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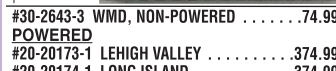
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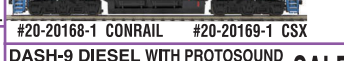
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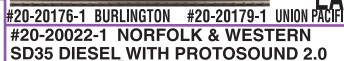
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# An Open Letter from Steve (Ross) Brenneisen

Hello everyone, Steve Brenneisen here from Ross Custom Switches. One of the first questions I am asked when someone is trying to figure out what track and switches to use on their empire is "Okay Steve, why should I get it from Ross?" Some folks think I am going to go into a list of what is wrong with Atlas or MTH switches (our main competitors) but I am not here to bash the other guys product. I do know, however, that after 41 years of building these things we are doing alot right. You may also ask why I don't mention GarGraves and that is because we have more of a synergistic relationship with them than a competitive one. I originally started building Ross switches to mate with GarGraves flex track, which was then, and still is, the standard of the O gauge world in flex (yep, you can bend it to any radius). Our sectional track (not bendable) and switches mate right up using the same track pins.

Our main objectives at RCS are to make switches (and track) that work as flawlessly as possible with all O gauge equipment, regardless of manufacturer. We have worked hard to get there and have made a lot of changes through the years to make that possible. Because it is relatively easy for us to make a change in our hand-built switches and track, we can keep up with innovative new ideas and modern equipment needs. Believe it or not, train manufacturers have few or no industry standards to which they build their equipment. It is a real challenge to make switches that are able to handle all the various locomotives and cars that are out there these days, but we do it!

Secondly, we want them to look as good as possible. Now I happen to lean towards brunettes, but would never tell someone that blondes are not attractive, too, so to each his own. However, most real railroad ties are made of wood infused with creosote, so ours are made of wood and are black just like creosote (not brown).

Thirdly, we want to, and do, make our products right here in the USA in our Connecticut shop. Now our aforementioned competitors are made in China and that alone does not make them inferior. It does make it hard to make improvements and changes though and that's where we shine (see goal #1). It also can make product hard to get, and as of this writing (the fall of 2013) at least one of our Chinese made friends are having difficulty getting product at all. Not something you want to hear if you are a layout builder! We are making our ALWAYS available track and switches right here in your back yard. That means your money stays right here in your back yard, and that is a real plus for America and the families that the guys who work here are responsible for.

Finally we make 54 different switches and crossings, and 14 different radii of track, along with straight track, too. No one else comes close! Here is the score;

(From websites Sept. 2013)

MTH switches and crossings....8.....track radii...4 (ScaleTrax)

Atlas switches and crossings....21....track radii...9

Ross Custom Switches and crossings....54...track radii...14

(Atlas will mate with Ross using regular Atlas rail joiners. ScaleTrax does not easily mate with either)

As you can see, in sports terms, those numbers add up to a real butt kickin! Absolutely no one but **Ross** gives you the variety and the chance to do everything the real railroads do. And another one of the real advantages of **Ross** is that it is EASY to cut so you have even more versatility! You are not bound by the constraints that some other track "systems" put on you. Our steel rail works with Magna-Traction too, the others above do not.

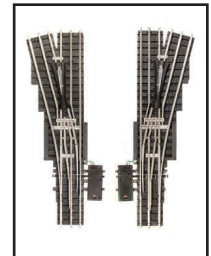
Last but not least, don't forget to check your local dealer to see if they carry **RCS**, or if you prefer, call us... 800-331-1395 ...and talk to a real live person who actually builds our track and switches (9am-4pm and/or from 11-4 Eastern most Mondays-Fridays, me.) We can answer any questions on layout building or design that you may have, and oh yeah, take an order too!

Or email for a catalog; [steve@rossswitches.com](mailto:steve@rossswitches.com) or check out our website: [rossswitches.com](http://rossswitches.com)

Nice talking with you, and Happy Railroading!



Steve



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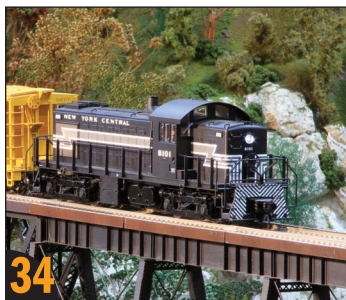
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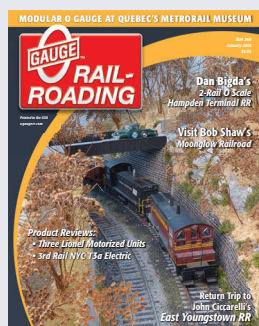
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## ON THE COVER

Even though Dan Bigda's career keeps him actively involved with real-world railroading, he finds time to enjoy the hobby of 2-rail O scale model railroading on his Hampden Terminal Railroad. Boston & Main and Penn Central SW switchers team up on a late autumn afternoon to ease loads of coal-laden hoppers around a tight curve.

*Photo by Brian Solomon*



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## Go Figure




Imagine how this scene on Jack Wheelihan's layout (Run 244) would look devoid of figures that bring the scene to life. Note how the figures' poses are appropriate to their duties. Note, too, how there are no distracting bases on the figures seen in this and the other examples displayed here. Sometimes a bit of careful razor saw surgery is needed to remove those distracting and unrealistic attached bases.

The larger of my two O gauge home layouts (the smaller one being all-tinplate O) is still very much a work in progress. There is no scenery to speak of, just a continually evolving arrangement of trackwork and a good number of structures set in temporary positions while I attempt to settle on a final track plan and select suitable locations for scenery and structures.

One area of the layout will include a portion of a U.S. Army base served by a variety of Army Transportation Corps motive power and rolling stock. Temporarily set in place on this section are several Quonset huts, a radar tower, a motor pool with military vehicles, and other theme-appropriate accessories. But even in this items-on-bare-plywood situation, something else definitely was missing, and that "something" was 1:48 scale people, and in this case, soldiers.

I have a box of military figures waiting to take their place on the layout at a later date, so on a whim I decided to go ahead and place a few of them among the huts and vehicles just for the heck of it. What a difference that made! Even in its otherwise barren state, those little figures added "life" to the scene.

Which brings me to the point of this discourse: populating a layout. I review hundreds of photos for the magazine every month, and one thing that always catches my eyes and attracts my attention is the way miniature figures enhance a scene and add interest and purpose.

Rather than dwell at length on how these small, affordable, and infinitely varied accessories can be used, I decided to review some images from my files to find just a few examples for presentation here. There's only space for a small sampling with comments, but give them a look and see how effectively they contribute to the overall feel of their respective scenes. 

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Bob Shaw (current issue) turned an otherwise bland open area on his layout into this interesting camping scene, complete with the campers and some appropriate lighting that immediately draws and holds a viewer's attention.



The figures inside this diner on Harold "Rocky" Rockowitz's layout (Run 233), including both waitstaff and customers, bring this scene to life. We often tend to overlook detailing the interiors of our structures, but if they are in prominent locations on the layout, and especially if they have interior illumination, it sure pays to give some attention to this additional detailing.



Just a couple of figures, appropriately positioned, significantly enhance this evening scene on Vernon Hart's layout (Run 266). It's always a good idea to avoid overcrowding any given scene with figures unless a crowd is appropriate to the overall environment, such as people at a circus or viewing a ballgame.



Figures can also be used on the trains themselves, as in this example from Paul Lally's layout (Run 261). Again, it's important to assure that the figures used, be they crew members or passengers, are appropriate in size and to their intended function in terms of attire, posture, and positioning. It's also fun to repaint figures (an illuminated magnifier lamp helps in this regard) even if only to reduce the shine seen on so many plastic models. After all, clothing and skin rarely exhibit a shine in real life.



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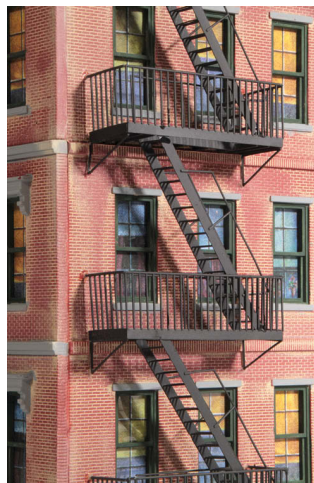
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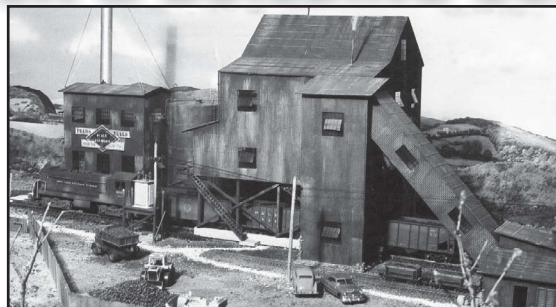
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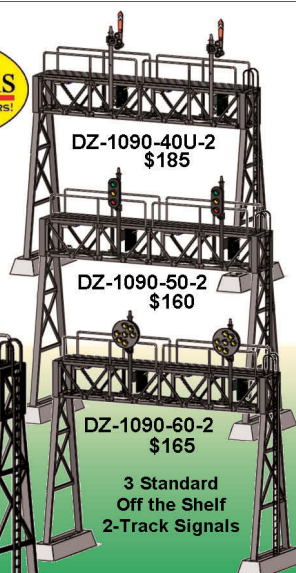


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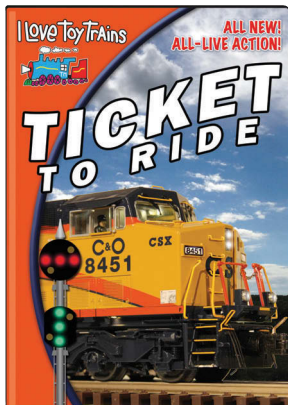
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## Product Announcements

### Ticket to Ride



The latest *I Love Toy Trains* DVD from TM Books & Video is titled *Ticket to Ride*. Chock full of special video effects, the program features vintage diesels at the Illinois Railway Museum, a prototype Shay in action mixed with shots of Lionel models of a Shay and Climax, the 999 steamer setting a new world speed record, and a visit to the Taltree Garden Railroad. This garden railroad is a fascinating half-acre of trains and vignettes showing the key role

railroads played in our country's history. For the kid in all of us, Vinny talks about his favorite diesel, and viewers visit Backwardsville where all kinds of weird things happen. This DVD has all this and more, plus new songs by James Coffey. The 48-minute DVD sells for \$9.99 and is available at many hobby shops as well as direct from TM Books & Video at [www.tmbv.com](http://www.tmbv.com) or 800-892-2822.



### Expand Your Views

BPH Enterprises announces four O scale additions to the SceniKing Roll Outs Backdrop System, increasing the total number of available scenes to 21. In keeping with the uniformity of other O scale roll outs, all scenes are 72" long and 16-1/2" high. The new additions include K118 Back Road, which connects on left to K110 and on right to seven other scenes; K119 and K120 Into Town and Out of Town, which connect to each other to create a 12' town that in turn connects on left to a choice of infinite-length hardwood forest or farmlands scenes or both; and K121 Field's Start, which connects on left to a choice of seven scenes and enables on right an infinite length of farmlands. As with previous scenes, SceniKing Roll Outs are made to scale and backdated to enable support for model railroading from the 1950s through today. Suggested retail price is \$49.95 each through any authorized SceniKing dealer or direct from BPH Enterprises, 4 Palmer Dr., Barrie, ON L4M 6V9 Canada.



### Pleasant Dreams for Nickel Plate Fans

Stockyard Express is offering an exclusive custom run of Nickel Plate Road sleeping cars made by M.T.H. Electric Trains. The 1:48 scale MTH Premier Line cars include the No. 20-68218 City of Lorain seen here photographed on Adam Matthews layout, No. 20-61006 City of Lima, and No. 20-61007 City of Fort Wayne. The cars have durable and highly detailed ABS bodies, metal wheels and axles, operating die-cast metal couplers, end-of-car diaphragms, detailed interiors with overhead lighting, and 10 passenger figures in each coach. Cars measure 19"x 2-7/16"x 3-1/2" and are designed for operation on O42 or wider curves. These special-run sleepers sell for \$89.95 each and can be ordered directly from Stockyard Express at [www.stockyardexpress.com](http://www.stockyardexpress.com), [sales@stockyardexpress.com](mailto:sales@stockyardexpress.com), or 440-774-2131.



### This Way to the Trains

Model Tech Studios is offering an O scale 1920s–1950s "The Underground" subway entrance to make your layout appear to go underground even if everything is on a flat sheet of plywood. This classic Victorian flair subway entrance treats your layout viewer to a sampling of the access used to get to underground transportation facilities that exist in so many cities and includes stairs and handrails vanishing into the subway platform. The ornate Victorian roof, entry canopy, and stairs are preassembled in cast sections and detailed down to the Entrance lettering and arrows inside the entryway that point to the stairs going down. This O scale easy-to-assemble kit covers an approximately 7" long x 3-1/2" wide footprint and sells for \$59.99. Available from Model Tech Studios LLC, P.O. Box 1497, North Hampton, NH 03862, [www.modeltechstudios.com](http://www.modeltechstudios.com).



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## Take Stock of MTH Rolling Stock

The new *Comprehensive Guide to MTH Premier Rolling Stock Vol. 2* book from Brentwood Antiques covers items in the extensive MTH production line numbered in the 95000–99000 series. Included are stack cars, tank cars, hoppers, and various other types of rolling stock including plows, flatcars with tractors and other loads, and foreign cars. The book is complete with color photos and lists the MTH catalog the item first appeared in, the road numbers, minimum curves required, dimensions, and retail price. Also it includes noncataloged and canceled items. Priced at \$44.95, this new volume in the series documenting MTH production is available directly from The Train Shop at Brentwood Antiques, 106 Lafayette Rd. (Route 1), Hampton Falls, NH 03844, 603-929-1441, or [info@thetrainshop.com](mailto:info@thetrainshop.com).

Comprehensive Guide to  
MTH PREMIER ROLLING STOCK, Vol. 2

1996–2013 Catalog #1

Richard Ridolfi

Covers flat cars, tank cars, hoppers, miscellaneous cars, and foreign cars



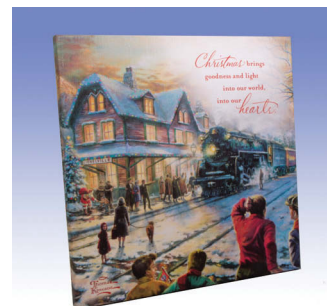
## Back to the Past



SMR Trains announces the availability of its newest models, the New York & Harlem *Amenia* (pictured here) and the Western & Atlantic *Yonah*. These all-brass, limited-edition 1:48 scale models are available in both 2-rail and 3-rail configurations. SMR models are configured with premium Swiss Faulhaber motors, and 3-rail models use electronics made in the U.S.A. for conventional transformer-controlled operation. These are the 14th and 15th locomotives to be released by SMR, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. Just 24 *Yonah* and 10 *Amenia* models were built in 3-rail, and each has an individual serial number. Most of the models already have been reserved; however, a limited availability remains for the two engines. Orders are being accepted at the SMR website at [www.smrtrains.com](http://www.smrtrains.com) or by mail to SMR Trains, P.O. Box 753, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054. Price for each locomotive is \$1,649.95 plus \$40.00 shipping.

## Lionelville by the Painter of Light

Fans of the late Thomas Kinkadee, the American artist best known as the "Painter of Light," now have a special Lionel-theme Christmas greeting card to send to family and friends. The quality Hallmark card is based on a painting released in 2012 titled *All Aboard for Christmas*, one of the last completed by the artist. The scene depicts what a real-world Lionelville might look like at Christmas. Pere Marquette Berkshire No. 1225, the prototype for the famed Polar Express with Lionel Lines painted on the tender, is pulling a string of Madison-type passenger cars into a station bearing the Lionelville destination sign. A young boy in the scene's foreground holds a small flag with a postwar-era version of the Lionel logo. The 8-1/2" square card with a linen-like finish mounted on heavy stock is currently available in Walmart stores with Connections from Hallmark greeting card departments throughout the nation. Visit [www.thomaskinkadee.com](http://www.thomaskinkadee.com) for more information about the painting.





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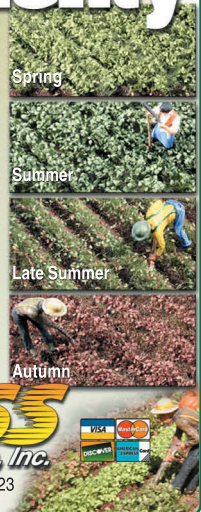


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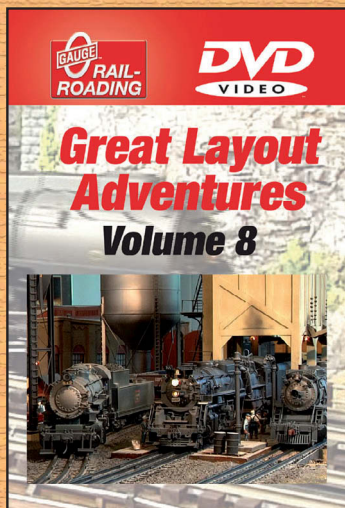
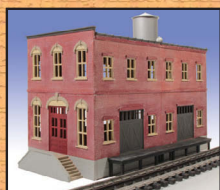


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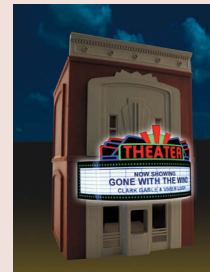
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You can take your photos using a digital camera capable of at least 3.3 megapixels set to the best JPEG image. Please send only original, unedited JPEG files. Color prints of 4"x 6" or larger are also fine. Be sure to include brief notes about the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

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

### *This Budd's for You*

The morning local is leaving Bellevue station en route to Schenectady on the beautifully detailed 3-rail O gauge layout built by Don Klose. Featured most recently in Run 230, the August/September 2008 issue, Don is continually enhancing his layout with new scenes and features. We're hoping he'll be treating our readers to an updated tour along the line at some point in the very near future.



### *On the Way to Work*

It's early morning on a hazy summer day in western Pennsylvania. Workers in the cars on PA Route 45 are already running late for their 8 a.m. start time. High above, train WE212, headed by SD40-2 No. 6351, is on schedule as it races to Rook yard over Hudson viaduct. This scene is on Jason Capra's 3-rail O gauge Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway, which you'll see much more of in a future issue.





### Seasonal Nostalgia

William L. Knode of Hagerstown, Maryland, builds a new holiday layout every year. Seen here is a recent creation that measures 7' x 12' and represents the U.S. railroading scene in the latter half of the 19th century. That 10-wheeler chuffing through town is an MTH model as is the modified Civil War cannon car at the right, which is being pushed by a Lionel 4-4-0. The store buildings behind the 10-wheeler are from MTH, and the station also at the right is from a Lionel kit.

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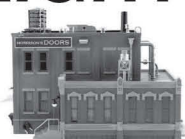
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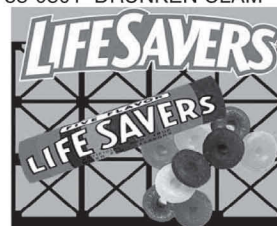
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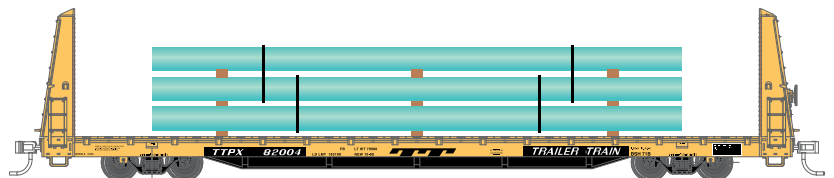
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# Product Reviews



## Lionel Motorized Units

Review and Photos by George Brown

When Ed Boyle recently talked with me about reviewing a few of what he called “critters” from Lionel, their command control capabilities garnered my interest. But as I quickly learned when I unpacked the three motorized units submitted for this review, it wasn’t just the command control that made them so neat. At my initial contact with the SP Early-Era Inspection Vehicle, CSX Speeder, and 4850TM Trackmobile, they proved surprisingly pretty...and cute, too. On each unit, the color scheme was attractive, and under close scrutiny the paint and graphics were excellent. In spite of their diminutive size, or perhaps even because of it, each of the three units delivered its own flavor of fun.

Initially, I was interested in seeing how Lionel was able to shoe-horn command electronics into each of the small motorized units, especially the inspection vehicle. Ultimately, I found the units ran great using TMCC and Legacy remote controllers and command bases with my ZW-L as the power source. These units also performed well using a DCS remote with a TIU wired as the command front end to my Legacy Command Base. For the operator using conventional control, the motorized units powered up in

forward with a direction sequence of forward, neutral, reverse, neutral, forward. Of course, all three of the motorized units will run on O27 or wider 3-rail curves.

Each unit has a command receiver and driver board for the motor and lights plus a program switch for setting the unit’s command ID. The two rollers pick up the electrical power from the center rail. Instead of incandescent bulbs, LEDs provide the lighting for each unit, but there is no sound system. The lack of sound didn’t surprise or disappoint me at all.

Final drive gearing appeared to be extremely low enabling all three units to start slowly and realistically. Because of this gearing, both the inspection vehicle and Trackmobile proved to have a limited top speed, but the speeder showed it could be downright...well, speedy.

### Early-Era Inspection Vehicle

The first to go onto the tracks of the editorial Carpet Central Railroad was the inspection vehicle in Southern Pacific black widow colors. I’ve not found any photos that verify the color



scheme or even if the SP had an inspection car similar to the Lionel model. But no matter, even if the vehicle is a fantasy unit with no prototype, I found it attractive.

At power-up in command mode, the headlights came on immediately. To verify the vehicle was receiving command signals, I pressed the AUX-2 key sequence on my CAB-1L twice, which toggled the headlights off and back on. This key sequence was described in the owner's manual. The inspection vehicle didn't go all that far before I realized here was a really neat little...uhhh...well, critter. A train was already on the track, so using my CAB-1L, I ran it and the inspection vehicle with the vehicle about 6' ahead of the locomotive. What a blast!

With its die-cast body and chassis, the inspection vehicle is surprisingly heavy at almost 11 ounces. Flanged metal wheels replace the usual rear wheels and tires for the roadway while under the front end is a four-wheel plastic pilot truck with built-in brake shoes and cowcatcher. The body is a reasonable rendition of a 1938 Chevrolet Master Deluxe four-door sedan, which probably was why Lionel dubbed the critter as an early-era vehicle.

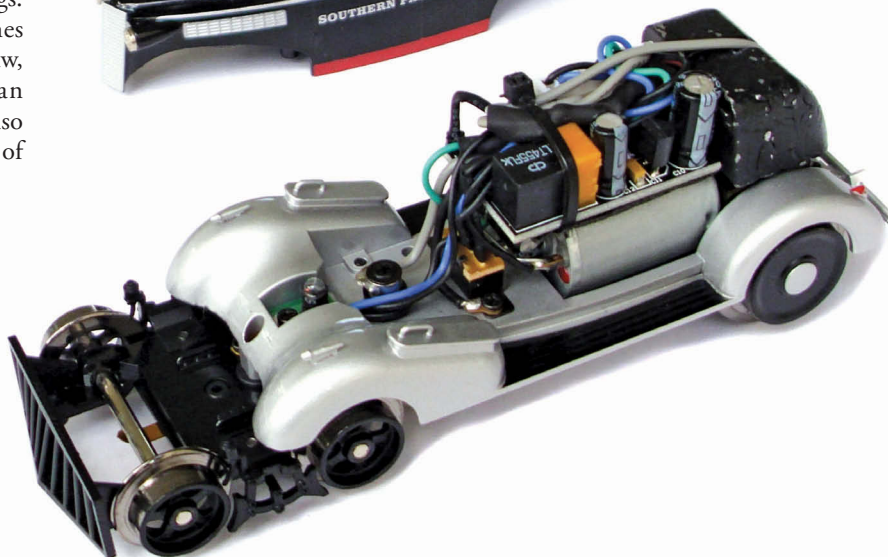
Comparing dimensions of a real '38 Chevy with the body of the Lionel inspection vehicle put the model at 1:43 scale rather than 1:48. I didn't have any issue with the slightly oversized model because the O scale Lionel Legacy N&W Class J 4-8-4 that followed the inspection vehicle around my O72 loop was still realistically huge in comparison. If the inspection vehicle did have a sound system, I wondered if it would have accurately portrayed the roar of a Chevy stovebolt six wound up tight as it strained to keep its vehicle ahead of the big, snorting 4-8-4.

A small self-tapping screw is in each corner of the chassis, so taking the body off took me less than a minute using a #0 Phillips screwdriver. Inside the vehicle were a command receiver and driver board, a small DC motor with a worm gear, and a hefty weight positioned over the rear axle. Of course, the rear wheels are the powered ones via a worm and gear arrangement. Plastic "light pipes" carried the light from the single LED mounted in front of the chassis to the two headlights. In fact, because the headlights were so bright, I originally thought a small LED was mounted inside each of the headlamp housings.

Other available road names and color schemes include the AT&SF, B&M, C&O, D&RGW, Milw, and PRR. According to the Lionel catalog, an inspection vehicle decorated for Transylvania is also available to inspect the tracks for legendary creatures of the night.

## Speeder

Next up on the editorial CCRR was the speeder in CSX colors, and it too ran about 6' ahead of the train. For a more contemporary setting, a pair of Dash 8-40BW diesels replaced the Class J at the point of the train with the speeder running ahead to ensure the track was clear. The speeder tracked rock-solid on my Atlas O sectional track and had no problems traveling across my switches.







At power-up in command mode, the red strobe light on the front of the roof began blinking, and the directional headlight illuminated. To verify communications between the remote and the speeder, I simply pressed the direction key on my CAB-1L and watched the forward headlight go dark as the light at the other end of the body illuminated. A rear marker light is also on each end of the body but did not illuminate as implied in the Lionel catalog, which I found somewhat disappointing.

A molded plastic body mounts on a die-cast frame, which gives the speeder its track-holding weight of nearly 11 ounces. Two painted figures representing the crew look out through clear plastic windows. Separate windshield wipers are on the windshields at both ends of the speeder with a slide-open door located on each side. Also on each side are separate wire handrails. But since about two-thirds of the interior is filled with a box that hides the electronics, the speeder can't hold additional members of the track crew or any equipment.

Inside the speeder is the command receiver and driver board, which is considerably larger than the board in the inspection vehicle, along with the motor. Additionally, one of the two drive wheels has a traction tire on it. Although they are not visible from most viewing angles, the wheels have spokes.

In addition to CSX, colors and road names also offered include BNSF, CN, NYC, NS, PRR, UP, and a generic Maintenance of Way scheme. Again I can't confirm the accuracy of the color schemes or even whether these roads had speeders. Regardless, the axiomatic box on four wheels is a neat little critter that has excellent operating potential.

## 4850TM Trackmobile

Finally, it was the Trackmobile's turn on the CCRR rails, but with a different twist. Initially, it got to motor out of an industrial siding, couple onto a weighted Atlas O 60' boxcar, and tug that unusually heavy car back into the siding. Even without traction tires on either of its two driver wheelsets, the Trackmobile was able to pull and push the car without difficulty on level track and through O72 turnouts. This little 1:48 scale industrial tug was also able to move two Lionel O scale 50' boxcars or three Lionel O scale 40' tank cars through O36 Atlas O turnouts, again on level track. With extremely light cars such as the Lionel 9600-series high-cube boxcars, the Trackmobile shuttled five into and out of O36 sidings. Understandably, the weight and rolling capabilities of the cars in addition to the curvature of the track and switches have a direct bearing on how many cars the Trackmobile can handle. Also, any track grade can dramatically skew the Trackmobile's performance profile to nearly zero.

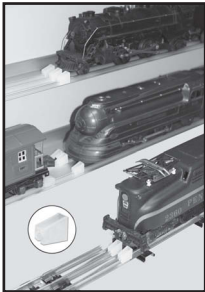
The real 4850TM Trackmobile is in its element on either rails or pavement. Its specialty is getting in and out of blind sidings to move railcars wherever needed within the industrial facility or complex. To learn more about this mechanical mule, visit the Trackmobile website at [www.trackmobile.com/history](http://www.trackmobile.com/history).

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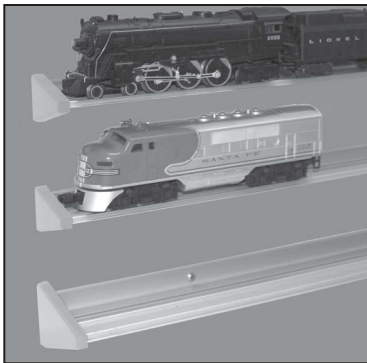
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Features for the Lionel model of the 4850TM Trackmobile are more akin to those for a switching locomotive than an entry-level motorized unit. These features include command-operated ElectroCouplers on both ends, directional headlights and rear marker lights, roof-mounted strobe lights, plastic handrails and grab irons, horns and exhaust stack, and nonoperating road wheels with simulated hydraulic actuators.

The cab has interior lights and details, a painted figure representing the operator, and glazed windows with separate windshield wipers. In a price comparison with the other two motorized units in this review, the Trackmobile's fare is commensurate with its operating features and details.

A note of caution in the owner's manual relates to the plastic exhaust stack, which covers the antenna wire for receiving command signals. This stack extends above the top of the cab and can be broken off by careless handling, which will likely cripple command communications to the Trackmobile. I took the caution at its face value and handled the model carefully.

On our evaluation unit, the couplers opened every time on command but wouldn't close easily during switching. I don't like ramming an awaiting car or






train with a locomotive just to get its coupler to close, even at a modest speed. However, this proved necessary for both couplers on the Trackmobile. If it were mine, I would extract each knuckle and burnish its latching cam for smooth and easy closing. And yes, this repair does require driving and peening rivets.

At slightly more than 17 ounces, the die-cast Trackmobile is the heaviest and most complex of the three motorized units submitted for this review. And I have to say in candor, it was my favorite of the three critters with its play value as an industrial switcher. I can easily envision a small diorama style of layout with the Trackmobile moving cars from a delivery track into and out of a cramped industrial complex with several sidings, each serving a different rail customer.

I especially liked the striking KCS color scheme of our evaluation sample. Other offered color schemes include Chessie, Conrail, CN, Long Island, NP, NS, NYC, and a generic Maintenance of Way. Can I attest to the accuracy of the model for these railroads? Again the answer is no, but I can confirm the operating fun the scale, command-controlled Trackmobile offers.

## At the End of the Run

Any of the three motorized units from Lionel can easily contribute to the overall effect of a layout, regardless of the miniature rail empire's simplicity or grandeur. One of the critters' several attributes is the relatively low cost for an O gauge item that runs under its own power and can be controlled using TMCC or Legacy systems. Considering the 2013 holiday season when this issue is released, any one or more of the Lionel motorized units could prove to be a nice gift for an experienced or neophyte O gauge railroader. 

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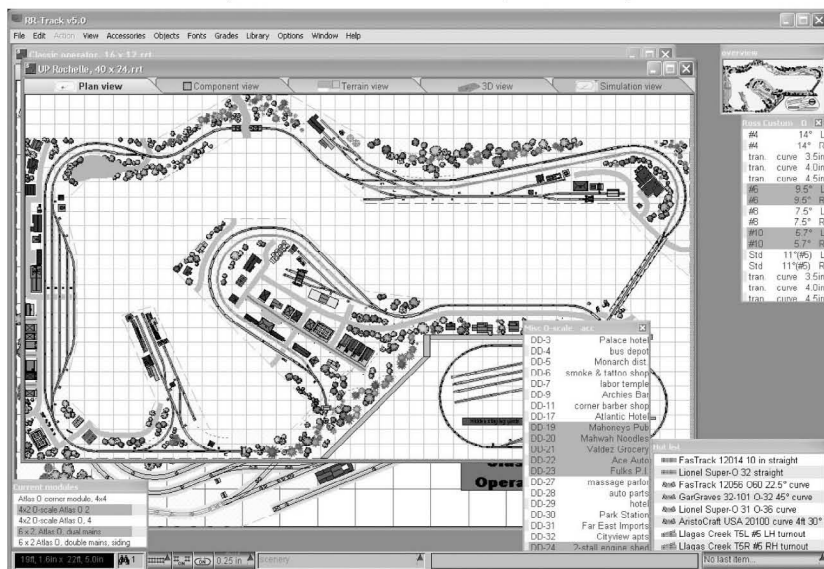


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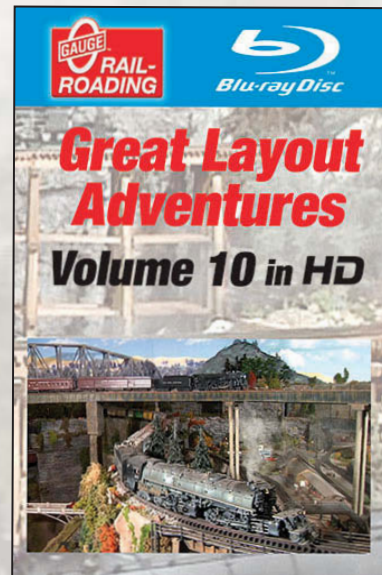


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# 3rd Rail NYC T3a Electric Locomotive

Review and Photos by George Brown

Throughout railroad history, new locomotive designs were the result of necessity. Longer and heavier trains along with the requirement for faster movement constantly mandated more powerful locomotives. One of many such necessity cases was the New York Central and its heavily traveled electrified rail lines in and out of Grand Central Terminal. Early in the 20th century, the railroad's Class S, colloquially referred to as S-motors, 2-D-2 electric

locomotives built by Alco and GE proved to be less than satisfactory at speed when hauling long, heavy passenger trains.

Beginning in 1913 and concluding in 1936, Alco and GE built a total of 36 Class T, commonly called T-motors, to replace the S-motors in mainline passenger service to and from Grand Central Terminal. Built in several subclasses including the T1a, T1b, T2a, T2b, and T3a, the T3a was the heaviest at nearly 130 tons. All T-motor locomotives had a B-B-B-B power truck configuration with eight gearless 380 hp GE traction motors producing a total of 3040 hp. Tractive effort from all 16 powered wheels was a strong 71,000 pounds, and top speed was 75 mph.

All 36 of the T-motors were employed exclusively on the road's electrified 660 VDC third-rail tracks radiating from Grand Central to Harmon on the Hudson Division and North White Plains on the Harlem Division. Assignments ranged from hauling commuter trains to pulling the road's flagship passenger trains including the 20th Century Limited. Six of the T-motors survived into the Penn Central merger in 1968, and I understand one T3a still exists but is now in derelict condition.

Through most of their service years, the T-motors were painted a monochromatic and uninspiring black with white lettering. The famous and fabulous lightning stripe color scheme appeared on the T-motors in the mid-1950s, which is the color scheme on our evaluation 3-rail model from 3rd Rail. Also offered are black models, and each paint scheme of the 3rd Rail T-motors is available in one of three cab numbers.



## Construction and Features

Available in black or the two-tone gray and white NYC lightning stripe color scheme, the 1:48 scale T-motor is hand-fabricated from brass sheets and bar stock. I was unable to locate full dimensions of the prototype T3a, but the scale length of the 3rd Rail 3-rail model closely compares with the real one. A version for 2-rail operation is also available.

Etching the brass sheets produces the rivet details on the pilot decks and cab as well as a grain that represents the prototype's wooden rooftop walkways. On our evaluation model, the skill of the assemblers was evidenced by the nearly seamless box cab body and flawless end platforms. Among the benefits of brass construction are the realistic thicknesses of the various structures around the windows and louvers as well as on the end platforms. Additionally and when compared to plastic models of similar detail, brass models tend to be less prone to damage from careless handling.

As with all limited-production brass models from Sunset/3rd Rail, details such as truck side frames, handrail stanchions, bells, and light housings are lost wax castings. Additional details are hand-fabricated from both wire and small castings including but not limited to handrails, grab irons, and nonoperating electrical cables.

Inside the box cab, several weights that help give the locomotive its tractive effort are mounted on the frame and also on the sides of the shell. Electronic circuit boards for control and sound plus an unbaffled speaker ride on the frame. The sounds are from the generic RailSounds repertoire for electric locomotives that Lionel makes available under license to other manufacturers. According to Scott Mann, president of Sunset/3rd Rail, the air horn is not the correct warning sound for the T3a, but it's the only one included in the licensed sound set. As I understand it, T-motors had steam whistles, not air horns.

A factory-installed 9-volt battery keeps the sound system running during short-duration power interruptions, such as during direction changes when in transformer-controlled conventional operation. For the command operator, this battery is not needed, and I recommend taking it out. Aged and depleted alkaline batteries are not prone to leaking and damaging whatever they are in, but I've seen it happen. Six screws hold the cab to the frame and are easy to access. With these screws removed, the cab simply lifts off the frame.

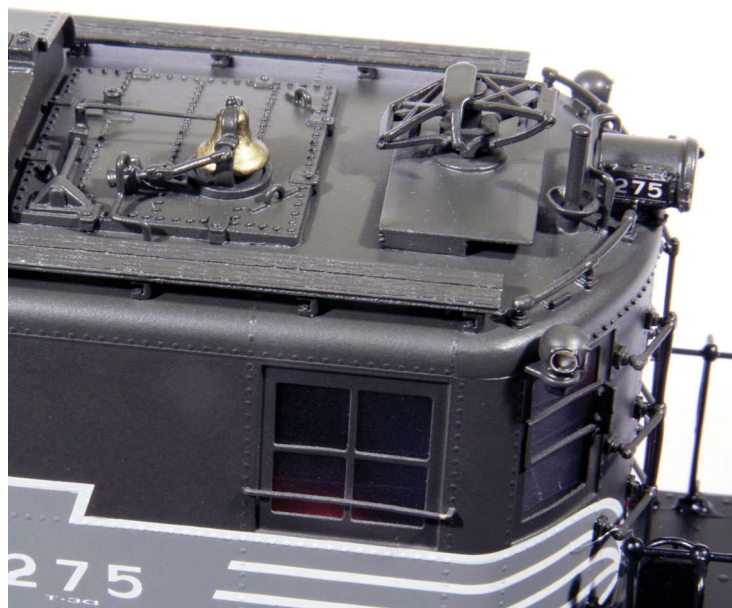


### 3rd Rail T3a Electric Locomotive 3-Rail Features and Details

- 1:48 scale
- Brass construction
- TMCC with RailSounds 4.0 under license from Lionel
- Cruise Commander motor driver from The Electric RR Co.
- ERR RailSounds Commander
- Two DC can motors with flywheels
- Eight powered wheels with ribbed traction tires
- Directional LED headlights
- LED white classification lamps and red marker lamps
- Coil-operated couplers on both ends
- Cast end buffers and brakeman's stirrups
- Safety chains with cast hooks
- Cast hand brake and sand boxes
- Illuminated cab
- Painted figure representing the engineer
- Frosted plastic windows
- Minimum 3-rail 042 curve







The round end box cab rides realistically on two articulated frames with two trucks mounted under each frame. Both of the inner trucks, which are those below the cooling louvers on the side of the cab, are powered. Each power truck has a flywheel-equipped DC can motor geared to all four wheels. As to the locomotive's pulling capabilities, most O gauge electric or diesel locomotives with a weight of just over 6 pounds usually don't produce the measured tractive effort of nearly 3-1/2 pounds that I saw from the T3a. In fact, this number represents the median pull of three consecutive tractive effort tests with the engine running on dry and clean Atlas O sectional track.

Each of the end trucks on the model is a nonpowered idler equipped with a unique mechanism of spring-loaded wiper studs. These studs ride against the inner face of wheels and conduct the AC return through the wheels to the outside two rails of 3-rail track. As with previously released locomotives from 3rd Rail, the wheels and wipers also pick up the radio frequency TMCC signals from the outside rails rather than employing insulated antennas mounted somewhere on the cab. A roller on each of the four trucks picks up the power from the center rail.

A casting representing the cover over the steam generator is held in place by a pair of small magnets. This cover lifts off to reveal the program switch and sound volume potentiometer and is also keyed so it will go back into place correctly.

The paint and lettering on our evaluation locomotive were flawless, which is what I've come to expect from Sunset/3rd Rail. I was especially pleased with the lightning stripe color scheme on our model of NYC #275. All the full-size T-motors I saw in the late 1940s through the mid-1950s on the electrified portion of the NYC Harlem Division were painted in the somber NYC black with white lettering.

## At Trackside

For the initial run of our sample T3a, the engineer figure inside one end of the cab indicated the default forward end at power-up. After addressing the engine in command operation, the sound of the cooling fans starts and the default forward headlight illuminates as do the classification and marker lamps. Both headlights are directional and light according to which way the T-motor moves. However, the classification and marker lights are



### 3rd Rail NYC T3a TMCC Performance

(sound: on; speed control: on)

**Length:** 15" over couplers; 13-1/2" between end sills

**Distance Between Locomotive Pickup Rollers:**

1st and 2nd: 4"; 1st and 3rd: 6-1/2"; 1st and 4th: 10-1/2"

**Weight on Driving Wheels:** 6 lbs, 2 oz

**Power Consumption at Idle @ 18 VAC:** 0.3 A, 5 W

**Tractive Effort @ 18 VAC:** 3 lbs, 6 oz. @ 4.6 A, 83 W

**Minimum Sustained Speed @ 18 VAC:** 1 scale mph @ 1.4 A, 25 W

**Maximum Tested Speed @ 18 VAC:** 60 scale mph @ 2.1 A, 38 W

**Test Train**

Eight-car streamlined passenger; train weight, 13 lbs; pull to move train, 12 oz; 60' and 80' O scale aluminum cars from K-Line

fixed and do not change color according to direction. Of course, in conventional operation, the sound and lights turn on when the AC power on the track exceeds approximately 5 VAC.

Starting and accelerating the T3a with or without a train on its coupler proved to be realistically slow and smooth, thanks to the low gearing in the power trucks and the Cruise Commander motor driver electronics. I especially enjoyed the realistic arrivals at a virtual passenger depot. The engine's response to commands from my CAB-1L and Legacy remote controllers was consistent and predictable. With the sound turned off, the motors were whisper quiet on the track power from my ZW-L.


Coupler operation was excellent and closed every time without having to bang the engine into its awaiting car or train. I enjoyed easing the engine into an awaiting car or train and then running it forward with the couplers closed and the car or train in tow.

Riding on its four articulated trucks, the T3a negotiated the O72 curves and turnouts on the editorial Carpet Central Railroad with the aplomb of a caterpillar on a twisty twig. The T3a handled my O54 curves equally well, and it looked a lot better in the tighter curves than did the 80' cars in our standard test train for scale passenger locomotives.

When running through O54 curves, the engine made a strange metal-to-metal rubbing noise in a right-hand turn. The cause turned out to be a flywheel rubbing against one of the engine weights. Two small Phillips screws hold each of the two weights in place against the inner side of the body. These screws apparently worked loose in transit, and my tightening them cured the problem.

Out of curiosity, I coupled my five-car set of Williams Crown Edition 60' Madison cars in NYC colors to the T3a and was pleasantly surprised with the visual results. As a side note, these Madisons were my only NYC passenger cars, and I just wanted to see how their colors looked with the lightning stripe T-motor. What surprised me was the 1:48 scale engine did not appear overly large compared to the traditional size Madison cars. Of course, the trim box cab electric was perfect at the point of a six-car train of scale 70' K-Line Heavyweights or eight-car train of Atlas express reefers and Trainman 60' passenger cars.

### At the End of the Run

For the O gauge railroader who is partial to New York Central electric locomotives, the T3a from 3rd Rail is a quintessential electric passenger hauler. It's at home pulling either a commuter run or a flagship intercity passenger train. I enjoyed my time with the T-motor. 

### New York Central T3a Motor

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## The O Scale Hampden Terminal Railroad



In this biplane view of a nostalgic scene, a leased Erie articulated camelback leads an empty coal train from the O'Neil Power Station back to Dylan yard on the Bondsville trestle. Beneath the trestle, a B&A tank engine runs a scheduled passenger train to Springfield on the Athol Branch.

# MODELING WHAT I LOVE

Article by Daniel M. Bigda    Photos by Brian Solomon

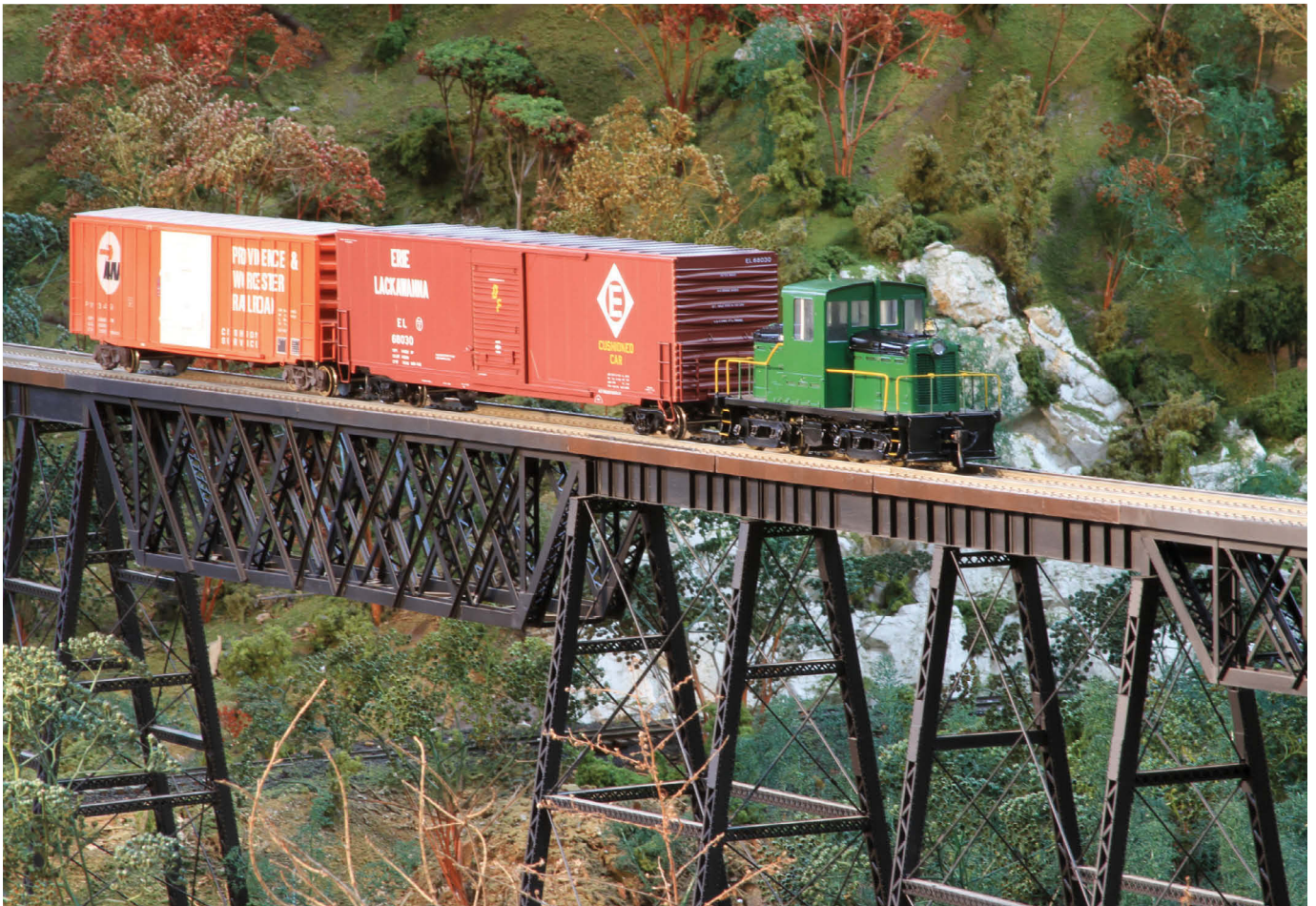
My career in railroading started with a choice I made in high school, not by design, but by fate. I wanted to fly A10s for the U.S. Air Force, but because I wore glasses full-time, I could not qualify. So I turned to the next best thing, model railroading. My inspiration for the hobby was sparked by my parents and the model railroading magazines they provided in addition to reading articles about the legendary John Allen and others. More recently, I also learned many of the modeling techniques I use today from Mike Tylick and George Selios, both of whom have great HO model railroads.

After high school, I began working for the Boston & Maine Railroad as a train conductor. After four years in that post, I moved to a short career with the U.S. Army and the Massachusetts National Guard. When I returned home from the service, I went back on the B&M, but there was no work available, and I was immediately furloughed. I then took a design and model-making job at Railway Design Associates while attending college. At the design studio, we were doing model work for a number of different toy companies, including Lionel.

A year and a half later, in 1992, I found

myself taking a job in Michigan working for Lionel in its design department. The first models I worked on were case designs for the new hand-held controllers that would house electronics being designed by renowned rock star and Lionel enthusiast and part owner, Neil Young. I was also engaged in the design of various other items including steam engine models such as the C&O Hudson and the New York Central Commodore Vanderbilt Hudson. And I helped to create some of the catalogs where I introduced selections for the product lines. It was certainly a fun job, but I also wanted to remain open to new opportunities.





Central Mass leased Whitcomb loco on the Bondsville trestle heads east with two loads to Opielowski Papers on the interplant transfer run that runs loads and empties from the mills to the SCS Box plant. This is a twice daily move that can involve between one and seven cars.

While at Lionel and in the course of a business flight from Pittsburgh to Detroit, I met Jim O'Neil, retired president of the Detroit Edison (DTE) Non-Regulated Business Unit. Although our initial meeting aboard the plane was inconsequential, today we are very good friends. When I left Lionel, Jim took me on as a consultant, and we worked on new railcar and other designs for DTE. While at DTE, I also met people from General Motors and soon found myself at a huge GM rail logistics meeting in Warren, Michigan. There I was introduced to key railroad personnel and others. I was among those tasked to design the world's largest boxcar. Taking an 86' boxcar and making the roof higher with a new design of my own creation, we were able to fit six truckloads of automobile parts racks into one railcar.

Sometime later, I was introduced to Christopher Pistell, a finance banker with LaSalle Bank in Baltimore, Maryland. That relationship allowed us to grow a substantial railcar fleet while I busied myself



Repairs completed, a B&A tank engine is seen sitting on the turntable at Dylan yard as it prepares for a last run for the day.





Penn Central SD40 rides the turntable after delivering a coal train from the interchange with the Hampden Terminal RR. This power apparently won't run through to the O'Neil Power Station to deliver the coal. HT leased power will take the train from here.



learning the business of leasing railcars. From there I developed what is today Boxcar Services, a company I own that brokers and leases railcars to clients throughout North America.

During all of these years of real-world railroading, I still maintained and nurtured my interest in model railroading. I modeled in N scale while at Lionel, moved to HO, and then on to my involvement with O scale railroading.

I rebuilt a horse barn on my property and made it the office for my company. It also includes a small model-building shop, and the second floor houses my evolving Hampden Terminal RR. The name is derived from the Hampden Railroad that was constructed here in Central Massachusetts one hundred years ago but never saw a revenue train.

I initially proceeded to build a large model railroad that I have since torn down due to the advice given by a friend of mine, Ben Brown. He came over one day, took a look at what I had, and sent me a long

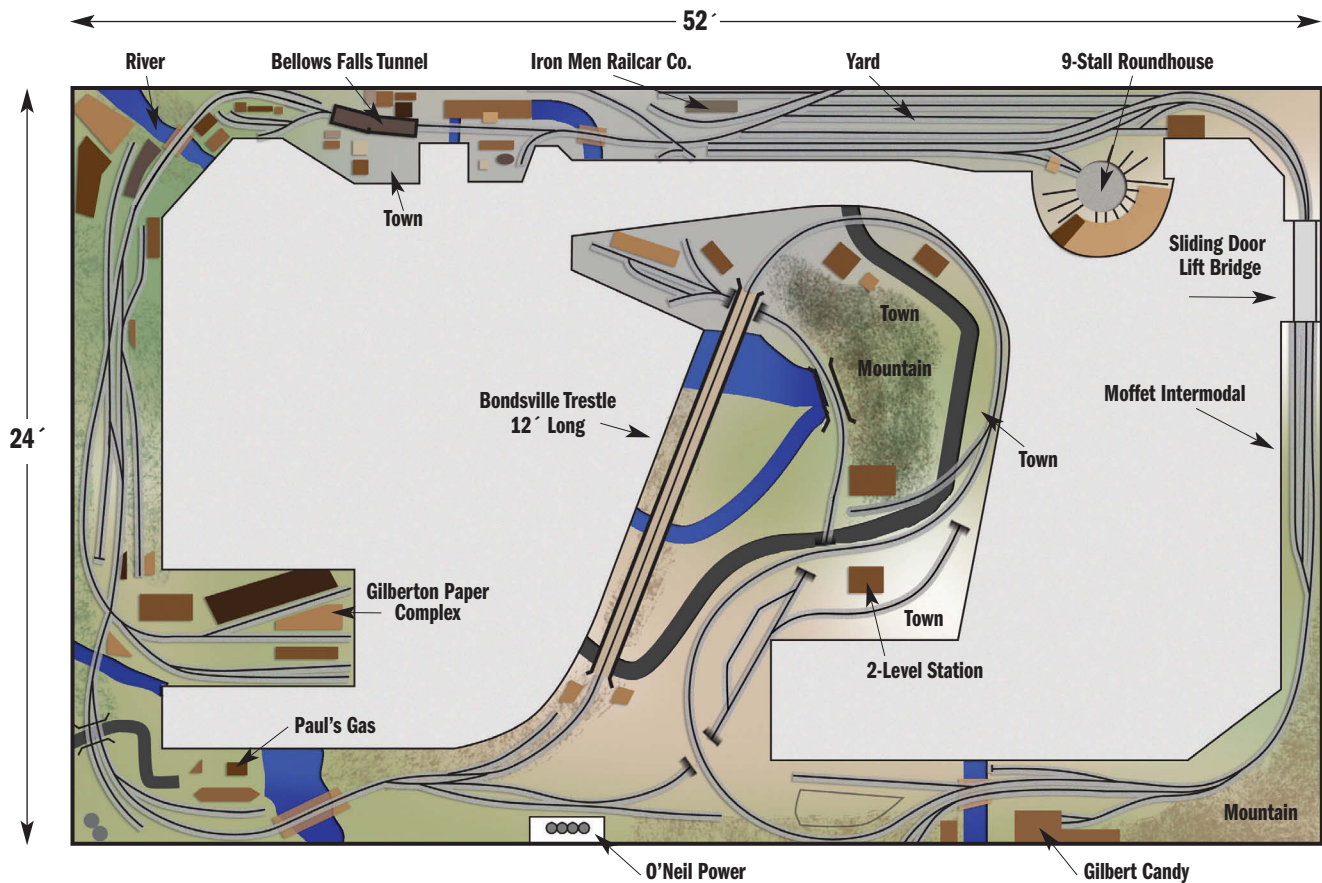


Leased Penn Central SW8 spots a load of steel inside the Iron Men Railcar Company. This small but productive enterprise manufactures eight 50' boxcars a day for many clients. It is a busy place.



Leased power awaits assignment at HT's John Conn roundhouse. Alco's were favored by both the roundhouse crew and the facility's namesake.





e-mail with some honest criticism basically stating that what I had was...well...rather boring and advising that I would probably lose interest in a short time. I wasn't happy with that critique and discussed it with my wife, Kara, who advised me to reread Ben's critique and to take a long hard look at my layout. I did as she recommended, and after evaluating it carefully a number of times, I realized Ben was right.

Within a week, I had the old layout torn down. Ben, in his critique, wrote something that he felt was critical; model things you like. Ben told me to jot down the top five real-world rail scenes that I liked and to then try to design them into the layout. In the course of developing that list, I realized that I am particularly attracted to 1970s railroading, considered by many to have been a rather dark time in the industry's history. I remember the Penn Central RR going through Palmer, Massachusetts, with all of its grungy motive power and rolling stock rocking and rolling along poorly maintained track plus all the other grunge associated with railroading in that period.

After I knew what my five top scenes would be, I came up with another five



**A Hampden Terminal freight passes in the background. Audette's Co-Op is in the foreground, and Small's Sneaker Manufacturing is housed in the stone structures.**

scenes that I really wanted to have on my layout and then designed things to fit in my 24' x 52' room. The impressive Bondsville trestle, once located in a village of Palmer, Massachusetts, was the first giant feature that I wanted on the layout. I contacted another friend, Phil Opielowski, for help, and he researched and found the

actual drawings of the prototype trestle. Phil, by the way, has scratchbuilt many local models in O scale. He is the go-to railroad research specialist in Palmer, which is known as the Town of Seven Railroads. It took me three months to complete a scale 12' long model of the trestle. Watching everything progress, Phil





An Erie camelback charges through a crossing in Bellows Falls. The siding leads to Kist Soda Company, a favorite local tonic.



The B&M makes a run on its namesake line that is being sold to the HT. During the sale, the B&M sent this SW8 across the line to pick up any remaining B&M assets. So far, only a single caboose has been retrieved.



said that when I was ready, he wanted to help move it up. When I was ready, we moved the module upstairs and found out it was 1-1/2" too high for the prepared benchwork. Uh-oh! I measured that how many times? After some discussion, Phil and I decided to take the Sawz-All and cut the legs of the surrounding bench area down by 1-1/2". That fixed it!

Soon other scenes came into play. The Bellows Falls tunnel and a small town surrounding that area were next on the list. A small switching yard named Dylan yard is being developed with the help of Dylan Lambert. Typical New England mills as seen in the towns of Minyoke and Gilberton will also be major parts of that scene. These names are adapted from the real mill towns of Holyoke and Gilbertville, Massachusetts. The fifth design feature being built is the utility that gives purpose to bringing in the coal trains.

What I ended up with, thanks largely to Ben's critique, is the single-track Hampden Terminal RR with five scenes that I enjoy working on. Five more scenes will also be added to the railroad—local scenes that people will recognize. Departing from the dream of having a long double-track main line and huge rail yard, I accepted the reality of a single-track Hampden Terminal RR.

The benchwork is in modular form using basic 1x4 frame construction to fit the area being modeled. I visualize the scene in my head, build the module in my model shop, and then when done, I have my brother or a friend come over to help lug the module to the train room and place it in the chosen location. I follow this same procedure for each module. Being able to work directly on modules in the model shop sure beats running up and down the stairs to get measurements for an area I am working on.

The original layout plan I had included big power, large turntables, and other imposing features. The downsized railroad is now run with smaller locomotives from Atlas, Overland, and MTH, with some steam power mixed in from time to time. An Aristo-Craft wireless controller is used to run the trains. Since I am the only one who really operates this layout, the system works just fine. Someday I will likely get into digital command control, but regular DC suits me just fine for now.

The minimum curves are Atlas 49.5-degree curves. I also use Micro Engineering



**This Central Mass leased Whitcomb switcher is crossing the bridge at Bellows Falls. It will soon make a stop in the next town to deliver two empty boxcars on the interplant boxcar swap run.**



**Owned by, but not yet relettered to Hampden Terminal, SW8 #1220 switches Conrail boxcars built just a few miles away at the Iron Men Railcar Company. The cars are being spotted at Gilberton and Opielowski Papers.**

FlexTrak, and most of the switches are Atlas. Five curved switches were made by my friends Phil and John Hoertel. I paint the rails and the ties.

All of the buildings are from OGR Ameri-Towne, MTH, Lionel, Bar Mills, Downtown Deco, DPM, K-Line, IHC, and Model Tech Studios, along with some that were acquired from friends and are built to fit the scenes.

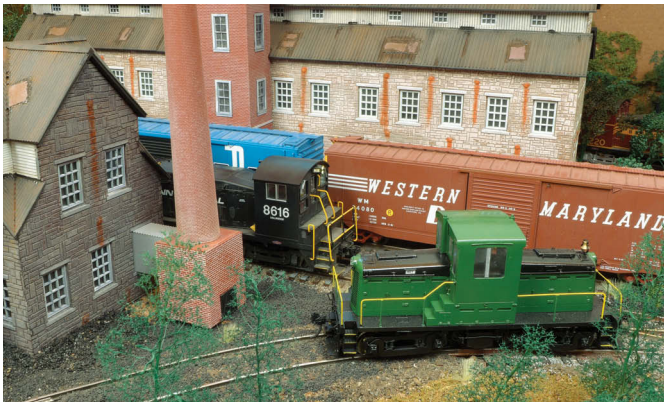
Rivers were created with Woodland Scenics Realistic Water, and rocks were made with Woodland Scenics latex molds.

I sometimes wonder why more people are not modeling 2-rail O scale. The most often heard excuse is that it takes up too much space, but I have found that it's possible to fit a whole lot of O scale stuff in some very compact areas. Some parts of my layout are only 18" deep, but they





The HT owns these two Penn Central GP9s at the John Conn roundhouse. These units are new to the house crews, and some parts from EMD will need to be ordered because at one time the HT was an Alco service roundhouse.



In this side view of Small's Sneaker Manufacturing, the leased Whitcomb is ready to head onto the main once the HT train clears.



From the top of a tall chimney is this view along Main Street in Bellows Falls. Just visible in the background is the HT main line.



Penn Central SW8 has just emerged from the Bellows Falls tunnel en route to Dylan yard. The leased Whitcomb is delivering coal to Small's Sneaker Manufacturing.

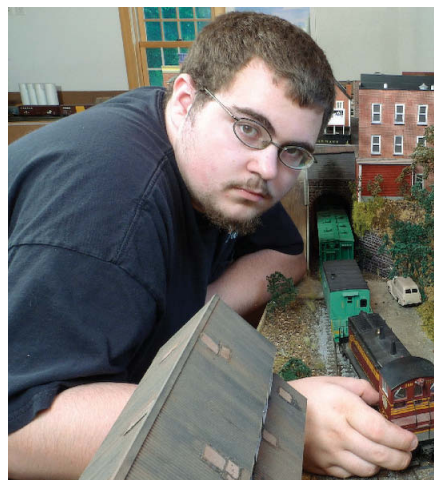




A leased NYC RS1, still sporting NYC paint years into the Penn Central merger, crosses Bondsville trestle heading west with grain loads for interchange with the Penn Central.



Hampden Terminal RR SW8 is in silhouette crossing Sliding River bridge.



Dylan Lambert helped to prepare the layout for the June 2013 O Scale National Convention held in Worcester, Massachusetts. Without his assistance and expertise, many of these scenes would be unfinished.




Daniel M. Bigda

### About the Author

Daniel M. Bigda grew up in central Massachusetts and now lives in West Brookfield, Massachusetts, with his wife, Kara, two dogs, and a cat. In the photo, he is working as a gandy dancer, spreading ballast.

### About the Photographer

Brian Solomon is a professional railway photographer and author with work included in more than 50 books. Learn about his worldwide photography at [www.briansolomon.com/trackingthelight](http://www.briansolomon.com/trackingthelight).

appear to be 30" or more deep with careful placement of the various buildings and features modeled into the scene. I am very happy to be involved in O scale and am continually on the lookout for inspirational layouts created by other O-scalers. My hope is that this brief tour of my layout will also inspire some others to explore the world of 2-rail O scale. 



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# Fun with a Mobile Modular Layout

Article and Photos by Jacques Brouillette



Here is an overall view of my mobile modular layout at Exporail at the Canadian Railway Museum. A small part of the real train collection is visible in the background below the mezzanine.

Just imagine coming into the Exporail train museum in Saint-Constant, Quebec, Canada, early in the morning. You are one of the lucky ones who get to go in before all the visitors. You go up to the mezzanine and really want to take a good, long look at the collection of beautiful Canadian steam and diesel engines, but today you have work to do.

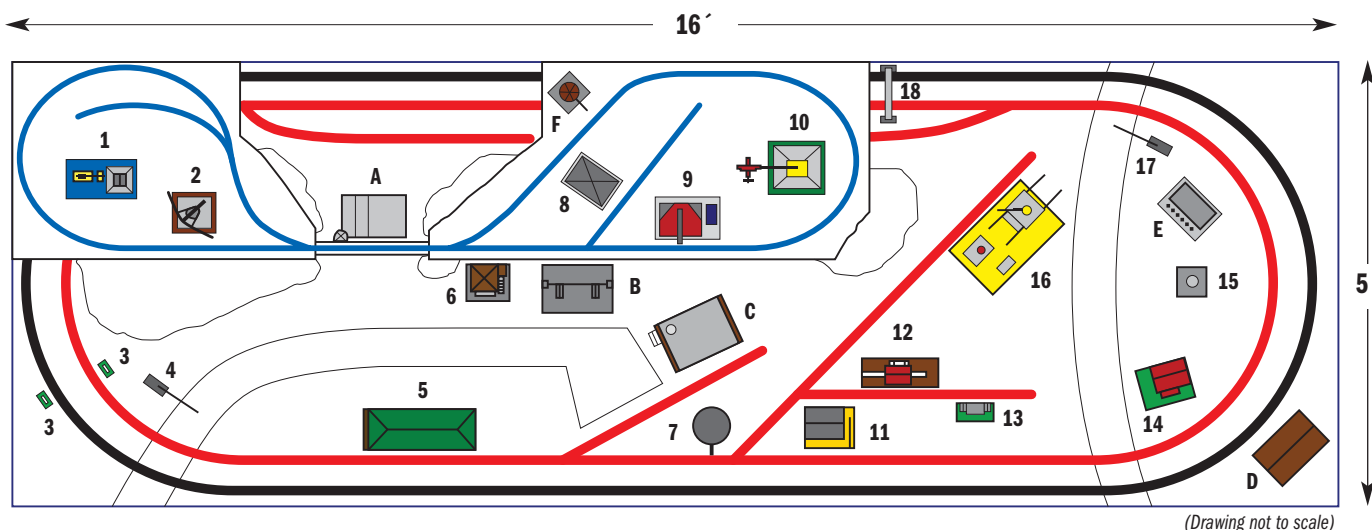
Each year in August, Exporail, the Canadian Railway Museum, hosts "A Great Passion for Model Trains" weekend where visitors can marvel at 15 model train layouts built by Quebec and Ontario model railroaders and clubs. You, or more specifically me in this case, are representing O gauge this year, and

there's a modular layout to be set up and checked out before the doors open. The available time today needs to be devoted to running O gauge trains and promoting the hobby. Now that is heaven for me, of course! But how did this event come to happen?

A few years after I wrote an article about our train layout at my father's home, we had to dismantle the layout so my parents could move into an apartment. I had not even finished packing the first box of trains when I was already planning a new layout. To my way of thinking, electric trains don't belong in boxes or in storage.

I had seen some modular layouts, mostly HO scale, at local train shows, and the idea of an interactive layout started to take





- |                         |                               |                         |  |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 1) Oil Derrick          | 10) Airplane Pylon            | A) Irving Gas Station   | <span style="color: red;">—</span> Main Line 2 (042 curves)        |
| 2) Radar                | 11) Rescue Maiden             | B) Canadian Style House | <span style="color: black;">—</span> Main Line 1 (054 curves)      |
| 3) Semaphore            | 12) Ice Station               | C) Korber Shop          | <span style="color: blue;">—</span> Upper Branch Line (027 curves) |
| 4) Crossing Gate        | 13) Milk Car Platform         | D) Railway Depot        |  |
| 5) Automatic Station    | 14) Automatic Gateman         | E) Pizza Stand          |  |
| 6) Burning Switch Tower | 15) Rotary Beacon             | F) Water Tower          |  |
| 7) Water Tower          | 16) Rocket Platform           |                         |  |
| 8) Control Tower        | 17) Illuminated Crossing Gate |                         |  |
| 9) Coal Loader          | 18) Signal Bridge             |                         |  |

shape. This would allow me to share the pleasure of operating a layout with the public by means of pushbuttons to activate some of the accessories. This would be a one-man show, so the layout had to be easy to assemble, operate, and transport in my minivan in a single trip.

The layout I built is comprised of eight modules and measures 16'x 5'. There are three panels for the pushbuttons and one main control panel. Each module has a folding set of legs and is secured to adjoining modules with 1/4" bolts.

Power is supplied by an MTH Z-4000 along with a Z-1000 for the train circuits and the 12-volt accessories. A Lionel 1053 transformer is used for the 18-volt accessories. Operation is with Lionel TMCC and conventional AC transformer control.

I use Lionel O27 tubular track on this layout, which allows for fast and easy assembly and reliable connections between modules. The layout must be assembled and torn down in three hours by one person. Multiwire plugs interconnect the modules, and quick plugs are used for audio systems for the accessories. The two main lines have O42 and O54 diameter curves, and the upper dogbone circuit has O27 diameter curves.

The layout is elevated 30" from floor level, which is an ideal height for youngsters to enjoy the trains. I do not place Plexiglas panels around the layout because I personally feel this creates a barrier between young viewers and the trains. Children are very respectful of the trains,

and the only incident I had, with over 5,000 people having viewed the layout in five shows, was a young boy who was scared by the whistle of a locomotive that was approaching from behind him while the lad was peering into a tunnel entrance looking for an oncoming train.



A Lionel 2-6-0 Mogul in Canadian National livery gets the okay from the dispatcher to start a new work day.





When possible I like my O gauge motive power exhibition to include models of real-world prototypes seen at the museum. A former steam locomotive engineer enjoyed operating the Weaver 2928 Jubilee seen in the foreground.

When I'm running trains at the Exporail museum, I try, whenever possible, to use models of locomotives and rolling stock that can actually be found at the museum. I then ask the public to look for the 5935 Selkirk steam locomotive, the 8935 CP Trainmaster, and the CP and CN passenger cars, and it is interesting to see them come back after their visit and point out where these units are located in the museum.

This is a small O gauge layout, but it is packed with action for the viewers. I wanted to include a maximum number of operating accessories and operating cars. There are a total of 24 different actions possible with the 15 operating accessories and 9 operating cars. Nine of the accessories can be activated either from the main panel via a double-toggle switch or by pushbuttons. When a train passes through one of the accessory blocks, a light in the pushbutton comes on to indicate that it's time to press the button and enjoy



I had a tough choice: get the display set up or enjoy some time with *OGR*.





A couple of hours later, all is set to go. Now it's time to settle back for some light reading before the museum opens to the public.



There's ample opportunity for a bit of whimsy in addition to more realistic operations.

the action. The accessories I use are self-sufficient in their motion and do not need to be reset or reloaded with coal, logs, or so forth.

This layout can be a bit demanding to operate when there's a big crowd on hand and when you're trying to make all the accessories and operating cars function. People are amazed at the ice station, the burning switch tower, the automatic milk car, the 394 Coal Loader, and the maiden rescue. You should see the eyes of youngsters when I pull off a railroad shed to uncover a 175 Rocket Launcher control panel. They get to press the start button and give me the countdown. Big smiles light up their faces when they see the rocket blast off. And when I call out "Why don't we blow up



Large buttons activate various accessories. The layout is designed with youngsters in mind, and they love being able to participate in its operation.

a train?", the look in peoples' eyes seems to say this guy must be crazy. But after seeing the missile-launching car send a missile into a boxcar that bursts into pieces, applause usually follows. Youngsters also take great pleasure in activating the accessories and blowing the whistles and horns of the locomotives. Some young visitors have trains at home and they may get the privilege of running trains on the layout. Don't worry, I am not far behind them and am keeping a good watch. Some will also ask how they can get trains like I have, and sometimes their parents tell me they will take this information to the local train stores. Who knows, there may be some new O gauge hobbyists in the making.





The old switch tower is on fire, but the situation is under control thanks to the village fire brigade.



The Lionel operating ice station and the ever-popular operating milk car rank among the most popular action accessories on the layout.



Batman and his Batmobile cruise over the main lines while a CN 0-6-0 prepares to depart the station.





Controls for the rocket launch pad are neatly disguised by a lift-off maintenance shed.



Talking with visitors, you quickly realize that they have at least one relative who currently works for, or has worked for, the railroad, or who has some electric trains. Those occasions provide wonderful moments of shared memories. On one occasion, I spoke with a fellow who was a steam locomotive engineer for the Canadian Pacific and who ran the 2816 Hudson and the 2928 Jubilee. I let him run Weaver models of those engines that I have on the layout while he was telling me all about the thrill and challenge of running those locomotives in real life—an unforgettable moment!

I also realize that our hobby is, unfortunately, somewhat unknown to the general public. This becomes evident when they ask if Lionel trains are still made. When you stop to think about it, we tend to have a hobby that goes from the store to the basement layout. It is not like a car, motorcycle, or even golf, which are activities that are routinely exposed to public view. That, as I see it, is why it is so important to have clubs or individuals who are willing to take the trains to public venues in order to share the hobby.

One visitor asked me if it was worth all the effort to put up an exhibit like this. I simply advised him to look at the faces and eyes of the youngsters alongside the layout. Seeing the joy and excitement in their faces, he readily agreed it definitely is worth it. 🚂



The entire layout, including everything that goes on it, tucks conveniently into the back of my minivan..



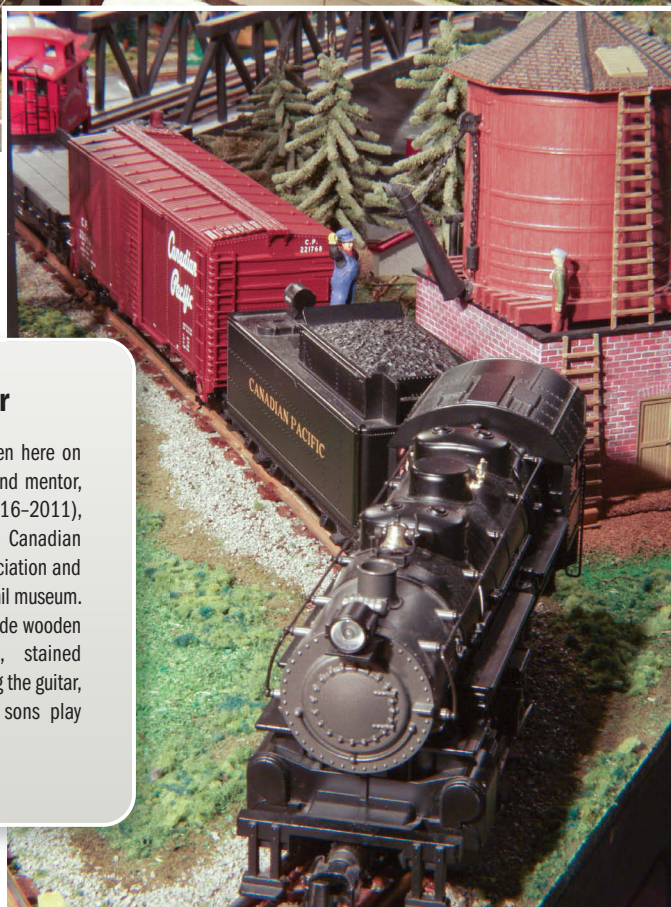


The layout has also been displayed at other venues. I thoroughly enjoy sharing my hobby with the young and the young-at-heart.



### About the Author

Jacques Brouillette, seen here on the right of his father and mentor, Thomas Brouillette (1916–2011), is a member of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association and a volunteer at the Exporail museum. His other interests include wooden furniture construction, stained glasswork, music, playing the guitar, and watching his two sons play hockey.



A CP switcher takes on water.





The 2-2-2 *John Molson*, a replica of an 1848 steam locomotive, operates out of Hays Station each summer.

## Exporail, Canada's Premier Rail Museum

Founded in 1961, the Canadian Railway Museum opened to the public in 1965 with 25 streetcars, 20 steam engines, and 5 passenger cars. In 1978 the Government of Canada designated Exporail as Canada's specialized railway museum. A group of dedicated volunteers had labored long and hard to bring this national treasure to fruition, and their work paid off.

Today the museum covers 50 acres with a main pavilion, two train stations, turntable, restoration shop, rail yard, rolling stock open reserve, closed storage building, miniature railway, streetcar circuit around the site, and a train ride. The collection currently includes more than 160 vehicles, some 10,000 artifacts, over 1,000 scale models, and more than 400,000 archived documents. Pictured here is just a small sampling of what visitors to the site can see and experience. For more details about Exporail, visit [www.exporail.org](http://www.exporail.org).



No. 77, built in 1929, was the Canadian National Railroad's first diesel switcher.



A CP Rail Royal Hudson and a CN FPA-4 greet visitors as they approach the Grand Gallery.



CP Rail No. 4563 is an M-630 painted in the road's action red.





Canadian Pacific Railroad's No. 492, a 10-wheeler, represents the largest class of CP steam locomotives.



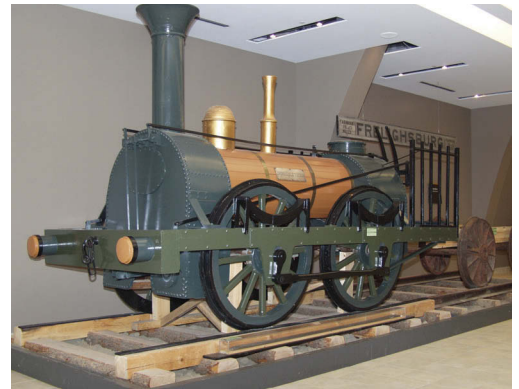
Here's a view inside the model train room.



Left: Visitors are afforded an up-close view of the power plant in CN No. 3684, an RS18.



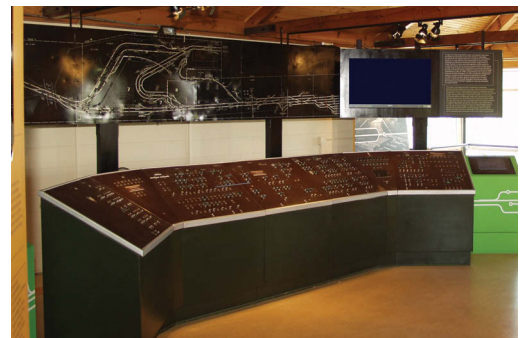
Both of Canada's major railroads, CN and CP Rail, are well represented at Exporail along with many of the nation's smaller carriers. CP Rail No. 7077 is an S2 switcher.



A replica of the *Dorchester*, Canada's first steam locomotive, is housed in the main lobby of the Angus Pavilion.



Among the operational streetcars at the museum are TS Rwy. No. 8 and MTC No. 1959.



The rail control room is located in Hays Station.



There's also a ride-a-board miniature railroad on the museum grounds.





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# A Visit to Moon Valley

Article by Bob Shaw    Photos by Fred Dromke



The Milwaukee Road distinctive beaver-tail observation car is about to traverse one of three parallel bridges.

Welcome to Moon Valley, an ordinary railroad town spiced with fantasy, and the Moonglow Railroad. The weather here is fair with a chance of an eruption because a 4' tall, dark and glowing nearby volcano menaces the town below. Despite the ever-present threat, the town is alive with people working and having fun. Whether enjoying the large amusement park, playing volleyball on the beach, or fishing in the clear pond below one of 11 waterfalls, this town has a lot to offer its residents. Downtown has an operating trolley that snakes through the busy city streets. Newcomers are warned to stay away from the nearby bar with its questionable characters as well as the sprawling hobo village with four campfires. There is a roundhouse and coaling tower far outside of town to service the variety of steam engines. After dark, the

whole scene takes on a new perspective with hundreds of lights illuminating the scene from one end to the other.

Like many others of the early 1950s' generation, I played with trains when I was young. Somehow I also developed a lifetime interest in creating and crafting small things on my own that started when I was just seven years old. I've been building plastic models continuously since I was around 14 and have accumulated a large collection, mostly of 1:48 scale aircraft.

I've been operating and collecting trains on a medium-sized layout while raising a family and working for over 30 years. Reading issues of *OGR* over the years and visiting other layouts in the area through contacts made at my local train shop and club also kept my interest alive. Another perk was having some





What's more fun than riding the streamliner, watching the Santa Fe Blue Goose pass by, or playing on the beach on a sunny day?

colleagues at work sharing the same interests. I always hoped to have a chance someday to start all over and do it right. Then I was afforded the golden opportunity to move and start a new layout in a much larger basement.

My goal was to create a layout with fun-to-operate trains and accessories that would appeal to our seven grandchildren and would have lots of attractive scenery and some real character. I hoped to have lots of open space to make viewing comfortable and to provide a cozy atmosphere for both me and my guests. I also wanted to reuse most of the 70 buildings and accessories removed from my former layout.

Layout construction began as soon as we moved into our ranch-style home. We immediately hired a contractor to remove seven walls and a hot tub from the basement. I was shocked to discover how much space this created. Our contractor's finishing touch was installing the basic layout with simple but attractive benchwork, which he constructed in only two days. Following are some things that I found worked well in building this layout:

- The floor was carpeted before the benchwork was installed. Besides sound deadening, the carpet provided much needed comfort for many hours of under-table wiring.
- We hired a contractor to build and install all the basic benchwork. At my age while still working at the time, this would have been a significant undertaking I could not have done by myself.



Visitors to the park are treated to a variety of rail action.

- I used GarGraves track because I liked the wooden tie appearance and found it very easy to install.
- I designed a simple two-loop track plan on one level and then added cutouts and mountains to give scenic character.
- I continuously asked and received advice from my son, my wife, and friends. I don't have enough imagination or creativity to do it all by myself. They each saw things and contributed in a different way.



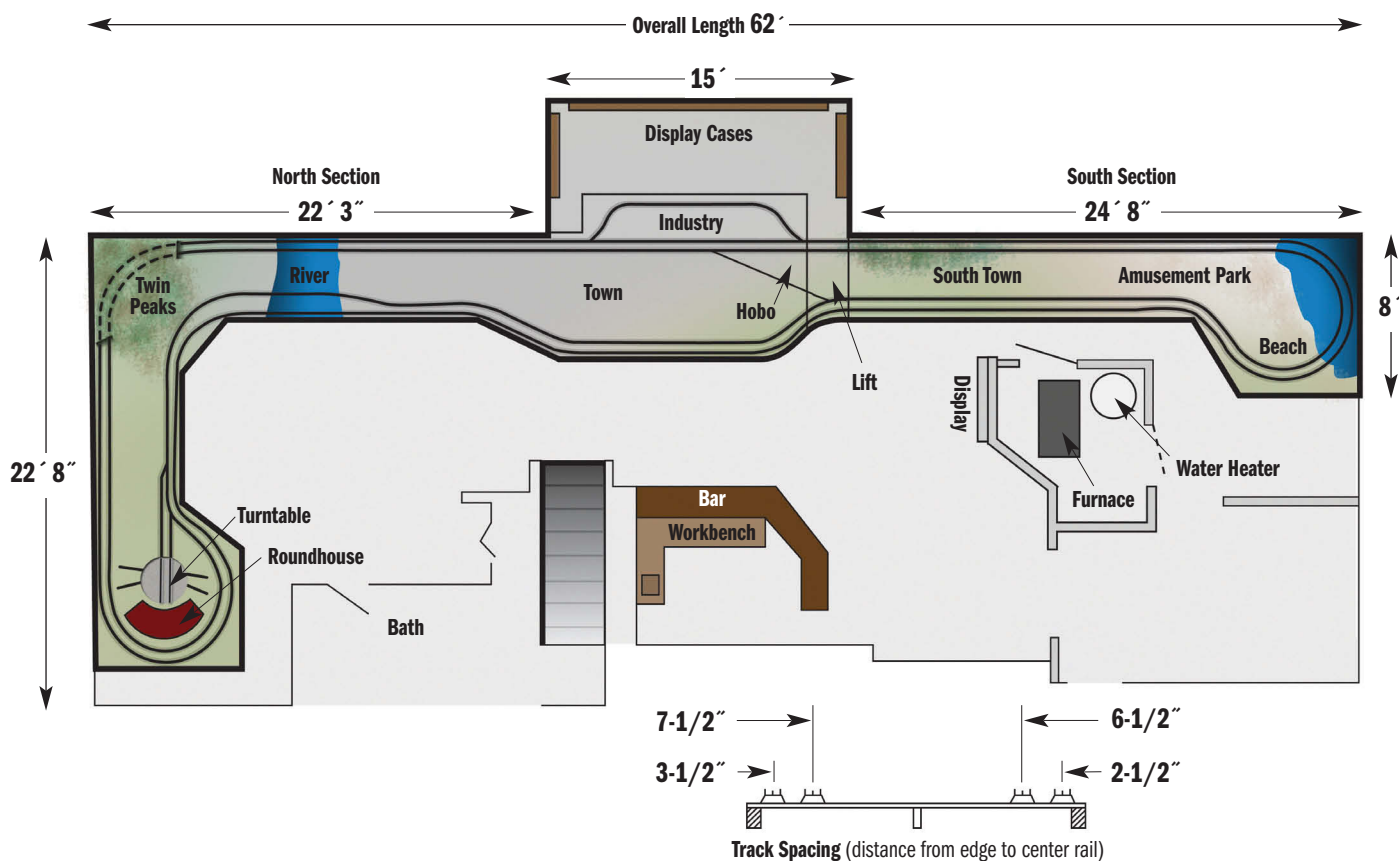


Some residents of Moon Valley are known to wear rather formal attire when they travel by rail.



Imbedded in plywood, the K-Line SuperStreets track has a built-into-the-roadway appearance.





A logging train passes over the wooden trestle in front of a majestic waterfall.



My benchwork consists of 13, 4'x 8' tables made with 1/2" plywood and 2x4s for framing and legs. It is mounted to the outside walls for less legs and more stability.

Despite all the advice from experts in the hobby, I made a somewhat controversial decision against using Homasote on top of the plywood layout platform. I actually had 14 sheets of Homasote delivered and then promptly returned all of it. It was simply a decision in favor of looks over

noise. There is no noise when trains are not running. Besides, track noise only becomes an issue when I run long passenger trains above 30 mph, which I rarely do. Using GarGraves track over ballasted foam roadbed, combined with the room's carpeting and the dropped ceiling, was sufficient. I don't regret that pivotal decision. The plywood top proved to be very beneficial towards making the large city scene. Buildings were simply laid on a flat-painted concrete gray surface.


The L-shaped layout is 40" above the floor and measures 22'x 62'. The double-wide track on one level was laid first before any scenery was applied. With invaluable help and creative talents of my oldest son, Pat, and several friends mostly from our local train club, the Detroit 3 Railers, a plan slowly materialized. We started by moving around all of those existing buildings I mentioned earlier. No track-planning software was needed, and many enjoyable evenings were spent just moving things around and discussing ideas.

I used GarGraves track on Woodland Scenics foam roadbed for the O72 and O80 main lines and Atlas O track for the elevated mountain logging train's line. Ross and GarGraves switches were fitted with Caboose Industries manual throws. The crushed granite ballast was applied with a Ballast King car.

My 28" Bowser turntable is equipped with a Millhouse River Studio drive unit. K-Line SuperStreets is imbedded in plywood to give the trolley system a realistic look. Power for the layout is provided by a Z-4000 transformer, and operational control is accomplished with Lionel TMCC and Legacy, and MTH DCS.

The scenery includes a 7' long roller coaster from Coaster Dynamix and about 80 buildings from Berkshire Valley, Downtown Deco, Lionel, MTH, Stone Mills Models, Woodland Scenics, and others. Most of the buildings are lighted with either LEDs or incandescent bulbs. Lightweight mountains on the layout are made with a foam frame covered with wire mesh and Sculptamold.

With seven grandchildren living in the area and because I am active with the Detroit 3-Railers club, my layout promises to be a continuous source of amusement for many and is sure to keep me busy for years to come.

It's often said that no layout is ever truly finished, and mine is no exception. There are an endless number of areas where detail can be added. In addition, I am planning to construct an underground Area 51 scene that is being taken over by aliens, a subway system, and perhaps get inspired enough to someday paint a sky backdrop. After all, the sky's the limit when it comes to having fun with this hobby. 



The crew of that logging train has to be wary about entering a tunnel built through an active volcano.



At night in Moon Valley, the skyline is aglow.



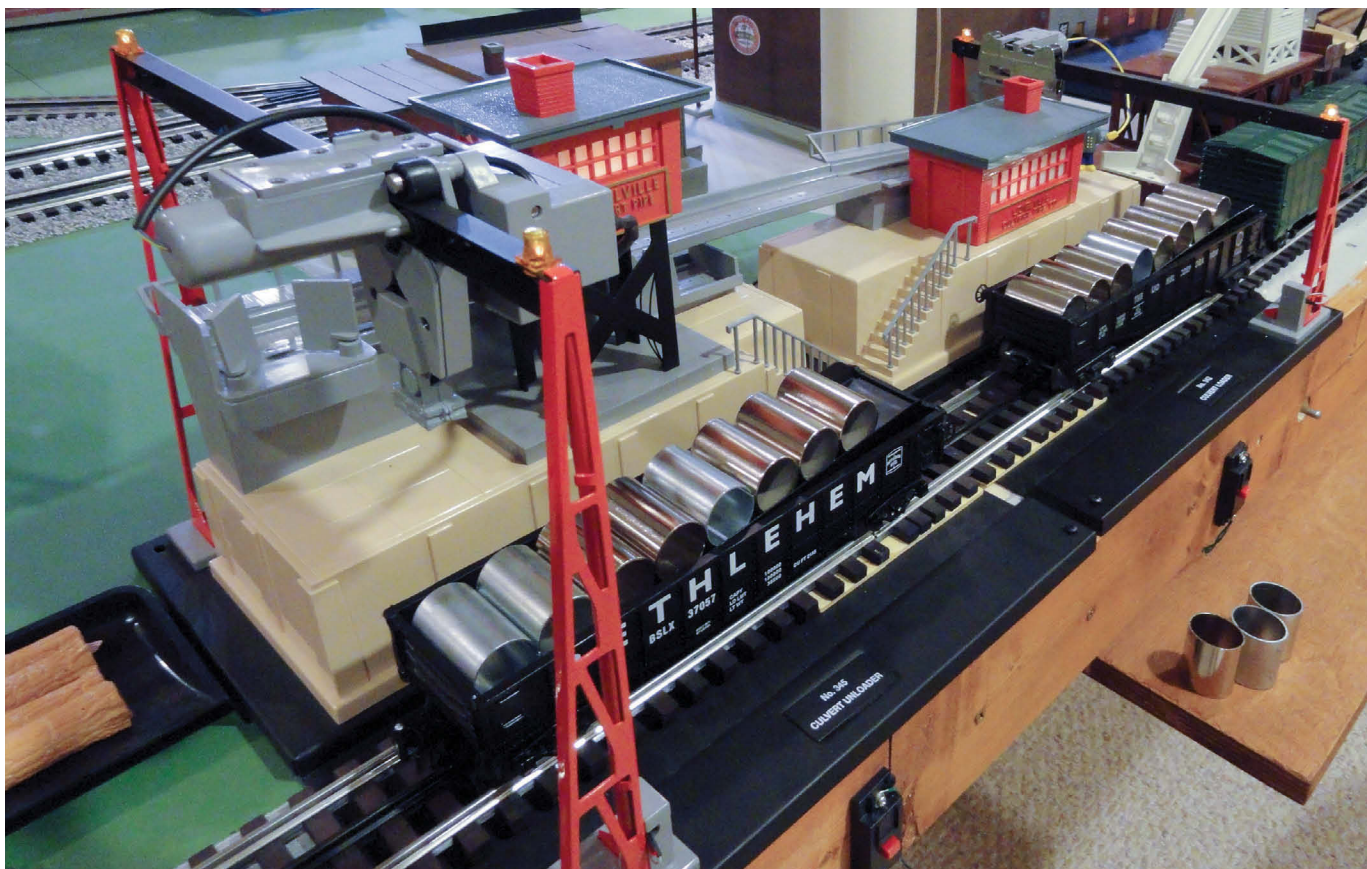


I think most of us would rather be railfans than stunt performers on the wing of an aircraft.



An N scale train serves riders in the amusement park. You would think those folks playing miniature golf would be more aware of the near presence of Godzilla.





Action accessories along the line include the always-popular Lionel Culvert Loader and Culvert Unloader.



This wide view shows wooden trestles on both the main and upper levels of the layout.



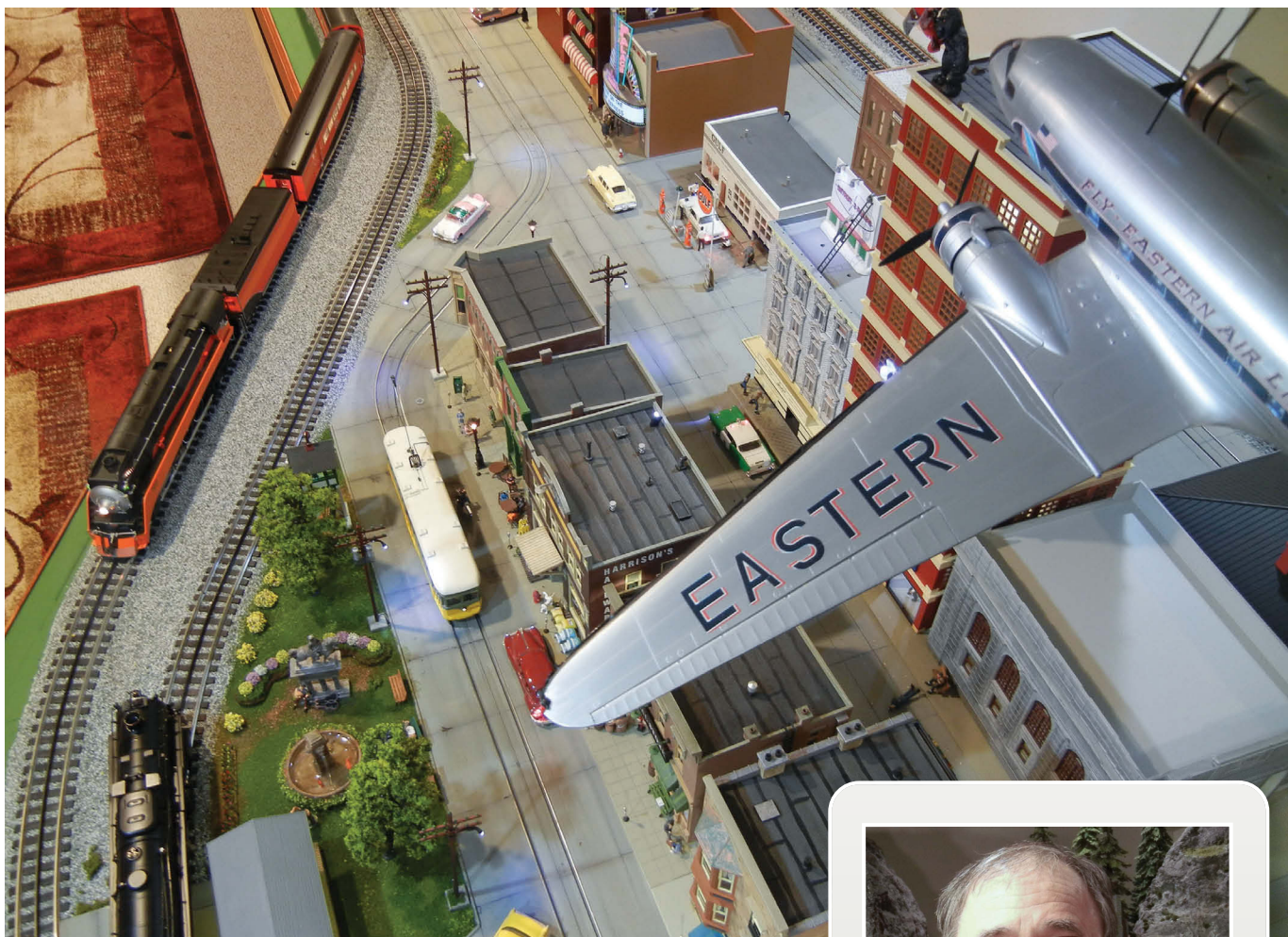


An SW switcher rumbles past the remains of a water tank and yard shack that previously served steam power.



Steam locomotives are treated to a load of black diamonds at a new coaling facility.

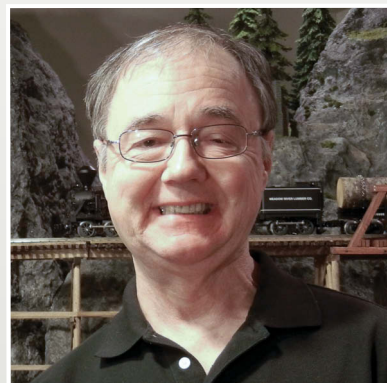




This aerial view is enough to impart a genuine feeling of vertigo.



Two Santa Fe beauties, the diesel F units resplendent in warbonnet paint scheme and the streamlined steam Blue Goose, pass each other near the amusement park.



### About the Author

Bob Shaw recently retired from a 39-year career in Chrysler Powertrain Engineering. He and his wife have lived in southeast Michigan all that time. They have three married boys with a combined total of seven young grandchildren. All three of those families have homes in the area. Bob has been building, collecting, and operating 3-rail trains for the past 33 years. He especially enjoys socializing at his local train shop and running trains at monthly train parties at the homes of members of the Detroit 3-Railers club. In addition to continuously improving his layout, he is hoping to do volunteer work, build more plastic models, and continue to do some traveling.





# Six Class 1 Roads at East Youngstown

Article and Photos by John Ciccarelli

Ever since I joined the Western Reserve Modular Railroad Club in northeastern Ohio ([www.wrmrrc.org](http://www.wrmrrc.org)) and began hosting club meetings in my basement, I have taken a lot of ribbing from fellow members about expanding my small 4' x 8' layout that was featured in Run 216 (August/September 2006). I do have a rather large unobstructed area available, but unfortunately my budget isn't as big as my basement. I kept telling my friends that this layout is finished. Well you all know how that goes.

Having a limited budget, however, has not stopped me from making some small yet practical and visually effective changes, along with changing the name. So return with me to what is now the place where the five major roads serving this area all converged in east Youngstown, Ohio, and you will see that I don't need a lot of space or money to make changes that will keep my interest alive and my modeling skills from getting rusty.

The first change I made was easy—the name. I chose East Youngstown because this location is actually listed on the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie track profile diagram and I regard the

P&LE as my home road (Photo 1). I have, however, collected engines and rolling stock of all the major roads that served the Youngstown area, and they all passed through this congested bottleneck via a complex maze of switches and diamonds. With this simple name change, I could justify running my Pennsylvania, Erie, Erie Lackawanna, B&O, and New York Central trains, as well as my P&LE. I could even run mixed consists of P&LE and Erie Lackawanna since those two roads routinely swapped and paired engines and cars on their trains between Youngstown and Pittsburgh.

I also changed the time period I was modeling from the 1950s to the early 1960s. This was done to allow for both Erie and Erie Lackawanna to have a presence since the merger had just taken place. This move was accomplished by simply changing the vehicles, motive power, and some rolling stock. Buildings didn't necessarily have to change much, although I did add a few more modern trackside structures. Changing signs and billboards also helped to set the time period. Steam was long gone with the exception of the occasional excursion train.



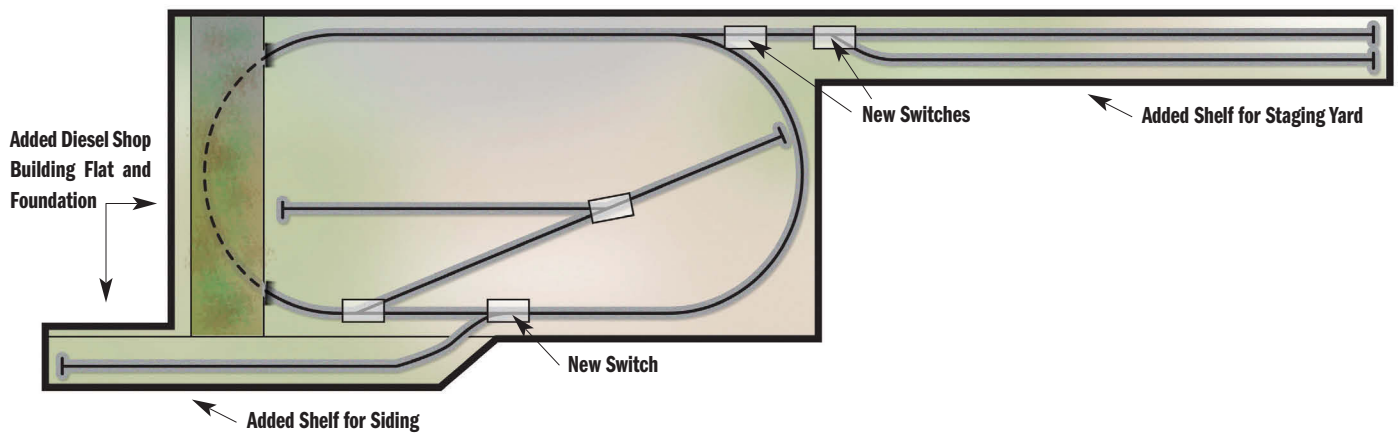


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The next four changes were cosmetic and practical. The first of these was the addition of a station building next to the original platform (Photo 2). This was scratchbuilt using my tried-and-true method of mat board and Evan Designs software. Passenger service was on the decline and soon to be discontinued, but I felt that those remaining loyal patrons deserved a place of comfort. I reasoned that this building would have been left over from the heyday of passenger service and still in use. I also added another waiting platform across the tracks from the original (Photo 3). The second change was a building flat, actually a corner flat, on the elevated storage yard to represent a diesel shop like the one in McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania. This was both cosmetic and practical in that it served to block the wires and electrical outlet that crept into pictures taken of this area (Photos 4 and 5).







6



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8

This was constructed of Masonite and covered with one of the brick patterns from Evan Designs along with factory windows and doors. This structure was featured in the cover photo for Run 233, January 2009.

The next addition was more structural and practical. I wanted a short track where I could park the P&LE's Steel King while the freights were running. This train was one of many passenger trains the P&LE ran between Pittsburgh and Youngstown, although by this time it had dwindled to just two coaches and a GP7. It was common on the prototype to have a station track or siding where the train would wait until it was time to make its run into Pittsburgh. I had a left-hand GarGraves switch lying around, and not wanting it to go to waste, I decided to put it to good use. I didn't have a lot of options, so using a 6' piece of 1x6, I attached a shelf to the front left of the layout. I inserted the switch into the main line, weathered it, and ran a couple of lengths of weathered GarGraves track. This allowed me to park the engine and the coaches in the siding. I then added ground cover in the usual manner along with some structures and vehicles. Ballast would be scarce to nonexistent since this would be an old and poorly maintained siding. Now I could pull the train out onto the main line and get it ready to roll to Pittsburgh. This made for a little more operating interest and was prototypical. Since this shelf created a 2' x 2' gap in the backdrop, I decided to simply extend the stone wall foundation of the diesel shop building to fill it (Photo 6).

Finally, I spliced a switch into the back right portion of my oval along with a second switch to allow me to add a two-track staging yard for an Erie Lackawanna freight train along with a pair of B&O Budd RDCs (Photos 7 and 8). The B&O had



trackage rights on the P&LE for its through passenger trains. I did this by attaching an 8' 1x10 plank to the main table extending along the wall, with a shelf for support underneath. I then added some building flats and basic scenery. This small yard allowed me to both stage trains and to do some prototypical switching. The finishing touches were two book or display cases and a desk or worktable along with some carpet (Photo 9). Back on the main table, I used what formerly was my P&LE SW8, now painted in Pennsylvania livery, to switch the local industries (Photos 10 and 11). One final change was to have the track isolated and wired with rocker switches to shut off power on all sections of track where a train was not running. This enabled me to have four trains on the layout at one time, and I didn't have to resort to manually lifting one train off to add another.

I hope this article adequately demonstrates how changes can be made to a finished layout with a little thought, some invested time, and not too much money. A real benefit in my case is I can now justify running all my different road names. But let's face it, in this hobby we really don't need to justify anything. 🚂



9



10



11





### Six Favorite Class 1 Roads

All of the prototype Class 1 railroads modeled on my layout served Youngstown, Ohio, in my boyhood years. I'm often asked why the Akron, Canton, and Youngstown Railroad (1913-1964) are not part of the roster, but the truth of the matter is that the AC&Y never actually served Youngstown. Here are examples of the motive power I use.









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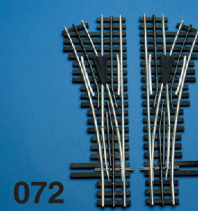
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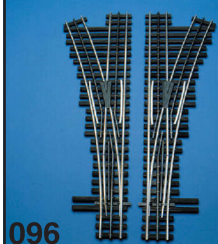
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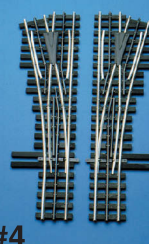
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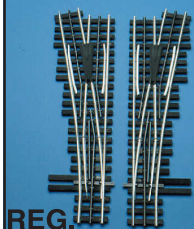


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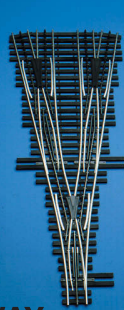
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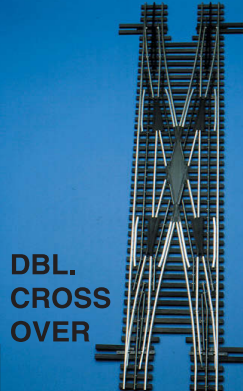


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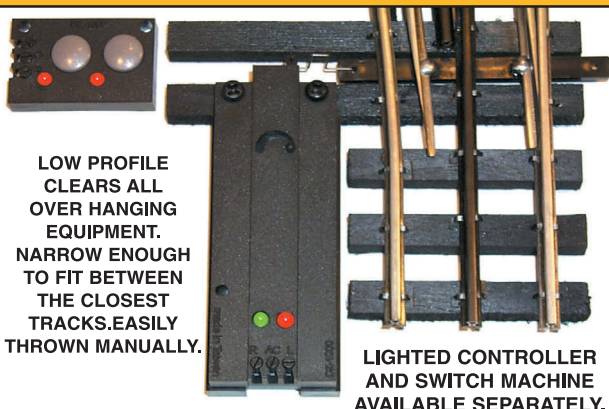
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## Plastic vs. Sheet Metal: Lionel and American Flyer Postwar Towers



1

The competition for parent and grandparent toy train dollars during the postwar years involved more than just which brand of electric trains you were going to get at Christmas; it also centered around the availability of a wide range of accessories you could add to your miniature railroad. Even though American Flyer 2-rail S gauge trains were not compatible with Lionel 3-rail O gauge equipment, many of the accessories produced by Lionel and American Flyer worked just fine for both O and S gauges.



2



The switch towers and water towers that both companies manufactured are great examples of the different approaches Lionel and A. C. Gilbert took to make attractive accessories for the growing toy train market of the 1950s (Photos 1 and 2). Relative financial resources dictated the choice of materials for the towers. A. C. Gilbert stuck with proven prewar sheet-metal construction techniques, while Lionel, a larger toy company with more sales, invested in newer injection-molding methods of manufacturing.

As we shall see, the production of a variety of high-quality railroad accessories made by the two companies in the immediate postwar years turned out to be good news for collectors and operators. Here are a couple of examples.

### The Lionel 445 Operating Switch Tower

Announced in the 1952 catalog and available from 1953 through 1957, the Lionel 445 Operating Switch Tower took full advantage of the detail injection molding could provide (Photo 3). The white tower is clad in siding, the green roof has shingles, the matching doors and windows are detailed, and the red-brown stairs and base look like shiny wood. Even the red-brown chimney is done in brick. Another advantage in production was that the plastic parts didn't need to be painted, saving time and manufacturing costs. During the five-year postwar production run, there were no variations in the tower itself, and there were only two types of outer boxes made. Even the two rubberized blue men who animated the tower were not painted. However, it turns out a few of the towers have been found with blue men with painted hands and faces, but there is some question whether the painted versions were even done by the factory.

Nitpicking aside, the 445 fit in well with the O gauge trains Lionel produced in the 1950s (Photo 4). Most of the mass of the 7" tall tower was vertical, and the 6-1/4"x 5-1/2" base did not take up too much space on the floor or on smaller postwar layouts.

Current pricing depends a great deal on the packaging and the original instruction sheet that came with the switch tower. The tower alone, in C-6 shape, goes for between \$25 and \$30. Add the outer box



3



4

with a tower in C-7 condition, and you are in the \$40 to \$50 range—the two inserts that go with the box can add more than \$20 to asking prices. If the tower has a 145C contactor in the box, along with the original “How to Operate the No. 445 Switch Tower” instructions designated

445-55 with a 1-53 date, then prices can go over the \$100 mark.

Versions of the postwar 445 Operating Switch Tower have been made by successor Lionel companies for decades, starting with the Fundimensions 2324 from 1984.



## American Flyer's 593 Signal Tower

The illuminated 593 Signal Tower was the American Flyer counterpart to the Lionel 445 Operating Switch Tower (Photo 5). Introduced into the A. C. Gilbert line in 1939 and sold through the first few months of 1942, until electric train production ceased due to the war, the 593 Signal Tower kept its prewar product number. However, the 593 shed its somber yellow and brown hues and was dressed in bright new postwar colors when American Flyer 2-rail S gauge trains became available in 1946. The 593 Signal Tower was cataloged without change by American Flyer through 1954.

A textured green roof topped with a black smoke stack shaded four white walls that were trimmed with red on embossed sections of the sheet-metal structure. A dark gray base anchored the tower and the black stairs. Three sides of the 593 Signal Tower had clear plastic windows, which were prone to falling out of the tower when the original adhesive used went bad. The 593 Signal Tower was approximately the same size as the Lionel 445 with a 5-1/2" square base and a height of 7-5/8" (Photo 6) because it had been designed for A. C. Gilbert's 3/16 scale trains, which ran on O gauge 3-rail track (Photo 7). Had it been tooled for S gauge 2-rail track as well as S gauge trains, it is likely that the 593 Signal Tower would have been smaller. The 593 was replaced in 1955 by the more appropriately sized 590 Plasticville Cedar Hill Junction Tower made for A. C. Gilbert by Bachmann.

Pricing for the 593 Signal Tower ranges from \$30 for one in C-6 condition without a box to well over \$100 for a C-8 example with a stapled-together original box and lid that boasts an intact red and white paper label.

## Water Towers

Water towers are fitting railroad companions to the signal and switch towers we have examined thus far. In the early postwar years, the majority of train sets sold by Lionel and American Flyer were headed by steam engines, and nothing evokes steam operations better on the limited space of a small household layout than a water tower with a movable spout.



5



6

From 1946 through 1957, Lionel fielded no less than four miniature water towers: the Nos. 38, 30, 93, and 138. Three of them were based on the brilliantly innovative but operationally flawed No. 38 of 1946. Only the No. 93 was a throwback to the significantly smaller No. 93 Water

Tower of prewar years. This view of the postwar No. 30 with a colorful prewar version of the No. 93 Water Tower graphically demonstrates the differences in size (Photo 8).

In contrast, American Flyer offered only the No. 596 Operating Water Tower





from 1946 through 1956, although there were many variations in paint schemes. The 596 tower was originally produced from 1940 to 1942 and was manufactured essentially unchanged during its postwar run (Photo 9).

## Comparisons

The Lionel No. 30 Water Tower of 1947 is most closely comparable to the A. C. Gilbert No. 596 because the movable water spout is the primary operating

feature of both towers (Photo 10). The No. 596 also has a red light on the round top of the tower along with a large yellow arrow with an "N" on the arrowhead. The red light and directional arrow emphasize the prewar origins of the 596 tower (Photo 11). Aircraft of the 1920s and 1930s relied on such markings to find their way over the American countryside.

The two water towers are close to each other in size for the same reasons that the 445 Switch Tower and the 593 Signal Tower are similarly sized. The No. 30 has a wider and slightly deeper tank, but the No. 596 is a bit taller as you can see from this side-by-side image (Photo 12).

In terms of looks, either tower would be a handsome addition to a toy train layout despite differences in basic construction techniques. However, prices in the current marketplace are significantly different for the two water towers. An A. C. Gilbert No. 596 in C-7 condition with all its packaging can usually be had for about \$100 to \$125, while a No. 30 in the same shape with all its packaging could cost two and a half times more. If you are an opera-

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tor and don't care about boxes, inserts, and instruction sheets, a No. 30 or a No. 596 in the ever-desirable "table grade excellent" condition at shows will cost you a lot less. I have seen both towers at train shows in the last year for as little as \$35 for a No. 596 and \$45 for a No. 30.



9

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## Evaluation

Okay, so why did we present these four collectibles in this format? The idea behind this presentation was not just to show you what the four towers looked like and what they are currently worth, but to give you an idea of how they relate to each other and what you could do with them if you took the towers out of their boxes or off the shelves and put them on an O gauge layout. We thought the end result would be educational for today's collectors, and I think it is. Of course, your reaction to this approach is much more important than mine, so let us know what you think.

I had a ball going through my "stash," opening boxes, and looking at items that had not seen the light of day for more years than I care to remember.

By the way, all four towers used in this edition of "Collector's Gallery" are in at least C-7 condition with all their boxes, inserts, and instructions intact, but there was only room in this article to show you either the packaging for the Nos. 445, 593, 30, and 595 towers, or the towers themselves. We chose the towers. 🚂





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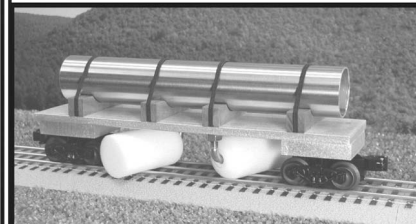
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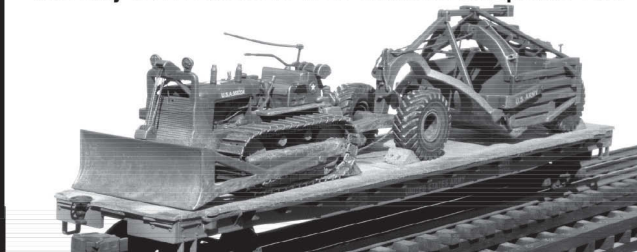
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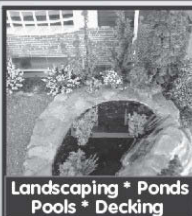
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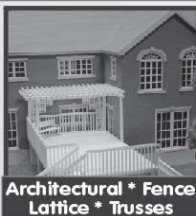
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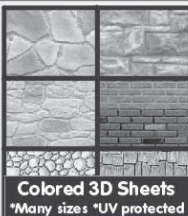
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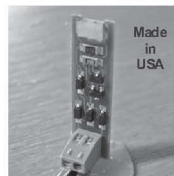
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Article and Photos by Eliot Scher


Who doesn't like barbeque? Just about everybody does, especially the always-hungry train crews that run through Mattbury yard on their way to Roseville and Munoz.

As luck would have it, on this day, unlike most, the Santa Fe map reefer train pulled by 4-8-4 Northern No. 3751 was stopped dead on a red by Mattbury yard. To further compound matters, the plumbing in the caboose was backed up. The consist behind 3751 included loads of Roseville yogurt, and the already lengthy delay could have serious consequences. More importantly at the moment, the train crew had some urgent business to attend to. Somewhat desperately, they scrambled over to Jax Barbeque, which as luck would have it sits conveniently trackside. There, Big Momma, the gracious and gregarious proprietor, allowed the fidgety crew to make use of the facilities.

Intoxicated by the aroma of the barbeque cookin' that permeated the area, 3751's engineer asked Big Momma, who really is big, if she and her staff could prepare takeout orders for the train crew. "Sure," she boomed. "Bring 'em on over, and I'll see that you fellas are takin' care of."

Before long the entire crew had scurried over to place their orders, and Big Momma, after tracking down her short-order cook, a fellow rather inappropriately named Tiny, jotted down their orders. Tiny had been on a break fraternizing with a group of locals at the nearby picnic tables, but because he had long been a railfan at heart, he didn't mind the interruption to take care of the train crew. He assured them the yummy ribs, chicken, and burgers would be ready before they got the green to highball.

In no time at all, Tiny was back gabbing with patrons, and the train crew, complete with multiple orders of savory cuisine, was on its way to Roseville.

That day at least, the crew was not the least bit unhappy about the delay, and Big Momma added a tidy sum to the cash drawer while advancing her reputation for great eats and great service to rail workers farther down the line. 



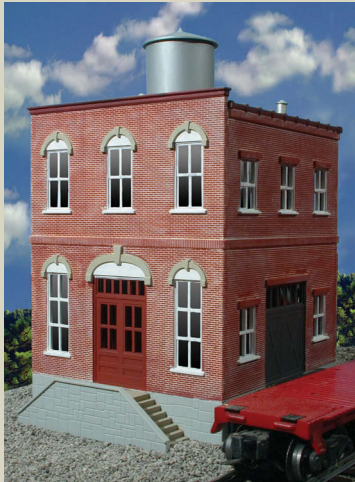






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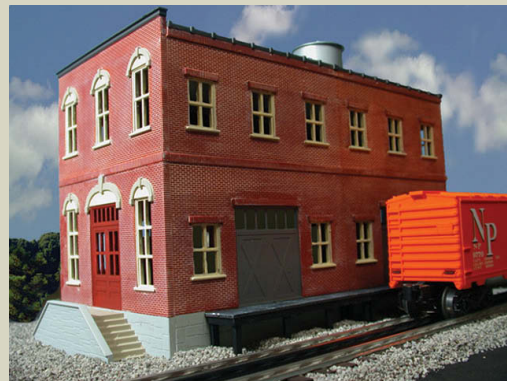


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# Scene Along the Rails

## Lifesize On30 Down Under

Photos by Frank Stamford

The Puffing Billy Preservation Society based in Belgrave, Victoria, Australia, placed Climax geared locomotive No. 1694 back into service on September 8, 2013, following a dozen years of restoration work. Some 2,500 volunteer hours went into the effort, which included major work on the boiler, frames, gears, and brakes, along with new wheels and axles.

The No. 1694 is a particularly special locomotive because only three other Climax locomotives are still operational, all in the U.S. Only 19 Climax locomotives survive worldwide, mostly in North America, and the No. 1694 is the only Climax built to 2' 6" gauge. That particular gauge is of special interest to some in the O scale hobby because it just happens to match the On30 scale trains popularized by Bachmann, and 30" gauge prototype railroads tended to be few and far between even in the heyday of U.S. narrow gauge. Learn more about the Puffing Billy Preservation Society and its scenic operation at [www.puffingbilly.com.au](http://www.puffingbilly.com.au).



Climax No. 1694 steams ahead on its inaugural run on September 8, 2013.



Packed with happy riders, the train passes through the site of a landslide that closed the line in 1953.



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One of the last projects designed by the late Lou Caponi, this train set is painted and lettered for the Reading Mining Company and will be made for club members by Lionel®. The leading hopper has operating underbelly hatch doors.

The trailing hopper includes a simulated coal load and a lighted end-of-train device, the battery for which is cleverly hidden under the coal load. Both coal hoppers have die-cast, fully-sprung trucks and operating couplers.

Like other LCCA-sponsored train sets, the *Lou Caponi Signature Edition – Coal Train Set* will be packaged in a unique set box decorated as a tribute to Lou’s creative spirit.

Production quantity will be limited to only 500 units because Lou had previously arranged for that number to be produced. Do not miss out on this highly collectible train set in a special set box with a LCCA billboard frame and insert.

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## Building a Layout: Credible Clouds

Creating believable clouds for a scenery backdrop has always been a chore for me. I am mechanically gifted but truly artistically challenged. That is to say, usually I can figure out a solution to most any mechanical problem, but when it comes to artistic solutions, I am just not in my element. Adding clouds to a scenery backdrop has been something I just can't do well enough for the results to be the least bit believable.

That being the case, for my previous layouts I've relied on preprinted scenery sheets such as those available in the Instant Horizons line from Walthers ([www.walthers.com](http://www.walthers.com)). These scenes have a printed blue sky complete with printed clouds. That's okay, but to my way of thinking, a printed blue sky is just not as believable as a painted blue sky. That is why I always have cut off and discarded the sky part of the backdrop sheet, spray glued the back of the remainder of the backdrop with 3M Super 77 spray glue, and applied it to a painted wall. To get the clouds, I've had to cut out each individual cloud from the printed blue sky, spray glued it separately (yuk!), and stuck it on the painted blue sky. When it was

done, I had what looked like...well, printed clouds stuck on blue sky, the classic lame mechanical solution to an artistic challenge.

I've tried making 3-D clouds out of all kinds of things, including cotton, furnace filters, fiberglass, and other materials, and sticking them on the blue sky. All that resulted in more lame solutions to the same artistic problem.

Then a friend introduced me to something called The Clouds, a series of stencils made by New London Industries, 8611 Norwich Avenue, San Antonio, Texas 78217. Finally, here was a mechanical solution to an artistic problem. Best of all, it was a solution that actually worked. These stencils along with several different cans of nothing more exotic than hardware store spray paint are shown in Photo 1. Holding these stencils up and spraying paint through them produced some of the best-looking clouds I've seen on train layout backdrops. And if a klutz like me can do it, anybody can.

That doesn't happen automatically, of course. It takes practice, but the process does work. Buy some spray paint from your local





2



3



4

hardware or home improvement store. Keep in mind that you want flat paint, not gloss. I found that paint labeled as primer is always flat and makes good “cloud” paint. The brand isn’t important, but the color is. Get some pure white, some off white (very light cream color), and some very light gray color paint. I found that there are now artistic spray paints, such as the Valspar line, available at some big box stores, whose colors are flat and muted in intensity. These are excellent candidates for painting clouds.

Make yourself a test panel. Paint a piece of Masonite left over from the backdrop project covered in Run 267 with the same sky blue paint used on that project. Using this as a practice piece, spray some of the flat white paint lightly onto the backdrop sample using one of the cloud stencils as a masking guide. Don’t place the stencil directly on the backdrop sample as you do this because the cloud’s resulting edge will be much too sharp. If you hold the stencil just 1/2” or so away from the backdrop, the edge of the cloud will be just a little fuzzy like the edge of some real clouds. Practice this a few times, and you will see how you can get the sharply defined edges or soft edges you prefer.

Spend some time actually looking at real clouds. I know this seems like a silly piece of advice, but we never seem to spend time really studying clouds. If you spend some time actually looking at the real thing, you will notice that clouds come in

several different types. Some are wistful things with very little defined shape, while others seem to have definite character with puffy shapes and “peaceful” plumps. Others have a threatening character with darker gray or even somewhat yellowish forms. Still others are downright edgy with darker threatening colors and an ominous character. My friend Bill Bramlage captured several different styles to show me how these stencils, along with the use of various different colors of spray paint, can capture all of these styles of clouds (Photo 2).

In general, clouds appear a little flat on the underside most of the time and also seem a little grayer in the middle. Another rule of thumb is that they appear to be along the edges darker on the bottom and whiter on the top. By shifting the same stencil over a little and using a different color of spray paint, you will see how you can duplicate these various styles of clouds and will learn how to apply the clouds you want to your customized backdrop.

You may want just some wistful, peaceful clouds of the type I wanted on my backdrop. In Photo 3, Bill shows how to hold the stencil out just a little from the backdrop and begin spraying the flat white color to outline the cloud. He will shift to a slightly darker color to do the middle of the cloud to achieve that white edge and somewhat darker body for the finished cloud.



With some stencils, you can do just the upper edge of the cloud (Photo 4). Don't be afraid to reuse the same stencil, shifted or rotated a bit, to continue some large cloud formations. Also experiment by using a different stencil over the top of a previous one to get the effect of clouds in front of other clouds.

Once you have used one stencil to form a cloud shape, switch to the next one to give the first cloud a little time to dry out before reusing that stencil right away. This will give each stencil time to dry out thoroughly as well as to sort of gently force you to use different stencils for different shapes to keep your overall cloud pattern more random.

Be sure to keep the paint can moving rapidly while you spray and also keep it quite a distance from the stencil to feather the edges of your clouds. Spray in slight, rapid strokes to keep the image looking less defined, too. There is a tendency to over control the finished cloud as you spray. You will see what I mean with just a little practice.


As you apply your clouds, keep in mind the height of future buildings or scenery features such as mountains or building fronts you might plan to use. Also remember that if you do something you don't like, just get out the paint roller and the sky blue paint and simply roll out the entire cloud and then redo it.

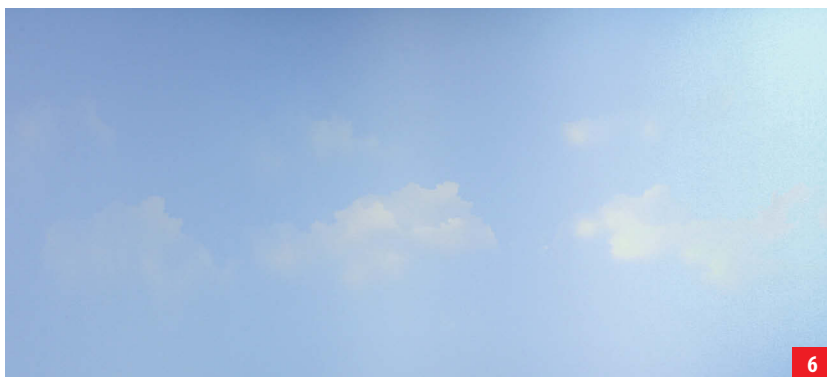
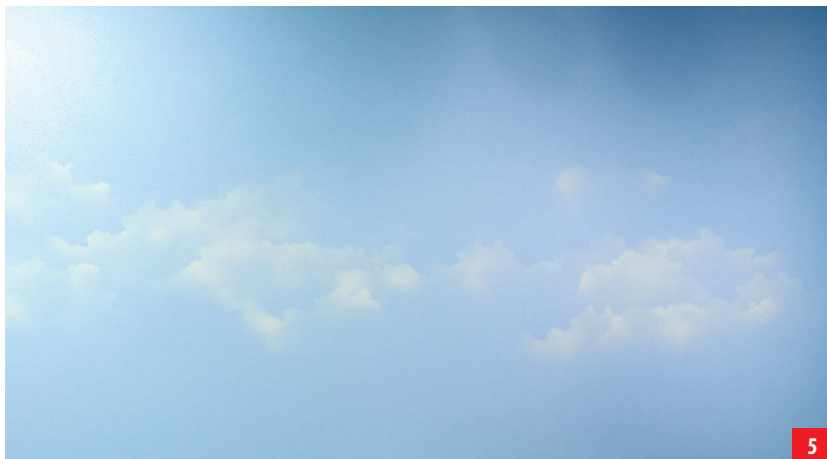
If you want to have a storm front moving in behind your mountains, there is a natural tendency to do too much darkening on the cloud. It is easy to do! When that happens, just get out the stencils and spray some white back over the dark areas of the clouds to make them a little friendlier.

Photos 5 and 6 show the kind of clouds I wanted over most of my layout. Photo 7 depicts a dark storm front moving in behind the mountain that eventually will be built in one end of the layout. I may go back and lighten some of the darker clouds a little as the layout develops. Resist the urge to fine-tune things until you have more of the layout built and more of the entire scene defined. You may find out that you don't have to do anything once you see the final form.

Don't get too carried away. My golden cloud rule is "less is more." You always can go in and add a small cloud here or there in the final outcome, but if you overpopulate the backdrop with too many clouds, it becomes very busy and less peaceful. New London Industries

has other stencils, too. While I haven't used any of the others, they do look very interesting. You can go to Walther's website and look up New London Industries to see its full line of other stencil ideas.

I found these cloud stencils to be a great tool for a mechanical solution to achieve an artistic result. Even with a little of the framework showing in the photos, you can see that the clouds will have a dramatic effect on the layout. But I'm getting ahead of myself. The framework will be covered in my next "Backshop." 





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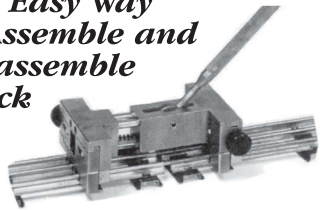


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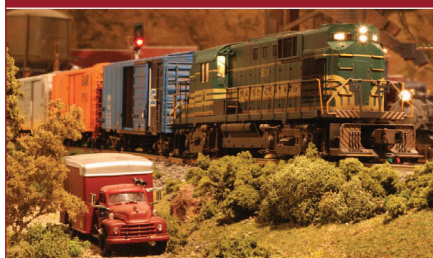
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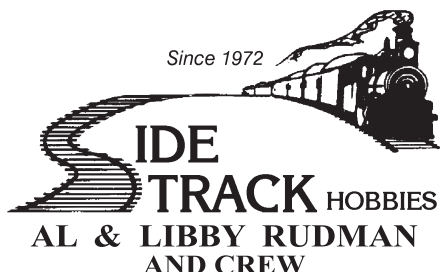
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M10-1131-1AM10-1131-1	AND M10-5018 DARK GREEN 4-CAR SET	\$1,199.00
M10-1132-1	TT BROWN 408 ELEC ENG CONT.	\$699.00
M10-1132-1AM10-1132-1	AND M10-5011/2/3 (COMPLETE SET)	\$2,599.00
M10-1135	4 CAR STD GG STATE SET MD BRN.	\$1,199.00
M10-1136	TT BROWN #414 STATE COACH ILLINOIS	\$325.00
M10-1146	GREEN 200 STD GAUGE ORE CAR	\$89.00
M10-1148	Maroon w/BT 200S Std.Gauge Flat Car 2001 V1	\$89.00
M10-1149	Black w/NT 200S Std. Gauge Flat Car 2001 V1	\$89.00

M10-1154-1	Gray w/BRASS TRIM 400E-Cont. 2001 V1	\$699.00
M10-1156-1	Orange 3243R EP set-Cont. 2001 V1	\$999.00
M10-1167-1	SET ONLY APPLEGRN 408E Eng.Cont.W/10-1172	SEE M10-1167-1A
M10-1167-1A	M10-1167-1 AND M10-1172 4-CAR APPLE GREEN SET	\$1,049.00
M10-1182-1	SET ONLY SOUTHERN 400E Eng.-Cont.W/10-5007 2002V1	\$1,799.00
M10-1193-1	Green Cream #9 Pay As You Enter MSRP 599.95 2005 V1	\$399.00
M10-1197-3	TYPE II NO. 200 WOOD GONDOLA (NON-PWR) MSRP 299.95 2005 V2	\$199.00
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M10-1226-1	PINK 408E EL. ENGINE - CONTEMPORARY 05V1	\$849.00
M10-1230-1	DK.OLV. W/NC IVES 3243R EL. PASS. W/PS2 MSRP 1499.95 05V2	\$999.00
M10-1231-1	RED W/NICKEL IVES 3243R EL. PASS.SET W/PS2 MSRP 1499.95 05V2	\$1,199.00
M10-1232-1	WINE W/NICKEL IVES 3243R EL. PASS. SET W/PS2 MSRP 1499.95	\$1,199.00
M10-1262-1	CRACKLE BLACK/BRASS TRIM 400E STEAM EN W/PS2 899.95 2007	\$799.00
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M10-1286-0	ORANGE & BLK IVES #3236 LOCO. (TRAD)/MSRP 499.95 03/07 08V1	\$339.00
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# Backshop Letters

**Do you have a question about repairing or operating your trains? Do you have a problem with your trains, accessories, or layout?**

For answers, e-mail Jim Barrett ([jim@ogaugerr.com](mailto:jim@ogaugerr.com)). Please include your phone number, city, and state. If possible, also include your work phone number so Jim can respond directly to you, as it may be several months before your question and his answer appear in the magazine. If you are unable to e-mail Jim, you may write to him at OGR Publishing, 33 Sheridan Rd., Poland, OH 44514.

I bought the MTH DCS DVD, and in it you give a short tutorial on installing DPDT toggle switches to create a programming track. I plan to do this and install other toggle switches so that parts of the layout not being used can be turned off, not electrified. Given your advice, I purchased the exact toggle switches you recommended. But with some reported issues with DCS, I want to install relays to keep wire length as short as necessary. Would you have any recommendations for what relays should be used with the toggle switches you've recommended?

—Pete

Back when we did that video, the thought from MTH and others including me was that a separate programming track was necessary for the system to find any new DCS engine to add it to the system. The relays were the answer to separating all the rest of the layout wiring from the relay track wiring. The thinking at the time was if there was more than one engine on the track, the system would not discover one of the engines was already in the system and it might inadvertently add the known engine back into the system again.

Since that time, the system has proven to be much more robust than was originally thought. In fact, I have had as many as 30 engines on the track, all sitting idle, and could still ask the system to find a new engine and add it into the remote. The system will still locate the engine and add it to the remote reliably. In fact, even if there are multiple engines on the track that have not yet been added into the system, the Add MTH Engine command will result in the system systematically adding each engine separately one at a time into the system.

The key turns out to be the battery condition of the engine to be added. If the battery is not fully charged, then the system may find it hard to discover the engine and add it into the remote. The remote is where the engine is stored when it is added.

The complication of adding a separate programming track simply isn't needed. In some rare circumstances such as on extensive track plans, you may need to add the engine separately from any others on the track. I have found this happens so infrequently, I now recommend a simple set of jumper cables with alligator clips on both ends be connected directly between the engine in question and the track, or even directly to the output of the

TIU if that is handy. That always resulted in the engine being readily added into the system if it didn't do it through the track. If you have a problem adding an engine, the problem is most likely corrosion or dirt on the track or on the collector roller of the engine. Alligator clips on the jumper cables remove any problems from such things as dirty track or bad wire connections somewhere else on the layout.

If you still have problems, don't hesitate to call me at 800-980-6477. —Jim

Do you know the supplier of the engine cradle you described at the recent York train meet? If you run across the vendor's name and contact information, I'd be grateful if you would pass it along to me.

—Bob Snyder

Hobbylinc at [www.hobbylinc.com](http://www.hobbylinc.com) is the one I use. It's not the only one out there, but I like this one. It should sell for about \$16.00. —Jim

I recently bought a 3rd Rail locomotive, and unlike any of my 15 other locomotives, this one stops, sometimes blowing it's whistle when it is near some

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but not all layout accessories. Then it stumbles and regains speed. If you run it fast enough, this does not happen. It is as though there is some kind of interference with the signal to the engine. This happens when using TMCC or DCS to run the thing. It has never happened with my Lionel, MTH, or even my other 3rd Rail engines.

—Stanley Ross

*This is a rather common problem with TMCC. What you are experiencing is called signal bleed over or signal wash. This is caused when the TMCC signal from one track actually pushes over the TMCC signal from an adjacent track. When this happens, the TMCC antenna from the engine suddenly loses signal from the outer rails, the radio signal. That causes the engine to stumble or otherwise act funny or nonresponsive. It is just a coincidence that the accessories are also in the area.*

*The way to reduce or possibly eliminate this is to install a simple wire of any gauge somewhere between the two tracks, directly on the surface of the layout, as an example, and connect this single wire to the faceplate screws of any electrical outlet or light switch plate in the room. Keep in mind that this wire is simply an earth ground since the house's electrical system is or should be grounded to earth. No electricity or current is involved. What this does is eliminate the crosstalk between the two signals coming from the two adjacent tracks by dampening the interference to the earth ground. That will straighten out the signal to the passing engine and keep things operating as they should.*

*When you use DCS, you are really only using the TMCC system controlled*

*through the DCS remote, so the same problem applies. The problem will only occur with your TMCC controlled engines, not all your TMCC engines. It will never happen with DCS-controlled engines since that is a completely different system that does not rely on radio signals emanating from the outer rails to the engines. —Jim*

I read your articles in the June 1999 issue and the April 2000 follow-up called "Saving a Bad Reputation" about the Lionel No. 18001 and No. 18003 locomotives. I picked up a new No. 18003 from an auction and decided to make it operational. Out of the box, it just moaned. I had to take the motor apart to clean out the dried grease, so I decided to fix the bearings as per your articles. Getting the old bearings out was easy. Getting the right replacements was difficult as you indicated, and getting the replacements back inside the casing was scary. But I did it following your tips, and the motor runs beautifully.

The mesh of the worm seemed fine; however, the axle would spin okay in one direction and grind in the other. There were no thrust washers on the axles of any of the flanged wheels. This allowed the worm gear to move slightly more than 1/8" in either direction, and the magnets would pull strongly against those wheels to one side or the other. I removed the drivers, evened everything with two thrust washers for each wheel, and now the engine runs smooth as silk.

The owner's manual stated that this engine had the latest high-output



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smoke generator. It must have been invisible smoke. The wick was not properly installed and did not extend down far enough into the reservoir. I fixed that, too.

I also ordered new trucks and a metal coupler from Lionel for the tender because they were warped.

—Steve Witko

*Thanks for your informative letter. It's old ground, but definitely worth plowing for those who still have these lovable rascals. —Jim*

Do you have any suggestions for how to keep MTH and Lionel traction tires on?

—Skip Tosch

*I use a drop of super-thin CA glue applied with a toothpick by lifting up the tire on the rim and depositing the drop under the tire. There is no need to spray a fixer setting agent. Just give the CA a few minutes to set. —Jim*

You wrote an article on how to rewire a Lionel smoke unit that was wired backwards. Could you tell me what issue it is in?

—Robert Cayne

*The only article I wrote was where the impeller motor used to blow smoke into the heating chamber was wired backwards into the plug—the one that plugs the motor into the smoke unit. An easy test to determine if that is the problem on your engine is to see if you can feel air being blown out the stack of the loco-*

*motive. If not, then the impeller is running in reverse. Since the motor only has two wires going to it, simply unsolder the two wires from the motor, reverse them, and solder them back on. That should fix the problem. —Jim*

My layout uses Atlas 21st Century track and switches. Operating cars like the Lionel No. 3459 dump car, No. 3451 log car, and No. 3462 milk car will not stay coupled in their consists. Is the problem for all of these related to the coupler on the truck not being used on Lionel track? Could the trucks be changed, and what should that change be? Or, might there be a different problem?

I also have a Plymouth switcher that will not run. The red and green classification and marker lights will light, but the engine will not move.

—Steve Barnard

*The operating cars you've listed should have no problem you can't fix or have fixed. They should stay coupled provided the coupler has been maintained or refurbished. I need some additional information:*

1. Do both couplers on every car have a problem staying coupled, or is it specific couplers that act up? Begin by assigning numbers to each coupler on each car so you'll know just who the culprits are.

2. Postwar trucks and couplers will have a thin flat retention spring going across the inside of the plate on the bottom of the truck that keeps the plate and therefore the coupler pin firmly engaged in the bottom of the coupler knuckle. Do these plates snugly hold the coupler pin up in the coupler knuckle casting?

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3. Do the coupler knuckles have some movement or play in the mounting of the cast coupler knuckle to the coupler mounting plate? They must have a firm staked mounting so there is no ability to move the coupler knuckle around on the coupler mounting plate. If there is movement, the coupler will work itself uncoupled while the car is going down the track.

4. Does the slide shoe on the bottom of the coupler mounting plate have gentle, firm pressure on it so that it doesn't wobble around under the coupler plate. If not, the coupler mounting plate needs to be replaced.

Postwar couplers definitely do not need Lionel track to properly work. They will work on any track. No, the trucks cannot be changed and still continue to have the sliding shoes that are needed to activate the operating mechanisms.

On your Plymouth switcher, usually the problem you describe comes from running the little engine on too much voltage or else trying to pull too much weight with it. Either of these things causes the little armature brush springs to heat up and lose their spring tension, keeping the voltage from working at all on the motor. It is almost never due to disconnected wires. —Jim

I appreciated your article on soldering in Run 263 and have been debating getting a new soldering iron. I was considering a Radio Shack 15-watt pro model. What model Weller soldering station do you recommend, and how do you know what temperature to use for different soldering jobs?

—Brad

I recommend the one shown with the article, a WES 5, because it is available for less than \$100. The temperature is something that is really just relevant. I started out using the dial at 1/3 the full range, and that has worked for just about any soldering job for printed circuit boards and electronic component attachments. If you see that it takes too long to heat, just increase it a little. Keep in mind that the lower the temperature range, the better it is for the electronic component, which is to keep it from absorbing too much heat by the time you've flowed the solder.

I've also used the soldering station with a wider flat tip for soldering repetitive wires to a single wire source. When doing that, I've increased the temperature range to almost 2/3 of the dial's range. Keeping the tip clean and tightly screwed in the holder is very important. It loosens up by itself easily when it is used many times. You'll know that has occurred when it seems to take longer for it to do its job. —Jim

I have a Lionel postwar No. 342 culvert loader, and the vibrator motor burned out. Is there a way to convert it to a 12-volt motor, and do you have the instructions on how to do it? Or where can I find another vibrator motor?

—Richard Frey

There is no easy way to convert the postwar culvert loader to a 12-volt motor, and it is actually relatively easy to find another vibrator motor for it. Doing a Google search for "parts for a 342 culvert loader" will come up with a whole list of part sources. When you get a replacement vibrator motor, I have found if you mount the base of the accessory to a firm surface or if you dam up the base

with strips of O gauge cork roadbed, it makes the vibrator action of the motor work much better. —Jim

I admit that I rarely read your column, but you really put me off with "plumbers clean copper with steel wool." This would be a good practice if you want the joint to eventually leak. There are tools for cleaning copper pipe and fittings, or you can use emery cloth tape. The critical point is that anything to be soldered must be cleaned. Steel wool is an outdated product that has no use today.

—Don Bumgardner

I'm already a believer in Scotchbrite when it comes to cleaning track, so it is a natural assumption that it would also work for soldering copper tubes as well. I learned something! In the future, I'll never make references to steel wool again. The only thing I could think of that it would be good for was soldering copper tubing, but now, as you pointed out, even that is archaic. —Jim

In your article in Run 263 on how to solder, you stated that if a layout is command controlled, the center rail needs only one lead from the power supply. I run TMCC-Legacy and DCS on my layout, but I have four terminal pieces of track spaced evenly around my layout. If I am reading your article correctly, I should remove three of the four leads to the center rail for better signal strength to my locomotives. Would this apply to the outside rail connection also?

—Paul Holse

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If a layout is equipped with DCS, then only one connection to the center rail is needed, if and only if you have a solid center rail all around the layout. If anywhere in the layout the center rail is broken, such as on an old Ross switch or in any other case where the center rail is physically and electrically separated, then the next section of isolated center rail also needs to have a wire connected.

With DCS, the digital signal should never run into itself along the same electrically connected rail. If a rail or rail length has more than one source of digital signal, not to be confused with the AC+ electrical power that also comes down the wire, then the digital signal will collide with itself coming up from the other jumper, and the signals will simply cancel each other out. That means that the engine will continue on without being controlled by the digital signal from the TTU.

Here's a situation where we always told ourselves that having many jumpers going to the center rail is a good thing, but now in the electronic age where the digital signal piggybacks down the same rail that's carrying AC+, it is actually a bad thing and disrupts the transmission of the control signal to the engine. The way to get around this is to make certain that between any two power wires going to the center rail, you have a physical cut in the rail, an insulating point, separating the rail physically and electrically from another source of digital signal. This won't hurt the actual AC+ power coming from the transformer because all engines have dual pickup rollers and will simply bridge the gap in the rail and won't even see the break.

—Jim Barrett

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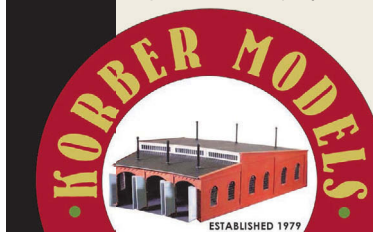
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# The Helper Engine

George Brown



## Scrap or Prize

Today is the middle of July as I type this column for our January issue. To me, working in the summer on an issue that releases at the start of the winter holiday season, specifically just before Thanksgiving, has always been seasonally out of sync. But today is an abnormally cool and wet day for this time of the year in this part of the country, so the weather and O gauge trains seem to whimsically fit together. Earlier this morning, I was in my train room just visiting with my trains on display and also those stored in stacks of large plastic drawers residing in the closet.

Reveries abounded as I looked at various individual cars and locomotives randomly selected from the shelves and drawers. I even opened the several plastic bins containing parts and bodies of restoration or rebuild projects that have languished ever since I took on the editor's desk, which was abruptly vacated by the previous editor in early 2006. As a side note, these projects included several postwar Lionel steamers and F3s plus a trio of postwar Madison cars. After spending a few minutes sifting through the various pieces and generally reconnoitering the projects, I stashed the bins back on the shelf and closed the closet doors.

Through all of this getting reacquainted with a number of cars and locomotives that I've not played with or run recently, I reflected back to a few other hobbyists and their layouts I visited in the past. Some of these folks proudly displayed their trains on shelves or cases either mounted on walls or standing on floors. Others appeared to have just set their off-track trains wherever space was available.

One individual stands out as not only a professional success but also as a caretaker of vintage machinery including a choice collection of postwar and MPC-era Lionel trains. For his trains, he obviously invested a sizeable sum of money in well over a dozen

matched and internally lit display cases, custom-built from blond oak with swing-open glass doors. His individual locomotives and also complete train sets were as pristine as the display cases that housed them. Each piece in what was obviously a carefully assembled collection stood proudly on display in a room dedicated to them. Behind their airtight glass doors, each engine and car was also spotless and dust free.

But the beauty of the situation was these collector-quality trains were not just expensive shelf sovereigns. While I visited with my host in his garden solarium, he recounted what led to the acquisition of a number of his trains, which were all in mint or like-new condition when he got them. He also went on to clarify they were toys that were supposed to run and deliver the joy they were designed and built to do. And run them he did on his attractive, professionally built layout. The ones he chose to put on the layout for my visit ran smoother and quieter than most of the traditional Lionel locomotives I've seen over the years. If I may animate these trains for a moment, I couldn't help but feel each pampered locomotive smiled as it rolled by me on that spectacular layout. Collectively, they all seemed to exude the obvious delight and care that their current owner lavished on them.

My trek down memory lane took a sharp turn toward the antithesis of those pampered trains. In a visit to another layout, I was initially awed by its expanse and visual complexity as I entered the spacious clear-span room that housed it. As a prelude to the photo shoot, the owner guided my attention from scene to scene with the tour taking well over an hour. He was justifiably proud of the O gauge rail empire he created. And best of all, the latest in Lionel and MTH trains ran simultaneously and flawlessly in a spectacular demonstration.




To say I viewed this layout as excitement on three rails would be an understatement. When I first entered the room, I set my photo equipment and laptop aside on a small table, not paying much attention to it or its surroundings. After all, that layout instantly garnered my full attention. Upon returning to the table to unpack and set up my equipment, piles of old Lionel steam locomotives and tenders greeted me. There were literally dozens upon dozens of them, possibly well over a hundred stacked like cordwood on the floor under and beside the table as well as piled in deteriorated cardboard boxes stacked two and three high against a wall. The cumulative weight of these heavy die-cast engines had to be crushing others buried deep within the piles—bending rods and handrails, breaking eccentric cranks, gouging paint, crushing plastic.... I instantly wanted to cry out in dismay at the sight but realized discretion had to be the better part of valor, at least for the moment.

During the photo shoot, I casually asked about the old engines. The response was a nonchalant comment that he picked them up here and there and would someday get around to doing something with them. He seemed totally disinterested in them and yet wasn't amenable to selling any of them. I dropped the subject.

A couple of hours ago with that memory of all those stacked cadavers still fresh in my mind, I went quickly back to the closet and retrieved one of the projects I mentioned earlier. It's a rebuild of a distressed postwar Lionel 736 into a 2-8-2 with a T&P flair. Like those old engines I saw relegated to piles of hopelessness, this

736 was a castaway I happened to rescue from its fall into oblivion. To be blunt, it was scrap!

I started that particular rebuild project during my abbreviated retirement from IT systems development in late 2005, but taking on the editor's desk of *OGR* in early 2006 put it on indefinite hold. My intention was to keep all the undamaged Lionel components intact and use only bolt-on modifications including a boiler front from a postwar 2056 with its external feedwater heater and a two-wheel trailing truck from a 675. The plan was also for a Texas & Pacific paint scheme with green-grey boiler sheeting and cylinder jackets, silver smokebox and firebox, and black cab with an oxide red roof. The tender would be black with an oxide red water deck. Since the plastic tender shell was a total loss when I acquired it with the 736, I didn't mind removing the previously destroyed coal bunker and water deck in prep for an extreme makeover.

All the necessary mechanical parts were bought back when I started the project including a new motor. The prep work was almost completed with the boiler stripped of its multiple layers of grime and paint. New driver axle bushings were pressed into the frame, and the drivers have been properly mounted and quartered with new axles. New rods, handrails, and other small pieces have been patiently awaiting final assembly once the engine is painted and decorated. Even all the plastic and metal pieces for the custom six-axle T&P-style oil tender are almost ready for assembly and finishing. This scrapped old engine's time has come to move into the limelight as my new prize. 



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## January 11-12, 2014

**DELAND, FL** – 46th Florida Railfair, Volusia County Fairgrounds, Tommy Lawrence Bldg., SR 44 and I-4, Exit 118. Sat. 9a-4p, Sun. 10a-3:30p, Adm: \$8, under 12 free. Info: Charles Miller, 3106 N. Rochester St., Arlington, VA 22213, (703) 536-2954, [www.gserr.com](http://www.gserr.com), [rrshows@aol.com](mailto:rrshows@aol.com).

**YORK, PA** – Greenberg Train & Toy Show, York Expo Center, 334 Carlisle Ave. 10a-4p, Adm: \$8, under 12 free. Info: Greenberg Shows, (630) 279-4087, [Staff@GreenbergShows.com](mailto:Staff@GreenbergShows.com), [www.GreenbergShows.com](http://www.GreenbergShows.com).

## January 18, 2014

**ATLANTA, GA** – 46th Model Train & Railroadiana Show, North Atlanta Trade Center, 1700 Jeurgens Court. 9a-4p, Adm: \$7, under 12 free. Info: Charles Miller, 3106 N. Rochester St., Arlington, VA 22213, (703) 536-2954, [www.gserr.com](mailto:www.gserr.com), [rrshows@aol.com](mailto:rrshows@aol.com).

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**MONROEVILLE, PA** – Greenberg Train & Toy Show, Convention Center, 209 Mall Blvd. 10a-4p, Adm: \$8, under 12 free. Info: Greenberg Shows, (630) 279-4087, [Staff@GreenbergShows.com](mailto:Staff@GreenbergShows.com), [www.GreenbergShows.com](http://www.GreenbergShows.com).

## January 25, 2014

**LA CROSSE, WI** – 23rd Annual Great Tri-State Rail Sale RR Show & Swap Meet, LaCrosse Center, 2nd St. and Pearl St. 9a-3p, Adm: \$5, under 12 free w/adult. Info: 4000 Foundation, P.O. Box 3411, La Crosse, WI 54602, (608) 781-9383.

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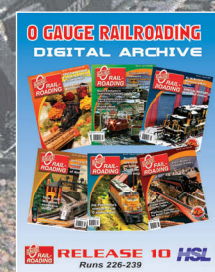
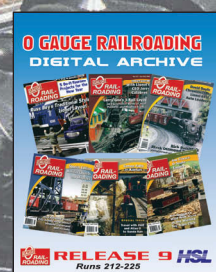
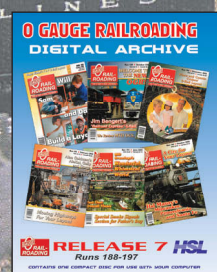
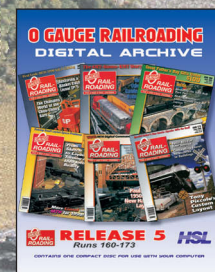
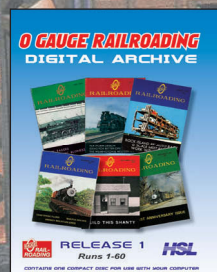
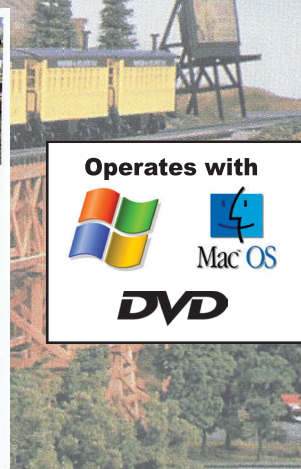
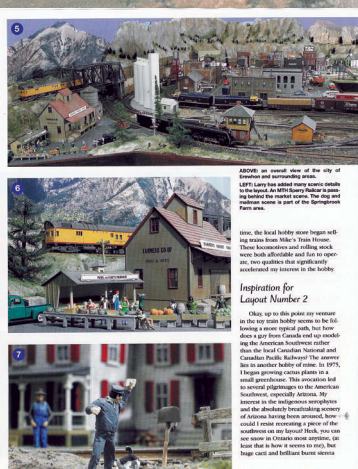
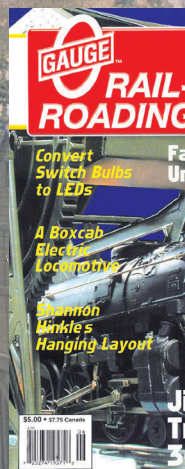
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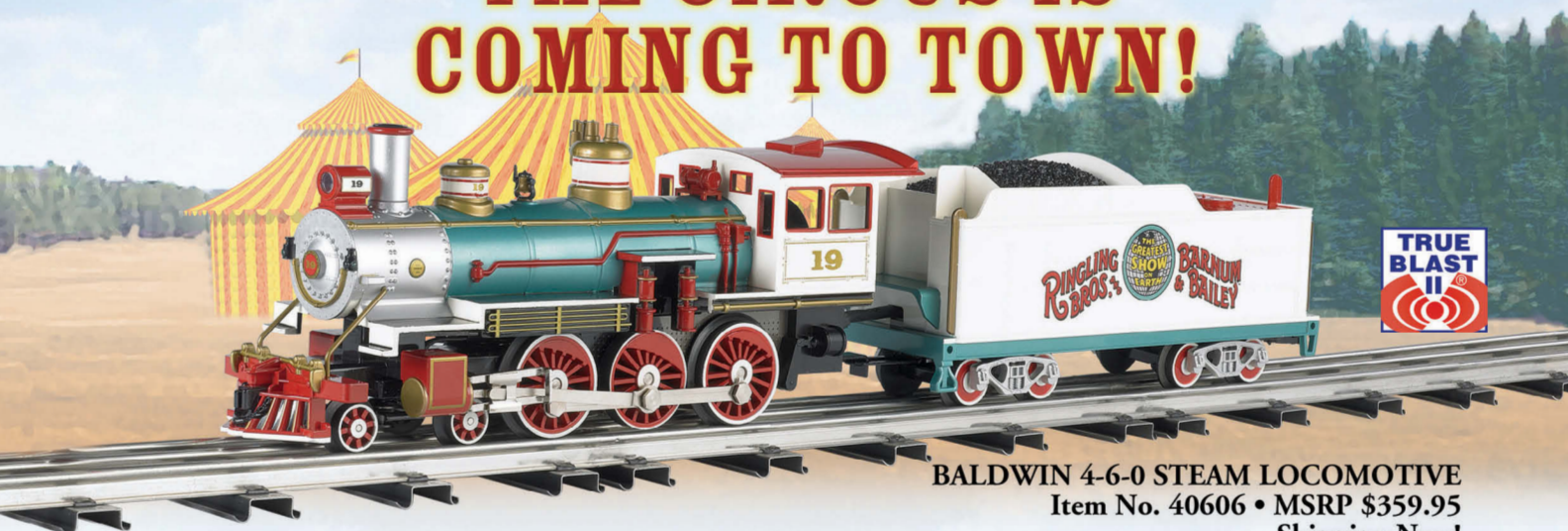
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