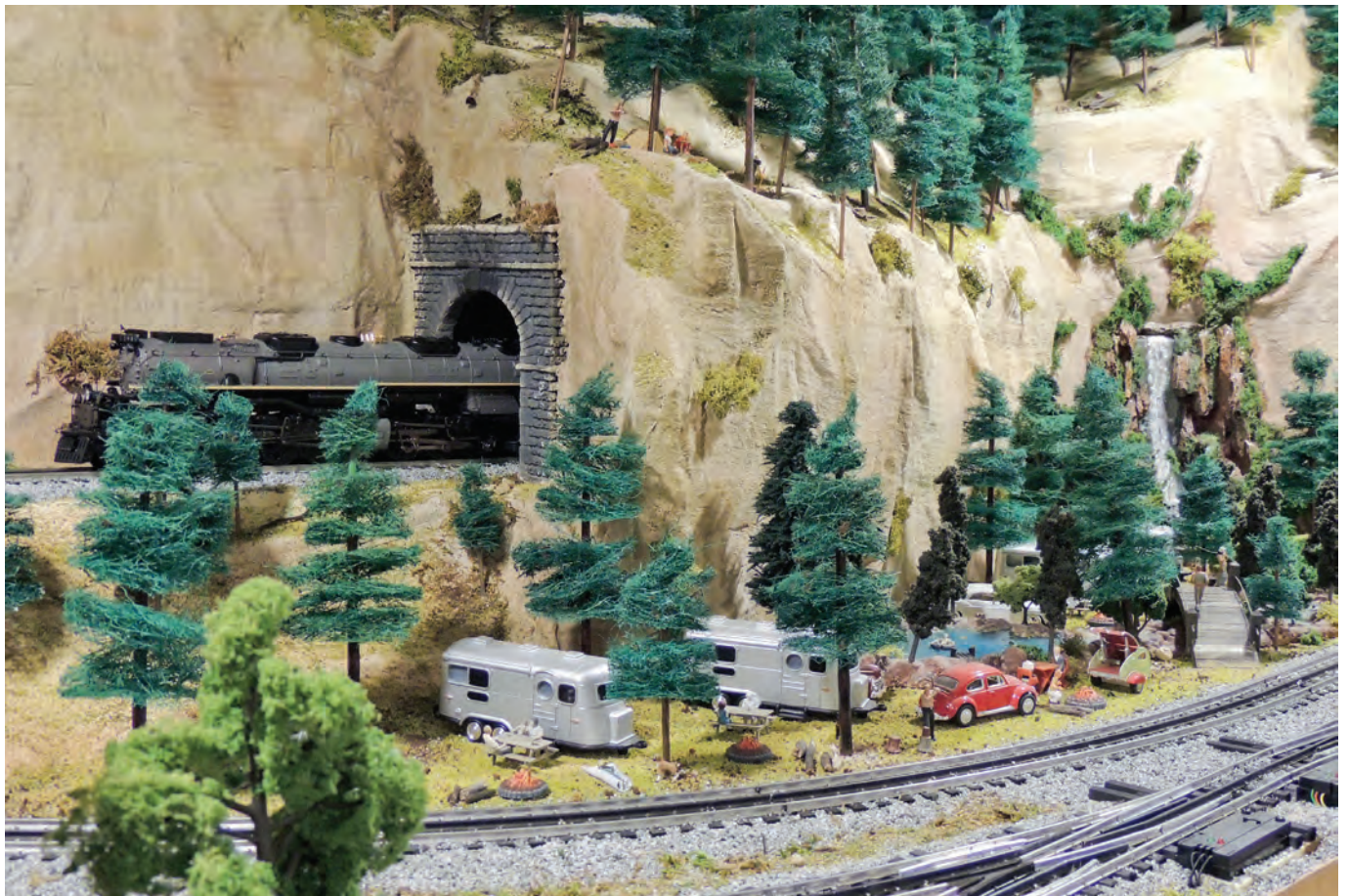
I already have several future projects in the planning stage. A mountain and tunnel will be added near the new Santa Fe Union Station along with additional lighting effects to simulate lightning and storms. I also plan to hide an existing window with a canvas painting of a landscape to blend into the existing scenery. There will always be future projects to tackle and enjoy, but that's what retirement is all about. 



A Santa Fe V01000 waits on the siding for an approaching train.



This UP freight train is entering Union Station yard through the mountain gorge. The caboose is an MTH model.



A UP Challenger exits the tunnel as it heads toward Union Station. The campground, river, and waterfall are below and to the right.



A UP DDX40 departs Union Station yard. The engine house in the background was built from an Atlas kit.



About the Author

Mike Bennette is a retired law enforcement officer who served with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. After retirement, he moved to the state of Washington to bring his dream of an O gauge layout to reality. When not in his basement working on the layout, he can likely be found camping on weekends in the family RV with Jackie, his wife, and their golden retriever, Britany. Other times you will find him in the family room watching sports events or car auctions.



The line's new UP Challenger, an MTH model with Proto-Sound 3.0, crosses over the lake. The carnival is in progress in the background.



Out of This World Diorama

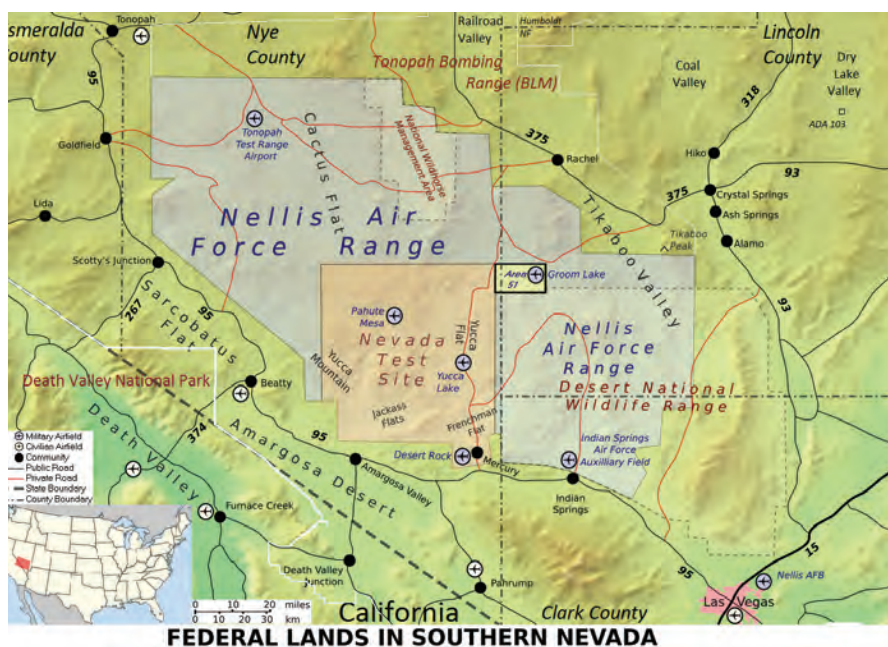
Article and Photos by John Ciccarelli

I've always said this hobby of ours is large enough to accommodate all types of modelers. Even within our O gauge segment, there is room enough for scale modelers, hi-railers, toy and tinplate collectors and operators, and even those of the fantasy and whimsical persuasion. This article leans toward the whimsical side of the O gauge hobby, but everyone is welcome to come along on our little trip out into the American desert southwest to a place called Area 51.

When I got the call from Ed Boyle to do a little project for *OGR*, I was, as always, ready and eager to consider whatever he had in mind. Well, I have to say that when I heard this particular project was going to involve aliens and flying saucers, I was a

little unsure. But when he explained that he needed me to build a diorama depicting the desert southwest, I was confident I could deliver.

This diorama revolves around the Lionel Area 51 set painted in an "authentic" bright green and black Area 51 color scheme. This set is reviewed by George Brown in this issue. Ed thought it might be a hoot to show how this engine and its consist might look in a scenario that depicted a typical close encounter of the 3-rail O gauge kind (Photo 1). So climb aboard as we travel to one of this country's famous yet little-understood places to see if we can find out what really goes on out there in that isolated and very secretive desert location.



A Little Background

For those who may not know, Area 51 is located in a remote part of southwestern Nevada (see the satellite photo and the map). For over six decades, it has been used as a testing ground for experimental aircraft and weapons systems. The CIA developed the high-flying U-2 and the triple sonic A-12 reconnaissance planes there in the 1950s and 1960s. In later years, the U.S. Air Force tested its famous SR-71 spy plane and the F-117 stealth fighter at the site. The military also used Area 51 to quietly evaluate foreign aircraft designs. However, the intense security and secrecy surrounding the site gave rise to persistent rumors that some of the vehicles being put through their paces at Area 51 literally came from out of this world.

Despite the fact the government has finally acknowledged the existence of Area 51, conspiracy theorists are convinced it is the prime location for UFO sightings, alien bodies, and extraterrestrial technology. Only those who have access to Area 51 know for sure.

Construction and Basic Scenery

Construction of my diorama began with a 2' x 4' sheet of 3/8" plywood glued and screwed to 1" x 2" supports around the perimeter (Photo 2). Lionel FasTrack was then attached with wood screws. To help keep the weight down, basic landforms were made by stuffing heavy brown paper shapes, stapled to the base, with crumpled newspaper (Photo 3). Ground cover was added by applying a couple of thick coats of sand-colored latex paint and sprinkling





multicolored fine and coarse ballast on the wet paint (Photo 4). After drying overnight, the excess ballast was vacuumed up. Then rocks, underbrush, and other debris were added using Walther's Goo and carpenter's wood glue.

This World and Other-Worldly Details

Scenic details for the desert landscape were obtained from Scenic Express and included saguaro cacti, tumbleweeds, and prickly pear cacti (Photo 5). Desert sand, rocks, and dead-wood were from Woodland Scenics as was the lichen. The backdrop was provided by Backdrop Junction and was glued to a piece of luan plywood using Loctite spray adhesive (Photo 6).

The Busch UFO, Preiser cows, and alien figures are all available from Scenic Express. I happened to have a small shed from K-Line and a few scratchbuilt storage tanks available, so I



added those for more scenic interest (Photo 7).

The alien spacecraft is a fun little kit. It can be put together in about an hour. The instructions are mostly in German, so you will have to rely on the pictures if you are not fluent in that language. I figure if I could do it, you can do it, too. Once assembled, the spacecraft can be connected to a transformer to activate blinking lights. The flying saucer also comes with its own aliens and robot, but they look too small for O gauge.

Using the Lionel LionChief remote, several other-worldly sound effects can be activated.

What's Happening

As you can see, the startled RS3's engineer has stopped his train dead in its tracks after sighting a UFO and its occupants (Photo 8). The



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aliens seem to be very curious about the rather large, multicolored four-legged earthlings that they have encountered. So much so, they have decided to beam one of the bovines up to their spacecraft for a more in-depth investigation.

For my purposes, I left the backdrop detached so I could photograph the diorama from different angles and under various lighting conditions. Subscribers to the *OGR* Digital Edition can click on a link to view a short video by Rich Melvin that will let you see and hear what the spacecraft and engine are capable of.

Beam Me Up

The scene for the beam-me-up photo was created by suspending the spacecraft from the ceiling with thread, attaching a small amount of clear plastic wrap to the spacecraft's underside, and anchoring the wrap to the module with the bovine (Photo 9). During the time-exposure photo, a flashlight beam was aimed at and waved up and down along the plastic wrap "beam."

More Possibilities

As I was doing this project, it occurred to me this diorama could be the starting point of a much larger and more encompassing layout. If you were so inclined, you could make this scene a part of a larger military base layout that could include Quonset huts, barracks, ammo dumps, and other structures seen on army or air force bases. Military trains, accessories, and vehicles are available as are figures and other details. This type of layout could open up all kinds of modeling opportunities and scenic possibilities in addition to switching and operating scenarios. A desert landscape provides a whole host of possibilities in terms of mountains, foothills, dry riverbeds, dilapidated shacks, and even the skeletons of unfortunate animals. Obsolete and abandoned military equipment would also make for interesting scenic elements.

I hope you have enjoyed this little flight of fantasy. As you can see, a little whimsy can turn into a whole lot of fun—at least it did for me. Thanks for the call, Ed! 🤖



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*VIDEO of John Ciccarelli's
Area 51 Diorama*

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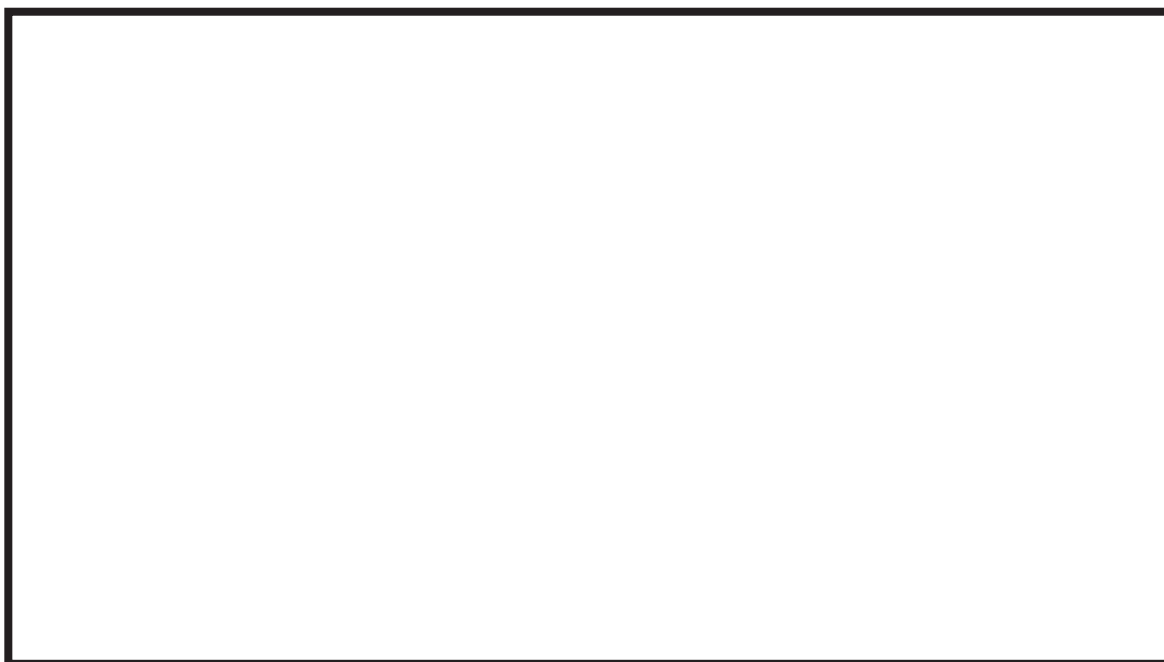
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Check out the fantastic **SOUNDS** in the Lionel Area 51 set!



Creative Collaboration at Work

Article by Jim Barrett Photos by Clarke Dunham and Jim Barrett



This Hell Gate Bridge exhibit is from Dunham Studios.

Most of us can reflect back into our past and come up with the day or occasion when the toy train or model railroading bug bit us. It may have been sparked by a gift we received or a place we visited, but a memory was formed way back then that has stayed with us over the years.

For Clarke Dunham, the founder of Dunham Studios and one of today's professional layout builders, that magic moment happened when he was very young. His grandparents took him to New York City to see the 1939 World's Fair, which happened to include a fascinating O gauge railroad display called Railroads at

Work. According to the event's brochure, the display consisted of more than 3,800' of O gauge track, 1,000 miniature buildings, 6,000 trees, 7,000 gallons of water, and 300,000' of wire.

"What impressed me most were all those wonderful high bridges," Clarke recalls. "Also I was impressed with all the small details embedded in the layout. They taught me how to handle the space on layouts after there was no more room for trains. These details capture the imagination of people after they have looked at all the train action and keep them interested."

Clarke's first hands-on involvement with toy trains came via



The Adirondack Mountains are the home of Clarke, Barbara, and Dunham Studios.

some wind-up Dorfan trains in the 1941–42 period given to him by a soldier who was also a family friend. But interest in trains didn't stick with Clarke at that time. Then came what he refers to as real trains, meaning some good old American Flyer electric trains.

In 1953 Clarke needed a date for the junior prom, and his mother introduced him to Barbara. Two years later they were married and moved into an apartment. There wasn't much room for trains, but Clarke stayed involved by collecting and building HO kits.

Destined to be involved in theater, Clarke at age 19 apprenticed at the Valley Forge Music Fair. When the set designer got fired, Clarke was hired on the spot to finish the set, thus beginning a career of artistic design and construction, although not necessarily with trains at the start.

Clarke designed sets from 1963 to 1967 for over 50 productions at the Bucks County Playhouse in Pennsylvania, which led to his first Broadway and off-Broadway engagements. That experience broadened his design career, and he eventually received two Tony nominations and a dozen other awards or nominations for his work on Broadway and in theater.

Barbara and Clarke now live in upstate New York in Pottersville. It's not the Pottersville of the *It's a Wonderful Life* movie with Jimmy Stewart, but a simple



Clarke and Barbara are a happy couple.

and more beautiful Pottersville than the one George Bailey saw. This Pottersville is located in the Adirondack Mountains amidst some of America's most alluring scenery.

Their home is a rambling, rustic log house built in 1853, which had once been a commercial vacation retreat. Existing structures on the site were incorporated

with new construction to provide a sprawling complex of 7,000 square feet, housing the couple as well as Dunham Studios.

In 1985 following his second Tony nomination, Clarke was approached by the advertising agency for Citibank. "The agency wanted to do something to improve the bank's public image, and its idea was to create a huge model railroad



The main erecting hall is 32' high and able to accommodate even the tallest public exhibits.



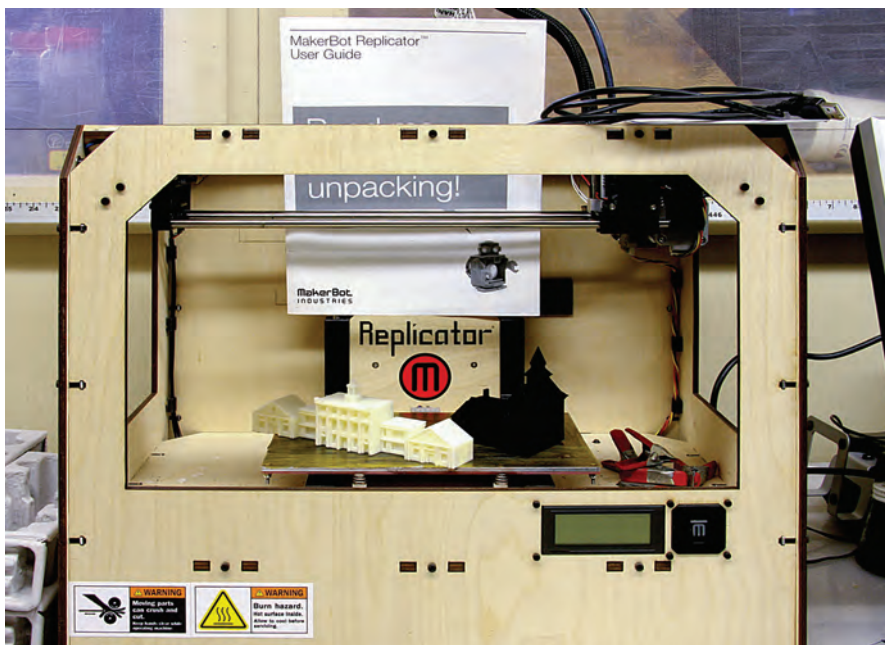
All sorts of power tools can be found in the carpentry shop.

exhibit for the upcoming Christmas holiday season," Clarke explains. "Taking on this project caused a change in direction that we would follow to the present day."

Two years later, the project resulted in the notable Citibank Station exhibition layout, and Clarke's career was changed forever. He continues, "The agency expected to draw 30,000 visitors, but in 1987 it drew 140,000, then 180,000 in 1988, and finally 240,000 in the third year. It was a huge success." The Citibank project became so all-consuming that Clarke's work in theater display production waned, and the new direction in Dunham Studios became his main source of income by default.



Another tool in the Dunham Studios computer-age arsenal is this 4' x 8' computer-driven CNC router.



This state-of-the-art 3-D printer is a valuable tool in the layout design and construction process.

"When Citibank tired of the idea of engaging with the public, it dropped the Citibank Station exhibit in 1990," Clarke states. "A Dunham Studios magazine ad that year attracted numerous requests for our layout design and construction services. In the meantime we took the Citibank Station exhibit, which became the property of Dunham Studios, to Boston and then to Williamsburg, Virginia, where it resided for seven years along with our newly designed Hell Gate Bridge exhibit."

In August 1992 Clarke received a phone call from World Trade Center officials in New York City seeking a holiday train display. Knowing that eight weeks was hardly enough time to create another world-class public exhibit, Clarke repurposed an original Barnum Museum exhibit from 1990 and with it the leftover NYC subway scene from the 1987 Citibank Station exhibit. With those raw materials, he created the Twin Towers Express exhibit. Just two weeks after the exhibit closed for the 1990 holiday season, the

Twin Towers were rocked by the first terrorist bomb attack. The Twin Towers Express exhibit was to be no more. It was moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where it became the Pennsylvania Station exhibit in association with Dallee Electronics.

Then Clarke received another call from executives at Citibank inviting him to bring the Citibank Station exhibit back for an encore engagement. The only problem was the original Citibank Station exhibit was installed in Williamsburg and therefore unavailable. Undaunted, Clarke revived and revised the Pennsylvania Station exhibit, returning it to its distinctive three-bladed-propeller configuration and giving it the Citibank signature including the Victorian tower and station roof along with a complete day-to-night lighting system. Named The Station at Citibank Center, this recycled exhibit was delivered in time for the 1996 holiday season. Each main line on the exhibit was 120' long. Operation began with 14 trains and advanced to the point of including 32 trains in 2008 along with many other improvements added over the intervening years.

"In 2008 Citibank, now Citigroup, again apparently tired of providing a public attraction," Clarke says. "As a result, we had a surfeit of exhibits in storage, enough to fill several thousand square feet of space. Friends began suggesting that the end result might be a huge roadside attraction similar to but more modern than the well-known Roadside America. I told them fine, but show me the money."

In 2010 someone actually did show Clarke the money. Thus was born Railroads on Parade. Nearly two years in the making at Dunham Studios, Railroads on Parade is in its fourth season with six model railroad exhibits in scales ranging from Z to HO to O. "We've even got Jackie Gleason's famous Celebrity Cable Car, a miniature cable car that TWA built around a golf cart to carry celebrities at JFK airport," Clarke relates. "The beauty of Railroads on Parade is that within its 5,000 square feet of floor space are 25 years of our layout creations, which have been viewed by over five million people or seven million if you count all of our other public and museum displays."

After creating Railroads on Parade, Clarke became interested in developing a



Step 1: Angela Trotta Thomas's preliminary sketch



Step 2: The painting with no buildings



Step 3: The final painted background

joint project with Angela Trotta Thomas, the painter of toy train dreams featured in Run 270. Clarke met Angela years earlier during a visit to Dick Kughn's Carail museum in Detroit. Dick had retained Clarke to design four huge layouts for Carail. Angela and Bob, her husband, were receptive to Clarke's idea of a collaborative effort with Dunham Studios. She would do what she does best, which is to create her paintings, and Clarke with Fletcher Conlon, his resident computer guru, would re-create layouts in 3-D based on Angela's paintings. For example, a painting by Angela became the profile backdrop surrounding a layout based on her scene. This layout was rendered in 3-D computer files and printed on a 3-D MakerBot printer. Clarke tells us, "We are showing the completed layout at the April 2014 TCA York meet, and custom versions by subscription will be delivered before Christmas 2014."

Reflecting on today's business realities, Clarke elaborates, "As museum funding



Step 4: Conceptual drawing of the completed layout



Roy Baker prepares a mold master created from a portion of an OGR Ameri-Towne Building kit for the Angela Trotta Thomas layout.



Clarke and Fletcher Conlon compare the completed 3-D print of Angela's building with the computer image on the screen.



This harbor scene includes a freeform layout edge.



This panoramic view can be seen at Railroads on Parade.

has declined, increasing numbers of corporate and small business display layouts are making up more of our client base. We have also found that train displays can have multiple lives. You might expect that an old display would just be carved up and salvaged for parts. But in fact, many of our layouts, both museum and private, have seen multiple additional purposes and locations.”

Barbara and Clarke agree that they will continue doing what they know and enjoy. Clarke explains, “It’s simply too rewarding for us to just stop, and retirement has no allure for either of us. After 25 or so years of watching visitors who started out as children, grew up, and ultimately brought their own children and even grandchildren to visit our exhibits, Barbara and I feel it is not



The New York City skyline is seen at Railroads on Parade.



Here is a typical Dunham Studios trade show display.

only thrilling but is absolute proof that model railroading will continue to live on."

Clarke also notes, "Those who believe they lack the skills to do a professional job in layout building are beginning, increasingly, to rely on professional layout design and construction services. We are well-positioned to provide both the technical knowledge and especially the artistic contribution that will make each client's experience special and lasting. Seeing the public and private railroad displays we create sparks powerful memories and thoughts among young and old alike. It's something that can be shared now and for generations to come, and we can help make dreams come true."





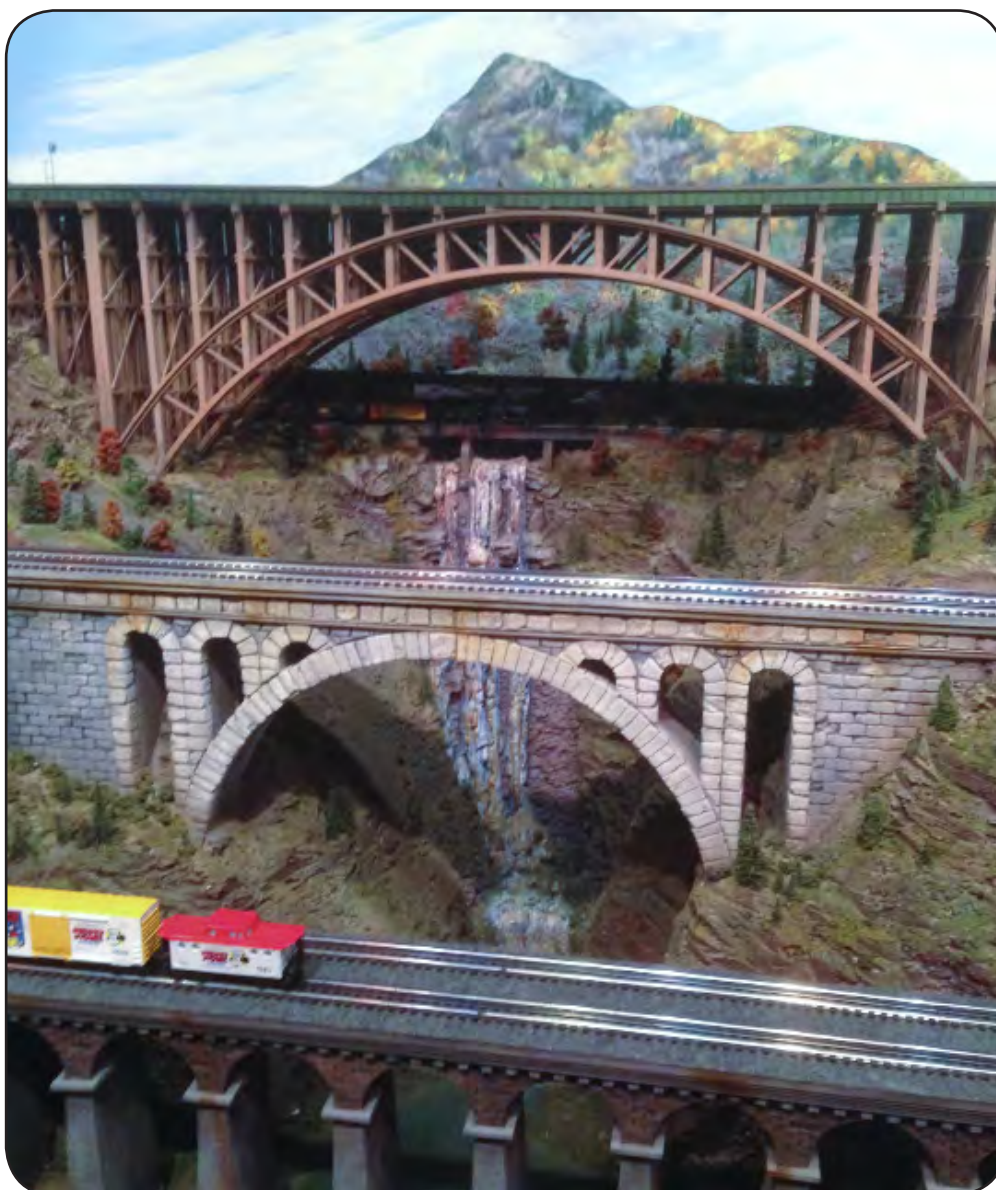
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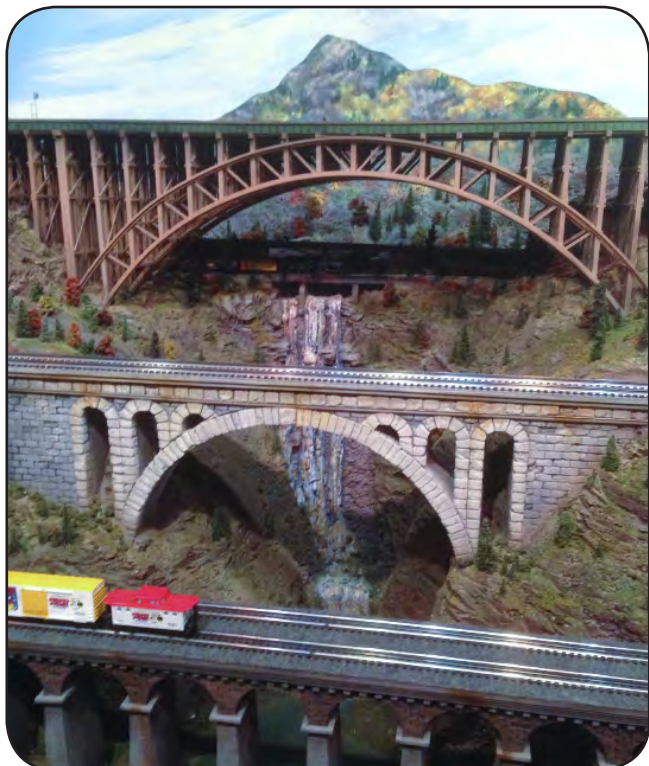
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More Photos from Dunham Studios



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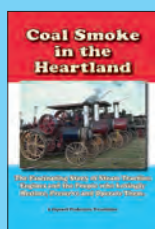
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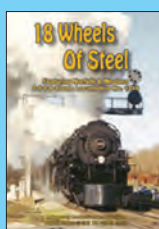
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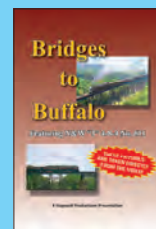
**Coal Smoke in the
Heartland**



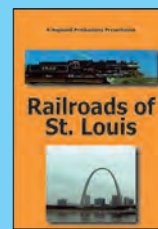
**Featuring N&W
No. 1218**



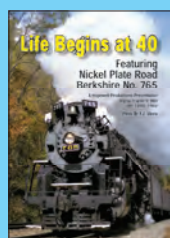
**Featuring C&O
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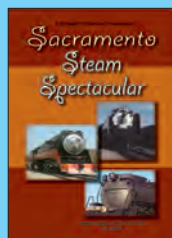
**Starring N&W "J"
No. 611**



**Railroads of
St. Louis**



**Starring Nickel
Plate 765**



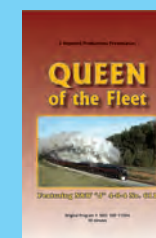
**Starring SP Daylight
4449 and UP
Challenger 3985**



**Starring Western
Maryland Shay No. 6**



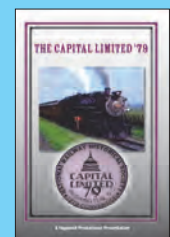
**Starring Nickel
Plate 765**



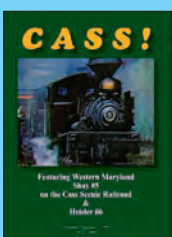
**Starring N&W "J"
No. 611**



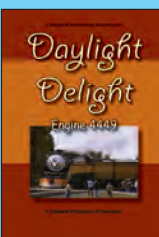
**Featuring C&O
No. 614**



**Starring WM F7's
and SRR Steam**



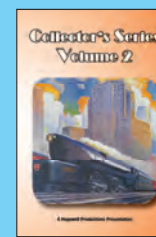
**Starring the Shays of the
Cass Scenic Railroad**



**Starring SP
Daylight 4449**



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**Starring Nickel
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Collector's Gallery

Ed Boyle



The OGR/MTH Tour Car Years



The members-only York train meet hosted twice yearly by the Eastern Division of the Train Collectors Association at the fairgrounds in York, Pennsylvania, is considered the pinnacle of buy and sell toy train swap meets. Many O-gaugers make the semi-annual pilgrimage to York for the wide variety of trains, old and new, offered by dealers and individual members. Attendees are also drawn to the event by the opportunity to renew long-standing friendships with like-minded O gauge collectors and operators and to meet new hobbyists. These days the folks who go to York are perhaps a little grayer than in past years, but enthusiasm for the joys of finding that just-right old or new toy train burns as brightly as ever for those who have “York” noted on the April and October pages of their calendars.

The York meet is still a unique mix of companionship, nostalgia, old trains, and the latest developments and products combined with just plain fun. In 2002, M.T.H. Electric Trains began to produce boxcars commemorating each successive TCA York experience. That series is still going strong, but our primary focus in this column will be chronicling six commemorative boxcars made especially for *O Gauge Railroading* magazine's MTH tours conducted during the spring York TCA meets from 2006 through 2011.

The MTH 2002 York Car

The first car made by M.T.H. Electric Trains for its own commemorative series set the pattern for all the MTH York rolling stock to come in terms of basic appearance and features, including the OGR/MTH tour cars. The MTH Inaugural York Collector Car (20-93154) was an offering from the more detailed and usually more expensive Premier line, which featured a PS1 scale-proportioned 40' boxcar with a separately applied roof walk, ladders, a detailed undercarriage, and sprung trucks (Photo 1). Only the 2002 car sported silver trucks, and the later cars had black sprung trucks. All the cars had dark-colored roofs, ends, and movable doors that contrasted with light-colored sides. The York boxcars were a real deal. You got all the high-end Premier features and the custom York decoration for only 20 bucks, which was around half the street price for other Premier boxcars. In later years the prices went up to \$25.00 and \$30.00, but they were still a good deal in comparison with other Premier rolling stock prices.

Shortly after the first York car was issued, the thumbtack couplers were replaced with a better-looking, upgraded design, which became the standard on all subsequent Premier boxcars (Photo 2).

2006 and 2007 MTH York Tours and Cars

By 2006, OGR's George Seil had helped manage successful tours of the facilities at Weaver Models in Northumberland, Pennsylvania, for three years during the fall TCA York meets. MTH headquarters in Columbia, Maryland, and the very large and highly acclaimed Tony Lash layout were close enough to the York fairgrounds and to each other that a bus trip to both locations in a single day was feasible. After some amicable negotiations with Andy Edleman, vice president of Marketing at MTH, and Tony Lash, CEO and owner of Consolidated Waste Industries, to iron out the details, George had another OGR tour up and running for the spring 2006 TCA York meet. Thanks to his efforts and the talented staff at MTH, the OGR/MTH/Tony Lash layout tours were almost immediate sellouts.

The look of the MTH 2006 OGR Tour Car (20-93322) was not subtle. The right side of the car was adorned with the largest OGR logo that could reasonably fit on its cream-colored flanks (Photo 3). The spring 2006 MTH York Collector Car (20-93321) had the same cream sides and purple roof, ends, and doors as the OGR tour car, but featured an image of the MTH 2006 Volume 2 catalog cover on its right side (Photo 4).

The reason for the similarities is simple. MTH made hundreds and hundreds of the York cars to sell at the spring TCA meet, but less than 100 of the OGR tour cars were produced. Time and space constraints at both the Tony Lash layout and MTH headquarters limited the number of people who could go on the tour on any one day to about 100. The only practical way to provide such a small number of people with a souvenir boxcar was to piggyback it onto the production run of the TCA cars. The fact that you could only buy the souvenir boxcar if you went on the OGR/MTH tour ensured its relative rarity. So the unintended consequence of making an uncataloged goody available for sale to tour goers was the creation of a scarce collectible as a companion to the much more numerous MTH York cars. And, of course, this relationship of relative production numbers held true for the next six years. As with most other collectibles, if creating one isn't your basic aim, that is usually when it happens.

The spring 2007 cars used green as the contrasting color for their roofs, ends, walkways, ladders, and doors. The OGR Tour Car (20-93363) had a very appropriate image on its right side (Photo 5). It was a dramatic *O Gauge Railroading* cover shot from the August/September 2006 issue, Run 216, of the high trestle on Tony Lash's Norfolk & Western layout. In addition to a lavishly illustrated cover story, Tony's layout was also featured in the *OGR Great Layout Adventures, Volume 5* video.



3

2008 Through 2010

The February/March 2007 *OGR* cover, Run 220, chosen for the 2008 OGR Tour Car (20-93417) nicely matched the dark red used to highlight the details of the souvenir boxcar (Photo 6). The blue used for the walkways, roof, ladders, and doors of the 2009 OGR Tour Car (20-93453) coupled with the *OGR* Run



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222, June/July 2007, blue cover colors made for a particularly pleasing combination (Photo 7). The companion spring 2009 MTH York Collector Car (20-93458) was also significant from a collector's point of view because the attractive image on its right side featured the first cover of the licensed prewar Lionel Corporation Tinsplate catalog on it (Photo 8).

The only boxcar to display two different images on its sides was the 2010 OGR Tour Car. (20-93493). One side had the OGR cover for the January 2009 issue, Run 233, complete with our 40th year anniversary logo (Photo 9). The other side of the car acknowledged the contribution that Tony made to the success of the tours with the prominent placement of the Consolidated Waste Industries logo (Photo 10).

2011 the Final Cars

The last year for the tours to MTH headquarters and Tony's layout was 2011. The tour package had gotten more expensive with the increase in bus prices and the strain of having a major

event at MTH in the middle of York week. Although Mike Wolf broke low-flying land speed records going to York for the Wednesday afternoon TCA Library talks in Strasburg after visiting with tour attendees for lunch at his own offices, it became apparent that the OGR/MTH tour was no longer sustainable as a York activity.

The two 2011 cars were a classy ending for the series with their olive green colors complementing cream-colored sides. The spring 2011 MTH York Collector Car (20-93529) highlighted an action steamer catalog cover shot, and the 2011 OGR Tour Car (20-93528) featured the February/March 2010, Run 241, cover with a scene from Rich Battista's hi-rail layout (Photos 11 and 12). Mike Wolf autographed the OGR car, and it was a happy accident that it turned out to be the last one in the series.

Packaging


The purple Premier line boxes stayed the same during the whole six years of the program, with the only changes made on the ends as required by government regulations (Photos 13, 14, and 15). The consistent look of the Premier boxes was part of a larger marketing aim to enhance brand identification and bring brand colors for MTH closer to the recognition levels of the orange-and-blue boxes of its Lionel competitor.

Collector Considerations

The OGR/MTH tour cars are hard to value because so few ever appear on the market. Those that do appear bring anywhere from a low of \$60.00 to a top price of \$90.00 depending on packaging and condition. Cars with the shipping box or that are unopened command higher prices. The companion spring TCA

meet cars are also a factor. If you have all 12 cars, that significantly alters the value of the group upward.

If you really want to get totally over the top about collecting the complete OGR/MTH tour car series, you can always acquire the MTH catalogs that appear on the sides of the spring TCA meet cars and the *OGR* issues that are featured on the tour boxcars.

Do autographs written on the boxcars make a difference in collectability? Hard to know. To some it is nothing more than the hobby's version of graffiti; to others it enhances the value of any piece that is signed by someone significantly connected with it. 



14



13



15

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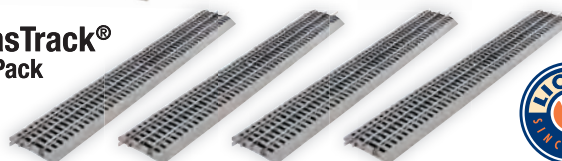


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Happy Valley, Where Life Is (Almost) Perfect

Article and Photos by Bill Bramlage

Welcome to Happy Valley where the sun always shines, the girls are pretty, the men are handsome, the children are polite, the dogs don't bark, and locally grown produce is always the freshest and most tasty to be found anywhere (Photo 1). Indeed, just about every aspect of life in Happy Valley is perfect for the young, old, and everyone in between.

But this idyllic little metropolis is about to become an even more desirable place to live, or so the citizenry has been led to believe, with the opening of a new human services center at the end of Main Street in the heart of downtown (Photo 2). The overly generous services to be provided promise an ever-better Happy Valley, if such a thing is remotely possible. For example, residents will receive coupons to cover food, fuel, electricity, and medical expenses; housing equipped with TV, radio, phone, and parking; and a two-week paid family vacation, among other perks (Photo 3).

The local population, always willing to enhance their already-comfortable and carefree lives, lined up well before the new center opened its doors for the first time (Photo 4). A quick glance at the diverse crowd reveals virtually all walks of life represented, including doctors, dancers, cooks, clergy, railroad workers, civil servants, and even a prisoner or two. Just about everyone, it seems, is eager to avail themselves of the latest array of generous government handouts.

But hold on! It appears that the more freebies some people get, the more they want. Check out the growing group of demonstrators bringing up the rear of the crowd (Photo 5). They want "More," and they want "Color TV," "\$4 Beer," "4 Weeks Vac" instead of that crummy two weeks, and even "New Cars." The greediest of the greedy even proclaims "Need Two Cars." Wow, talk about rampant narcissism! And all this is happening in Happy Valley, already deemed the most benevolent community in the entire U.S. of A. Hurry up and get in line! 



2

Happy Valley Human Services Complex

Bill Bramlage tells us he is running out of undeveloped real estate on his layout but found that he had two late-19th-century small buildings and many residual 1/4" scale people to make use of. Many of the figures were either damaged, repetitive, or for some reason were not used in other scenes on his train layout. So, imaginative fellow that he is, Bill decided to create a scene that he had not seen before on other layouts. Thus was born the Happy Valley Human Services complex. —ed.



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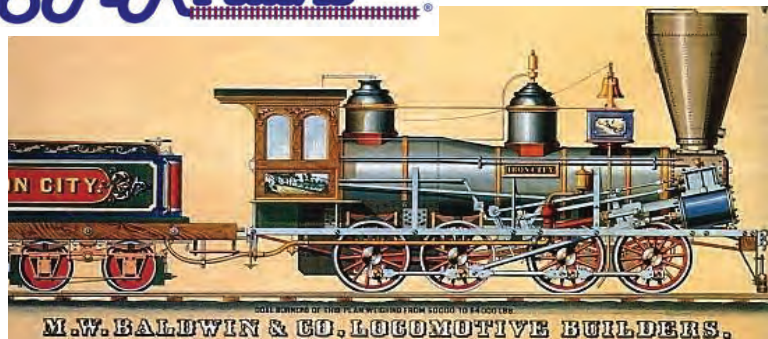
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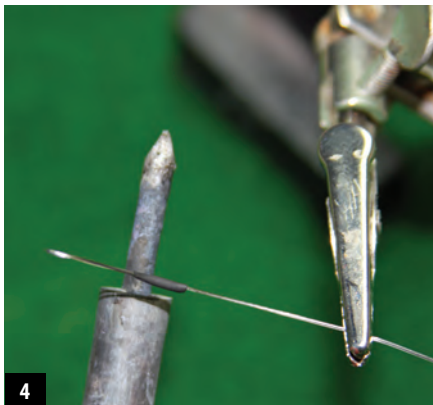
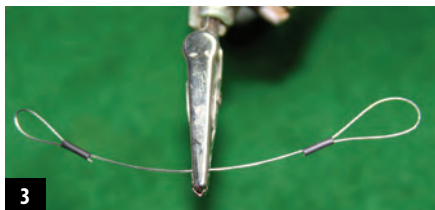
Article and Photos by Daniel Kleine

While surfing the Internet for photos of railroad cranes and tender/boom cars that might provide inspiration and ideas for detailing my latest maintenance-of-way (MOW) project, I noticed that this special-purpose rolling stock often has a lot of equipment strewn on the decks or hanging along the car sides. Among the items one might typically find are a number of chains and wire rope slings used for handling heavy loads in various situations. Consisting essentially of lengths of wire rope with fixed loops at each end, these wire rope slings commonly are used in heavy hoisting and rigging applications. See the drawing of the three common types.


I previously used inexpensive jewelry wire for securing loads of all types to O gauge flatcars and thought a variation could work as choker hitch slings. In this case, a choker is a heavy-duty looped cable, and not costume jewelry worn around the neck. Jewelry wire, or bead stringing wire, is available at craft stores in a variety of sizes, colors, and styles (Photo 1). It is amazing how some types look exactly like scale-sized twisted cable.

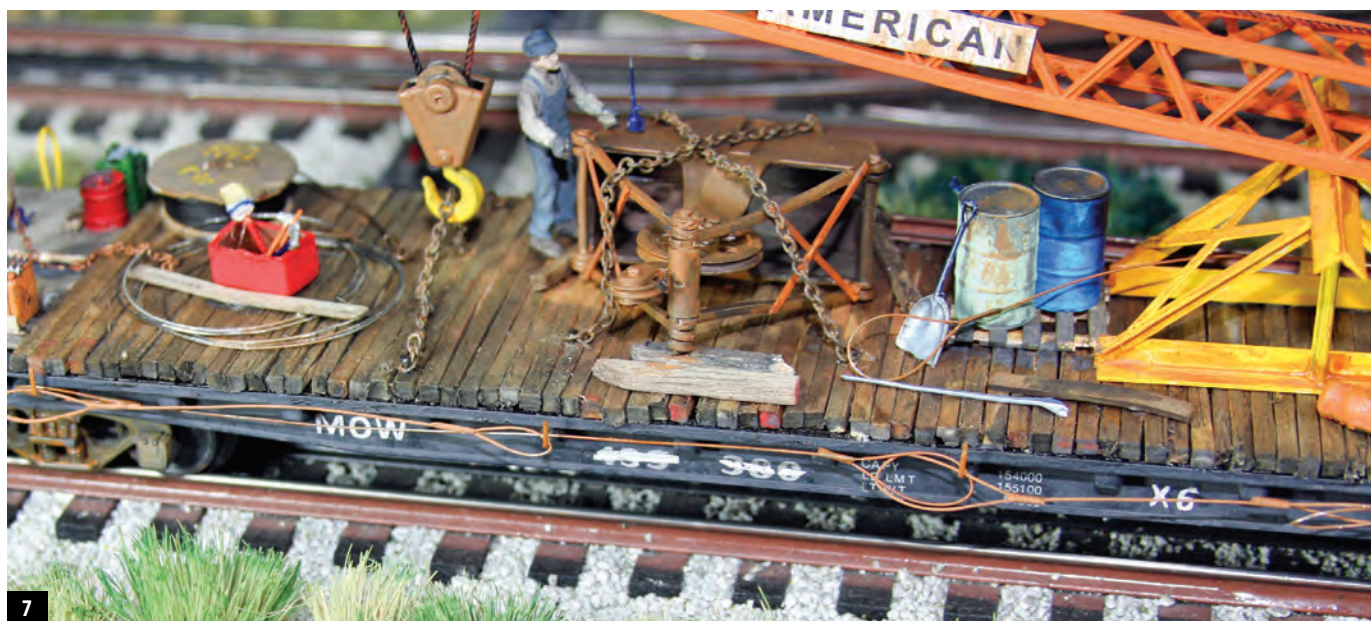
Heat shrink tubing, also needed for this project, commonly is applied to electronic or wiring projects in our hobby and is available at electronic stores. I used the 1/8" diameter size.

To make choker hitch slings, cut random lengths of jewelry wire to the scale length you prefer. Then cut the shrink tubing in 1/2" lengths to serve as ferrules. You can substitute jewelry crimp tubes, which are metal, for the soft plastic shrink tubing (Photo 2). Place two shrink tubes on a length of the chain, loop the ends, and thread the ends back through the tubes, forming the wire into the shape of loops (Photo 3). Heat the shrink tubes with a soldering iron (Photo 4). While the tube is still warm, squeeze it between your fingers so it forms a tight fit around the cable (Photo 5).



Jewelry wire has a natural curl, and you can leave it this way or heat it a little with the soldering iron to straighten it. The wire ropes can be painted with various colors of rust, black, silver, or yellow. The crimps or ferrules can be painted a different color for added detail.

This simple construction project resulted in a pile of choker hitch slings in just a few minutes (Photo 6). Scatter them around your layout wherever you have cranes, docks, or MOW equipment (Photo 7). 





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Building a Layout: Laying Roadbed and Track

We are truly blessed in O gauge with having several different brands of track and roadbed to choose from for building our layouts. Each brand has its strong and not-so-strong points, and the final selection really is a matter of personal preference. For the layout I'm building, my choice is to use GarGraves track, Ross Custom Switches, and Ross preformed sectional track. These two brands of track and switches fit together seamlessly and are easy to use.

GarGraves flexible track is cheaper per foot over long distances, but the formed curves may not be the best thing to use when you go over hinged or movable sections of benchwork. When forming curves with GarGraves track, the rails making up the curves remain under some spring tension after forming and being attached to the roadbed and tend to spring back toward straight if they are anywhere in the curve to accommodate a hinged panel joint. The same is not true of preformed curves in

Ross sectional track. For this reason, I switch back and forth from GarGraves to Ross track if I see that a curve will fall on a needed track cut.

As a rule, I lay my track on Midwest Products cork roadbed. This roadbed is split lengthwise so, when properly positioned, each half joins right on the centerline of the track. The outer edges of the cork roadbed strip are cut on an angle to represent the ballast shoulders of the track. For us 3-railers, this is ideal because it allows us to scribe a centerline where we want the track to go and then lay the cork roadbed halves against that line.

First you'll want to transfer your track plan from your drawing to the tabletop using single pencil lines where you want track to go (Photo 1). Now locate the general locations of accessories and trackside structures (Photo 2). Even if you have made a detailed plan on paper, there's no better reality check than positioning them for the real thing. You'll almost always see minor or even

major location changes that you'll want to make before you put down any roadbed and track. Some rail cutting might even need to be done on certain rails or switches to accommodate your track plan. This is the time to prove out the feasibility of your track plan before you start laying roadbed and cutting up track and switches.

Once you are certain that you can make a viable layout track plan after making the necessary cuts and adjustments to switches plus scenery and structures, then and only then should you proceed with laying the cork roadbed. When you are sure that you're ready, separate the cork halves along the split line (Photo 3). Turn the cork halves around so all the slanted edges are upside down and away from you.



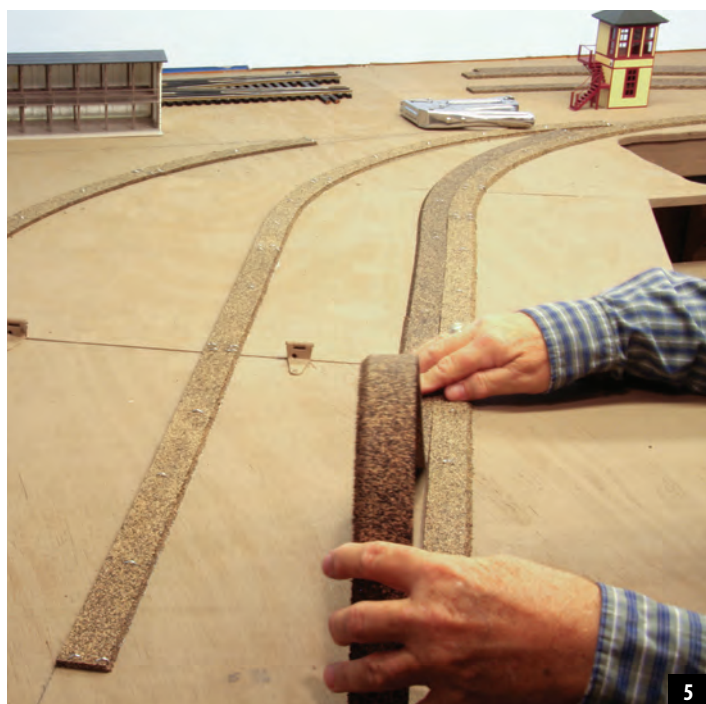
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Place them on a covering of newspaper to protect your work surface from any glue overspray.

Using a can of 3M Super 77 spray glue, coat the exposed underside of the cork halves until the cork strips appear to be evenly coated with the glue (Photo 4). The effect you want to achieve is like spray painting a large piece of material using long even strokes.

Lay the cork strips against the pencil line right over any hinged section joints and staple them in place (Photo 5). I use an Arrow T-33 staple gun that shoots curved-top staples through the cork, leaving a curved top to grab and pull out after the glue has set.

Cork used as a roadbed covers up a world of sins. You will always have slightly uneven tabletop material between one plywood layer and the next and possibly a slightly uneven layer at hinged panel joints (Photo 6). Not to worry! Cork can be easily leveled with a plane on an uneven hump at the joint line. In Photo 7, I am using a carpenter's jackplane to do this. If such a tool is unavailable, you can also use a Stanley surform file.

Track is laid using #4 flat-head wood screws and also a combination drill bit and countersink (Photo 8). Note that ties have been spaced so the benchwork joint line goes right



between the track ties. The ties on either side of the joint will get two holes each since this is a hard point where the rails must be kept perfectly in line on both sides of the cut.

When laying track through curves, pre-bend the GarGraves track sections to approximate the shape of the curve (Photo 9). Note that the end of the track section will no longer be even (Photo 10). Cut off the two extended rails using a motor tool and fiber cutting discs (Photo 11). When the track section is placed down on the cork, drill and attach a screw about every 4" or so through the curve. I alternate sides of the center rail for each screw.

When you get to the uneven end of the track, resist the urge to cut the ends of the rail off evenly. Using a block of wood and a small hammer, tap each of the three rails back through the ties so that they totally close the previous track joint (Photo 12). Then cut off the ends to make a nice square track cut.

You may also note that the curve is not totally smooth throughout its length. This is easily corrected by noting where the slight kink in the track is, driving track screws at roughly the beginning and the end of the kinked area, and then removing any screws between the two you just put in. Then gently tap on the edges of the ties right at the middle between the two screws you just added. Use a piece of scrap wood along with a small hammer (Photo 13). You will be amazed at how smoothly and perfectly you can make the curve.

When all the track has been laid, smoothed out, and closed track joints completed, this is the time to open the track at the benchwork joints previously covered. Look closely at Photo 14, and you will see that you will end up with a slanted cut line in the rail, slanted either one way or the other depending on how you hold the motor tool and cutting disc. For a raised panel, if you are cutting on the hinged side of the panel, cut so that the slant will lean toward the hinged section when it is lifted. On the opposite edge of the panel, cut so that the track cut will lean away from the panel. Using this method will prevent the track from binding against the table side of the track when raising and lowering the hinged section.

Don't be bashful about cutting switches. Just make sure the frog of the switch or any moving rails on the switch don't end up on the cut line when you are



10



12



11



13

positioning track and switches (Photo 15). Also, don't forget to pad any switch machine or switch track ties by adding some cork where it is needed (Photo 16). I plan to add a switch lantern to the opposite side of the switch machine later, so the ties that stick out on that side are also padded.

Here's a nice touch. On real railroads, mainline tracks are almost always maintained better than sidings. Why should things not be this way on your railroad, too? When you have a track

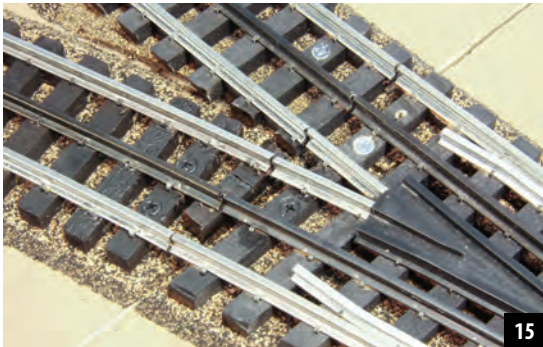
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switch leading off the main line to an old spur siding, don't use any cork roadbed where that siding track will be (Photo 17). Just screw that siding track directly to the table. The result when the ballast is added will be a distinct height difference between the mainline tracks and the siding. Sure, that means the switch may need to be bent sideways a little, but that is how it looks on the real railroads. It will show

a subtle ski jump effect sideways as the siding track settles into a lower roadbed. Also, you can make that siding track look all kinked and misshapen from heat and the lack of maintenance by intentionally kinking up the siding track a little. The end effect is marvelous.

Be sure when you are laying track and switches to make the track joint as closed up as possible before you go to the next section of track (Photo 18). Eliminating little gaps will result in a much smoother main line and a noticeable difference in a lack of noise as your train rolls through the area. Also



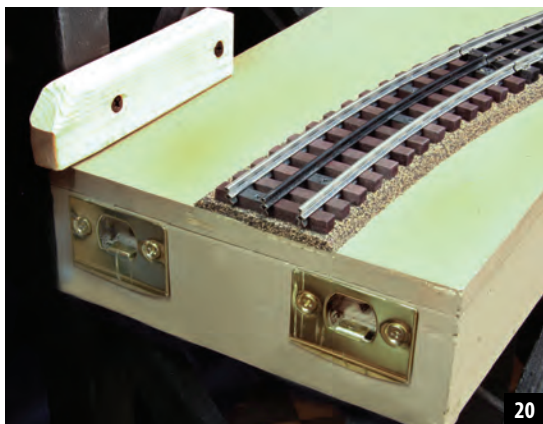
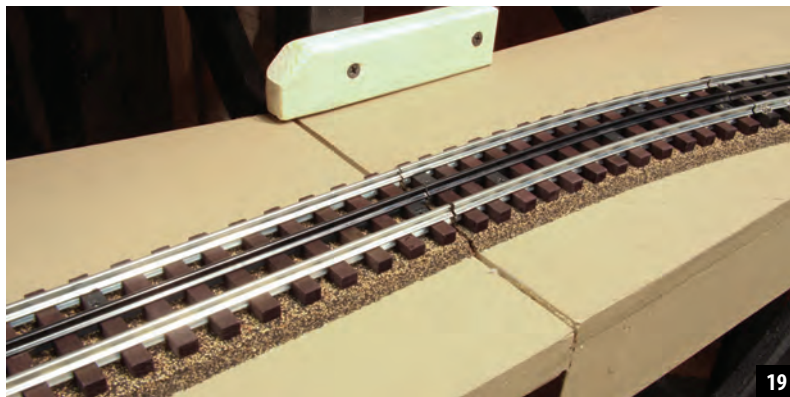
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note how easily the screw head goes away with a touch of flat black paint. If the actual height of the rail at the joint is slightly different, use a flat file on the high rail surface. That makes for a smooth-running train as well.

Check things as you go when laying track over butted end joints. Photos 19 and 20 show how important this becomes on hinged drop sections. Also, make sure that you have waited some period of time between building your benchwork and laying track when dealing with movable sections of benchwork. The wood needs to cure out at residential temperature and humidity before you proceed with laying track.

Now I need to figure out how my trains are going to go through the wall into my furnace room, make it around the furnace, and then get back into the viewing room. I also need to figure out how I'm going to do that while still leaving the furnace available for maintenance when needed. That may be a tall order that I'll cover in my next "Backshop." See you there! 🚂

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Days of Yesteryear



To paraphrase the intro to the “Lone Ranger” radio shows of the distant past, let’s return for a moment to those thrilling days of yesteryear when urban department stores and even rural merchants sold toy trains. As a lad in the early 1950s, I found my annual visit to see the new Lionel trains on sale at the big department stores of Gimbel Brothers and John Wannamaker in Philadelphia and Macy’s in New York to be more than just thrilling. Offerings of O gauge trains were also fun to see at the smaller shops such as our local Western Auto and especially at my favorite paper route customer and Saturday morning hangout, Crowley’s Train Depot. But I digress....

Back then, merchants large and small competed vigorously for the annual dollars spent on trains for youngsters and for parents, too. This spirited competition led to special train sets or even individual cars being manufactured for a particular merchant and not available anywhere else. Even considering the evolution of the

retail landscape over the past several decades, some vestiges of special toy train offerings are still with us. But instead of traveling to a palatial department store of yesteryear, these specially released trains or individual cars can be viewed and bought via a computer or even a cell phone connected to a contemporary Internet website. Whether or not this is a fun or cool way to buy trains depends on your point of view, but I won’t delve into that topic, at least not at this time.

A recent special product offering that caught my attention a few weeks ago is the upcoming group of boxcars from the Midwest home improvement retailer, Menards. As I write this column in late February, the initial offering has yet to occur but is planned for early April as this issue rolls off the press. In fact, the car and two extra shells shown in the photos are pilot models because the production cars have yet to arrive at Menards from its builder.



Before I got to see the actual car and additional shells, I anticipated they would be traditionally sized at something smaller than 1:48 scale. The basis for my rationale was two-fold with the low price of a penny under \$20.00 per car plus the O27 minimum curve. I also anticipated a lightweight construction with thin plastic components including a plastic frame and plastic couplers. To be candid, I can easily deal with the several pleasant surprises that greeted me as I unpacked the car and shells here at the OGR Southwest Office.

The shell moldings were considerably thicker than I anticipated, and the frame of the complete car was stamped steel with a separate stamped steel underframe beam and a separate air brake appliance. All four channels that the doors slide in are also stamped steel with metal pins securing these channels to the body. Stamped steel and die-cast side trucks feature fast-angle sintered metal wheels on needlepoint steel axles. Best of all, the die-cast operating couplers close fairly easily and stay closed. Magnetic coupler actuation uses my favorite design of a hidden steel flap and lever rather than the sometime troublesome and always ugly thumbtack-style plastic actuator.

As to the overall size of the Menards boxcar, it proved to be 1:48 scale and matches my 1:48 scale ARA X-29 steel 40' boxcar from Atlas O. Of course as a concession to cost, all the ladders and grab irons are molded into the body, and there are no separately applied details on the car ends other than the steel brake wheel. On the editorial Carpet Central Railroad, the Menards boxcar blended in with a train of traditionally sized rolling stock as well as in a consist of scale cars.

On each of our samples, the decoration was flawless. Color separation between the sides and the rest of the body on the Santa Fe car rivaled that of much more expensive O gauge boxcars. As to the lettering on all the bodies, it was crisp and clear. On the topic of lettering, I understand from Jim Johnson at Menards Merchandizing Department that each production car will have a unique car number as do real cars. No two of these limited-production Menards boxcars will have the same car number. Obviously, the car numbers were not applied to the pilot samples I received.

As I also understand from Jim, the cars will be for sale on the Menards Collectable page of the Menards website at www.menards.com with arrival expected in early May of this year. If any of these boxcars are still available in late September, they will be disbursed to the company's stores along with the rest of the still-available 2014 offerings. The excitement of seeing specially built train cars for sale in a store like Menards recalls those thrilling days of yesteryear. 🚂



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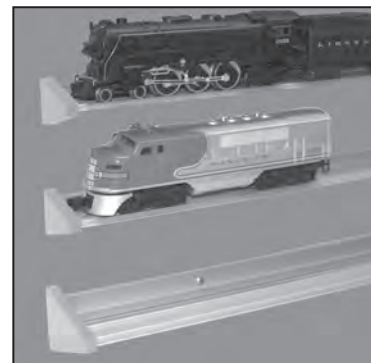


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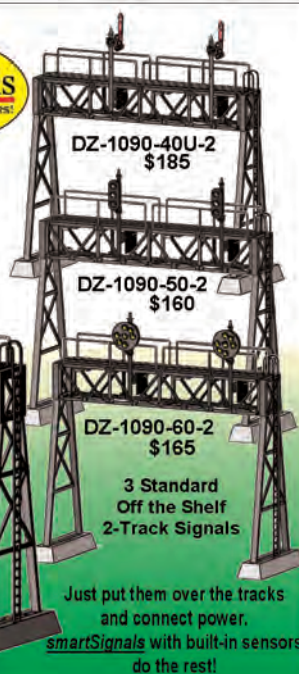
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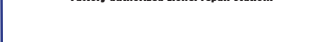
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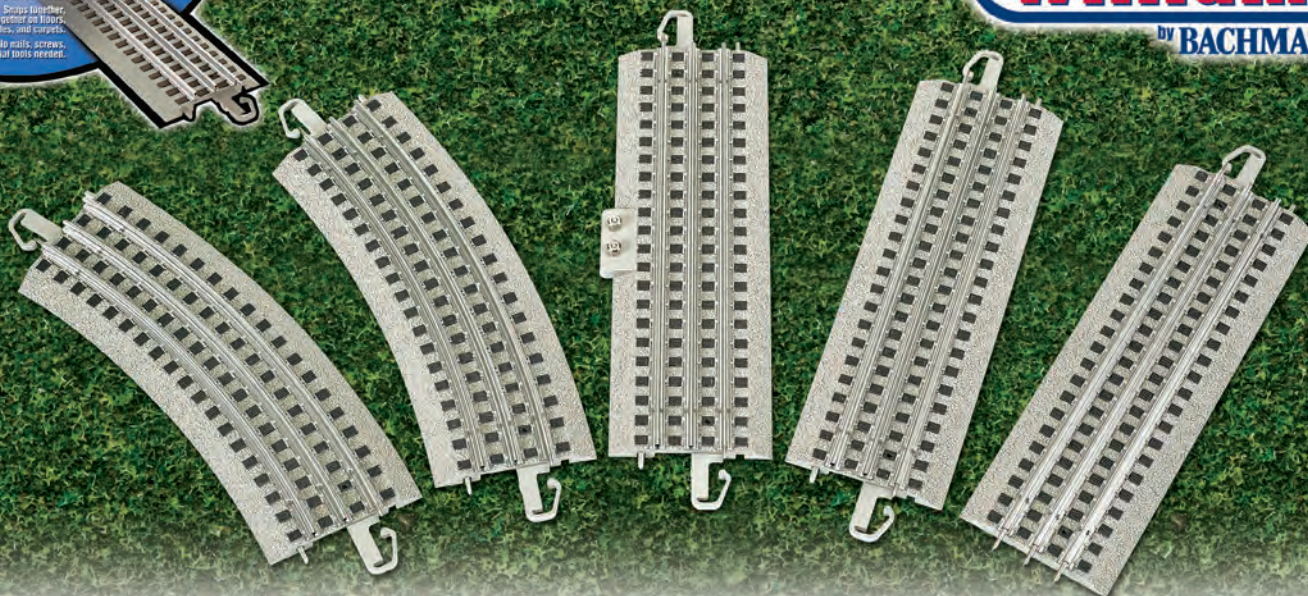
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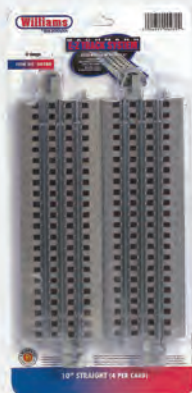
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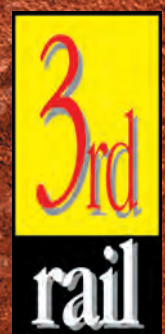
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