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*Jim Policastro Creates
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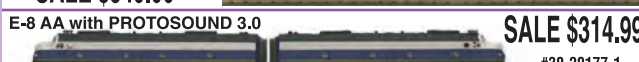
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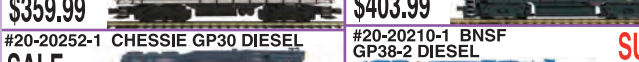
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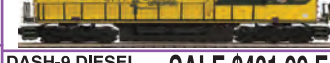
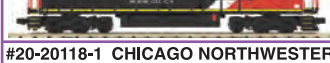
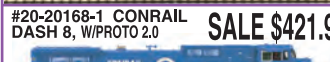
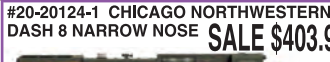
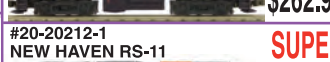
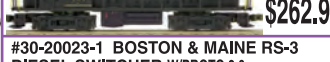
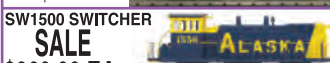
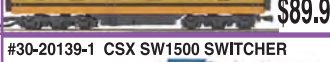
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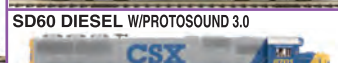
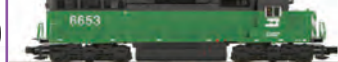
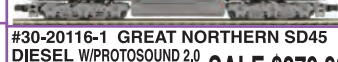
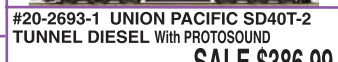
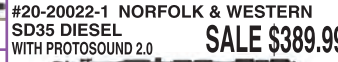
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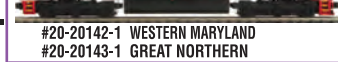
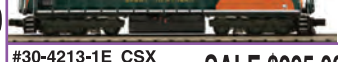
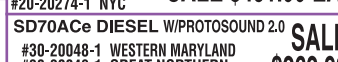
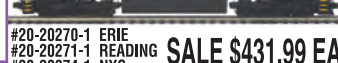
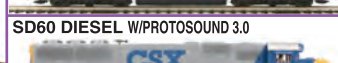
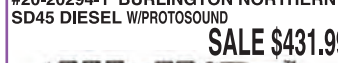
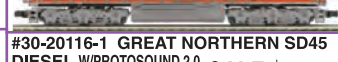
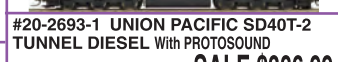


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An Open Letter from Steve (Ross) Brenneisen

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.

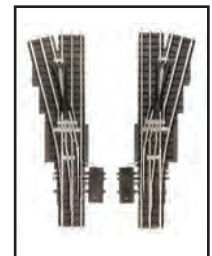
Last but not least, don't forget to check your local dealer to see if they carry **RCS**, or if you prefer, call us... 800-331-1395 ...and talk to a real live person who actually builds our track and switches (9am-4pm and/or from 11-4 Eastern most Mondays-Fridays, me.) We can answer any questions on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

Or email for a catalog; steve@rossswitches.com or check out our website: rossswitches.com

Nice talking with you, and Happy Railroading!



Steve



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Call for a free catalog
www.rossswitches.com

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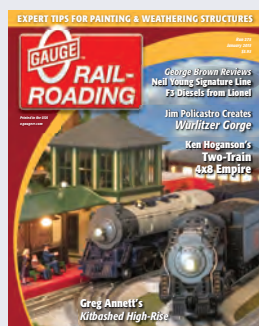
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ON THE COVER

Ken Hoganson believes in growing the hobby starting with the basics. In this issue he demonstrates how to expand an O gauge starter train set into a two-train operation on a lightweight layout that requires minimal space and allows for future expansion. It's a layout also ideally suited to running with Lionel's LionChief and LionChief Plus command control.

Photo by Ken Hoganson



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Growing or Slowing?

Depending on who you care to listen to and agree with, our model railroading hobby today—O gauge as well as other scales and gauges—is either healthy and growing or shrinking and at risk of disappearing at some point in the undetermined future. As one with some considerable involvement in the hobby, both professionally and from the “playing with trains” leisure activity perspective, I’m always interested in seeing what others have to say about what we must surely agree is a speculative and largely unpredictable future. That being the case, I thought it might be useful to present some alternative views.

Growing...

The folks at the online *Model Railroad Hobbyist* magazine in their August 2014 issue had this to say:

“Every so often, we run into people in the hobby who insist that it has to be shrinking. The view is held by some rather influential people in the hobby as well.

“MRH doesn’t share this view. We’ve done a lot of empirical studies and built some predictive models. These models say that since 2005 the hobby population should be on the upswing. If we check the number of Google searches for things like RC airplanes, model ships, RC cars, military models and model trains—almost always model trains has the largest number of searches, so says Google.

“The HMA, Hobby Manufacturers Association, keeps statistics on annual industry sales, and for several years running now, they’ve reported the industry revenue for model trains is growing, while the revenue for things like RC models is down.

“All in all, empirical hobby data that we can measure fits our predictive model that the hobby is currently growing.”

Dennis DeVito, president of the Lionel Collectors Club of America (LCCA), is similarly optimistic about the hobby’s future. Here are excerpts of his comments in a recent issue of *The Lionel Roars*, the official LCCA magazine:

“I see the future of the hobby far more positively than many others. It’s full of potential and fun for all for years to come.

“I accept the reality of vendor consolidation in the hobby, and more of that may be forthcoming. I accept that many of the things in the hobby that have been so delightful to me will be limited going forward.

“I fully understand that many in the hobby are ‘de-collecting’ for personal, financial, or health reasons. These factors have been emphasized as evidence of impending doom. I do not share this disparaging and caustic view. From this same data and info I can reach a different conclusion. At LCCA Conventions, Special Events, shows like the WGHOT, TrainFest, and in our increasing membership, I see almost unlimited growth.

“To the doomsayers who believe the hobby will not experience significant growth, here’s my ‘in your face’ response—don’t believe your overly hyped script. The hobby is large and growing larger.”

Slowing...

For a somewhat different view, here’s what Charlie Getz, president of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA), had to say in his column in the August 2014 issue of *NMRA Magazine*:

“The NMRA does face challenges, as does the hobby itself. The number of model railroaders is slowly shrinking, as is our membership. Although ironically, growth is occurring in the hobby; it is occurring in countries where the hobby was historically unknown.”

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A couple of issues later, in the magazine's October 2014 issue, Charlie also had this to say:

"We are at a crossroads in our hobby, and yet opportunity presents itself. Some are convinced that the hobby is on its last legs and doomed. Others, such as the editors of both *Model Railroader* and *Model Railroad Hobbyist* magazines, claim the hobby is not only strong but also growing. Those espousing this belief cite record sales levels as proof of growth. Pessimists discount those stats as reflecting a more prosperous aging class of consumers, but not an increasing base.

"It is an interesting debate, and one we need because it affects us all."

My own "Editor's Corner" column in Run 265, our August/September 2013 issue, was titled "State of Our Hobby: The Industry's Perspective." In that column, I presented and discussed the synopsis of a 2012 study by the HMA, which essentially concluded that (1) hobbyists are aging and the industry is not attracting younger demographics; (2) the economy has adversely impacted consumer spending on hobby interests; (3) traditional distribution channels are being negatively impacted by Internet commerce; and (4) the decline in hobby retail stores has made it more difficult for consumers to locate products and learn about them.

Mark Boyd, editor of *The Train Collectors Quarterly*, an official publication of the Train Collectors Association, wrote in his January 2014 column about industry consolidation in the toy and model train hobby and the inevitable relationship to the number of participants in the hobby.

"We talk about shrinking numbers [in the hobby] with little notice of the internal operation and health of the manufacturers within the toy train industry itself. In recent talks I have had with manufacturers, it causes me to worry how long this bubble can be sustained.

"Manufacturers claim they are ordering about half of the amount of new products these days that they made ten years ago. The market continues to shrink, even with new train enthusiasts continuing to enter the hobby.

"Toy train sales are a small portion of the products and clients that employ the technical engineers who design these trains. Can the necessary volume be sustained to continue this innovation? Manufacturers need some assurance that they can be profitable or they will cease making their products. That is why they are in business, but diminishing sales begs the question of how long can they sustain this bubble."

As I See It...


Youngsters—the truly young—enjoy watching real trains, model trains, toy trains, movie trains, and even cartoon trains.

Teens—significant numbers of them—are not all that involved with trains and never have been, even dating back to when trains of all types were an everyday presence in the real world. Nothing is going to change that, so there's little point in fretting about it.

Some young adults are involved in the hobby, but those numbers always were relatively small, and, again, that is not going to change. Most young adults are too involved with finding their way in the real world to be devoting time and money to a hobby interest that requires time, space, and fairly significant financial resources.

The core of this hobby has long been older and more settled adults, including those who eventually become empty nesters. The age demographic may cover a fairly broad range, but an average over most of my long lifetime has been around 50+ years old. That, too, has changed, and both the TCA and NMRA now report an average membership age of around 63.

Our model railroading hobby (all scales) is in no danger of *dying*, but if you take time to do your homework, you'll find that the O gauge segment, in particular, experienced resurgence in the mid- to late-1970s, peaked in the 1990s and early years of the current century, and has since leveled off and started on a gradual decline. That trend, also largely driven by simple real-world demographics, is not apt to change to an appreciable degree no matter what manufacturers and we hobbyists do. We can sit back and fret about that, or we can do the best we can—as individual participants—to demonstrate the personal satisfaction, relaxation, and individual creativity that the hobby of model railroading can bring to one's life in an increasingly demanding and troubled world. And the best way to do that is to devote some of your own time to attracting just one new participant to our great activity on an annual basis. Just one new model railroader a year—it's certainly not much to ask!

At least that's how I see it. 



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L37989	Sodor Shipping Co. Train Shed	46.95



L31960

POLAR EXPRESS SET

L30218	Polar Express O Gauge Remote Set	\$299.95
L81101	10th Anniv. Polar Express Remote Set	299.95
L30220	10th Anniv. Polar Express Streamliner Pass. Set	354.95
L35290	Polar Express Streamliner Pass. Add-On 2-Pack	109.95
L28425	Polar Express Elf Hand Car	70.95
L81450	The Polar Express Trolley	79.95
L25134	Polar Express Diner	50.95
L25135	Polar Express Baggage Car	50.95
L25186	Polar Express Chocolate Car	50.95
L35130	Polar Express Disappearing Hobo Car	54.95
L36875	Polar Express Coach w/Announcement	94.95
L81699	Polar Express™ GLA Twin Hopper	55.95
L25965	Polar Express 10th Anniversary Boxcar	50.95
L14273	Polar Express Add-On Figures (4)	22.95
L37183	10th Anniv. Pewter Snowman/Children Figures (5)	28.95
L24251	Polar Express Caribou Animal Pack	19.95
L24252	Polar Express Wolves & Rabbits Animal Pack	19.95
L24286	Polar Express Girder Bridge	16.95
L37837	Polar Express Straight Tunnel	69.95

L31960 The Polar Express Train Set SALE \$209.95

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L11330	Polar Railroad K-4 Steam Loco (L)	\$679.95
L11331	Polar Railroad K-4 Steam Loco (C)	599.95
L17752	Polar Railroad Round Roof Boxcar	41.95
L26445	Polar Railroad Hopper with Presents	43.95
L27496	Polar Railroad PS-2 Covered Hopper	41.95
L27872	Polar Railroad Hot Cocoa Car	44.95
L27873	Polar Railroad Reindeer Stock Car	44.95

Frosty The Snowman Train Set

LionChief Remote Control System with Smoke & RailSounds



CHRISTMAS ITEMS

L30194	North Pole Express Freight Set (Whistle)	\$224.95
L30193	Peanuts® Christmas Set (Whistle)	259.95
L30164	Santa's Flyer Train Set (Whistle)	249.95
L30162	Thomas & Friends™ Christmas Remote Set	149.95
L30205	Silver Bells Christmas Remote Set	179.95
L81284	Frosty the Snowman Remote Set	224.95
L81395	Thomas Kinkadeo® Remote Set	284.95
L81280	"Saint Nicholas" Victorian Remote Set	299.95
L30039	North Pole Central Passenger Expansion Pack	79.95
L28474	North Pole Central Elf Handcar	54.95
L38853	Santa and Mrs. Clause Handcar	75.95
L81450	The Polar Express Trolley	79.95
L25947	Jack Frost Reefer	30.95
L25958	Gingerbread Dough Vat Car	43.95
L25962	Thanksgiving Poultry Car	50.95
L25963	A Christmas Story 30th Anniversary Boxcar	46.95
L25964	Silver Bell Casting Co. Ore Car w/Load	39.95
L25977	A Christmas Story "Leg Lamp" Mint Car	57.95
L26481	Boy Scouts of America Christmas Gondola	46.95
L26489	Hershey's Christmas Bells Boxcar	41.95
L27872	Polar Railroad Hot Cocoa Car	44.95
L27873	Polar Railroad Reindeer Stock Car	44.95
L27946	#6050-25 Christmas Savings Boxcar	32.95
L27948	#6464-25 Great Northern Christmas Boxcar	43.95
L27949	#3854-25 PRR Christmas Merchandise Car	44.95
L29633	Christmas Ornament Lighted Mint Car	50.95
L29699	Silver and Gold Christmas Mint Car	SALE 44.95
L35250	North Pole Express Passenger Car (2 Pack)	86.95
L36170	Partridge in a Pear Tree Reefer	33.95
L37089	Santa's List Snow Globe Car	64.95
L81316	Personalized Message Christmas Boxcar	57.95
L81426	Frosty the Snowman Animated Gondola	43.95
L81427	Frosty the Snowman Aquarium Car	50.95
L81428	Frosty the Snowman Boxcar	35.95
L81534	Christmas Toys Stock Car	50.95
L81699	Polar Express™ GLA Twin Hopper	55.95
L81733	2014 Lionel Christmas Boxcar	46.95
L81895	North Pole Central 52'-6" Gondola	57.95
L81945	Polar Express Scale Coach	151.95

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CHRISTMAS ITEMS (Continued)

L81984	#1887 Christmas Flatcar with Reindeer	\$50.95
L81985	#6428 Christmas Mail Car	43.95
L81986	Christmas Wish Tank Car	43.95
L81987	2014 Angela Trotta Thomas Boxcar	46.95
L81990	Christmas Gondola with Reindeer Feed Vats	46.95
L81992	Santa Claus Bobbing Head Boxcar	46.95
L81993	Santa Finder Searchlight Car	39.95
L81999	Pennsylvania Gondola w/Xmas Gifts & Trees	46.95
L82000	Pennsylvania Christmas Crane Car	54.95
L82001	Merry & Bright Hot Cocoa Car	50.95

STANDARD O SCALE DIESEL LOCOMOTIVES

Multiple units available for most roadnames - Call or See Our Web Site

L28380	NYC "Lightning Stripe" #9959 DD35A Non-Pwr'd	\$249.95
L38371	#2031 Rock Island Alco AA Set	SALE 199.95
L38386	Wabash #2367 F3 AB Set	SALE 359.95
L38429	NYC M-497 Powered Jet Car	279.95
L38436	Long Island #1501 H1L44 (L)	(L) = Legacy 419.95
L38464	Alaska #3602 RS-11 (L)	(C) = Conventional 409.95
L38486	Southern #2215 Alco (C)	(BTO) = Built To Order 299.95
L38751	Central of New Jersey F3 A-A Set (L)	SALE 494.95
L38760	CNJ Powered B-Unit (L)	SALE 244.95
L38761	CNJ Non-Powered B-Unit	SALE 134.95
L38754	C&NW F7 A-A Set (L)	SALE 494.95
L39621	Kansas City Southern E9 A-A Set (L)	779.95
L39636	S&A #1065 SD70Ace (L)	SALE 369.95
L39637	S&A #1915 SD70Ace (L)	SALE 329.95
L81137	BNSF (SD70MAC #9858 (L) (BTO)	399.95
L81141	Conrail SD70MAC #4138 (L) (BTO)	399.95
L81144	CSX (SD70MAC #781 (L) (BTO)	399.95
L81147	KCS SD70MAC #3950 (L) (BTO)	399.95
L81154	Union Pacific ES44AC #7361 (L) (BTO)	399.95
L81160	CSX ES44AC #937 (L) (BTO)	399.95
L81176	Canadian National ES44AC #2812 (L) (BTO)	399.95
L81207	Canadian Pacific H24-66 TrainMaster #8900 (L)	399.95
L81209	CNJ H24-66 TrainMaster #2401 (L)	399.95
L81211	RDG H24-66 TrainMaster #801 (L)	399.95
L81213	Southern Pacific H24-66 TrainMaster #4803 (L)	399.95
L81215	SOU H24-66 TrainMaster #6300 (L)	399.95
L81217	N&W H24-66 TrainMaster #151 (L)	399.95
L81219	AT&SF E8 AA (L) (BTO)	669.95
L81225	Rock Island E8 AA (L) (BTO)	669.95
L81228	C&O E8 AA (L) (BTO)	669.95
L81240	Wabash E8 AA (L) (BTO)	669.95
L81507	B&O (L) FA-2 AA	539.95
L81523	B&O (L) Powered FB-2 #817X	324.95
L81529	B&O (L) Non-Powered FB-2 #827X	254.95
L81516	NYC (L) FA-2 AA	539.95
L81526	NYC (L) Powered FB-2 #3327	324.95
L81532	NYC (L) Non-Powered FB-2 #3348	254.95
L81519	PRR (L) FA-2 AA	539.95
L81527	PRR (L) Powered FB-2 #9608B	324.95
L81533	PRR (L) Non-Powered FB-2 #9610B	254.95
L82128	C&O #3011 GP30 (BTO) (L)	469.95
L82130	EMD Demo #1962 GP30 (BTO) (L)	469.95
L82132	Penn Central #2202 GP30 (BTO) (L)	469.95
L82134	GM&O #501 GP30 (BTO) (L)	469.95
L82136	N&W #522 (Black) GP30 (BTO) (L)	469.95
L82138	Milwaukee Rd #344 GP30 (BTO) (L)	469.95
L82140	Southern #2594 GP30 (BTO) (L)	469.95
L82142	Union Pacific #803 GP30 (BTO) (L)	469.95
L82112	B&M #1260 S2 (BTO) (L)	469.95
L82114	CB&Q #9306 S2 (BTO) (L)	469.95
L82116	CP #7020 S2 (BTO) (L)	469.95
L82118	GM&O #1001 S2 (BTO) (L)	469.95
L82120	Great Northern #2 S2 (BTO) (L)	469.95
L82122	Pennsylvania #5648 S2 (BTO) (L)	469.95
L82126	Union Pacific #1111 S2 (BTO) (L)	469.95

POSTWAR CONVENTIONAL CLASSICS

L27917	#2550 Mail & Bag. Budd Car Non-Pow.	\$50.95
L38353	X-628 Promotional Navy Outfit	SALE 469.95
L38354	#1464 UP "Anniversary" Pass Alco Set	SALE 359.95
L38371	#2031 Rock Island Alco AA Set	SALE 199.95
L38386	Wabash #2367 F3 AB Set	359.95
L38388	Wabash #2367 F3 Non-Powered A-Unit	124.95

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L29365	N&W Passenger Set (Legacy)	\$1639.95
L29366	Southern Pacific Tank Train Set (L)	714.95
L81094	"Big Blue" 86' Hi-Cube Boxcar Set (BTO) (L)	699.95
L81141	Conrail SD70MAC #4138 (BTO) (Legacy)	399.95
L81247	Pennsy M1a Twin Hopper Set (BTO) (Legacy)	1299.95
L81686	PRR GLA 50-Ton Twin Hopper 3-Pack (Matches Cars in L81247 M1a Set Above)	159.95
L81793	Berwind GLA 50 Ton Twin Hopper 3-Pack (Matches Car in L81247 M1a Set Above)	159.95

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L11449	Union Pacific Big Boy #4004 (BTO)	1999.95
L81142	PFE UP/SP SS Reefer w/Freight Sounds (3 Pk)	215.99
L82202	Big Boy Commemorative CA-4 Caboose	68.95
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L82394	UP Auxiliary Water Tender #907853 (BTO)	274.95
L82395	UP Auxiliary Water Tender #907856 (BTO)	274.95
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L11450	Polar Exp. Scale Berkshire Gold (BTO)	\$1079.95
L11451	Polar Exp. Scale Berkshire (Black) (BTO)	1049.95
L11452	C&O Berkshire (L) (BTO)	1049.95
L11453	ERIE Berkshire (L) (BTO)	1049.95
L11454	Nickel Plate Berkshire (L) (BTO)	1049.95
L11462	SP AC-12 Cab Forward #4294 (L)	1229.95
L11465	SP Daylight AC-12 Cab Fwrd. #4275 (L)	1229.95
L81245	Pennsylvania M1A #6771 (L)	1079.95
L81185	CNJ 2-8-2 Heavy Mikado #854 (L)	939.95
L81188	NYC 2-8-2 Heavy Mikado #9506 (L)	939.95
L81192	GN 2-8-2 Heavy Mikado #3148 (L)	939.95
L82340	N&W #2171 Y6B (BTO) (L)	1439.95
L82266	CN #1158 4-6-0 (BTO) (L)	649.95
L82267	C&NW #1385 4-6-0 (BTO) (L)	649.95
L82271	NYC #1258 4-6-0 (BTO) (L)	649.95
L82272	New Haven #816 4-6-0 (BTO) (L)	649.95

LIONCHIEF® PLUS STEAM LOCOMOTIVES with RAILSOUNDS

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L81296	Great Northern 2-8-2 Mikado Steam	309.95
L81297	Pennsylvania 2-8-2 Mikado Steam	309.95
L81299	Chessie System 2-8-2 Mikado Steam	309.95
L81301	New York Central 4-6-4 Hudson Steam	309.95
L81302	Chesapeake & Ohio 4-6-4 Hudson Steam	309.95
L81303	Union Pacific 4-6-4 Hudson Steam	309.95
L81304	Canadian National 4-6-4 Hudson Steam	309.95
L81307	Baltimore & Ohio 4-6-2 Pacific Steam	309.95
L81308	Canadian Pacific 4-6-2 Pacific Steam	309.95
L81309	Southern Pacific 4-6-2 Pacific Steam	309.95
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L38779	New York Central RS-3 Diesel	239.95
L38816	Pennsylvania RS-3 Diesel	239.95
L38819	Denver & Rio Grande RS-3 Diesel	239.95
L38821	Santa Fe GP7 Diesel	239.95
L38824	Northern Pacific GP7 Diesel	239.95
L38825	Union Pacific GP7 Diesel	239.95
L38827	Burlington GP7 Diesel	239.95
L82163	B&O LionChief Plus NW2 #9555	215.95
L82164	BN LionChief Plus NW2 #546	215.95
L82165	CB&Q LionChief Plus NW2 #9412A	215.95
L82166	Southern LionChief Plus NW2 #2401A	215.95

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L37066	Maintenance of Way Speeder (CC)	SALE \$84.95
L37067	New York Central Speeder (CC)	SALE 84.95
L37068	Canadian National Speeder (CC)	SALE 84.95
L39534	Rio Grande 1955 Mow Truck (CC)	SALE 134.95
L39537	New York Central 1955 Mow Truck (CC)	149.95
L39540	Southern 1955 Mow Truck (CC)	SALE 134.95
L81439	Halloween Pumpkinheads Handcar	61.95
L81444	PRR Command Control Tie-Jector	144.95
L82091	PRR Tie-Work Car (CC) Command Control	53.95
L81445	MOW Command Control Tie-Jector	144.95
L82092	MOW Tie Work Car	53.95

PASSENGER CARS

L25178	Cal. Zephyr Streamline Baggage w/TrainSnds	\$114.95
L25646	Santa Fe "The Scout" Heavyweight (4 Pack)	299.95
L25651	Santa Fe "The Scout" Heavyweight (2 Pack)	144.95
L25656	Alton Limited Heavyweight (4 Pack)	289.95
L25713	NYC 20th Century Ltd. Heavyweight (4 Pk.)	299.95
L30111	Pullman Pass. Expansion Pack (3 Cars)	116.95
L35229	Hogwarts Express Dementors Coach	43.95
L35259	Long Island RR Pass. Car (2 Pk.)	SALE 59.95
L35282	Long Island Anniversary "Jamaica" Coach	43.95
L81644	Chessie Madison 3-Pack (Combo/Coach/Obs)	194.95
L81768	Chessie Madison 2-Pack (Coach/Diner)	129.95
L81769	Chessie Madison 2-Pack (Coach/Baggage)	129.95
L81649	SP Daylight Madison 3-Pack (Combo/Coach/Obs)	194.95
L81773	SP Daylight Madison 2-Pack (Coach/Diner)	129.95
L81774	SP Daylight Madison 2-Pack (Coach/Baggage)	129.95
L81749	Pullman Madison 3-Pack (Combo/Coach/Obs)	194.95
L81763	Pullman Madison 2-Pack (Coach/Diner)	129.95
L81764	Pullman Madison 2-Pack (Coach/Baggage)	129.95
L81812	Rock Island 18" Alum. 2-Pack (Obs./Coach)	229.95
L81813	Rock Island 18" Alum. 2-Pack (Combo/Vista Dome)	229.95
L81866	Rock Island 18" Alum. 2-Pack (Coach/Baggage)	229.95
L81818	C&O 18" Alum. 2-Pack (Obs./Coach)	229.95
L81819	C&O 18" Alum. 2-Pack (Comb./Vista Dome)	229.95
L81869	C&O 18" Alum. 2-Pack (Baggage/Diner)	229.95
L81842	Wabash 18" Alum. 2-Pack (Obs./Coach)	229.95
L81843	Wabash 18" Alum. 2-Pack (Combo/Vista Dome)	229.95
L81872	Wabash 18" Alum. 2-Pack (Baggage/Diner)	229.95

OPERATING ROLLING STOCK

L25962	Thanksgiving Poultry Car	\$50.95
L26694	Carnegie Science Center Flatcar w/Submarine	43.95
L29322	Koi Aquarium Car #2	49.95
L37075	Boy Scouts Crane	54.95
L37097	Where The Wild Things Are Aquarium Car	61.95
L81256	Personalized Message Birthday Boxcar	57.95
L81491	Jersey Central Coal Dump Car	39.95
L81568	4th Of July Parade Car	57.95

BOX CARS

L15052	Amtrak Hi-Cube Boxcar	\$29.95
L15075	"Eagle Scout" Boxcar	SALE 34.95
L15084	Great Northern Hi-Cube Boxcar	27.95
L15098	The Lone Ranger Boxcar	SALE 34.95
L17752	Polar Railroad Round Roof Boxcar	SALE 41.95
L25930	President John Adams	46.95
L25931	President Andrew Johnson Boxcar	46.95
L25932	President Calvin Coolidge Boxcar	46.95
L25933	President Harry S. Truman Boxcar	46.95
L25946	"Black Widow" Hi-Cube Boxcar	32.95
L26499	Canadian National High Cube Boxcar	39.95
L27282	Union Pacific Double-Door Boxcar	SALE 44.95
L27710	#6464 Variation Boxcar #2	79.95
L27857	Pennsy Double-Door Boxcar w/End Doors	57.95
L29791	Wizard of Oz Anniversary Boxcar	50.95
L29793	Where The Wild Things Are Boxcar	50.95
L29994	Army Boxcar	46.95
L29995	Navy Boxcar	46.95
L39361	Coke Polar Bear Boxcar	50.95
L39354	Monopoly® North Carolina" Boxcar	50.95
L39358	Boy Scouts "Prepared For Life"™ Boxcar	43.95
L39360	Cub Scout™ Boxcar	43.95
L39362	Thomas Kinkadee Wizard of Oz Emerald City Boxcar	50.95
L81000	BNSF Waffle-Sided Boxcar	32.95
L81066	MILW RD Double-Sheathed Boxcar #8775	57.95
L81195	Pennsylvania Railroad Boxcar	46.95
L81196	Timken Boxcar	46.95
L81197	Santa Fe Boxcar	46.95
L81198	Great Northern Boxcar	46.95
L81619	RDG PS-1 Boxcar #109448	57.95
L81707	NYC 86' Hi-Cube Boxcar 2-Pack	136.95
L81712	NYC 86' Hi-Cube Boxcar #67001	68.95
L81828	GN Single Door Rnd Roof Boxcar #5217	57.95
L81733	2014 Lionel Christmas Boxcar	46.95
L81836	Erie Double-Sheathed Boxcar #71107	57.95
L81838	CNJ Double-Sheathed Boxcar #14014	57.95
L81987	2014 Angela Trotta Thomas Boxcar	46.95

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L15086	Alaska Wood Sided Reefer	\$29.95
L25934	Santa Fe Map & Slogan Reefer 3-Pack	99.95
L27872	Polar Railroad Hot Cocoa Car	44.95
L29989	PFE Steel Sided Refrigerator Car 3-pack	172.95
L27458	Union Pacific Mechanical Refrigerator Car	61.95
L27771	#6572 REA Refrigerator Car	43.95
L81011	Pacific Fruit Express Reefer	32.95
L81015	Boston & Maine Reefer	32.95
L81142	PFE UP/SP SS Reefer w/Freight Snds 3 Pack	215.99
L81908	PFE Steel-Sided Reefer 3-Pack	172.95

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L25958	Gingerbread Dough Vat Car	\$43.95
L25959	Gingerbread 3-Dome Tank Car	39.95
L26496	Lionelville Aquarium Co. Fish Food Vat Car	43.95
L27259	Pennsylvania ACF Stock Car	59.95
L27873	Polar Railroad Reindeer Stock Car	44.95
L29649	Lionel SP Smoke Pellets Mint Car	49.95
L29654	Boston Federal Reserve Mint Car	50.95
L29671	Smoke Pellet Mint Car #2	50.95
L29777	Cibro TankTrain - Set of 2 Cars	114.95
L39386	Marines Tank Car	46.95
L39388	National Guard Tank Car	46.95
L39399	Army Tank Car	46.95
L81002	Union Pacific 3 Dome Tank Car	32.95
L81012	T&P Single-Dome Tank Car	32.95
L81076	Penn Salt 8000-Gallon Tank Car #4770	52.95
L81077	PM 8000-Gallon Tank Car #71710	52.95
L81078	NYC 8000-Gallon Tank Car #107898	52.95
L81079	NKP 8000-Gallon Tank Car #50277	52.95
L81080	BN 8000-Gallon Tank Car #977100	52.95
L81199	Pennsylvania Railroad Tank Car	46.95
L81200	Timken Tank Car	46.95
L81201	Great Northern Tank Car	46.95
L81202	Santa Fe Tank Car	46.95
L81419	Alien Ooze Single-Dome Tank Car	43.95
L81469	Great Northern Bi-level Stockcar	43.95

HOPPERS, GONDOLAS AND ORE CARS

L17480	Rock Island PS-5 Gondola w/Coke Containers	\$50.95
L26448	U.S. Army Gondola with Reels	29.95
L26473	Lackawanna NS Heritage ACF 2-Bay Hopper	39.95
L26481	Boy Scouts of America Christmas Gondola	46.95
L26488	Hershey's Ice Breakers Hopper	SALE 35.95
L26677	Long Island RR Gondola w/Canisters	29.95
L26696	KJ Transit® Gondola with Wood Ties	54.95
L27095	NCS PS-2 Hopper (2 Pk.)	99.95
L27457	Norfolk Southern 3-Bay Open Hopper	57.95
L27496	Polar Railroad PS-2 Covered Hopper	SALE 41.95
L29787	Pennsylvania 3-Bay Open Hopper	57.95
L81435	N&W NS Heritage Quad Hopper w/Coal Load	39.95
L81686	PRR GLA 50-Ton Twin Hopper 3 Pack	159.95
L81687	Lehigh Valley GLA 50 Ton Twin Hopper 2 Pack	104.95
L81688	CB&Q GLA 50 Ton Twin Hopper 3 Pack	159.95
L81689	C&O GLA 50 Ton Twin Hopper 3 Pack	159.95
L81699	The Polar Express™ GLA Twin Hopper	55.95
L81789	NH GLA 50 Ton Twin Hopper 2 Pack	104.95
L81793	Benwind GLA 50 Ton Twin Hopper 3 Pack	159.95
L81858	PRR GLA 50 Ton Twin Hopper 3 Pack	159.95
L81891	BNSF 52-6 Gondola w/Covers #523300	57.95
L81892	Bethlehem Steel 52-6 Gondola w/Covers #303022	57.95
L81894	CSX 52-6 Gondola w/Covers #709190	57.95
L82096	"Lionel Steel" Culvert Gondola	46.95
L82098	Bucyrus-Erie Culvert Gondola	46.95
L82111	Lionel 2-Bay Coal Hopper	39.95
L82411	N&W 2-Bay Coal Hopper	39.95

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L19388	BN '89 Auto Carrier Car	\$79.95
L19391	Soo Line '89 Auto Carrier Car	79.95
L26693	Krackel® Piggyback Flatcar with Trailer	50.95
L26694	Carnegie Science Center Flatcar w/Submarine	43.95
L26699	Pennsylvania Flatcar w/Wheel Load	39.95
L27473	Conrail '89 Auto Rack Car	79.95
L29345	Santa Fe '89 Auto Carrier Car	79.95
L29376	Conrail '89 Auto Carrier Car	79.95
L29381	GT '89 Auto Carrier	79.95
L29695	BNSF Trailer Train Maxi-Stack (2 Pack)	86.95
L36195	Pennsylvania Patrol Helicopter Flatcar	43.95
L37855	Lionel Airplane (2 Pack)	28.95
L39391	Army Flatcar	46.95
L39394	Air Force Flatcar	46.95
L39395	National Guard Flatcar	46.95
L81203	Pennsylvania Railroad Flatcar	46.95
L81204	Santa Fe Flatcar	46.95
L81205	Timken Flatcar	46.95
L81206	Great Northern Flatcar	46.95
L81466	SP Flatcar with Two Piggybacks	50.95
L81466	BN Maxi-Stack (Pair)	89.95
L81486	NYC Patrol Helicopter Flatcar	43.95
L81896	NYC PS-5 Flatcar with Piggybacks	71.95
L81898	Lionel PS-5 Flatcar with Piggybacks	71.95
L81899	CP PS-5 Flatcar with Piggybacks	71.95
L81900	UP PS-5 Flatcar with Piggybacks	71.95
L81901	NYC Semi-Tractor & Piggyback Trailer	64.95
L81904	CP Semi-Tractor & Piggyback Trailer	64.95
L81905	UP Semi-Tractor & Piggyback Trailer	64.95

SCALE OPERATING CARS

L81881	SP Command Control Crane Car (L)	\$359.95
L81886	SP RailSounds Boom Car (L)	174.95
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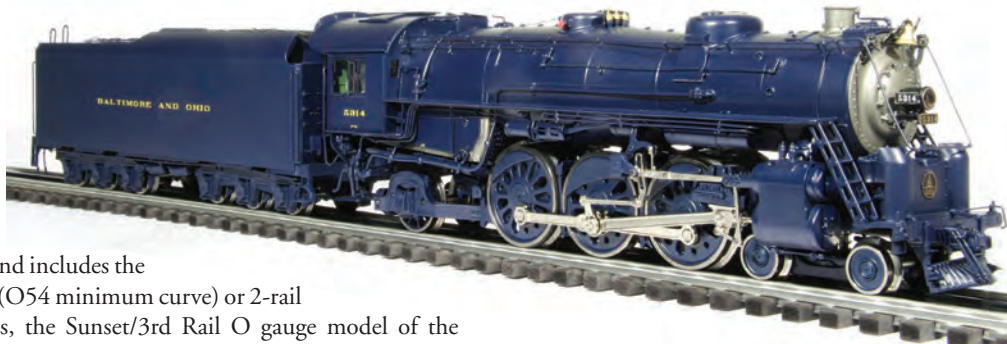
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Smoke Signals

Product Announcements

Blue Pacific

Modelers of the B&O now have a Class P7e Pacific available for their Royal Blue passenger trains. From Sunset/3rd Rail, this 1:48 scale all-brass model



of B&O #5314 is painted blue and includes the

correct tender. Offered in 3-rail (O54 minimum curve) or 2-rail

(48" minimum radius) versions, the Sunset/3rd Rail O gauge model of the

4-6-2 features a fully detailed backhead with illuminated gauges, skew-wound Pittman motor,

Cruise Commander with RailSounds from ElectricRR, and synchronized smoke. The #5314 is in stock and lists for \$1,399.95. To order one of these limited-production locomotives, contact Sunset/3rd Rail, 16 Beta Court, San Ramon, CA; 800-373-7245; www.3rdrail.com.

Smokin'

Henning's Trains has introduced the Super-Chuffer, a smoke and lighting enhancement product for O gauge steam engines with fan-driven smoke. The Super-Chuffer improves the appearance of the smoke operation with dynamically timed chuffs that vary with locomotive speed and are synchronized with Lionel's RailSounds. When stopped, the smoke fan runs continuously at low speed. Lighting features include Rule 17 lighting for the headlight and cab light control that extinguishes the cab lights when moving. This small unit (1.1" x 1.2" x 0.6") adds many of the features found on newer locomotives and is a perfect upgrade for older TMCC or conventional fleets. Super-Chuffer #10100 is available for TMCC locos, and the Super-Chuffer #10200 is for conventional engines. Each comes with complete installation instructions. For additional information and ordering, visit Henning's Trains at 128 South Line St., Lansdale, PA 19446, www.henningstrains.com, or call 215-362-2442.



Sample Ballast Sale

Brummy's Landscaping Express is offering layout builders and modelers the chance to sample one pound assortments of its most popular premium rubber ballast and scenery materials. Four bags of different colored 1 mm nuggets are designed for O-scalers and 3-rail hi-railers. The colors include Aged Cinder #1, Seasoned Gray #01, Dark Gray #1, and Limestone #1. The four 2 mm nugget color choices are aimed at tubular rail and tinplate operators who need larger ballast sizes for their track. The coarser ground ballast comes in Aged Cinder #2, Dark Gray #2, Gray #2, and Limestone #2. The landscape assortment covers layout builders with light brown, Railyard #01, Dark Dirt #1, medium green, Lakeside #1, and Deep Forest #01. Each assortment contains four 4 oz bags and costs \$9.95 including free shipping in the continental U.S. To order, e-mail Dave Brumagin at dbrumagin4@netscape.net or call 330-825-3673.



Bring on the Clowns

Get behind the wheel of the newest car designed for operation on the Williams by Bachmann E-Z Street track system. This new O gauge Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Clown Car features the vintage Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey paint scheme and operates on the popular O gauge E-Z Street track system as well as any other straight or curved 3-rail track (forward operation only). This colorful car operates on both the 16" and 21" diameter E-Z Street curves. Suggested retail price is \$76.95. See this and the full line of E-Z Street and Williams by Bachmann products at your favorite hobby retailer or visit www.bachmanntrains.com.



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Floating Rails

The Nassau Lionel Operating Engineers (NLOE) has announced a Cross Harbor Railroad Round Roof Boxcar, the latest offering in the group's commemorative car program. This car represents the New York Cross Harbor Railroad switching and terminal operation, which from 1983 to 2006 had the only car float operation across Upper New York Bay between Jersey City and Brooklyn. This car also commemorates construction of the club's own harbor scene, which includes a car float and offloading ramp. The Lionel scale car will be painted in the two-tone blue used by the Cross Harbor Railroad and will have die-cast metal sprung trucks, operating couplers, grab irons, and underframe details (graphics may differ slightly from that shown). Cost of the car is \$67.00 each plus shipping and sales tax if appropriate. Estimated delivery is September/October 2015. Orders must be received by December 31, 2014. Purchasers will automatically be enrolled as Associate Members of the NLOE. Make check or money order payable in U.S. funds to Nassau Lionel Operating Engineers and mail to P.O. Box 343, Levittown, NY 11756.

Train in Maine

Weaver Models is offering its TOFC 50' Flat Car with 35' Trailer in the Maine Central livery. The car has prototypically correct and individually applied road name boards. This car is available in six




different road numbers and operates on O42 curves. It comes equipped with die-cast sprung trucks and couplers. The cars are available in both 2-rail and 3-rail versions. MSRP is \$69.95 for the 2-rail version and \$66.95 for the 3-rail version. This TOFC is also available in 10 other colorful road names. The car is assembled, painted with Scalecoat paint, and printed in the USA. Check with your Weaver dealer at www.weavermodels.com for more info.

Stocking Stuffer Deluxe

In celebration of the 2014 holiday season and the new association between the Lionel Collectors Club of America (LCCA) and the Lionel Railroader Club (LRRC), the LCCA has announced



release of a special and distinctive 2014 Christmas car. Continuing in the traditions of the LRRC, this Christmas boxcar features die-cast sprung trucks and graphics commemorating this year's union of the LCCA and the LRRC by displaying heralds and logos from both clubs. The "Assembled in America" car by Lionel will be offered to club members for \$67.95 delivered and will be available for a limited time at the LCCA web store, www.lionelcollectors.org. Only 500 units will be built and available for sale with delivery expected late in December 2014. Members can purchase the car via mail addressed to LCCA Business Office, P.O. Box 529, Peru, IL 61354; by fax to 815-223-0791; or on the website. 



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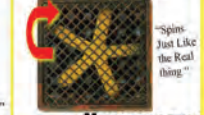
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Bright and Bold

You can spot brightly colored Detroit, Toledo & Ironton diesels coming from a mile away both in the real world and on Gary Figi's O gauge shelf layout. Here, DT&I No. 350, operating over Pennsy trackage en route to the Detroit terminal, crosses a plate girder bridge spanning the Pine River.



Fore!

Tower City's golf tournament is well under way on Bill Bramlage's layout, and the gallery is packed. Art's new golf shop is finally open as well after several construction delays. The #3 hole plays off the edge of the train world—an especially dangerous hillside. Let's hope that the fellow swinging the driver is not number ten on the roster of lost golfers!

Old Meets New

Steam-era power meets more contemporary FP diesel power on Len Vonderhaar's nicely detailed 3-rail layout. The Amtrak train has just completed a brief station stop to discharge several passengers and is about to head to a major metropolitan area farther down the line.



On the Waterfront

Here's a hot-air balloon view of a beautiful scene on Mike Guarraia's highly detailed 0 gauge layout. A rail yard sits adjacent to the dock area where fishing boats come and go throughout the day. A bit farther along the rail line is a boat yard where paddle-wheel tugs are being built. We'll show you a view of that facility in our next issue. Mike's layout was previously featured in Run 241, our February/March 2010 issue.

Fallen Flag and a Thoroughbred

Norfolk Southern No. 2653 waits in the hole as a freight headed by a unit adorned in distinctive Conrail blue glides past on the main. Both diesels are actually Norfolk Southern property at this point since the former Conrail was restructured and split between NS and CSX back in 1998. Many Conrail units continued to bear their original livery until they were either sold or in desperate need of repaint. This scene is on Rich Battista's superbly detailed Black Diamond Railway in Virginia.



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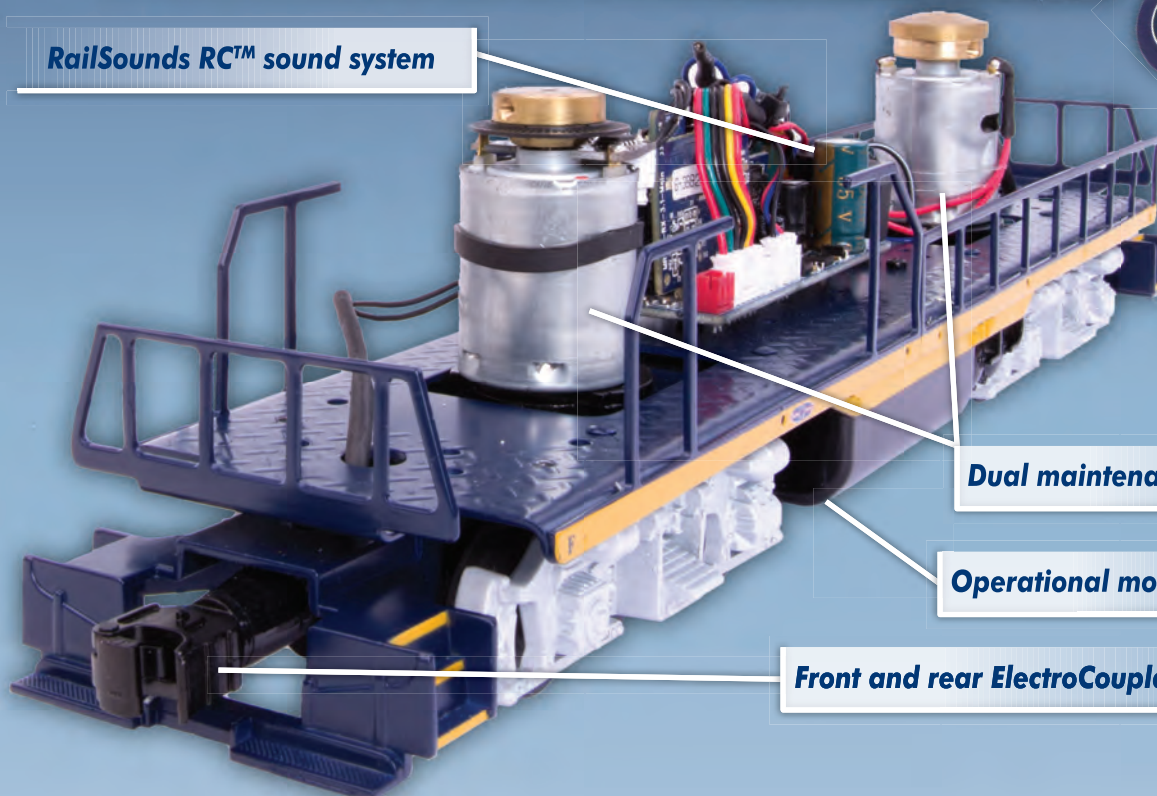


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Product Reviews



Lionel Neil Young Signature Line F3 Diesels

Review and Photos by George Brown

On the rails or on the shelf, the new Neil Young Signature F3 A-A units from Lionel have the traditional postwar physical appearance, but with postmillennial motors and electronics inside. For this review, I had the pleasure of examining and running not only the MKT Texas Special A-A set in its red, silver, and yellow color scheme but also the Pennsylvania A-A set in its livery of Brunswick green with gold trim.

As listed in the current Lionel 2014 Signature Edition catalog, these F3s are offered as a set consisting of powered and dummy A units. Powered and dummy B units are also available as separate-sale items. Complete passenger trains are cataloged in either MKT Texas Special or Pennsylvania Trail Blazer liveries. Each train includes the double A pair with four 15" illuminated aluminum cars. To round out the cataloged offerings, a two-car add-on package includes a dining car with StationSounds and a baggage car. Current and recent Lionel catalogs are available for viewing on the Lionel website.

Construction and Features

For all outward appearances, 2014 release of these iconic carbody diesels has plastic shells with all the molded-in and separate details of the initial postwar edition plus some additional niceties. Electronic boards using the latest in surface-mount technology ride inside the powered A unit for sound reproduction in addition

to command or conventional control of the dual motors, smoke unit, coil coupler, and LED lighting. Inside the dummy A unit are additional electronics for control of the smoke unit, coil coupler and LED lighting.

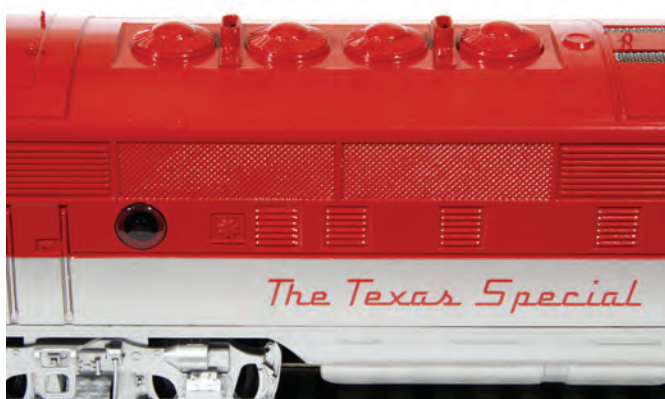
Although I haven't seen an example of the powered B unit, I understand from Lionel's Director of Project Management and Customer Service Mike Reagan that it has the same Legacy command receiver, Odyssey II system, DC can motors with flywheels, and smoke unit as the powered A unit. A backup light and coil coupler are on the default back end; that is, the end with the steam generator stacks. In contrast to operating features in the dummy A unit, the dummy B unit is a traditional one with dummy couplers and nothing inside.

Both of our evaluation sets of F3s wore excellent finishes complemented by outstanding lettering and graphics. The satin Brunswick green A-A set was downright handsome with its gold single stripe and lettering plus the uniquely Pennsy radio antennas. With the addition of the dummy B unit that Ed Boyle graciously loaned me from his recently acquired Pennsylvania Trail Blazer set, the resulting A-B-A trio of traditional Lionel F3s proved to be an exciting consist at the head of its train. Both A units were numbered 9502, and the B unit did not have a road number, which was typical for postwar Lionel F3s. Engine 9502 was a real F3 on the PRR.

The glossy decoration of the Texas Special units was a mixture of realism and fantasy. Major differences between the real pair of E7 A units owned by the MKT and the Lionel F3s began with the initial postwar release of the red and white 2245 A-B F3 set in 1954—colorful, but no awards for realism. On the new F3s, Lionel combined several Texas Special decorative elements from the real E7s with the generic livery for MKT carbody diesels of that era—attractive, but not exactly accurate. As to the predominant red script on the lower flank of the Lionel carbody, it was carried over from the postwar 2245 fantasy. Especially peculiar are the road numbers of 201A and 201C on the new Lionel models. In the late 1940s, these road numbers were on real MKT F3s; however, road numbers for the Texas Special E7s were 101A and 101C. But even considering these decorative anomalies, I still found the new Texas Special F3s to be a particularly attractive pair of A units. In fact, our evaluation sample F3s were very attractive at the head of my seven-car Texas Special train from the 1999 Lionel release—much more attractive than my Postwar Celebration 2245 F3s from that same release.

Lionel Neil Young Signature Line F3 Features and Details

- Powered units only:
 - Legacy command control with Legacy RailSounds
 - Odyssey II Speed Control
 - Dual DC can motors with flywheels
 - Metal drive gears
 - All eight wheels powered
 - Four traction tires
 - Die-cast trucks with bronze bushings
 - IR transmitter for use with LCS sensor track section
- Directional LED headlights and marker lamps
- Illuminated number boards
- Fan-driven smoke units (all except dummy B unit)
- Command operated ElectroCoupler on pilots
- Die-cast truck side frames
- Die-cast engine frames and pilots
- Stamped steel trucks with bronze bushings (dummy units only)
- Metal horns and dynamic brake screens
- Wire lifting rings
- Separate steam generator exhaust and vent pipes
- Separate steps and nose grab irons
- Tinted cab widows and portholes
- Illuminated cab (when locomotive stopped)
- Crew figures in cabs
- Control switches under frame





For the conventional operator, a clip is inside the powered unit for installation of an owner-supplied 9-volt alkaline battery. This battery keeps the sound system running during short power interruptions for changing direction of the locomotive. Removing the body shell to install the battery is as simple as it comes. One small Phillips screw holds the front of the shell to the frame while a pair of slip-on tabs holds the back. Magnetizing my #0 screwdriver took longer than removing the shell.

The forward fan on top of the powered unit is actually the knob for the RailSounds volume control. Unless you know its purpose, that fan blends in seamlessly with the other three.

At Trackside

Initial power-up immediately revealed a totally new and different repertoire of Legacy RailSounds recordings—sounds I've not heard previously from Lionel Legacy diesels. A number of new clanks and metallic squeals overlay the exhaust bark and gear whine from the EMD 567 prime mover. On the topic of the exhaust bark, Legacy RailSounds reproduces the correct eight run levels of the prime mover. My e-mail inquiry about these sounds to Rudy Trubitt, the sound guru at Lionel, yielded the explanation in the Legacy F3 RailSounds sidebar.

Operating under commands from either my CAB-2 or CAB-1L with the appropriate command base, both the Pennsy and the MKT F3s responded with smooth and predictable performance. Mechanical noise was almost nonexistent, while realistically slow starts and stops were a treat. Running the powered unit at 1 scale mph with two dummy units and a heavy train of eight 21" aluminum cars in tow proved the capabilities of not only the speed control system but also the locomotive's drive mechanism. Even though the train was always stretched through two 90-degree O72 curves on the editorial Carpet Central Railroad, the powered unit with four traction tires on its eight drive wheels had no trouble getting the train under way or maintaining its speed.

All of the F3 units negotiated my O36 Atlas sectional track and switches with the same aplomb as on my O72 main line and crossovers. Of course the locomotives and their trains were a lot more graceful on the wider curves. As an operator who likes to run switching sessions, I appreciated the Legacy command electronics and ElectroCoupler on the dummy A unit's pilot. These electronics controlled the coil-operated coupler on the trailing A unit for switching. They also controlled the illumination of the cab light and either the headlight or the marker lights as well as the volume

Legacy F3 RailSounds

Sounds of the prime mover and appliances such as the air compressor for these F3 sets come from several different locomotives, all with EMD 567B diesel. In particular, I drew heavily from our recordings made in 2007 of the Western Pacific #918, an F7. This locomotive was restored by the Pacific Locomotive Association and sounded great. We record different elements of a locomotive from a variety of vantage points. The final sound perspective I create is that of a listener standing trackside at a respectful distance from a large and powerful piece of machinery.

For every Lionel product, I keep several points in mind. Are the sounds prototypically accurate? Is the sound playable? Is the sound set responsive to the operator's command such that they feel more in control of the Lionel locomotive? And finally, does a casual listener believe the model sounds like a train? All these points are important, although at times they seem to be in opposition to each other. In the end, the overarching goal of our sound system is to create a stronger engagement between the operator and the locomotive.

Rudy Trubitt

Director of Audio
Lionel, LLC

of smoke from the exhaust stacks. The ElectroCoupler on the trailing A unit opened every time on command to uncouple from the train or drop off a car on a siding.

Operators who like lots of exhaust smoke from their locomotives will likely enjoy the F3s. Both the powered and dummy A units as well as the powered B unit have a fan-driven smoke unit with operator-selectable output. This output can be at any of several different levels between room-filling dense and shut off. During my verification of smoke unit operation, the white vapor from the F3s' twin exhaust stacks on our evaluation A-A units simulated a pair of EMD prime movers with worn-out rings and cylinders. Even in the pre-EPA years, a well-maintained EMD prime mover had a fairly clean exhaust.

To run our tests chronicled in the performance sidebar to this review, I coupled our O scale passenger test train to the MKT A-A set.

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K3481-0379CC Reading Reg. 600 SALE 450
K3499-0381CC Reg. 600 SALE 450

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20-80002I PRR 6-8-6 Reg. 230 SALE 170
30-1163-1 N&W Y6B Reg. 700 SALE 650
30-1163-0 N&W locosound Reg. 600 SALE 550

MTH Premier Steam

20-3312-1 BC Royal Hudson Reg. 1000 SALE 950
20-3315-1 CP Royal Hudson Reg. 1000 SALE 950

Lionel Steam

6-11425 Alaska 0-4-0 Reg. 450 SALE 400
6-11392 MC scale Berkshire Reg. 1250 SALE 950
6-11419 SP GS-2 black Reg. 1300 SALE 1100
6-11317 Southern 4-4-2 Atlantic Reg. 550 SALE 500

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But for the rest of the two weeks that the red, silver, and yellow F3 pair was on Carpet Central rails, it pulled my red and chrome Texas Special passenger train. The performance of the new A-A set was vastly superior to my 2245 A-B Texas Special set from 1999. Of course the Pennsy F3 A-B-A set also had its dedicated ten-car Pennsy fast mail train. Both sets of the F3s proved themselves over nearly 12 hours of trouble-free operation. Best of all, they were fun to watch and run.

At the End of the Run

I rarely quote the marketing verbiage usually found in catalogs from the train manufacturers, but with our evaluation sample F3s, I feel it's appropriate. The Lionel 2014 Signature Edition catalog states "...the postwar glory of Lionel's classic F3 diesel locomotive meets our 21st-century technology in the new Neil Young Signature Line." Yes, it does! 

6-81452 Neil Young Signature Line F3 A-A Set

Retail prices at authorized Lionel dealers:

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

Length: 13-3/8" one unit over couplers
12-3/4" one unit pilot to end sill
26-1/2" two coupled units over couplers

Distance Between Locomotive Pickup Rollers: 1st and 2nd: 6-1/4"

Weight on Driving Wheels: 4 lbs, 6 oz

Nonpowered Unit Weight: 3 lbs, 3 oz

Power Consumption at Idle @ 18 VAC: 0.4 A, 7.2 W

Tractive Effort @ 18 VAC: 2 lbs, 2 oz @ 2.1 A, 37.8 W

Minimum Sustained Speed @ 18 VAC: 1 scale mph @ 0.7 A, 12.6 W

Maximum Tested Speed @ 18 VAC: 60 scale mph @ 1.1 A, 19.8 W

Minimum 3-Rail Curve: 031

Test Train

Eight-car streamlined passenger; train weight, 13 lbs; pull to move train, 12 oz;
80' 0 scale aluminum cars

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9-18"	2389	2390	2391	\$54. ⁹⁵

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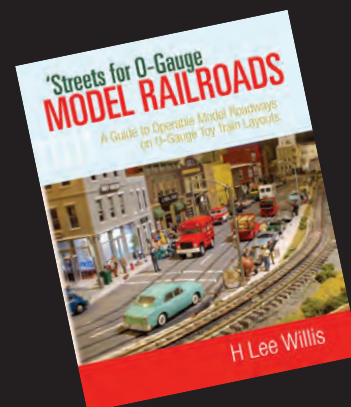
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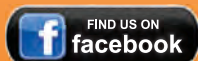
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Bachmann On30 50-Ton Center-Cab Whitcomb Diesel

Review and Photos by George Brown

After a number of years offering On30 steam locomotives under its popular Spectrum line, Bachmann Trains recently released its first diesel locomotive for the On30 hobbyist. This 1:48 scale model of the Whitcomb 50-ton center-cab diesel can be at home on just about any On30 layout or line that depicts a lumber or mining operation or perhaps an industrial complex of the mid-20th century or later. A Whitcomb can also pull a narrow-gauge excursion train through 1:48 scale entertainment parks or even pastoral backwoods scenery. Of course the little side-rod switcher runs on HO gauge track and will negotiate short radius curves down to 15".

Prototype Notes

By the 1920s, Whitcomb Locomotive Works of Rochelle, Illinois, was known for its rugged and dependable locomotives by its industrial, government, and common carrier customers. The company, which became a wholly owned subsidiary of the Baldwin Locomotive Works in the late 1930s, built small gas and diesel switchers that could move a few cars in areas with minimal clearances and marginal track. In its later years, the company also built larger switches for several major railroads such as the 75-ton #1012 diesel for the Rock Island.

The 50-ton center-cab Whitcomb was a diesel-electric with inside or outside frame trucks, depending on the customer order. A standard gauge 50-ton Whitcomb, built in 1950, is still in operation today on the Port Stanley Terminal Railroad, a tourist railroad in Canada.

Construction and Features

Because of the plastic steam locomotives from Bachmann that I've reviewed in the past, I expected the Whitcomb to have a plastic body riding on a plastic frame. Surprise! Both the body and frame are die-cast with realistic handrails and coupler cut levers of formed wire. Louvers and door handles are cast into the body, and the top of the frame has the typical industrial nonslip diamond pattern cast into it. The outside frame trucks and cranks are also die-cast while the rods are stamped steel with small hex screws for the crankpins. Weight of the little Whitcomb is a hefty 24-1/2 ounces, which is somewhat surprising for a locomotive that's only 7" between the footboards.

On the cab, all the windows are clear plastic, and the side windows slide open or closed. I especially liked the simulated aluminum frames around both the stationary and sliding windows. Separate windshield wipers are a small and inconspicuous

detail that's easily overlooked. Inside one side of the cab is a representation of the control console with visible gauge faces. An appropriately painted figure representing the engineer sits at the controls.

A realistic die-cast bell and horn are included but separate from the model and packed inside a small plastic envelope. Square indentations cast into the inside of the front hood mark where the owner has to drill and file small square holes to mount both the horn and the bell. As evidenced by the photos, I chose not to drill and file holes on a locomotive that wasn't mine.

Each end of the two hoods has a see-through grille of photo-etched brass with Whitcomb clearly emblazoned in a vertical format. Behind each grille is a factory-installed speaker for an optional, owner-installed sound board.



Bachmann Spectrum On30 Whitcomb 50-Ton Center-Cab Diesel Features and Details

- NMRA-compliant dual-mode DCC decoder
- Speakers for optional owner-installed sound module
- DC motor with dual flywheels
- All wheels powered
- Die-cast body, frame, and trucks
- See-through radiator grilles
- Wire handrails and coupler cut levers
- Soft white LED directional headlights
- Engineer figure and control stand in cab
- Owner-installed die-cast bell and horn
- E-Z Mate Mark II operating couplers
- 15" minimum radius curves
- Optional sound module available



As with other recently released Spectrum On30 steam locomotives, the Whitcomb can run on either analog DC power or under control of a digital command control (DCC) system. With analog DC power, the power pack controls the track voltage and polarity that thereby establishes the locomotive's speed and direction. Operation under DCC requires a separate control system such as the Bachmann E-Z Command set or any other NMRA-compliant DCC system. Such a system issues encoded digital speed, direction, and sound commands, entered by the operator on a hand-held controller, to the DCC decoder board installed in the Whitcomb. The DCC technology is similar to the Lionel and MTH command systems used with 3-rail O gauge trains in that the track, which has a constant voltage on it, carries the command signals from a DCC encoding power supply to the decoder in the locomotive.

An NMRA-compliant DCC decoder board is factory-installed inside the Whitcomb body. I found it easy to remove the body so I could install the separate-sale Bachmann sound module. This module is a small printed circuit board that simply plugs into the 22-pin socket on one end of the decoder board. The sound board uses the 16-bit Tsunami technology to reproduce sounds of the locomotive's prime movers, horn, bell, and so forth.

Our evaluation sample wore a flawless satin-finish paint scheme of red with yellow and white trim, which was unlettered. Applying lettering proclaiming the locomotive's virtual owner could be a pleasant assignment for the On30 hobbyist. Two other unlettered color schemes also available in this release of the Whitcomb are orange with cream and yellow with black stripes. A black and silver version is also available that is lettered for Midwest Quarry & Mining Company.

At Trackside

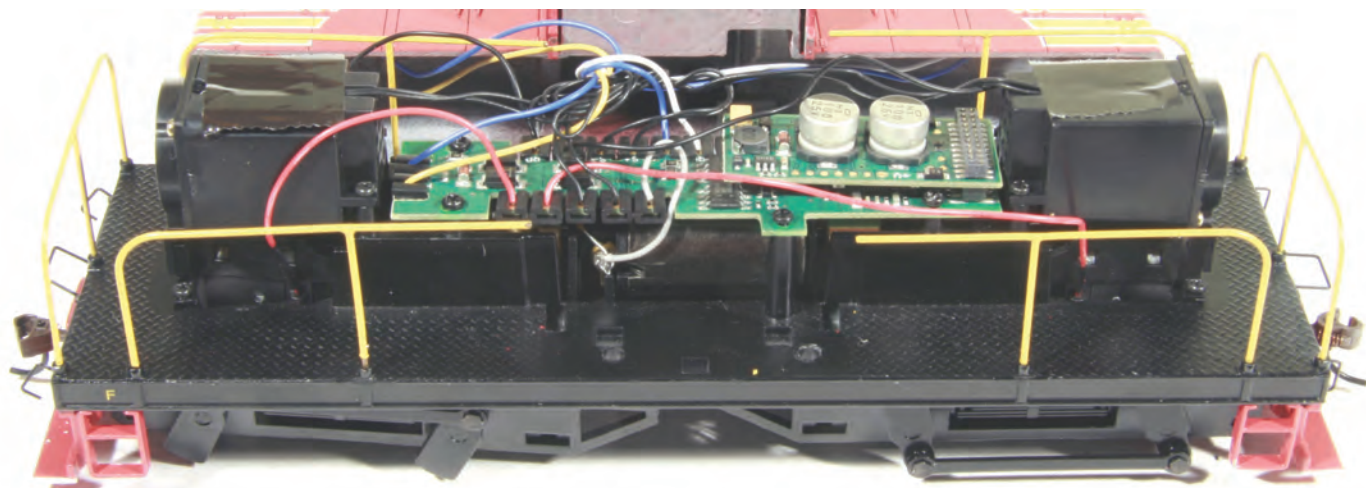
My test setup initially consisted of a temporary loop and siding of 18" radius Bachmann E-Z Track with a Bachmann Spectrum HO power supply for analog DC operation. A Bachmann E-Z Command Digital Command Control System then replaced the HO power supply as the power and control source for running the switcher. A single word aptly describes how the On30 Whitcomb ran using either of the two power and control systems—great! As to which of the two systems I preferred for



running the engine and its test train, the DCC system won that contest hands down.

The test train consisted of six Spectrum cars, which the center-cab diesel pulled and pushed with seemingly little effort. Before I installed the sound module, the only noise emanating from the Whitcomb was its wheels whispering on the rails. As I expected, addition of the Bachmann sound module gave the engine some audible pizzazz, which was controllable only with the DCC system.

I especially liked the soft white LED in each of the directional headlights. With a soft light facing me, the engine with its train was a lot easier to see as it slowly approached my rail-height track-side vantage point. Yup, I like watching trains approach and pass by with my head lying on the floor close to the roadbed—reckon





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I never grew up. And then there were those captivating side rods bobbing up and down asymmetrically as the Whitcomb glided slowly along the HO rails—definitely not something normally seen on a diesel, but fascinating to watch.

In a nutshell, starts and stops were realistically slow and easy with the engine rolling smoothly around the loop of track. It was equally at home pulling or pushing a car or two through the siding's turnout.

At the End of the Run

I found the Bachmann Spectrum model of the Whitcomb 50 diesel to be a pleasing little locomotive with a definite charisma to it. For the On30 enthusiast, it merits a close look for potential service on a narrow-gauge rail domain, large or small. 

#29204 Whitcomb 50-Ton Center-Cab Diesel

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8120x	E8 "AA" Legacy Diesels (Call for Name).....	659.95
81200	Timken Tank Car USA Made.....	45.95
81201	Great Northern Tank Car USA Made.....	45.95
81202	Santa Fe Tank Car USA Made.....	45.95
81203	Pennsylvania Flatcar w/Load USA Made.....	45.95
81204	Santa Fe Flatcar w/Load USA Made.....	45.95
81205	Timken Flatcar w/Load USA Made.....	45.95
81206	Great Northern Flatcar w/Load USA Made.....	45.95
81245	Pennsylvania M1a 4-8-2 #6771.....	1059.95
81246	Pennsylvania M1a 4-8-2 #6764.....	1059.95
81419	Area 51 Attack Tank Car.....	42.95
81435	N&W 4-Bay Hopper w/Coal Load.....	38.95
81465	S.P. Flatcar w/Piggyback Trailers.....	49.95
81203	Pennsylvania Flatcar w/Load USA Made.....	45.95
81420	Penna. Truss Rod Gondola w/Trap Load.....	42.95
81437	York Peppermint Patty Flat Car.....	45.95
8144x	Command Control Tie-Jectors.....	142.95
81451	ST. Louis Motorized Trolley.....	71.95
81466	BNSF Maxi-Stack Car.....	89.95
81469	Great Northern Bi-Level Stock Car.....	42.95
81486	NYC Flatcar w/Helicopter.....	42.95
81487	Personalized Series #3 4-Boxcar Set.....	179.95
81491	Central of New Jersey Coal Dump Car.....	38.95
81492	Strasburg RR Searchlight Car.....	38.95
81568	4th of July Parade Car.....	56.95
81605	ATSF Map & Slogans PS-1 Boxcar 5/pk.....	269.95
81619	Reading PS-1 Scale Boxcar.....	56.95
8177x	86" Hi-Cube Boxcars (Call for Name).....	87.95
81076	Penn. Salt 8000-Gallon Tank Car.....	51.95
81077	Pere Marquette 8000-Gallon Tank Car.....	51.95
81078	New York Central 8000-Gallon Tank Car.....	51.95
81079	Nickle Plate Road 8000-Gallon Tank Car.....	51.95
81080	Burlington Northern 8000-Gallon Tank Car.....	51.95
81081	PRR GLA 50-Ton Twin Hopper 3-pack.....	157.95
81687	Lehigh Valley GLA 50-Ton Twin Hopper(2).....	104.95
81688	CB&O GLA 50-Ton Twin Hopper 3-pack.....	157.95
81689	C&O GLA 50-Ton Twin Hopper 3-pack.....	157.95
81725	Union Pacific Oper Merchandise Car.....	56.95
81726	REA Operating Merchandise Car.....	56.95
81769	New Haven GLA 50-Ton Twin Hopper(2).....	104.95
81793	Berwind GLA 50-Ton Twin Hopper 3-pack.....	157.95
81806	Pennsylvania N5b Caboose.....	67.95
81807	Conrail N5b Caboose.....	67.95
81808	Penn Central N5b Caboose.....	67.95
81809	Long Island N5b Caboose.....	67.95
81810	Lionel Lines N5b Caboose.....	67.95
81824	P&W GLA 50-Ton Twin Hopper 3-pack.....	157.95
81858	PRR GLA 50-Ton Twin Hopper 3-pack.....	157.95
81827	Penn Central Round Roof Scale Boxcar.....	56.95
81828	Great Northern Round Roof Scale b/c.....	56.95
81829	Western Pacific Round Roof Scale b/c.....	56.95
81836	Erie Double-Sheathed Boxcar.....	56.95

81837	Frisco Double-Sheathed Boxcar.....	56.95
81838	C.N.J. Double-Sheathed Boxcar.....	56.95
81839	PFE Pacific "Fright" Steel-Sided Reeler.....	56.95
81840	Union Pacific CA-4 Caboose.....	63.95
81841	Union Pacific MOW CA-4 Caboose (green).....	63.95
8188x	Scale Oper. Legacy Cranes (Call 4/Name).....	349.95
818xx	Scale Legacy Boom Car (Call for Name).....	171.95
81891	BNSF 52-6 Gondola w/Covers "Scale".....	56.95
81892	Bethlehem Steel 52-6 Gondola w/Covers.....	56.95
81893	Grand Trunk 52-6 N/G w/Covers "Scale".....	56.95
81894	CSX 52-6 Gondola w/Covers "Scale".....	56.95
81896	New York Central PS-5 Flat w/Piggybacks.....	70.95
81897	Milwaukee Road PS-5 Flat w/Piggybacks.....	70.95
81898	MLB St. Louis Cardinals Boxcar.....	49.95
81899	Canadian Pacific PS-5 Flat w/Piggybacks.....	70.95
81900	Union Pacific PS-5 Flat w/Piggybacks.....	70.95
8190x	Matching Tractors & Trailer (for above).....	63.95
81908	PFE Steel-Sided Reeler 3-pack.....	171.95
81912	MLB New York Yankees Boxcar.....	49.95
81913	MLB St. Louis Cardinals Boxcar.....	49.95
81916	MLB Boston Red Sox Boxcar.....	49.95
81917	MLB Los Angeles Dodgers Boxcar.....	49.95
81919	MLB Pittsburgh Pirates Boxcar.....	49.95
81920	MLB Detroit Tigers Boxcar.....	49.95
81922	MLB Baltimore Orioles Boxcar.....	49.95
81924	MLB Chicago White Sox Boxcar.....	49.95
81925	MLB Chicago Cubs Boxcar.....	49.95
81926	MLB Philadelphia Phillies Boxcar.....	49.95
81927	MLB Cleveland Indians Boxcar.....	49.95
81928	MLB New York Mets Boxcar.....	49.95
81930	MLB Texas Rangers Boxcar.....	49.95
81931	Union Pacific W/WW Cab. (green).....	63.95
81968	Halloween CA-4 Scale Caboose.....	63.95
81256	Personalized Message Birthday Boxcar.....	56.95

OPERATING ROLLING STOCK

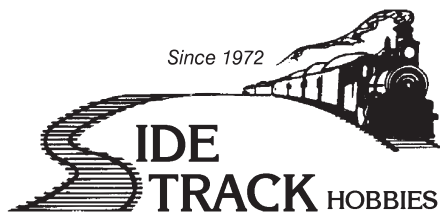
29310	Deep Sea Aquarium Car.....	53.95
29312	Area 51 Attack Tank Car.....	42.95
29311	Swift Hot Box Roader.....	SALE!! 34.95
37041	P.L.P. Coal Dump Car (metal).....	56.95
37044	CP Rail Log Dump Car (metal).....	56.95
37053	Erie-Lackawanna Derrick Car.....	31.95
37055	Southern Pacific Log Dump Car.....	33.95
37076	Bethlehem Steel Coal Dump Car.....	35.95
37083	Strasburg Railroad Coal Dump Car.....	35.95
37084	PA CO & Hobo Animated Gondola.....	46.95
37085	Burlington Northern Log Dump Car.....	35.95
37086	Lionelville Aquarium Fish Car.....	57.95
37092	Wizard of Oz Aquarium Car.....	60.95
37097	Where the Wild Things Are Aquarium.....	60.95

'2014' CHRISTMAS ITEMS

11528	Frosty the Snowman Figure Pack.....	21.95
30205	Silver Bells Lionelchief RTR Set.....	171.95
39361	Coca-Cola "Polar Bear" Boxcar.....	49.95
81249	Fastrack 10" Straight Girder Bridge.....	17.95
81250	Victorian Christmas Lionchief RTR Set.....	294.95
81284	Frosty the Snowman Lionelchief Set.....	214.95
81290	Thomas Kinkadee Covered Bridge.....	49.95
81316	Personalized Message Xmas Boxcar.....	56.95
81395	Thomas Kinkadee Christmas Set.....	272.95
81425	Frosty the Snowman Passenger Station.....	45.95
81426	Frosty the Snowman Animated Gondola.....	42.95
81427	Frosty the Snowman Aquarium Car.....	49.95
81428	Frosty the Snowman Boxcar.....	35.95
81534	Christmas Toys Stock Car.....	24.95
81627	New Haven Holiday Shed.....	45.95
81733	2014 O Gauge Christmas Boxcar.....	45.95
81946	Christmas Wish Tank Car.....	42.95
81984	Christmas Flatcar w/Reindeer.....	49.95
81985	Christmas #6428 Mail Car.....	42.95
81987	Angela Trotta Thomas 2014 Boxcar.....	45.95
81990	Xmas Gondola w/Reindeer Feed Vats.....	45.95
81992	Santa Claus Bobbing Head Boxcar.....	45.95
81993	Santa Finder Searchlight Car.....	38.95
81999	Penna. Gondola w/Xmas Gifts & Trees.....	45.95
82000	Pennsylvania Christmas Crane Car.....	53.95
82001	Merry & Bright Christmas Hot Cocoa Car.....	49.95
82002	Old St. Nick Animated Billboard.....	42.95
82003	Christmas Water Tower.....	24.95

027 GAUGE ROLLING STOCK

15074	Mr. Goodbar Reeler (Hershey)	38.95	
15075	Boy Scouts Eagle Scout Boxcar	49.95	
15080	C&O 40' Boxcar	SALE!!	29.95
15098	Lone Ranger Boxcar	42.95	
15394	Hershey's Milk Duds Hopper	38.95	
19369	Alaska Quad Hopper	42.95	
25930	To 33 Presidential Boxcar Set #2	184.95	
25943	3-Pk. Black Widow Hi-Cube Boxcar	30.95	
26377	Lackawanna NS Heritage 2-Bay Hop	38.95	
26474	New York Central Quad Hopper	38.95	
26488	Hershey's Ice Breakers Hopper	42.95	
26491	P.P.&L. Gondola w/Containers	30.95	
26494	Penna. Truss Rod Gondola w/Vats	42.95	
26494	C&NW Poultry Car	42.95	
26494	Lionelville Aquarium Fish Food Vat	42.95	
26497	Bethlehem Steel Deep Flat w/Reels	30.95	
26499	Canadian National Hi-Cube Boxcar	38.95	
26654	Boy Scout Flat w/Pinewood Derby Kit	SALE!!	39.95
26660	Coca-Cola Vat Car	42.95	
26670	Boy Scout Flatcar w/Tractor-Trailers	49.95	
26676	Heinz Vat Car	SALE!!	35.95
26677	Long Island Gondola w/Canisters	28.95	
26679	Santa Fe Gondola w/Reels	39.95	
26687	Lone Ranger Gond w/Gunpowder Vats	46.95	
26693	Knapedale Flatcar w/Trailers	SALE!!	44.95
26695	Pennsylvania Flatcar w/wheel loads	38.95	
27776	#464 Variation Boxcar 2pk	SALE!!	84.95
27941	M&StL Boxcar	SALE!!	32.95
29649	Lionel Smoke Pellets Mint Car	SALE!!	42.95
29654	U.S. Army Flatcar (USA Made)	49.95	
29655	Penna. 16-wheel Flatcar w/Girders	53.95	
29656	Santa Fe 16-wheel Flatcar w/Transformer	53.95	
29733	White Pass Ext. Vision Caboose	SALE!!	49.95
29965	Lionel Air Boxcar 2-pack	SALE!!	49.95
29967	U.S. Army Flatcar (USA Made)	SALE!!	49.95
29994	U.S. Navy Boxcar (USA Made)	46.95	
29995	U.S. Army Boxcar (USA Made)	46.95	
29996	U.S. Marines Boxcar (USA Made)	46.95	
29997	U.S. Air Force Boxcar (USA Made)	46.95	
29998	U.S. Coast Guard Boxcar (USA Made)	46.95	
29999	U.S. Coast Guard Boxcar (USA Made)	46.95	
31793	White Pass & Yukon Flat Car 3pk	SALE!!	99.95
36118	New York Central Postal Stock	30.95	
36176	1-80 1-0 Home Tank Car	SALE!!	29.95
36195	Richmond Heights Helicopter Flatcar	42.95	
37069	Strassburg RR Crane Car	42.95	
37089	Boy Scouts Prepared for Life Boxcar	42.95	
39360	Cub Scout Boxcar	42.95	
39362	Kinkadee Emerald City Bic	SALE!!	39.95
39382	U.S. Tank Car (USA Made)	46.95	
39383	Mariner Tank Car (USA Made)	46.95	
39387	Air Force Tank Car (USA Made)	46.95	
39388	National Guard Tank Car (USA Made)	46.95	
39389	Coast Guard Tank Car (USA Made)	46.95	
39390	U.S. Army Tank Car (USA Made)	46.95	
39391	U.S. Navy Tank Car (USA Made)	46.95	
39392	U.S. Air Force Flatcar (USA Made)	46.95	
39393	U.S. National Guard Flatcar (USA Made)	46.95	
39396	U.S. Coast Guard Flatcar (USA Made)	46.95	



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LIONEL TRAIN SETS

Item No.	PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE	Our Price
11006	LEWNY THE LION STEAM FREIGHT SET	\$139.00
11180	CSX SD80 MOTOR CITY EXPRESS SET	\$839.00
11181	CANADIAN NATIONAL GP-9 PIGGYBACK SET L12V2	\$619.00
11183	LINCOLN FUNERAL TRAIN LOCO/CAR	\$539.00
11194	TEXAS SPECIAL F3 PASSENGER SET MSRP 1109.99 L13V1 08/13	\$879.00
11710	CANADIAN PACIFIC RAIL FREIGHT SET	\$329.00
11743	CHESAPEAKE & OHIO FREIGHT SET	\$259.00
11912	SERVICE STATION ORE SET	\$259.00
29366	SOUTHERN PACIFIC TANKTRAIN SET	\$599.00
29365	THE POCOAHNTAS PASS SET STD 'O' SCALE 1949.99 L12V2	\$1,729.00
30069	THOMAS O GAUGE SET L11RTR	\$129.00
30096	PRR KEYSTONE 0-8-0 SPECIAL FGT SET W/WHISTLE&FASTRACK	\$219.00
30116	LONE RANGER WILD WEST SET W/FASTRACK	\$279.00
30118	A CHRISTMAS STORY SET LC12	\$219.00
30122	WIZARD OF OZ SET W/FASTRACK	\$299.00
30123	BOY SCOUT FREIGHT SET	\$199.00
30161	BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA SET L12RTR	\$249.00
30162	THOMAS & FRIENDS REMOTE CHRISTMAS SET L13RTR	\$119.00
30166	COCA-COLA 125TH ANNIVERSARY VINTAGE STM SET L12RTR	\$219.00
30167	SOUTHERN PACIFIC MERGER SET L12RTR	\$249.00
30169	2011 LIMITED EDITION NJ TRANSIT SET L11RTR	\$229.00
30171	GG-1 FREIGHT SET L12V1	\$349.00
30178	SANTA FE CHIEF PASSENGER SET L12RTR	\$269.00
30179	ROCK ISLAND ROCKET FREIGHT SET L12RTR	\$269.00
30180	HORSESHOE CURVE SUPER FREIGHT SET L12V1	\$379.00
30181	CANADIAN PACIFIC FT PASSENGER SET L13RTR	\$279.00
30184	POLAR EXPRESS FREIGHT SET LC12	\$249.00
30185	NJ TRANSIT LIMITED ED MAINTENANCE OF WAY SET	\$219.00
30186	KCS SOUTHERN BELLE FREIGHT SET L12RTR	\$219.00
30187	MARITIME EXPLORATIONS SET RTR	\$269.00
30188	UP FLYER FREIGHT SET L12RTR	\$199.00
30189	LONG ISLAND RAILROAD PASSENGER SET L12RTR	\$219.00
30193	PEANUTS CHRISTMAS SET LC12	\$219.00
30194	NORTH POLE EXPRESS FREIGHT SET L13RTR	\$199.00
30195	GRAND CENTRAL EXPRESS PASSENGER SET L12RTR	\$299.00
30196	HERSHEY'S 'O' GAUGE FREIGHT SET L12RTR	\$219.00
30200	NEW YORK CENTRAL FLYER FREIGHT SET L12RTR	\$239.00
30205	SILVER BELLS CHRISTMAS REMOTE SET L13RTR	\$169.00
30210	CP U36B DIESEL GRAIN TRAIN SET L13RTR	\$259.00
30213	NS GP38 HERITAGE FREIGHT SET L13RTR	\$269.00
30214	PEANUTS HALLOWEEN 2-4-2 REMOTE 'O' SET L13RTR	\$199.00
30217	SOUTHERN PACIFIC 'BLACK WIDOW' FREIGHT SET L13RTR	\$289.00
30219	GINGERBREAD JUNCTION DOCKSIDER SET L13RTR	\$189.00
30220	10TH ANN. POLAR EXPRESS STREAMLINER SET LC13	\$299.00
30221	DIESEL REMOTE SET L13RTR	\$99.00
30222	PERCY REMOTE SET L13RTR	\$99.00

30223	JAMES REMOTE SET L13RTR	\$99.00
30225	MEDAL OF HONOR TRAIN SET L13V1	\$319.00
30226	NS GP-38 SOUTHEAST HERITAGE FREIGHT SET L13V1	\$269.00
30228	CHATAHOOGA EXPRESS REMOTE PASS SET L13RTR	\$169.00
30233	PENNSYLVANIA FLYER REMOTE 'O' SET L13RTR	\$169.00
31746	GREAT NORTHERN MOUNTAIN MOVER TRAIN SET L12V2	\$265.00
31774	AEC RADIOACTIVE TRANSPORT SET L9V1	\$129.00
31775	#1562 BURLINGTON GP-7 PASSENGER SET	\$249.00
31784	#1593 UNION PACIFIC WORK TRAIN L9V1	\$299.00
31790	PENNSYLVANIA GG-1 PASSENGER SET L9V2	\$399.00
31791	NYC LIONMASTER DIESEL FREIGHT SET W/FASTRACK L9V2	\$579.00
31799	GN EMPIRE FREIGHT EXPRESS W/VISION WHISTLE	\$319.00
31960	POLAR EXPRESS 'O' GAUGE PASS SET W/FASTRACK LC12	\$249.00
38342	1619W SANTA FE FREIGHT SET L10V1	\$359.00
38354	#1464 UP 'ANNIVERSARY' PASSENGER ALCO SET 459.99	\$389.00
38358	#2239 ILLINOIS CENTRAL F3 FREIGHT SET L12V1	\$499.00
38848	CHRISTMAS PIONEER ZEPHYR SET LC13	\$799.00
38856	MARK TWAIN ZEPHYR SET L13V1	\$799.00
38864	LIONEL LINES ZEPHYR SET L13V1	\$799.00
51009	NO. 269E O GAUGE FREIGHT TRAIN	\$489.00
51010	PREWAR NO. 246e O GAUGE PASSENGER SET	\$489.00
51012	CHRISTMAS TINPLATE SET	\$450.00
51014	#291W RED COMET TINPLATE SET L8V1	\$649.00
7-11022	G-GAUGE BATTERY OPERATED POLAR EXPRESS SET L12RTR	\$99.00
7-11140	PENNSYLVANIA FLYER G-GAUGE SET L12RTR	\$99.00
7-11193	SANTA FE FREIGHT G-GAUGE SET L10V1	\$99.00
7-11296	LIONEL LITTLE LINES POLAR EXPRESS SET L10V2	\$59.00
7-11352	HERSHEY'S FREIGHT G-GAUGE SET L12RTR	\$99.00
7-11370	LIONEL LITTLE LINES L13RTR	\$49.00
7-11371	POLAR EXPRESS LITTLE LINES L13RTR	\$49.00
7-11440	WIZARD OF OZ LITTLE LINES L13V2	\$55.00
7-12020	MLB LITTLE LINES L13RTR	\$49.00
T1828TRAIN	KYLE BUSCH #18 NASCAR SET L13RTR	\$179.00
T2428TRAIN	JEFF GORDON #24 NASCAR SET L13RTR	\$179.00
T4828TRAIN	JIMMIE JOHNSON #48 NASCAR SET L13RTR	\$179.00
T8828TRAIN	DALE EARNHARDT JR. #88 NASCAR SET L13RTR	\$179.00
TX328TRAIN	DALE EARNHARDT #3 NASCAR SET L13RTR	\$179.00

EXPANSION PACKS / FREIGHT CAR PACKS

11166	CSX GONDOLA AND SEARCHLIGHT (2 PACK) 110V1	\$99.00
11167	CSX TANK AND HOPPER (2 PACK) L10V1	\$79.00
11168	CSX FLATCAR AND MAINTENANCE CAR (2 PACK) L10V1	\$117.00
11977	NORTHERN PACIFIC BOXCAR/REEFER/HOPPER/CABOOSE (4-PK)	\$169.00
18556	C&M 3 BOXCARS/CABOOSE (4-PK)	\$99.00
21751	PENNSYLVANIA REEFER/HOPPER/FLATCAR/CABOOSE (4-PK)	\$125.00
21757	UNION PACIFIC BOXCAR/REEFER/GONDOLA/CABOOSE (4-PK)	\$125.00
25631	LINCOLN FUNERAL TRAIN CARS (2-PK)	\$259.00
25938	PENNSYLVANIA FREIGHT EXPANSION PACK L13RTR	\$99.00
25942	WESTERN FREIGHT EXPANSION PACK L13RTR	\$99.00
30012	THOMAS & FRIENDS EXPANSION PACK L12RTR	\$99.00
30040	NORTH POLE CENTRAL OPERATING FREIGHT EXP PK L11RTR	\$69.00
30111	PULLMAN PASSENGER EXPANSION PACK L12RTR	\$99.00
30112	EASTERN FREIGHT EXPANSION PACK L12RTR	\$99.00
30128	WESTERN FREIGHT EXPANSION PACK L12RTR	\$99.00
30135	SCOUT FREIGHT SET EXP PACK L12RTR	\$99.00
30136	THUNDER VALLEY FREIGHT CAR ADD-ON (2-PK) L11RTR	\$85.00
30138	CHESIE MERGER FREIGHT CAR ADD-ON (2-PK) L10V1	\$89.00
30141	SODOR TANK AND WAGON EXPANSION PACK LC12	\$99.00
30157	MINI&ST LOUIS DIESEL SUPER FREIGHT ADD-ON (2-PK)	\$59.00
30170	SODOR FREIGHT (3-PK) L13RTR	\$99.00
31716	NAGARA MLK TRAIN SET 5 REEFERS/CABOOSE (6-PK) LOC II 2000	\$300.00
31726	PRR SHARKNOSE COAL TRAIN 5 HOPPERS/CABOOSE (6-PK)	\$299.00
31793	WHITE PASS & YUKON REEFER/TANK CAR/FLATCAR (3-PK)	\$175.00

31796	FEATHER ROUTE REGIONAL BOXCAR/FLATCAT/GONDOLA (3-PK)	\$189.00
7-11009	TONY STEWART EXPANSION PACK W/TRUCK	\$45.00
7-11010	JIMMIE JOHNSON EXPANSION PACK W/TRUCK	\$39.00
7-11011	JEFF GORDON EXPANSION PACK W/TRUCK	\$45.00

EXPANSION PACKS

25631	LINCOLN FUNERAL TRAIN CARS (2-PK)	\$259.00
25938	PENNSYLVANIA FREIGHT EXPANSION PACK L13RTR	\$139.00
25942	WESTERN FREIGHT EXPANSION PACK L13RTR	\$139.00
30012	THOMAS & FRIENDS EXPANSION PACK L12RTR	\$119.00
30040	NORTH POLE CENTRAL OPERATING FREIGHT EXP PK L11RTR	\$79.00
30111	PULLMAN PASSENGER EXPANSION PACK L12RTR	\$124.00
30112	EASTERN FREIGHT EXPANSION PACK L12RTR	\$99.00
30128	WESTERN FREIGHT EXPANSION PACK L12RTR	\$99.00
30135	SCOUT FREIGHT SET EXP PACK L12RTR	\$99.00
30141	SODOR TANK AND WAGON EXPANSION PACK LC12	\$119.00
30170	SODOR FREIGHT (3-PK) L13RTR	\$102.00
7-11009	TONY STEWART EXPANSION PACK W/TRUCK	\$39.00
7-11010	JIMMIE JOHNSON EXPANSION PACK W/TRUCK	\$39.00
7-11011	JEFF GORDON EXPANSION PACK W/TRUCK	\$39.00

MTH TRAIN SETS PREMIER

20-1004-1	NYC #2001 J-1E HUDSON MODERN FREIGHT OUTFIT	\$799.00
20-1006-1	NYC #767W 'O' G. TIN PLATE FRT SET W/PS2 SPECIAL	\$799.00
20-20088-1	CHESIE SD70ACe DIESEL FREIGHT SET W/PS2 M10V2	\$549.00
20-20154-1	NS SD40-2 DIESEL FLATCAR FREIGHT SET W/PS2 M11V1	\$549.00
20-20346-1	NEW HAVEN TURBOTRAIN PASSENGER SET W/PS3 M13V2	\$669.00
20-20357-1	BURLINGTON PIONEER ZEPHYR DIESEL PASS SET W/PS3 799.95 M13V2	\$699.00
20-20358-1	BOSTON&MAINE PIONEER ZEPHYR DIES PASS SET W/PS3 799.95	\$699.00
20-20359-1	UNION PACIFIC PROPANE TURBINE LOCO SET W/PS3 899.95 M13V2	\$789.00
20-20393-1	NORF SOUTHN DASH-8 SOLID ROCKET MOTOR TRANSP SET PS3 749.95	\$629.00
20-20394-1	UP AC4400 DIESEL TWIN-STACK FGT SET W/PS3 749.95 M14V1	\$629.00
20-20395-1	CSX AC4400 DIESEL TWIN-STACK FGT SET W/PS3 749.95 M14V1	\$629.00
20-20421-1	BNSF DASH-8 DIESEL FREIGHT SET W/PS3 749.95 M14V2 12/14	\$579.00
20-2925-1	UNION PACIFIC M1000 DIESEL PASSENGER SET W/PS2	\$579.00
20-3412-1	PENNSYLVANIA 4-4-4 G2 SPECIALTY FREIGHT SET W/PS2 M10V2	\$1,149.00
20-3427-1	PA 4-4-4 G2 SPECIALTY FREIGHT SET W/PS2 M10V2	\$1,149.00
20-3456-1	PENNSYLVANIA STM FREIGHT SET W/PS3 M11V2	\$1,049.00
20-3459-1	PA 1942 WAR BONDS STM FREIGHT SET W/PS3 DAP	\$1,149.00
20-3460-1	JERSEY CENTRAL P47 BLUE COMET STM PASS SET M11V2	\$849.00
20-3467-1	PA K4s METROPOLITAN DELUXE STM PASS SET W/PS3 M11V2	\$799.00
20-3468-1	PA K4s RED ARROW DELUXE STM PASS W/PS3 M11V2	\$799.00
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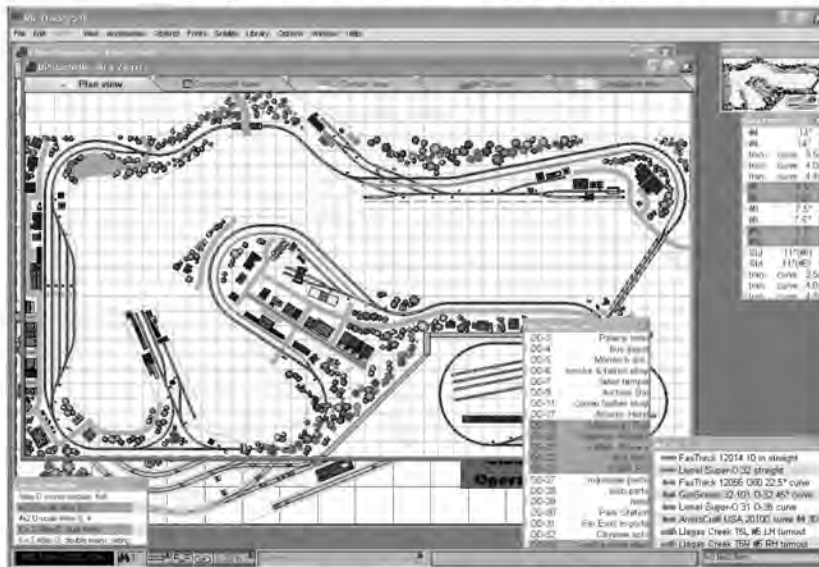


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TWICE THE FUN

Article, Photos, and Figures by Ken Hoganson



Named for the real whistle-stop town of Cisco, Georgia, just four miles from the Tennessee border in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, the Cisco RR track plan is a great way to expand a Lionel FasTrack train set into a two-train empire in a limited space.

My fictional Cisco RR serves the small town of Cisco with its one store, two industries, water tower, and station platform at the edge of town along a gravel road that leads 'round the hill to a coal-loading facility. With your choice of terrain and vegetation, the railroad could be located in just about any region, and the track plan accommodates modest-size steam or diesel power pulling freight and passenger trains—any equipment that is happy with the Lionel O36 FasTrack curves included in the firm's starter sets.

For ease in construction and a small footprint, the plan fits two independent O36 FasTrack routes on a single 4x8 sheet of plywood or, in this case, a 4x8 sheet of extruded polystyrene foam board available at home and building supply stores. The layout is ideal for conventional operation of traditional-size trains (typical train set equipment) and works great with Lionel's new LionChief and LionChief Plus trains.

The Concept

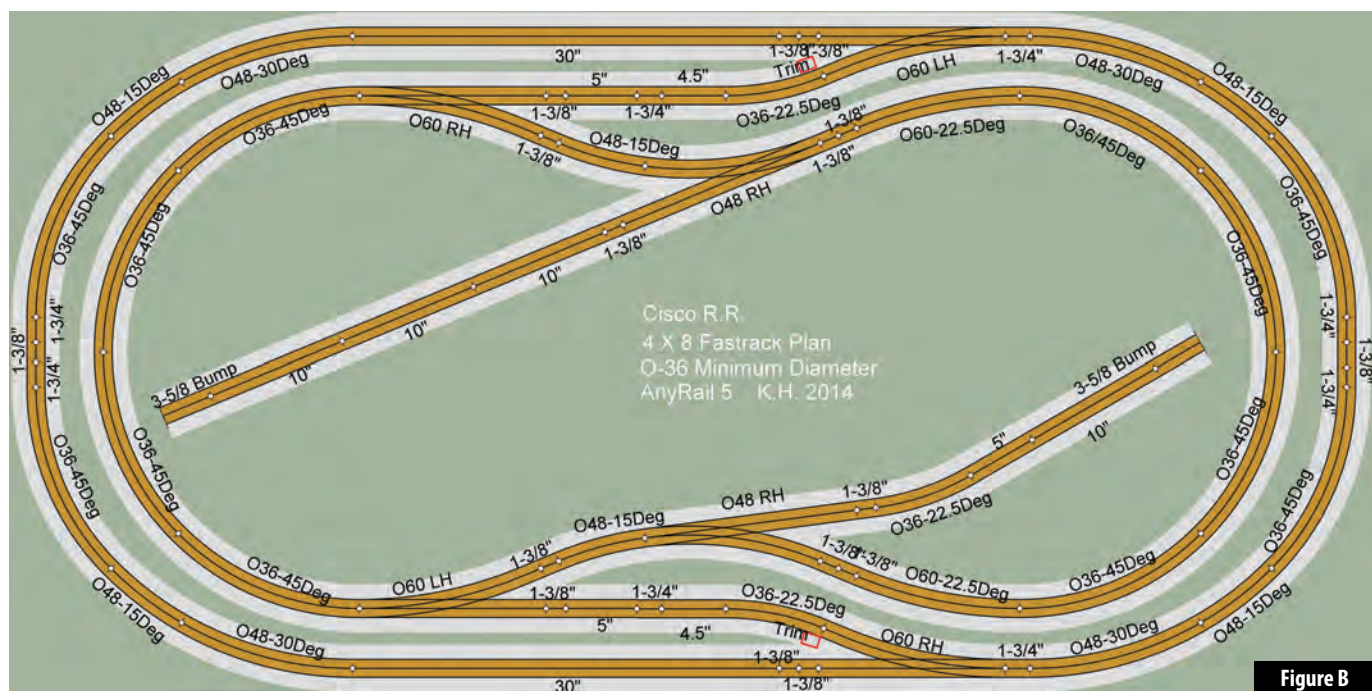
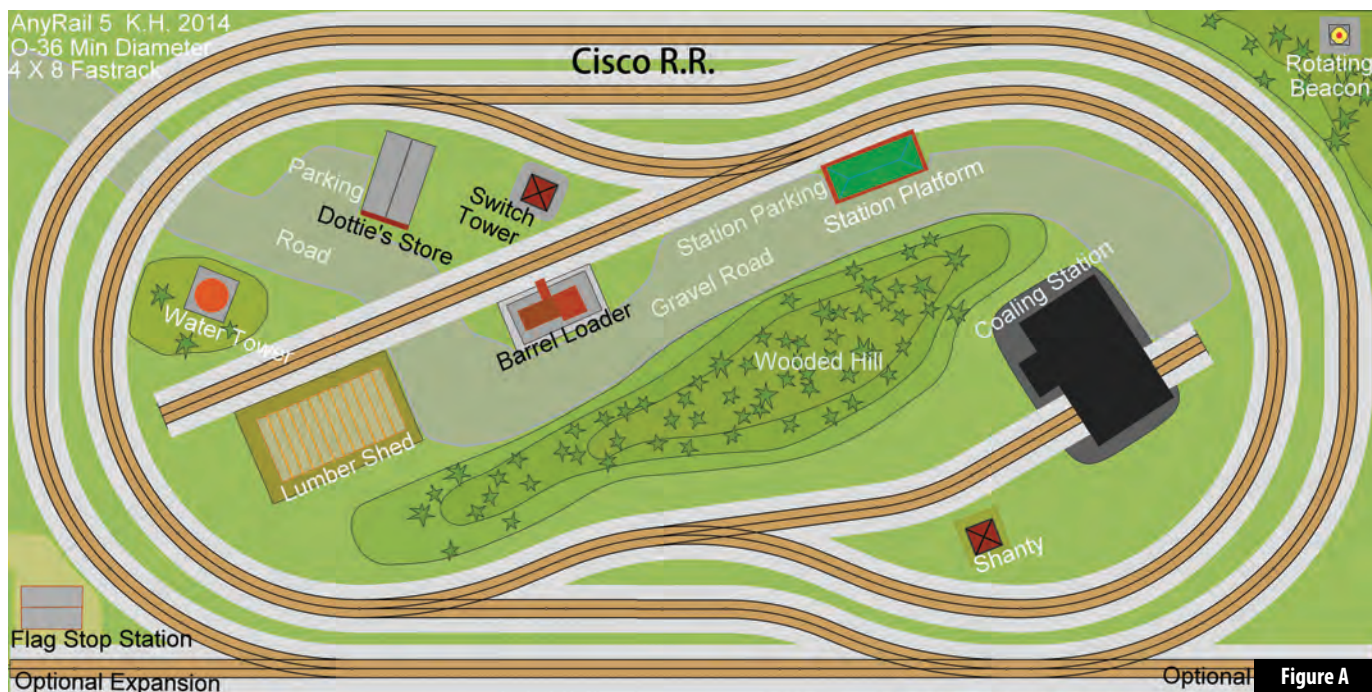
The plan consists of two independent routes linked by two short connecting tracks (Photo 1 and Figure A). Trains can run on each route without conflict or switching so two kids can run trains at the same time without tension or needing to throw turnouts or block toggles to get the trains past each other. The two independent routes also allow two-train continuous running without intervention, allowing the operator to kick back and enjoy watching the trains go.

The FasTrack O36 diameter curves included in Lionel train sets are the minimum diameter curves used in this layout. Lionel and nearly all other traditional train set engines and cars will negotiate these curves flawlessly and look good doing so. In addition to the minimum diameter of O36, each route includes easements leading from straight to curved, allowing trains to ease into the curves (Figure B). While only minimally improving operation for model trains, the prototypical wider-curve easements are aesthetically pleasing, leading the eye to see the curves as less sharp with trains gliding smoothly around the layout. See Figure C for the full list of track components.

The outer loop is O36 minimum diameter with the transition from straight to curve eased by O48 diameter curves. Also shown in Figure A are the optional O48 turnouts and layout expansion tracks leading off the edge of the layout. These may be included to connect the Cisco RR to the class 1 railroad of your choice, justifying the use of your favorite railroad locomotives as run-through power.

The inner route is a butterfly or hourglass shape with O36 minimum diameter curves and O60 turnouts easing into each curve. The waist of the hourglass is comprised of O48 turnouts and O48 curves. The inner route also includes two spurs to serve industry: one the town of Cisco and the other the Lionel coal loader facility.

Slow orders? No way! The layout adheres to strong design guidelines for small layouts: minimum diameter O36 curves (as opposed to O27 or O31). All curves have easements from straight track, and turnouts are all wider than the minimum curve diameter. Even the S curves of the loop connecting tracks are made of a generous O60 turnout with a short section of O36. These are good design rules to follow for any scale leading to a reliable and enjoyable layout.

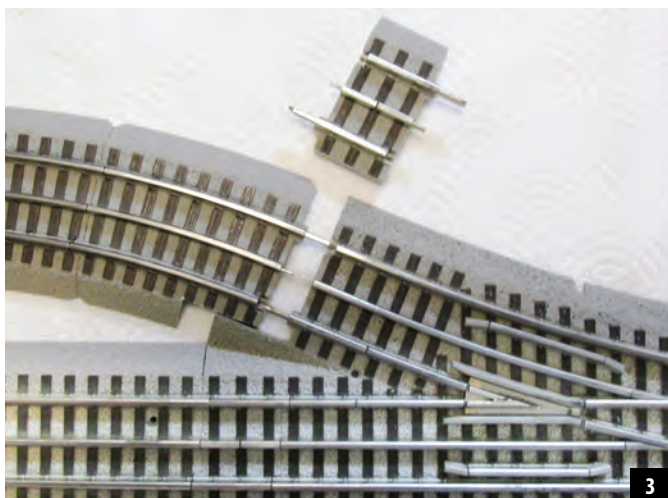


Each Lionel O60 turnout comes with two small 1-3/8" fitter tracks without roadbed on one side, designed to fit into the turnout (see short section at top of Photo 3). These fitters are not needed if you trim a piece of FasTrack to match. Trimming a small

section from the plastic roadbed is not hard and can be done with a hand tool or power tool. The Cisco track plan needs two pieces of O36, 22.5-degree curves with one edge trimmed.

LionChief or Command Control

For command control, wire the entire layout from a single power source without any power toggles with recommended two power drops in the middle of each loop semicircle (four total). This will ensure that all trains will see strong power voltages across the entire layout.



Cisco Railroad Lionel FasTrack Components				Figure C
(Without optional layout expansion connections)				
Part No.	Qty Req'd	Two sets include	Description	
Turnouts (manual or remote)				
6-12057	2		O60 Left-Hand Turnouts (with four 1-3/8" fitters)	
6-12058	2		O60 Right-Hand Turnouts (with four 1-3/8" fitters)	
6-12066	2		O48 Right-Hand Turnouts	
O60 Curves				
6-12056	2		O60 22.5 degree	
O48 Curves				
6-12043	4		O48 30 degree	
6-16834	6		O48 15 degree	
O36 Curves				
6-12015	12	16	O36 45 degree (two sets include all that are needed)	
6-12022	3		O36 22.5 degree	
Straights				
6-12042	2		30" Straight	
6-12014	6	8	10" Straight (two sets include all that are needed)	
6-12024	3		5" Straight	
6-12025	2		4.5" Straight	
6-12026	8		1-3/4" Straight	
6-12073	6		1-3/8" with roadbed both sides.	
Included in turnout	6		1-3/8" with roadbed one side. (eight come with the O60 turnouts, no additional needed)	
6-12035	1 pr		3-3/4" Lighted Bumpers	

Conventional Transformer Control

Though this is a perfect layout for Lionel's LionChief locomotives or another command control system, many operators still prefer conventional transformer control. To run conventional control, wire each of the two loops to separate transformers with a shared common on the outside rails and the center rails from each route wired to a different transformer. One transformer will control the outer loop route, and the other will control the inner hourglass route.

The two short connecting tracks that connect the two loops should have isolated center rails, each wired to a single-pole, double-throw toggle. Each toggle connects its siding's center rail to either transformer thereby facilitating trains changing loops. This allows the dispatcher to electrically assign the connecting track to either the inside or the outside route. The two industry spurs should each have center rail on/off toggles to allow a parked locomotive to sit isolated on either spur.

Constructing the Cisco

Cisco RR construction philosophy involves simplicity and ease in building for the new O-gauger who may be assembling a first layout. The layout could be constructed on traditional plywood, but I elected to use a 2" thick sheet of 4x8 foam insulation board (extruded polystyrene) for the platform (Photo 4). The foam sheet is rigid, lightweight, and portable. It can rest on a bed, kitchen table, dining table, or upon one or two folding tables (also portable of course). If your home building supply store does not stock the 2" thick foam, you can make do with three sheets of 1" thick foam board glued together.

The foam plus a grass mat covering results in a layout base quiet enough to listen to TV in an adjacent room at normal volume.

1. Wrap the edges of the foam sheet with Duck Tape to protect them from erosion while handling and to improve overall appearance (Photo 5).
2. Roll out the grass mat on the smoothest side of the foam sheet. The grass mats are sold larger than a 4x8, so trim one side and one edge to fit (Photo 6).
3. Working around the layout, glue one edge of the grass mat to the foam board using Gorilla Glue. Glue from the edge to about 4" in—the interior of the grass mat should not be glued at this time. After applying the glue, place weights on the glued area (the glue behaves a bit like expanding foam and will rise up creating a hump without the weights). Allow about two hours to bond to 90 percent of its strength.

Now lay out and connect the FasTrack sections following the track diagram and then place the buildings. The structures and accessories I used are listed in Figure D. Do not fasten anything down at this point.

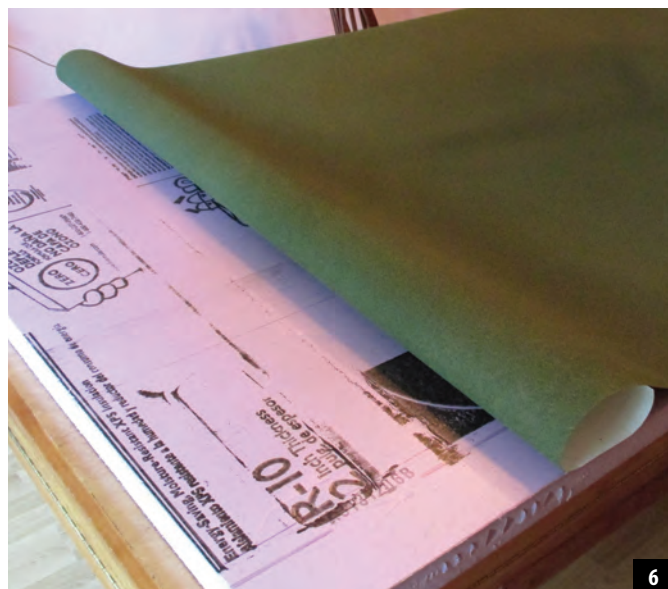
The Cisco RR runs all wires for power for track and buildings underneath the grass mat and above the foam foundation. This technique is very easy. It involves no crawling under the layout; the bottom of the foam board stays smooth and unobstructed; changes are easy to make; and mistakes are easily covered up. The foam board is easily compressed using thumb pressure alone to create a trough for the wires. All that's needed is one 50' roll of 22-gauge solid-core two-conductor wire (or two 25' rolls of different colors for track power and accessory power), a sharp hobby knife, and the transformer(s) or power sources of your choice (Photo 7). You will need two runs of wires: one for train power and a second for building and accessory power.

Construction Materials

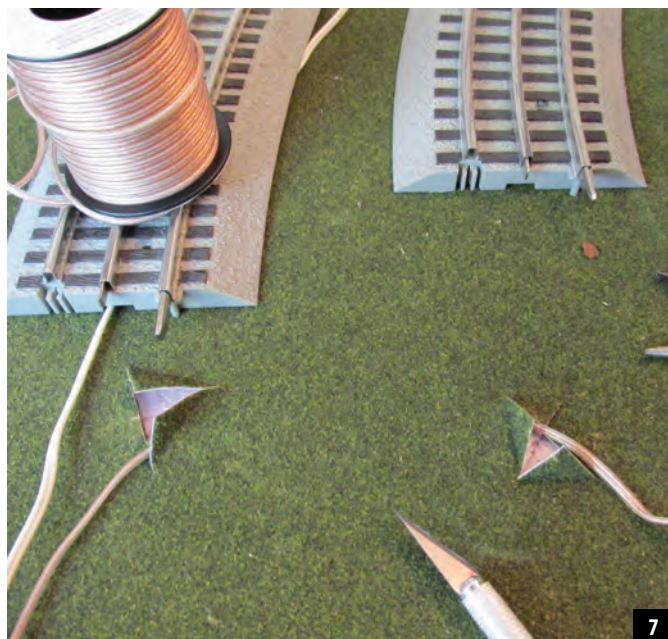
- One 4x8 extruded polystyrene (foam) sheet, 2" thick
- One roll of 2" wide black or dark green Duck Tape
- One scenic grass mat in your choice of color (Woodland Scenics Summer Green shown)
- One container of Gorilla Glue
- Scrap lumber or books for weight while the glue sets

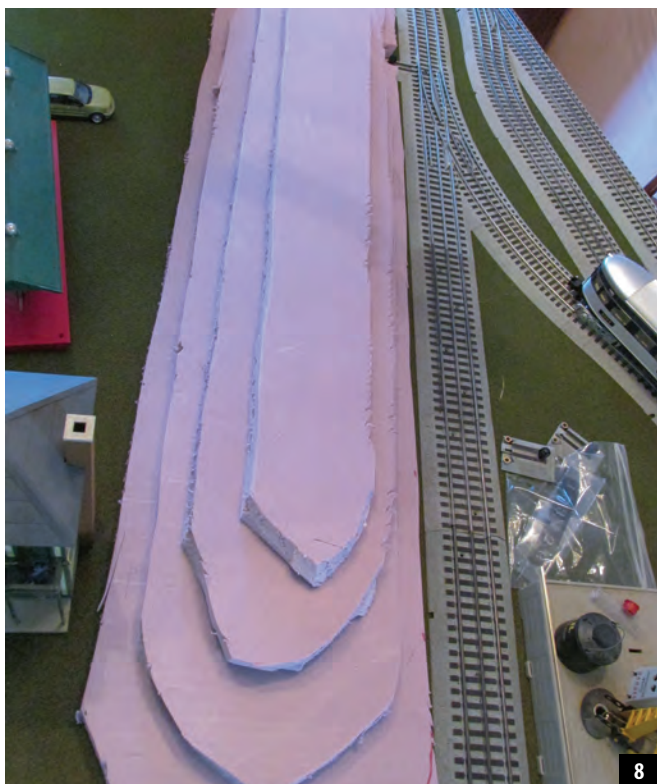
1. The Cisco RR shown here runs LionChief locomotives, greatly simplifying locomotive power wiring. Power enters the layout at one corner where wires dive beneath the grass mat and provide power to each of the loops nearby. A wire pair also runs beneath the outer route track to the other end of the layout. This run will connect to a track section within each train route. Power connects at four places on the layout: two connections at each end of the loops.

Power for the lighted buildings is routed from the transformer to the nearest building and then runs in turn to the next and the next working from one end of the layout to the other. Underneath each building will be access for wires to provide power.



Cisco RR List of Buildings and Structures		Figure D
Part No	Description	Dimensions
Lionel 6-37102	Watchman Shanty (lighted)	2-1/4 X 2-1/2
Lionel 6-81629	Lumber Shed	6-1/8 X 3-1/8
Lionel 6-81017	Barrel Loading Building (lighted)	5-3/4 X 3 X 3
Lionel 6-81016	Coaling Station (lighted)	13 X 9-7/8
Lionel 6-37166	Crossing Shanty (lighted)	2-1/3 X 2-1/2
Lionel 6-37807	Station Platform	5-3/4 X 2-7/8
Ameri-Towne	Dottie's Store Kit	6 X 3
Ameri-Towne	Flag Stop Station	3 X 4
RMT	Water Tower (lighted)	3 X 3 X 12
RMT	Rotating Beacon (lighted)	3 X 3 X 12





Scenery Materials

- Half of a 4x8 sheet of 1" thick foam to be cut into layers to build up the hill
- A sharp hobby knife and one hacksaw—the hacksaw will make a mess but leaves natural-looking rough surfaces and eroded shapes
- One 16 oz tub of Woodland Scenics Foam Putty used to fill and smooth the hillsides as desired
- Tan and green spray paints
- Assorted trees and foliage

Create a Scenic Feature

As a simple and possibly first layout, the Cisco uses lightweight modern foam materials to construct a single, long, thin, wooded hill and commercially available trees.

2. Begin where your power will enter the layout. Here a single CW-80 transformer on one corner of my layout provides all power for trains and accessories. Create a flap in the grass mat, using a hobby knife, positioned to allow the wires from the power supply to dive under the grass mat.
3. Make an X in the grass mat beneath the four track sections that will connect train power. Flip back the four sides of the mat to allow access beneath.
4. Cut a length of two-conductor power wire to run from the power supply to each of the two track sections that will connect power, allowing extra length. Remove insulation from each wire end.
5. Push the wires beneath the grass mat from the power supply flap over to each track access flap.
6. Connect the wires at the transformer and to two track sections. Test connectivity. Reconnect track sections and test a locomotive on each loop.
7. Push down using thumb pressure to indent the foam board so it accepts the wires running beneath the grass mat.
8. Run a length of two-conductor wire from the power supply to an access hole beneath the outer track route. This wire runs beneath the track and above the mat all the way to the far end of the layout where it will provide power to the far end of the layout.
9. Connect power to each track route and test with a locomotive. Trains should be able to circle the layout without problems.
10. Run accessory and building lighting wires from the transformer to the first structure, feeding beneath the grass mat. Each structure will be joined in turn working from one end of the layout to the other. Test that power reaches each structure as you progress and that the building lights properly.

1. Cut the rough hill shapes. Using the hobby knife, cut four foam layers to shape the hill, checking the shape on the layout (Photo 8).
2. Glue the layers using either white glue or Gorilla Glue sandwiched between boards with weight on top and allow to dry overnight.
3. Shape the hill with the knife and hacksaw accepting the inevitable mess and clean-up. Have fun shaping the terrain to your liking (Photo 9).
4. Use Foam Putty to fill and smooth your hill as you like. It's okay to experiment; the foam putty remains flexible and removable (Photo 10).
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until satisfied with hill shape and texture.
6. Spray the hill with tan or earth-colored paint in an outside or well-ventilated area using newspapers to protect overspray areas.
7. Using green spray paint, spray the top surfaces of the hill. Grass, moss, and vegetation will cling more to the horizontal surfaces, but steep-angled hillsides should also receive some green. Be creative and experiment. An optional step at this point is to add commercial grass sprinkled onto the paint while still wet.
8. After the paint is thoroughly dry, plant trees and vegetation using white glue (Photo 11).

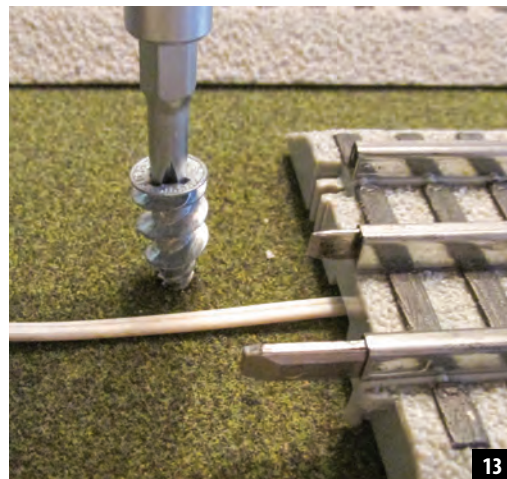




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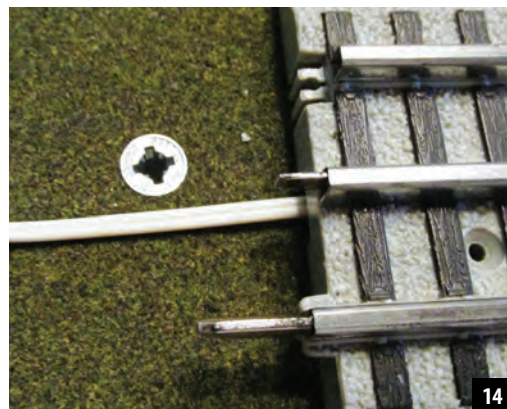
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13



11



14

Secure the Track

The Cisco road construction is intended to be lightweight and portable. Moving the layout requires first removing the trains, vehicles, and some scenic details, but the FasTrack needs to be secure.

I used screw-type hollow-core door and drywall anchors to secure the track with screws that can be removed to access the underside of the track or to move or add track. You'll need a total of 50 anchors, 50 #6 x 1" sheet-metal screws and a Phillips-head screwdriver (Photo 12). Note that the screws packaged with the anchors have round heads that project above the roadbed while the replacement #6 sheet-metal screws seat flush.

1. Doing a section of the layout at a time, use a nail or small screwdriver to push through the FasTrack mounting holes to puncture

the grass mat and foam below thus marking the location for the anchors. Most track sections will need only one anchor.

2. Remove the track sections. Using the screwdriver, widen each hole a bit by inserting with a single thrust.
3. Insert a large drop of Gorilla Glue into each hole.
4. Insert and screw an anchor into each hole so the anchor is flush with the foam top (Photos 13 and 14).
5. Repeat steps 1 through 4 for the entire layout. Allow the glue to set at least two hours.
6. Screw each FasTrack section into the anchors.
7. Each turnout accepts two screws. Care should be taken to ensure that the screws do not interfere with movement of the turnout points.



15



16

Road Building

Roads are constructed easily and inexpensively using HO scale cork roadbed.

Road-Building Materials

- HO scale cork roadbed, 9'
- HO scale cork sheets, 3' for parking areas
- Krylon Natural Stone textured paint, your color choice or Granite color
- Brads 3/4" to 1" long and thin with a small head for securing the cork roadbed to the foam.

1. Paint the roadbed in a well-ventilated area separating about half of it into sides, each with a beveled edge. Do not try for a perfectly painted surface, but allow the cork texture and color to show through for a more natural look.
2. Lay out the road where you would like it to run. A beveled-edge roadbed section forms each road side with a center section of roadbed not yet separated. Use a sharp hobby knife to slice sections. Push brads through the roadbed into the foam to hold it in place (Photo 15).
3. Use Foam Putty to fill in cracks and edges and to create a simple grade crossing.
4. Touch up with textured spray paint. Careful application can be done to the assembled roads on the layout with barriers for overspray. Alternatively, spray into the inside of the can top and use a brush to dab and paint the roadbed and Foam Putty filler.

Once you've reached this point, all that's really left to do is the fine detailing. Add an assortment of vehicles, people and animal figures, benches, trash, parts, lumber, mailboxes, etc. around the layout to suit your tastes.

This completes an action-packed, 4x8, starter layout that supports operation of two trains, conventional or with command control (Photo 16). This railroad will provide fun and easy operation in a compact space with attractive scenery and train-watching views and with plenty of options for future expansion. Happy railroading! 🚂

About the Author



Ken Hoganson lives in the north metro Atlanta area where he teaches computer science and owns a weekend home near the real Cisco, Georgia. He has layouts in O, N, and Z scales with O the primary focus for the last 15 years. His wife, Mary, takes him on annual train vacations where train travel features prominently.



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A Short Ride on Ken Hoganson's Cicso Railroad



Going Up

Article and Photos by Greg Annett

When I invite friends over who are not modelers and haven't seen my layout before, I am often asked the customary, first-time, visitors' questions about it. How long have you been working on this? Where do you get all this? What stuff did you actually make here yourself? After answering in this order—seven years, at hobby stores, and online—I proceed to explain that there aren't many O gauge high-rise-style buildings on the market, so I had to make a lot of the tall structures myself by the process known as kitbashing. At that point they all usually just stare off into space.

The modeling process called kitbashing is a fairly common way to construct something in our hobby and involves combining parts of two or more kits to create an entirely new or distinct model. Kitbashing can really save a lot of time over the alternative scratchbuilding, which is constructing something starting with nothing but an idea, possibly a set of plans, and some pieces of this and that.

As the town on my layout grew, I saw the drama unfold by placing structures of different heights side by side, resulting in a pleasing skyline effect. I also found that I didn't really need to have a scale-height 50-story building in place to accomplish that look, not to mention that available space precludes something with those proportions even fitting in my basement. I decided instead to try for what we all really do in this hobby and just create the effect.

There are some O gauge high-rise-style buildings available for background use, but nothing that can be placed on the layout and viewed from all angles. So I started searching for a good building candidate to transform—something I might be able to stack multiple sections of, one on another, to create the main structure, as in Photo 1.

Looking through what was available at my local hobby store one day, I settled on the MTH RailKing Five-Story City Building. Just by looking at it, I could tell it would look great if I just added some of the art deco features that many HO kits offer such as upper floors set back in from the outer walls of the lower levels, creating narrower levels near the top. So up to the check-out counter I went with two identical kits.





Attaching the Structures

At home I unscrewed the base of one building and unplugged the wires that connect the building's illumination to the base. Then I unscrewed and removed the lower-level floor because it has the doors and windows for street level. Don't discard the base and lower floor because they both might be used for another project someday. The remaining four-story unit can now be used as the top portion of the two combined sections. Set it aside for now.

To save some cash, you could buy a five-story and a three-story version of the city building. However, I don't believe that at any given time MTH produces identical colors of each structure at the same time. If you choose that method, you will likely be looking at doing some repainting to match the top and bottom halves after you perform the other steps described in this article. Be advised MTH did produce extra floors for some buildings and sold them separately, but not for this one.

Now it's time to rip into the second building that will be used for the building's bottom portion. At this point, you have a choice of how high you want the building to be (mine was a total of seven MTH floors) and which of two methods you want to use to connect the two sections.

Method 1: If you wish to take extra time and want a more solid model, you will need to unscrew all the floors on this bottom portion and then reattach them, one at a time, beginning with the upper floor being screwed to the lowest floor of the top portion that you previously set aside and then repeating this process. If you choose this method, the top floor (with the roof molded to it) will not be able to be used in this bottom portion because it is not designed the same as the other floors.

Method 2: A second method of joining the two portions is to simply glue them together without removing the floors on the bottom portion. You can also use that upper-level floor, which as I noted has the roof molded to it, for an extra floor. This method also allows for separating the two halves for convenient storage if you ever move. To connect the two portions, use a small amount of glue on all sidewalls at the joint where the top section rests on the bottom section. Do not go overboard with the glue. Someday you might want to break them apart again for ease of changing a light bulb. Set the unit with both portions now attached aside for now (Photo 2).

If you choose to light both sections of the building, you'll need to drill a hole to allow wire to pass between them. The second method described above is probably the best to use if you want to light this building because it will be easier to access all the lights if need be.

Adding Upper Levels

At swap meets I'm always looking for HO buildings that can be used in the layout's background to create forced perspective situations. So in order to give this O scale building the look of a much taller high-rise, I used parts from two different Walther's HO scale building kits for the top floors.

You'll want to use HO building components that are varied in size so when they are stacked, the result will be smaller footprints progressing toward the top levels. This is where creativity kicks in. Try to find one or two portions of any HO scale kit that will blend well and be slightly smaller than the assembled MTH O scale section.

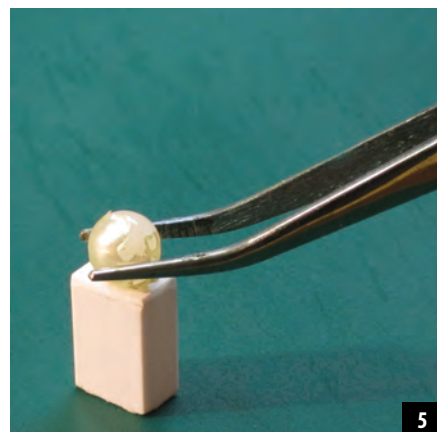


A good choice for the uppermost level probably would be something that is somewhat symmetrical in appearance, such as the one seen on the left in Photo 3. When you find suitable structures, start envisioning the height you will need to cut or modify each one to. I found a great piece for the midsection of the building and just cut off the lower floor with my motor tool, deleting all references to HO scale by removing people figures, doors, and a few loading docks (Photo 4). These two HO portions were simply glued together and to the MTH portion. I use a product called RCZ56, a thick glue from J&Z Products that dries clear, has good adhesion properties, and does not dry brittle.

After your HO sections are attached to the MTH O scale section, it's time to do whatever is necessary to give the entire building a uniform appearance. In my case, the HO building portions I used were just about the right color to begin with and were already weathered enough when I purchased them. I figured they would blend well with the MTH section once I got it weathered, too. Weathering was done with washes of Polly Scale paints. Some weathering was even air-brushed on. I primarily used Polly Scale colors such as Dirt, Depot Buff, and SP Lark Dark Gray.

Art Deco Elements

To give the building a 1920s' flavor, I used some Plastruct products to build limestone architectural elements. Once again, be creative. There are no hard and fast rules here. Examine some old buildings on the Internet or just search topics related to architecture if you get stumped. You can even try looking for products





from various suppliers that might represent items like gargoyles and statues.

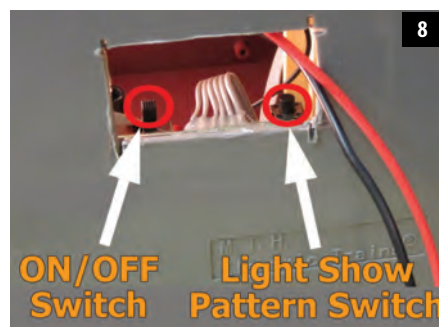
For my model I created corner piece elements for all top corners with Plastruct #90633 rectangular 3/8" x 1/4" styrene tube stock for the main portion. I glued tops to those elements using sheet styrene.

Next, the round globes I attached to each corner piece top were inexpensive craft beads purchased at my local craft store (Photo 5). They are available in a variety of sizes. The assortment I bought had some smaller ones that I used for art deco light sconces flanking the doorways at the front entrance. Looking through my box of spare parts, I found some awnings left over from a different MTH RailKing building (Photo 6). Then I added some vertical limestone details extending down the building face on each side from the corner pieces. They were made by cutting pieces of Plastruct #90885 half-round 1.56" x 4.0 mm styrene stock to staggered lengths (Photo 7).

Final Details

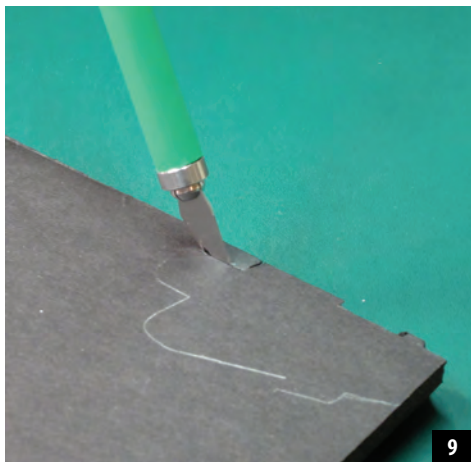
I used a Miller Engineering #6600 Downtown-style sign. This sign comes with different peel-and-stick selections for the front of the sign. Just peel and stick the appropriate facing. I cut a small slot in the front of my new Ambassador Hotel (guess it's time to reveal the name of this building) where I wanted the sign to extend out from the building face. Following the directions from there was a cinch. These kits come complete with a wiring harness to connect the sign to the circuit board. I mounted the circuit board inside the building.

I cut a 1"x 2" hole so I could extend two wires through from the circuit board to the bottom of the train table and then to my power source. I used a hot glue gun to attach the circuit board to the inside



ON/OFF
Switch

Light Show
Pattern Switch



9



10



11



12




13



14

floor adjacent to this opening. I made the hole big enough to reach into and push the power on/off button on the left and the light pattern button on the right of the circuit board, easily changing the light pattern that these devices offer without having to unscrew the floor (Photo 8). I gave the sign an extra dimension by adding a piece of foam core board to the back. First I traced the shape onto the foam core board and cut it out with a knife. (Photo 9). That was followed by some sanding and filing along with pressing quick-dry spackling compound into the edges to fill the foam holes (Photo 10). Follow with a light sanding when the compound is dry. Gluing was done with CA glue (Photo 11). I then painted the foam core board face (unlit side of sign) and edges with Polly Scale paint (Photo 12).

I painted all roofs Polly Scale SP Lark Dark Gray. All limestone elements, including the window frames and sills, were painted Depot Buff. This helps to tie the entire building together visually. The old faded sign on the side of the building was made with Woodland Scenics Letters (Photo 13). My completed model has a footprint of 9-1/4" x 6-3/4" and stands 32" high. To complete the scene, I placed some crates in the rear and placed some Artista figures on the front sidewalk (Photo 14).

I'm happy with the way this project turned out, and it really does convey the feeling of a towering structure in an urban setting. I hope this from-the-top view helps to convince you (Photo 15). 





Scenic Harmony in Wurlitzer Gorge

Article and Photos by Jim Policastro

The two urban population centers of Poughkeepsie and Schenectady on my Central New York Railroad were recently combined into one large town. This resulted in an open corner on my layout. A team of 1:48 scale geologists in charge of landscape creation for the railroad recommended that the corner be scenicked in a way that would complement the views beyond the Pinnacle Peaks area seen in Photo 1. As you can see, the original site of the town, visible just beyond the twin peaks of the park, detracted from the aes-

thetics of the scenic view. The team decided that this newly vacated area should feature a lush hillside, a rushing stream, an old mill, and a backdrop of rocky cliffs. The area would be traversed by the railroad's double-track main line and would contain an equipment storage spur. A fairly lengthy tunnel was also part of the plan.

Landforms Take Shape

The project was begun by locating the tunnel portals at each end of the soon-to-

be-hidden track sections (Photo 2). The near portal and the stone retaining walls are from Scenic Express. The other portals were cut from 3/4" medium density fiberboard using a jigsaw. The team also considered the placement of an MTH granary building on the future hillside. They temporarily removed the granary's lower floor to gauge its suitability for the area.

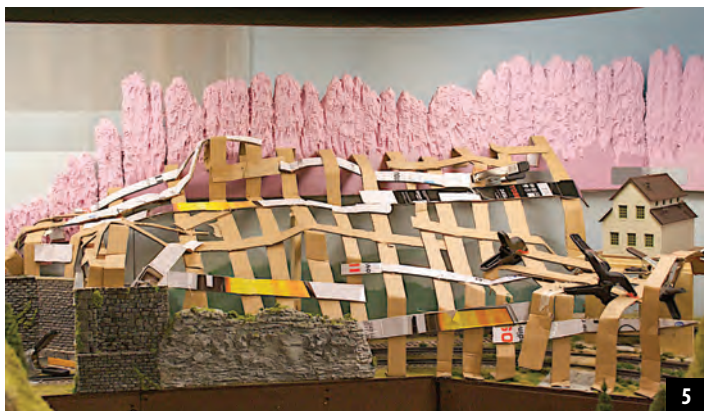
The rocky cliffs that would form the backdrop were carved from pink Styrofoam panels and tacked in place with hot glue on the much-too-short Masonite



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panels already in place (Photo 3). Carving is actually too elegant a term for the process. It was more like hacking away at the Styrofoam with a serrated steak knife, removing small chips of material. Styrofoam breaks in a way very similar to real rocks, so the cliffs soon began to assume a craggy appearance (Photo 4). A wire brush and Shop-Vac were useful in removing those small pieces that tended to cling to the surface. Soon the area was surrounded by a series of column-like formations reminiscent of organ pipes. It wasn't long before the team began referring to the area as Wurlitzer Gorge.

The Hillside

When the cliffs were completed, a web of cardboard strips was glued in place as the foundation for the gently sloping hillside (Photo 5). The once flimsy web became remarkably strong as more and more pieces of cardboard were glued in place.

The cardboard strips were then covered with just a single layer of plaster gauze material. After this set, a thick 1/4" layer of Structo-Lite plaster was applied using a disposable paintbrush. Using the gauze material alone would have required the application of numerous, expensive layers to achieve any degree of strength. However, the inexpensive Structo-Lite sets rock solid to provide plenty of strength.

In places, additional chunks of pink Styrofoam were glued to the hillside and plastered over to represent outcroppings or erratic boulders left by glaciers in the dim geologic past. It was decided that the granary building should be restored to its original three-story configuration, painted using craft store acrylics, and placed on a removable lift-out panel for access to the tracks below.

The cliffs were given a much thinner layer of Structo-Lite. I preferred the texture of the carved Styrofoam with no covering other than flat latex paint. The railroad's geology team has been second-guessing itself recently as to whether the cliffs would have looked better without the plaster.

A thick coat of tan, flat latex, house paint was applied to the hillside, blending to gray on the rocky cliffs (Photo 6). I added washes of color consisting of craft store acrylics in burnt sienna, raw sienna, and raw umber mixed 50-50 with water to the rocks after the latex paint was totally dry. This added shadow detail and a little variation in overall color.

Then the all-important dry brushing of the rocky surfaces brought out the details. Just the tips of the bristles of a 2" brush were dipped into off-white acrylic paint. Removing just about all the paint from the brush with a rag and then lightly whisking the almost dry brush across the surface highlighted just the edges.

Vegetation Grows

Vegetation is best applied in layers, with each in turn adding to the realism of the overall scene. My first step was to apply diluted white glue or matte medium (50-50 glue and water) with a 2" brush wherever vegetation was likely to grow.

Fine turf of burnt grass and yellow grass from Woodland Scenics was then sifted into the glue. Sifting continued until



the top layer retained its dry appearance. The excess that didn't stick to the glue was vacuumed away later (Photo 7).

When that dried, clump foliage in burnt grass, light green, medium green, and dark green colors also from Woodland Scenics was added using full-strength white glue. The foliage was concentrated in hollows, between rocks, along the base of retaining walls, and along river banks. In other words, vegetation grew best wherever the ground was likely to be moist.

Some evergreens from Grand Central Gems and Woodland Scenics were added to the scene. Neither my budget nor my patience would allow for creating the dense tree growth common in the

Northeast. But if even a limited number of trees are planted in small groups, the scene can be fairly realistic (Photo 8). I made sure that each grouping contained an odd number of trees, were not the same height within each group, and were randomly placed. I didn't want anything that grows wild in nature to be evenly spaced in the scene.



The Stream

The geology team decided on a narrow, rapidly flowing stream. Always looking to make the most of any situation, they decided to add a water wheel to the granary in order to make use of the energy in all that falling water. The water wheel was scratchbuilt using 1/8" plywood and assorted stripwood from the local hobby shop. The water was created entirely of clear silicone latex caulk. I used the non-paintable kitchen-bath variety, not the paintable window-door material. Parallel beads of caulk were applied along the entire length of the stream. Then the separate beads were blended together. A few toothpicks held together in my hand were run lengthwise in the direction of the water's flow. A slight whipping motion was used to create the frothy look of rapidly moving water. The more I worked it, the whiter and less clear the caulk became (Photo 9).



Finishing Touches

Finally, some variety was given to the vegetation by adding patches of foliage in light green and medium green colors from Woodland Scenics. Some small clumps of Scenic Express SuperTrees material were also added to represent thicker brush. These were coated with more coarse turf. These final touches were added using hairspray as a bonding agent instead of diluted glue, which eliminated unsightly water stains that diluted glue can cause in the finished scene.

When completed, this corner scene greatly improved the overall appearance of the entire Pinnacle Peaks area. Now there is nothing but natural scenery in the background when tourists take in the view of the twin peaks area (Photo 10). You would never guess that there is actually a 24" aisle between the train crossing the bridge and the old mill in the background. 🚂



Give your wooden structures an aged paint look



1

Fear-Free Weathering with Chalk

Article and Photos by Joey Ricard

It is fair to say that weathering models is high on the list of enhancements that strike fear in the hearts of many modelers. Yet, in all actuality, the processes and methods used to complete the job can often be some of the simplest of tasks in the art of model railroading. Additionally, few other enhancements can create such a realistic look.

The fear of destroying a model is often on the minds of even the best of modelers. There is, for many, an ever-present mental “stop factor” that hits at some point during the building or detailing process, often preventing the modeler from taking the creation to the next step in the journey to creating a realistic model railroad world.

To ease the fear, I most often rely on select methods that have proven worthy and reliable over my many years in the hobby. Each allows for some degree of proverbial backpedaling in the weathering

process. The most reliable method involves the use of chalks. Yep, I said chalks! Some modelers call them powders and pigments, but I use your ordinary, everyday artist’s chalks. These can be found at most craft stores at a reasonable price. Chalks come in a variety of colors that can be used along with some earth or natural tones to create very realistic effects.

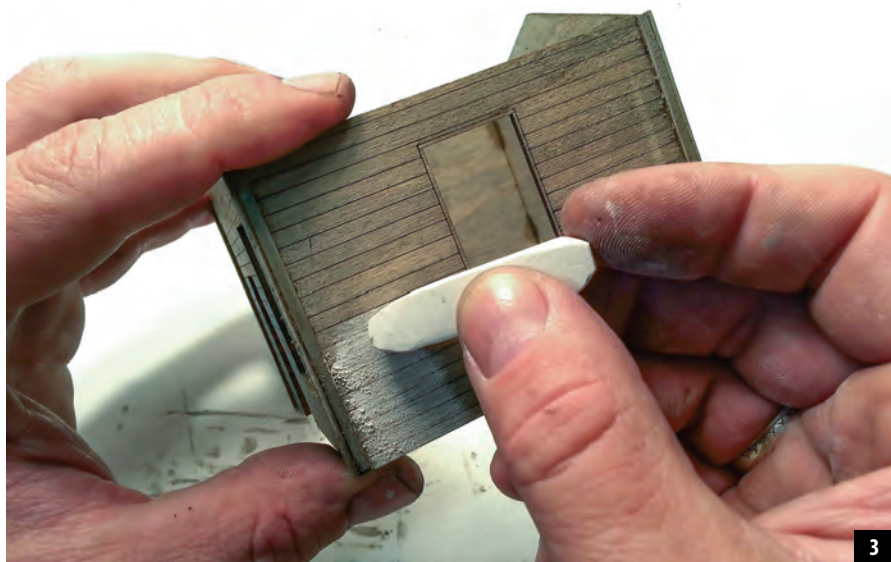
Let’s be real here. Like any other tasks of daily life, you have to devote some time to learning the processes and methods to achieve the desired effects. In this case, you have to play with different amounts of ingredients to see how small changes affect the bigger picture. When it comes down to the results, there is no right or wrong result. Rather, it is a matter of what suits your personal taste. With a little practice on some pieces of scrap wood, you can be up and running in no time and quickly work yourself into a weathering comfort zone to achieve very realistic results.



2

For this article we will use a laser-cut wooden structure kit with some basic budget products to show just how simple it really is. This process can just as easily be used on any wooden-type kit or scratch-building project. To stain laser-cut or hand-cut wood, I most often use a mixture of solvent-based products. I do this as opposed to using a water-based mix to prevent warping of the wood. The laser process tends to seal the leading edges of the wood, but with the addition of water, it can expand and warp. This is less evident with solvent mixes.

Much of the correspondence that I receive includes messages from folks asking about my “secret formulas” and the ratios of my mixes and washes. The truth is, there are no secrets, and I rarely write anything down. My supplies are very basic and consist of flat black enamel paint, paint thinner, artist’s chalks, and cheap paintbrushes (Photo 1). Trial and error has led me to use a similar mix of ingredients almost every time to come up with a basic standard that I use.



3

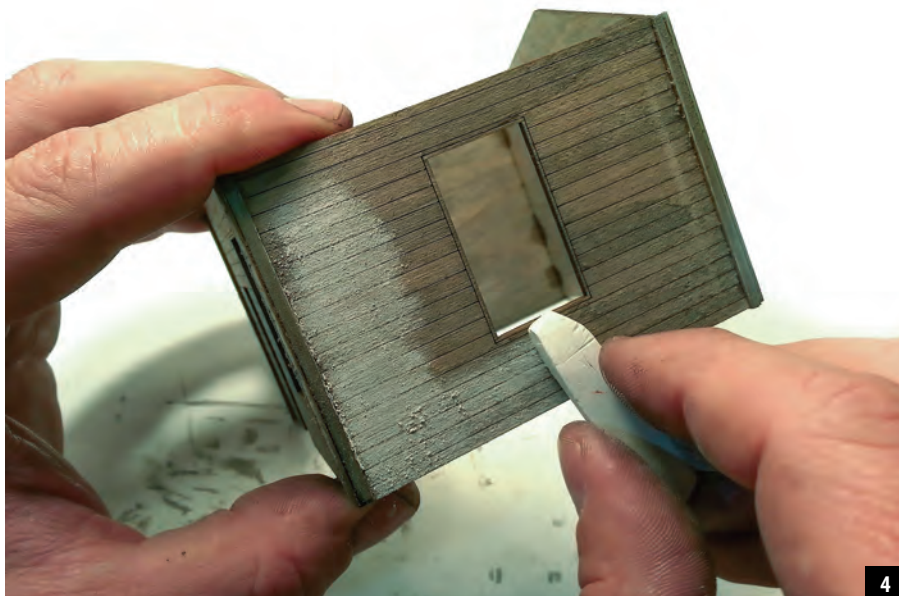
In this article we are using a two-step process where we stain the wood first to give it an under color of gray aged wood. Then we will apply a chalking over that to give the effect of peeling and faded paint. Here’s the whole deal, step by step.

It is always a good idea to stain, wash, or paint your wooden pieces before assembly

in an effort to avoid unwanted glue seeps and messes on the wood that won’t get covered by the stain, paint, or chalk (Photo 2).

Start by mixing a dab of flat black paint in with a splash of paint thinner in an old mixing bowl. I always use a piece of scrap wood to test the color and intensity of the mixture. Remember, there is no wrong or

right look; it is a matter of what suits you, so do not be afraid to experiment with the darkness of the tones. Lighter washes will almost always produce a brown or even bronze appearance when dry, and in this case where we are creating the effect of old gray wood under paint, we will make the mix a darker color to produce a gray color on the wood. Once you have the desired color mix, you can stain all the pieces you intend to use at the same time. It is a good idea to stain all components at one time so they have a uniform color over all pieces. Staining is much like painting. Stain in even strokes and go with the grain of the wood to keep even patterns. If you are not going forward with the chalking part, pay particular attention to the stain patterns as you go and do not



be afraid to apply more than one coat to achieve the color you are going after.

There are many variations of chalk, and sometimes they will behave differently. A little experimenting may be necessary on your scrap piece. After assembly of the item or structure, take a piece of your chalk and start applying the chalk as if you were coloring with a crayon (Photo 3). You can use the flat sides of the chalk to get as close to the corners and crevices as possible. Apply enough chalk to cover thoroughly and do not worry about chalk in the cracks, as you will adjust this later in the process (Photo 4).

Obviously, you will not be able to get your stick of chalk into every corner. Take a dry brush and shove some of the loose chalk into the corners and cracks to fully distribute the chalk (Photo 5). Also, go over your flat areas by brushing with the grain of the wood if there is a pattern in the wood.

Once you have fully covered your piece with an application of chalk, use a soft bristle brush to create down strokes (Photo 6). This will simulate the effects of Mother Nature and the natural movement of water over time, causing drips and runs. This will also remove some of the larger chalk pigments and chunks and provide a natural effect. At this point, you can decide if you need another overall coat of chalk to get the



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look you are going after. If you feel the need to remove some of the chalk to start over, you can do so by simply wiping the chalk off. This is a very nice feature of weathering with chalks.

Once you have the piece fully coated in chalk, you can start fine-tuning your work. For this demonstration, I used scribed wood. Because of this, I used a fine-tip knife to pronounce the lines of the scribed wood (Photo 7). Now is also a good time to take a small soft brush and apply tiny amounts of black or dark gray chalk to create dark down strokes, simulating runs of dirt and debris or rust from a rusty metal roof. Experimentation is the key to success. Photos 8 and 9 show the results achieved on the structure depicted in the earlier steps.

Applying a coat of clear matte finish is a great way to preserve the chalk weathering but in most cases is not required. When working with a model wooden structure, it is often not necessary anyhow as this type of model usually does not require constant handling where the chalk can start wearing off. Clear coating, depending on the particular product you use, may cause a darkening of the color or even removing the chalk altogether. You can, however, certainly add more chalk over any coatings you apply. I have many structures that are well over 20 years old that have never seen a spray coating over the chalk, and they still look as they did when they were created. Just experiment a bit with this part of the process. Several examples of different types and levels of weathering applications I've used can be seen in Photos 10, 11, 12, and 13.

There are many facets to modeling in our great and diverse hobby, and some require more creativity than others. But there is no right or wrong way, at least not in this form of weathering. If you give yourself plenty of leeway, you can create some believable effects that are both simple and adjustable. Chalk offers ease of use and the ability to correct color flaws that cannot be compared to the permanence of using paint to weather.





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The completed structure has its sidewalk section attached.

ACRYLIC REALITY

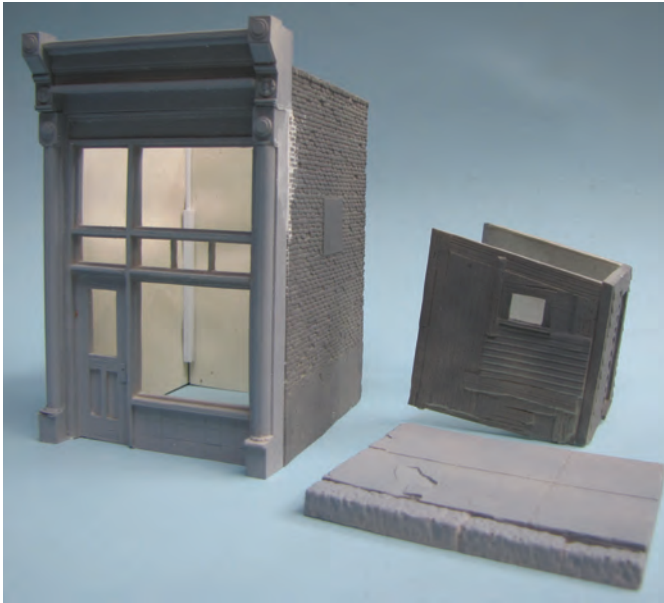
Article and Photos by Thomas A. Yorke

I have been manufacturing model railroad kits since 1976, and from that time to the present, I also have been experimenting with colors and painting plastics. This article is about painting and finishing cast resin and styrene model kits, both of which are similar in composition. The example shown here is a compilation of old kit parts found in my scrap box that together seemed to form a nice little structure.

Techniques used for painting resin kits take me back to my earlier days of working with Hydrocal. Nobody seemed to know

how to paint these cast objects, so they often didn't even try. I conducted some seminars on the subject, and the instruction sheets I provided with my products were full of information on the process. Slowly this caught on, and people began to experiment, which resulted in many beautiful models.

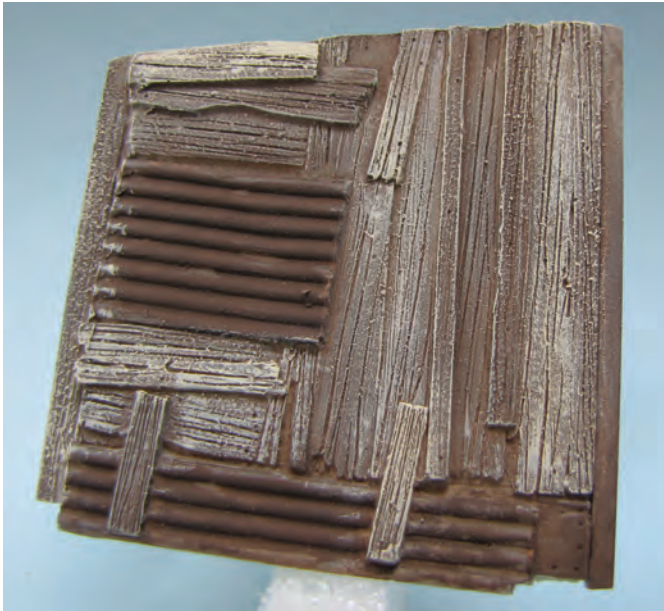
Now here we go again, but now we're working with resin and plastics, which are quite similar to Hydrocal when it comes to applying a finish. Truth is I see the process as "staining" resin and plastic kits rather than painting them.



The basic structure components used in this project are grouped together with a gray undercoat sprayed on.



Teddy bear brown stain has been applied to the model.



Dry brush applications of white are made in the direction of the wood grain.



Rust color is added to the metal areas.

Paints and Paint Consistency

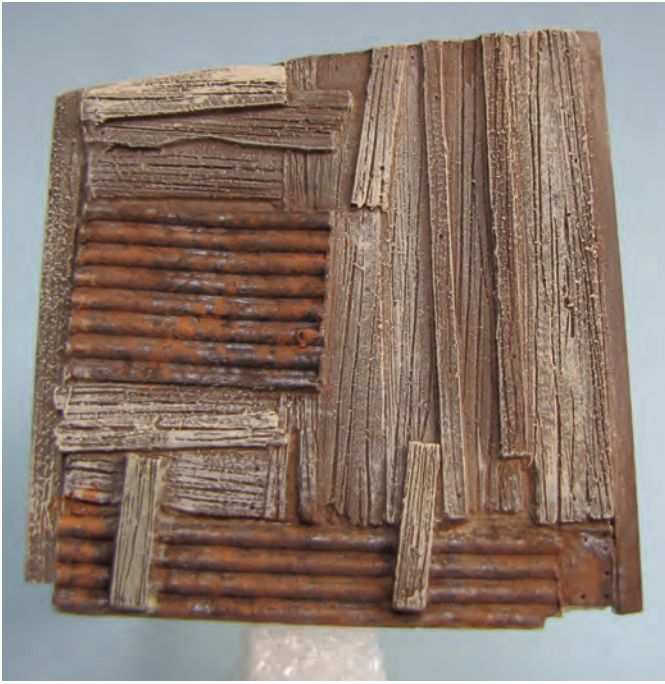
Painting or staining with acrylics is very easy and inexpensive. All it really takes is some practice. I use Apple Barrel products, but there are many craft brands that all work equally well, and they will intermix. The main point, first of all, is to use thin stains or washes. Just use water as the thinner. The final finish is built-up in the course of many successive coats of color to form a rich and colorful surface. There is no fast or shortcut way to do this successfully.

The colors I most often use include burnt umber, russet, teddy bear brown, terra cotta, brown oxide, yellow ochre, king's gold, camel, butter, antique white, true white, country gray, dolphin gray, blue stoneware, bright red, barnyard red, red clay, numerous greens, silver, asphaltum, and black.

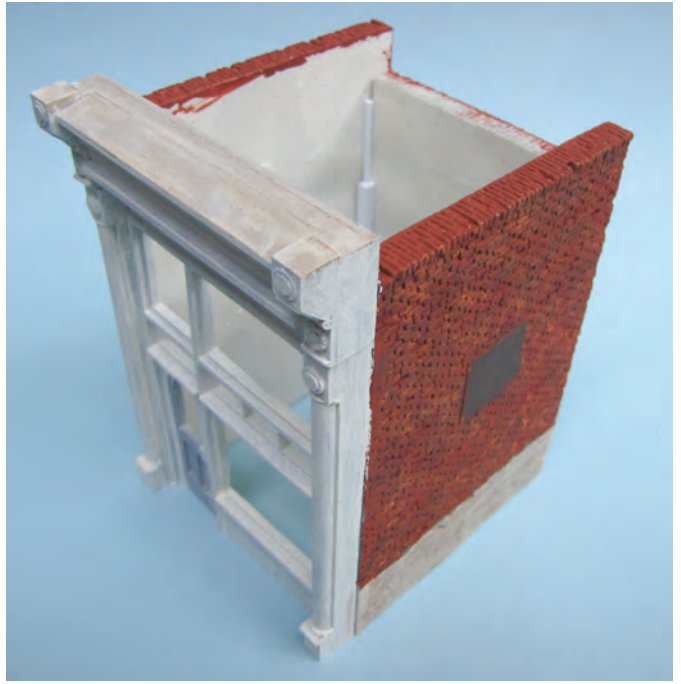
You certainly do not need all of these colors, but the more you have, the easier it is to build up a beautiful finish on a variety of objects. The small bottles are less than a \$1.50 each—not bad when compared to the price of Floquil paints.

A Proper Undercoat

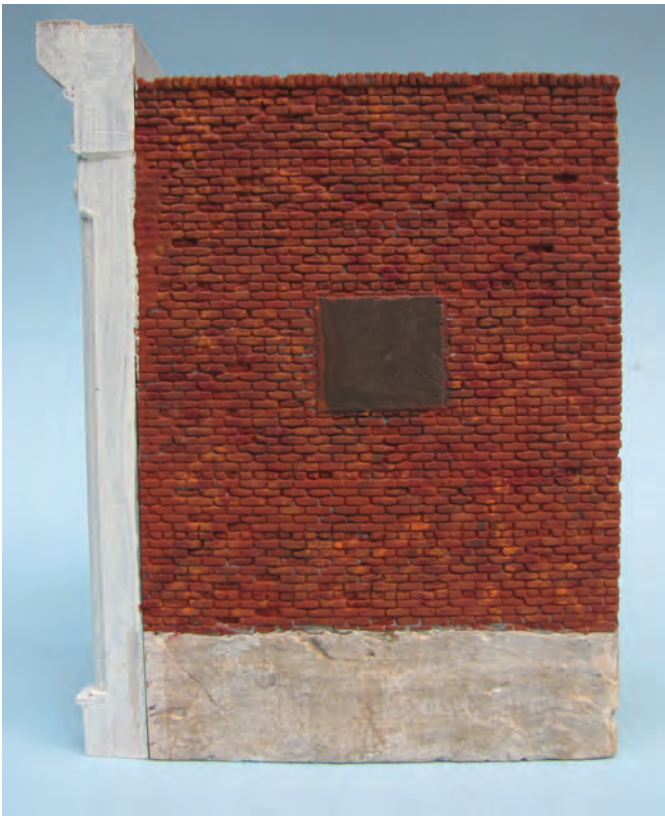
I start with a spray can of undercoat of either a light gray or a roof brown. Rust-Oleum or Krylon brands provide good undercoats. They should be sprayed on in a light coat, not a completely smooth, fully covered finish. Let the paint be a little rough and spotty. All you are doing at this point is applying a thin coat of paint so the acrylic to be applied later will adhere. Acrylic paint by itself does not like plastics, which is why you should always start with this spray undercoat.



Small touches of metallic gunmetal gray help provide a slight silvery look. More antique white is dry brushed on the boards to lighten them.



An undercoat of white has been sparingly applied to the façade with a light gray stain applied to the concrete base and followed by a thin overall coating of brown stain.



Red brick color is applied full strength with a light speckle of orange added here and there.



White gesso was applied with a stiff brush to small areas at a time and immediately wiped off with a rag to highlight the mortar lines in the brick and to provide a more realistic look.



The front façade was painted two shades of green with a red door. Plywood over the large window was dry brushed with light green so wood grain would show through.

Should you use a brown or gray undercoat? The answer is simple. I use a gray undercoat unless I am trying to achieve a dark finish such as wood or brick. In that case I use brown. However, it doesn't really matter which color is used. Just be sure that you do use an undercoat. With time, you will learn which color is best for whatever effect you are trying to achieve.

I thin all of my acrylic paints with water, always using much more water than pigment to start with a very thin, watery mix. It needs to be thin enough to apply by brush easily but still have enough body to give a light coat over the surface. This coat will still be watery, but it will not bead up when applied. Let it dry. Several more coats can be used to build up the surface to a nice thin stain that covers fairly well, but not thickly.

Procedure for Models with a Brown Undercoat

I start with a thin overall application of burnt umber. Paint over any metal patches or corrugated features because this is a great undercoat for them, too. I then add a little more water to the mix along with a drop of teddy bear brown. Apply this overall in the direction of the wood grain, but do not do all of the boards; instead, leave a few unpainted. Now go back and add another drop of brown pigment and paint some more boards, but still not all of



A very light brown stain was brushed over the façade colors in multiple thin coats for the desired color.

them. Do this several times with thin stains over the surface to build up the depth of color.

Now mix a very thin batch of camel and apply this sparingly over some boards in the direction of the wood grain. Some boards do not need to be fully covered. You want a random application and very subtle variation. When dry, apply a thin black stain over the entire wall to bring out the details and cracks. I also apply several thin coats to the bottom of walls to darken that area. Feather this out as you go up the wall and let it dry. Then I use a dry brush (a stiff, bristle brush with almost no paint and certainly no wet paint) of camel. This is carefully dragged over some boards in the direction of the wood grain to vary the effect and "bleach" a few boards here and there. Don't overdo this! Practice and observation of the real thing will do wonders.

Procedure for Models with a Gray Undercoat

With a gray undercoat you'll want to substitute dolphin gray for the brown used above. The application technique is the same as previously described, only you are now using gray. Build up board by board, varying the color and density slightly. Remember to keep it subtle. Apply a thin stain of black overall to bring out the details and darken the lowest parts of the walls as described



A swamp cooler was added to one side of the building along with appropriate era signs and some foliage.

above. Be subtle here, too. Use the dry-brush technique with light gray to highlight some boards in the direction of the wood grain. Vary the color of the boards somewhat to make things more interesting. Again, be subtle—no heavy hand here.

The example shown here is a mixture of gray undercoat over which browns have been applied. Why? Because I didn't have any brown undercoat spray left at the time. As noted earlier, either undercoat color will work fine.

Metal Parts

For metal parts, use an undercoat of burnt umber. Do not apply evenly; instead, splotch it on. Let everything dry. Now take a very small amount of thinned terra cotta and splotch this on in a quick motion. There is no need to be even or to cover completely. Do not paint or scrub



Here is a view of the details added to the opposite side of the structure.

the color on. You just want an uneven appearance. Let everything dry once again and then apply a final coat or splotch of dry pigment rust over what has already been done in acrylic. For a true metallic look, brush a tiny amount of metallic gunmetal gray acrylic over the metal parts. Just touch a few areas with it. Do not cover the entire metal piece because this is just an accent color.

About Brushes

I prefer to use good quality sable brushes. These cost more, but if you take care of them, they will last a very long time. I use a large, round, pointed #7 brush for the initial work. Large brushes hold more paint and allow you to cover more area quicker and with less stopping and starting, which thereby yields a better finish. Get used to using a large brush. The other sizes I use are smaller #4 and #2 brushes for detail work. For drybrushing I use a stiff bristle brush. A flat 1/4" and a 1/8" are all you need.

Wash your brushes in dishwashing liquid and water after every use. Don't just rinse them. Wash until all color is gone from the rinse water and then let them dry bristles up. Do not let them sit in water with the intention of cleaning them later. This will curve the bristles and all but ruin the brush.


Research and practice are essential keys to painting with acrylic washes. Keep your work very subtle and visually blend the finish. Stop before you think you are truly finished. It is very important to not overwork the model.

The painting process does take time. I just don't paint a single color anywhere. I combine similar colors to provide extra depth. This is not difficult to do, but it does take time and practice. Colorizing my models is a lot of fun, and it is very satisfying to see a model develop and turn real.

Final Touches

When you are satisfied with the effect you have obtained, apply a dull spray coat to seal the finish. Acrylic will wear at sharp corners and edges. I use a hobby knife to slightly round off all sharp edges and corners. This helps the paint stay in place. If you stop to think about it, paint does not adhere well to a knife edge; there needs to be a little surface for the paint to grab. Just a tiny relief of that sharp edge is all that is really needed.

Now that the building is painted and stained, let's add some final details. I used styrene pipes for the stacks on the roofs. These were painted silver. I used a large roof vent that I had available and rusted it up as previously mentioned. The swamp cooler was painted and added on top of a wooden rack made from scrap lumber bits. A vent, which I also had in the parts box, was placed on the right wall after painting. An air conditioner was added above the front door. I cut out some card signs I had and applied them to the walls with CA cement. I also had some extra decals left over from another project and applied those also. Some white paint patches needed to be applied to the red brick walls so they would show up, and tiny bits of chipped plaster, stained gray, were used as concrete footers under the wooden addition. Finally, some greenery was applied around the base of the walls here and there. This also helps to hide little areas that didn't turn out quite to your liking. Nobody has to know!

I hope this article has given some of you the courage to try your hand at staining plastic and resin buildings. It really isn't difficult, and with a few simple tools and paints along with some practice, you will be proud of what you can turn out. 



The cardstock roof has been covered with tissue paper that was painted gray. Full-strength black tar lines were added using a small brush.



In this close-up view of the front façade, the top of the metal façade is not painted green but is given a rust color imitating the effect of direct exposure to the elements.

About the Author

Tom Yorke is a professional model builder. You can see his ad in this issue.



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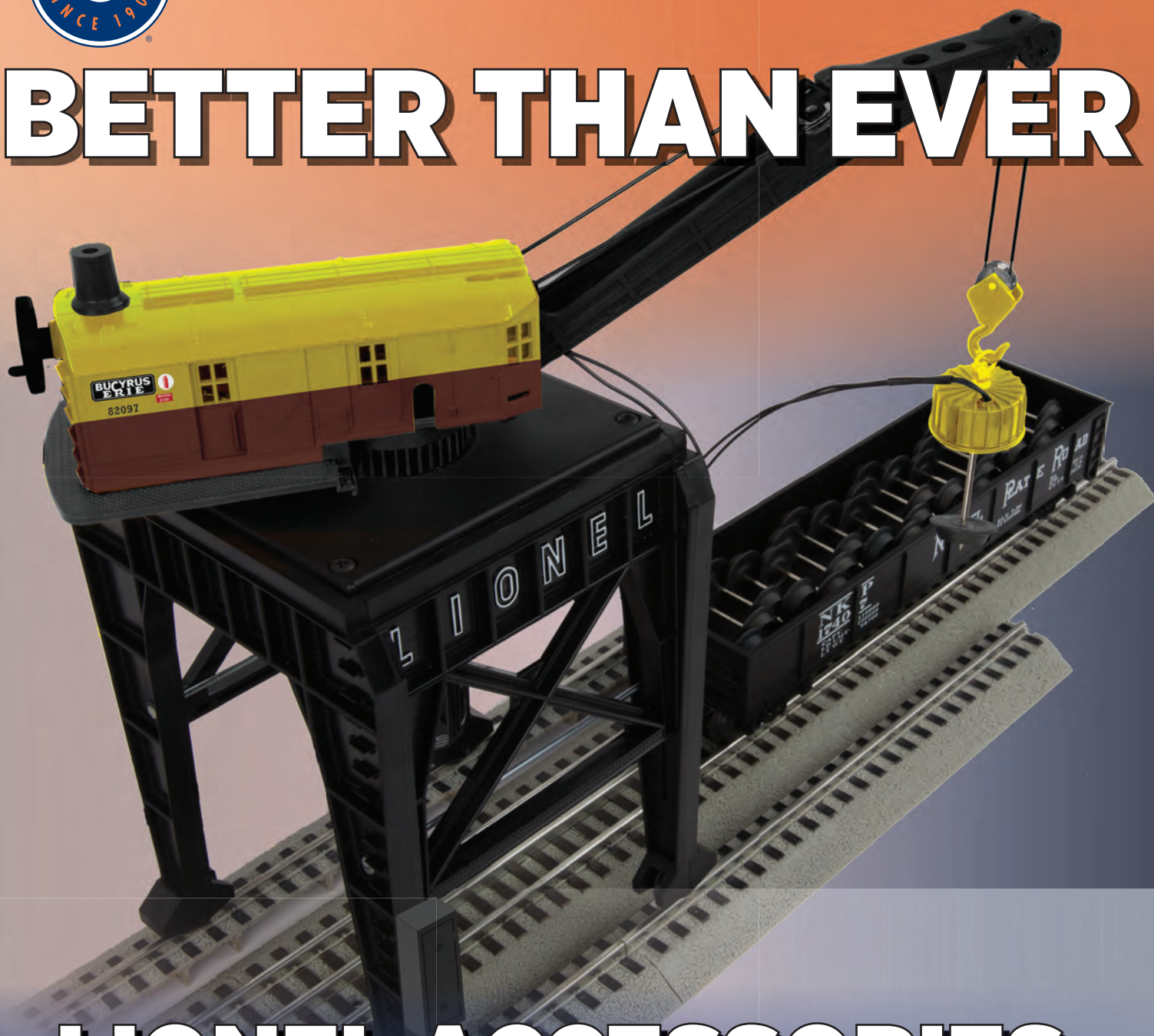
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Rarest of the Common: The 3672 Bosco Milk Car

When a collector thinks about Lionel's postwar milk cars, he most often thinks about the flood of white cars and the large number of white and brown operating cars that dominated two generations of production runs for 12 years. What you are looking at on the top of this page is the rarest and most colorful version of this postwar perennial, the 3672 Bosco Milk Car and the distinctive Bosco logo (Photo 1).

The First Generation: Exciting Action

The Automatic Refrigerated Milk Car was the most produced Lionel operating car of the postwar era. Introduced in 1947, the all-white 9-1/4" 3462 was an instant hit with its ability to deliver, at the press of a button, six or seven milk cans onto a platform that came with the car. Hundreds of thousands of the white operating cars with black lettering were produced under three different product numbers including 3462, 3472, and 3482 (not shown) during eight years of production (Photo 2). Numerous modifications to the car were made during these production runs. The

most noticeable outside change was the replacement of the 3462 aluminum opening doors, used by the rubberized milkman who delivered the milk cans, to white plastic doors used in the later production of the 3472 (Photos 3 and 4).

The huge numbers of cars made from 1947 to 1955 pretty much ensures that you will find one in any private postwar Lionel collection you view or that is for sale. The first-generation 9-1/4" Automatic Refrigerated Milk Car defined "common" in the early postwar era for collectors.

The Second Generation: Just Another Operating Accessory

The second generation of Lionel operating milk cars made its debut in 1955. By that time, the 3400 series was showing its age, and its 9-1/4" length looked short and stubby next to the 6464-series boxcars and other newer operating cars featured in the Lionel line. The new 3662-1 Automatic Refrigerated Milk Car body was 10-1/4" long, virtually 1:48 scale, and the body was molded in two main parts (Photo 5). The first section consisted of



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a brown plastic roof and ends molded in one piece that came in various shades of reddish brown and dark brown depending on production date. The second molded section formed the white plastic sides that were either painted or unpainted. Operating doors on the sides matched the ends and the roof. The result was a handsome-looking, two-tone operating car that used the same unloading platform as the first-generation cars (Photo 6). The 3662-1 became a solid if not terribly exciting item in the Lionel lineup.

By 1959 the 3662-1 was very much overshadowed by the flood of space and military toy trains Lionel was offering to try and stem the tide of diminished interest and reduced sales of electric trains from the buying public. In a bid to pep up lagging sales of operating milk cars, Lionel came up with a colorful version, the 3672, that delivered cans of “Bosco Nutritious Chocolate Flavored Syrup,” rather than plain ol’ milk cans (Photo 7).

The Postwar 3672: Good News for Collectors

At this juncture it was way too late for any purely cosmetic changes to affect the downward spiral of Lionel sales. However, bad news for Lionel in 1959–1960 was very good news for postwar collectors. Poor sales meant that there were not many cars, cans, and platforms for collectors to find later. In addition, the design of the second-generation milk cars made the 3672 Bosco Automatic Milk Car even more desirable for collectors. The second-generation mechanism, and more importantly for collectors, the second-generation milk cans were different than the aluminum cans with magnets on their bottoms that were used for the earlier 3400 series (Photos 8 and 9). The cans for the 3662-1 and the 3672 Bosco Milk Car were made of light plastic with heavier steel bottoms so they would stay upright when they were pushed out (or in some cases hurled out) from the car to the unloading platform. Their plastic construction made it easy to paint them golden yellow to match the sides of the Bosco cars and to have “BOSCO” rubber-stamped on each can in red (Photo 10). The unloading platform was painted brown and the railings yellow, which marked the only time in the postwar era that the unloading platform was decorated in other than the usual green base with white or cream-colored railings (Photo 11).



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Evaluation

Unless you have all the packaging, the time for sky-high prices for the 3472 is over. But if you have the original platform in C7 shape and all seven of the Bosco cans in C7 along with the car, you are still looking at several hundred dollars more than the going rate for its far more common relation, the brown and white 3662-1 Automatic Refrigerated Milk Car. The 3472 was only cataloged in 1959 and 1960. There were two versions of the car. One had unpainted yellow sides, and the other had painted sides. Most of the Bosco cars came with metal bar end trucks.



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The 3472 has several things going for it as a collectible. It was available for only two years—1959 and 1960—and was made in miniscule quantities versus its much more common first-generation ancestors and even the second-generation 3662-1. More important from the collector point of view, the Bosco Milk Car is genuinely rare, very good-looking, and with other elements such as the unloading platform and the seven cans that greatly affect its value, are very hard to find. It does not get much better than this if you

are a collector who enjoys the hunt as much as the possession of a desirable piece of rolling stock.

A Money-Saving Alternative from Lionel

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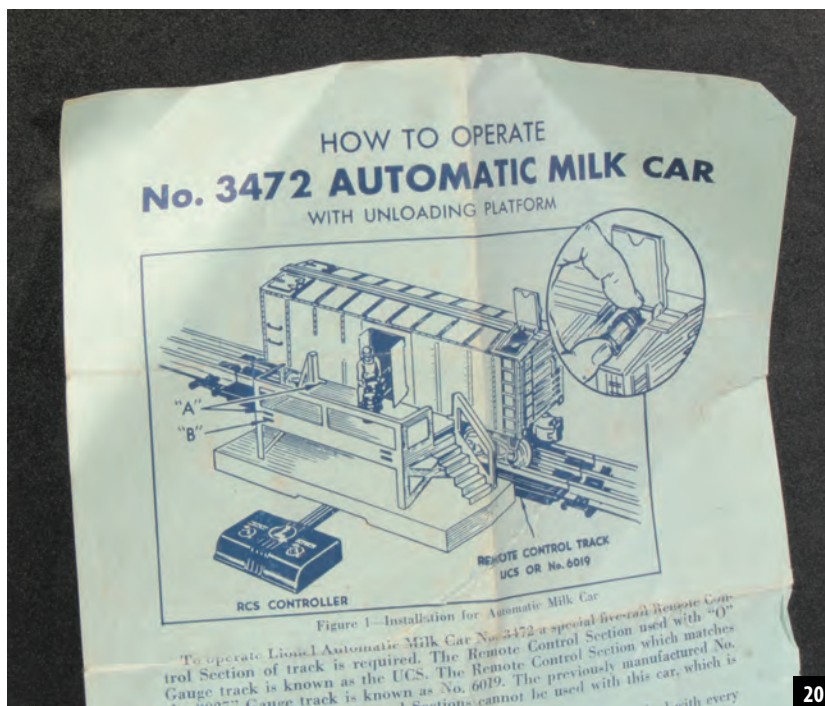
The 6-36702 Bosco Milk Car with Platform appeared in the Postwar Celebration Series section of the Lionel Classic Trains, Volume 1, 2002 catalog. The box had the signature PWC logo and design on the front and a 3672 label on the side (Photos 12 and 13). The inside of the box lid on my example was stamped "16 JAN 2002." The contents inside were neatly packaged in a white plastic tray (Photo 14). When the original and the replica 3672 are placed one above the other, it is difficult to tell the two Bosco cars apart, which is a real plus for the reproduction especially since the replicas can be bought from individuals, dealers, and on leading auction sites with all their packaging for \$100 to \$150 (Photo 15).



19

The Bosco decal on the original car was a bit of a graphic breakthrough in the postwar era because the sides of the Bosco jar were metallic and the design was faithfully reproduced on the PWC version (Photos 16 and 17). The original Bosco milk can is on the left, and the two cans are easily distinguished from one another because the modern replica has larger and crisper lettering (Photo 18). Turn over the 2002 car, and it is also easy to tell that it is not original (Photo 19).

There is one final element that has been a constant for all versions of the Automatic Refrigerated Milk Car made since the first ones were offered for sale in 1947, and that is the drawing of the car and the unloading platform in the operating instructions (Photo 20). That seems a fitting way to conclude this edition of "Collector's Gallery."



20



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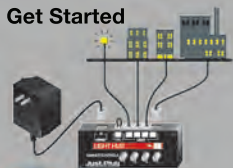


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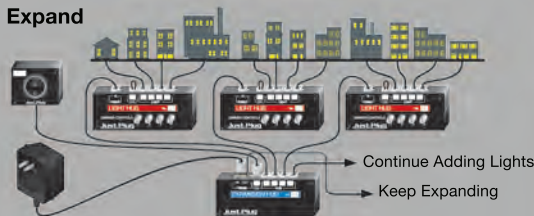
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New Station for St-Thomas Junction

Article and Photos by Jacques Brouillette



The news is very good for the industrious citizens of the village of St-Thomas in Quebec, Canada. Their bustling little town is getting some additional train service and a new train station. The railroad's owners have decided to terminate traffic on an older line some distance from town and divert it to St-Thomas. They also concluded that the old St-Thomas freight station would not be able to handle a projected increase in both freight and passenger business. This news was warmly received by the people of St-Thomas, who for years had lobbied railroad officials for a full-service station that could handle the ever-growing demand for efficient freight service. Best of all, the town would finally have a true rail passenger facility—one that would provide a full-time ticket agent and a comfortable waiting room for travelers.

Railroad officials, who had announced their final decision in late January, insisted on having the old station demolished and the new station up and fully operational by the end of summer. This presented a very tight schedule for the demolition and construction crews. That being the case, teardown of the old freight station got underway shortly after the spring thaw. Workers were determined to clear the site as promptly as possible and retained the services of one of the railroad's gondolas to haul off the demolition debris. This made the site clearance phase go much faster.


It was also decided that construction material and furnishings for the new station would be delivered to the site by rail, saving both time and money. After all, this was to be a railroad structure and was being built adjacent to an operating rail line, so it just made good sense to take full advantage of this resource. These special construction-material trains did have to be unloaded quickly so they would not affect the timely operation of scheduled trains, but that posed no particular problem.

Prospective passengers as well as the rest of the town's citizens enjoyed seeing the new station rise from the ground in such a brief span of time. Construction workers labored long and hard over the first weeks of summer and soon were ready to start work on the roof structure.

Everybody was excited and anxious to see what the new station would finally look like. The railroad company had assured the good people of St-Thomas that they had chosen a design that

would be far better than the old station and that the new station would definitely be an attractive addition the whole town could be proud of. The truth be told, they actually followed the blueprints used for another station—an architectural beauty itself—built farther down the line at Acton Vale, Quebec.

By late July the construction crews were applying finishing touches to the roofing and completing work on a good many of the interior details. Responsible officials from the railroad were delighted that there had been no delay in the construction schedule, and the general contractor was also happy because he had been assured a substantial bonus for meeting or beating the schedule. Even the weather cooperated by providing a relatively dry and pleasant summer, with moderate temperatures most days.

Finally came the day that everybody had waited for: formal dedication of the splendid new station. The local military band played for the pleasure of the many dignitaries and townspeople who gathered for this event. Senior railroad executives and local political figures delivered the requisite long-winded speeches, and then the ribbon was cut. With the railroad's most recently acquired diesel engine in attendance at the event, this day marked the start of a new era in rail service that would help make St-Thomas Junction an important stop on a growing rail line. 



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The station master has mixed emotions as he watches his old station being torn down.



Construction of the new station is well underway.



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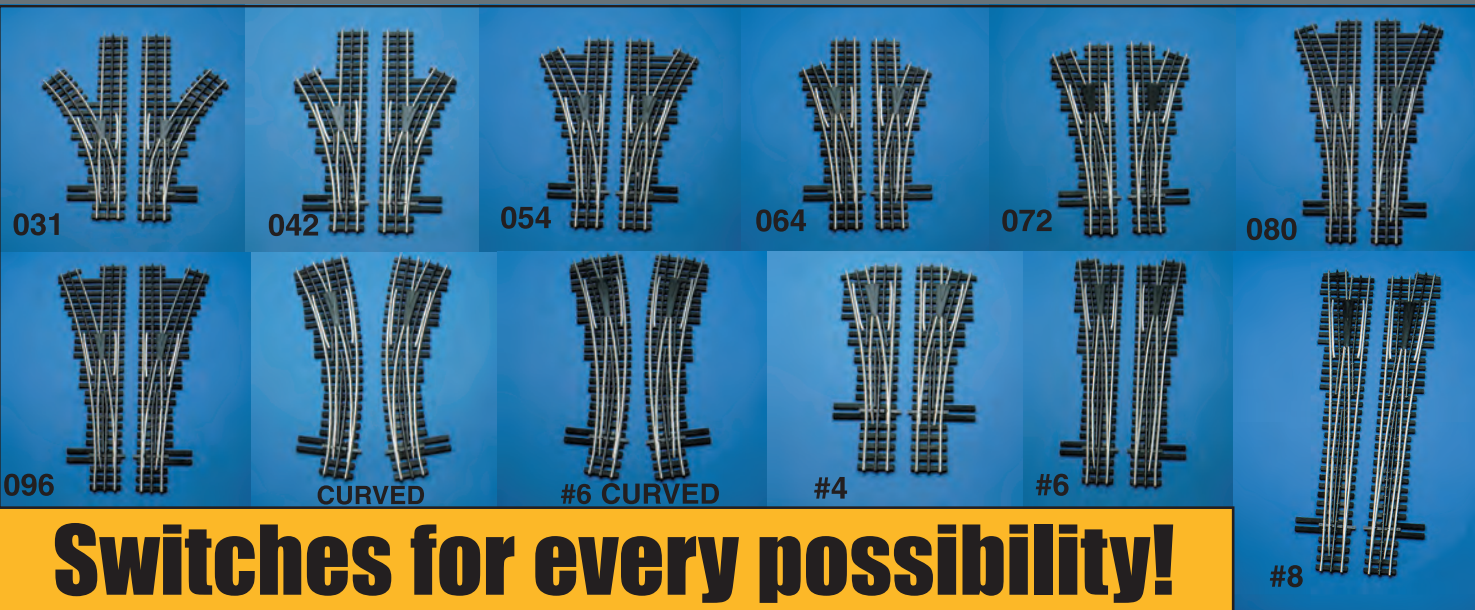


Things are looking up for the station master, as the first train to use the new station pulls in to a stop.

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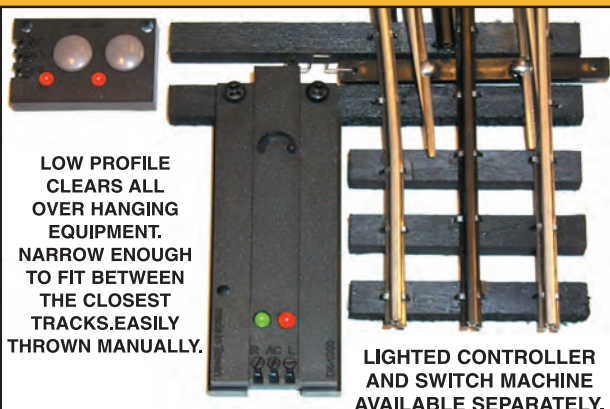
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Building a Layout: Making a Valley

Back in Run 273 we constructed a removable roll-around section of the layout, which is where I will build three trestles for three curves of track (Photo 1). If you'll recall, I wanted to make these three curved trestles removable to gain access to the river gorge behind them as well as to be able to work on the back part of the layout in that end of the room. In the photo, the separation line between the fixed part of the layout and the removable part shows up as two different surface colors. The light-colored wood will be part of the removable module, and the darker brown part will be the fixed layout. The pencil lines on the flat black part of the bottom of the valley represent where the track center lines of the three curves will be.

A train trestle has many parts. A trestle "bent" is the name applied to each vertical trestle support assembly. Those penciled track lines indicate where the foundations for each trestle bent will

be placed. The trestle bents on my layout will be 4" apart, representing 20' spacing (on center) between each trestle bent (1/4" per foot). My valley floor will also feature a stream coming from the waterfall I plan on modeling at the back of the gorge. This means that the railroad engineers would have had to plan for the valley floor to be somewhat unstable since spring rains might cause the river to flood the valley floor on occasion. For this reason, I'm going to model concrete footers at the base of each trestle bent. They will be represented by pieces of basswood cut to 3/8" widths by 3/8" depth and painted with concrete color paint. The beams making up my trestle bents will be made of 1/4" square basswood (12"x 12" in scale) which means that the concrete foundation will be about 6" wider than the beam footers of my trestle bents. That will make a nice stable base for my railroad's trestles.

In Photo 2 I have spaced the footers at exactly 4" apart along





4



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the track centerline. The angle of the footers can easily be eyeballed to make them evenly spaced. A touch of CA glue along the base of each footer holds it down in place. Note that I have used some risers under a few of the concrete footers at each end of the trestle as it nears the edges of the canyon to allow for the slope of the sides of the gorge (which we will add later).

If you will have more than one trestle side by side as I have, be sure not to make the risers identical for each track since Mother Nature would never make each part of the wall slope in exactly the same way.

Note also in the back of Photo 2 that I have added two 1x3s to the table legs on what will be both sides of the canyon walls (to be added later).

My goal when this project is finished is to be able to go from a finished scenicked canyon, train trestles, river, and canyon floor to a free and unencumbered walk-in space all the way to the back of the layout where the trestles, the river, and the waterfall will be located. That will mean that those two stringers I just added will eventually have two piano hinges attached where I will locate my river floor. The piano hinges will allow that river floor to split and fall away, thereby allowing me to gain that access. Okay, more about that later.

Note that I have also left out a few concrete foundations in the middle of the valley since a river or large stream will be flowing through there. That means that somewhere up the trestle bents, footings for a bridge will have to be added at each trestle to span that gap later on.

In Photo 3 I have added the plywood for the river bed and painted it and the floor around the concrete foundations a brown color. Keep in mind that the canyon floor is a rollaway floor and the river floor is attached to the fixed part of the layout. For that reason, the rollaway canyon floor must fit neatly and as close as possible just under the river floor.

Before painting the river floor, I sketched on the plywood where I wanted my river to be and then cut the floor in two along the left edge of the river. Both halves of the river were then attached to the piano hinges on each stringer. I covered the piano hinges and the edges of the drop-away river floor with an overlapping plywood piece cut out with a jigsaw to show where the bottom edge of the canyon's walls will come down and be attached. Now the front edge of both river floor halves rests on the removable trestle canyon floor. When the trestle module is removed, the river floor falls away neatly, allowing me to walk to the rear of the layout right through where the river used to be.

There are all kinds of ways to make terrain including screen wire mesh, the paper wad method, and numerous others as well. I like the one I use, which is to cut up 3/4" strips of corrugated cardboard and lace them together. This method enables you to change each part of the terrain as you go or to cut the strips and alter things at any time during the construction. In Photo 3 I have started by attaching the vertical cardboard strips with a hot-glue gun and low-temperature hot glue. I begin by attaching them all at the top, as shown on the left side of the photo.

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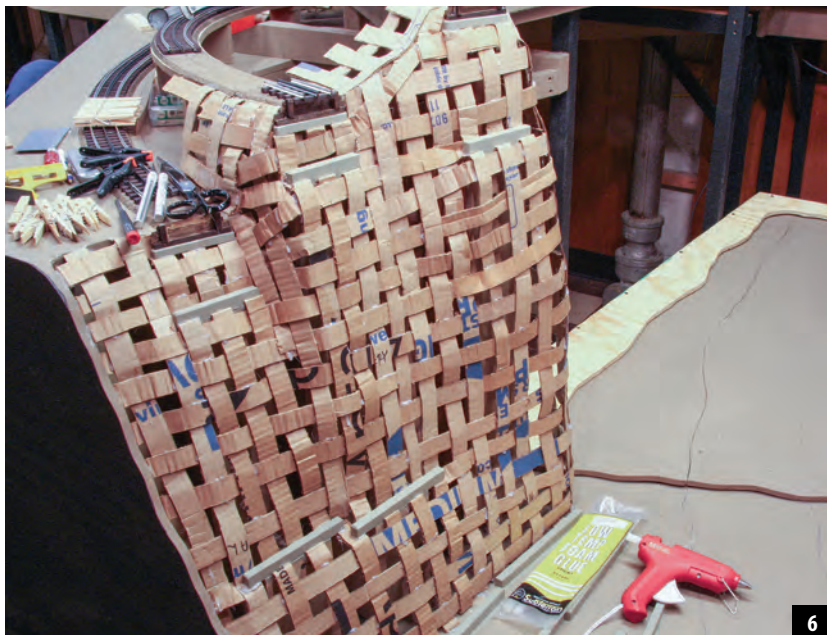
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In Photo 4 a trestle wooden barrier has been added to hold back the ballast at the end of each track before it crosses over the edge to the future trestle. I built this simple crib out of basswood parts stained a wood color and cemented with CA glue on top of the small concrete footer. That assembly was cemented to the wooden riser at each location.


The vertical cardboard strips beginning the top edge of the canyon wall were hot-glued to the undersides of the footers. Photos 3 and 4 show these vertical strips running down to the edge to the next concrete footer. Horizontal cardboard strips lace in and out, over and under, the vertical strips, as shown in the photo. In Photo 5 you can see the top edges of the cardboard strips hot-glued to the layout plywood surface next to the track roadbed. Also note that the wooden crib intended to hold back the ballast should be extended up to the underside of the track in order to hold back the ballast properly. I used a scrap piece of track as shown to get the height of the wooden crib right.

Photo 6 shows how the terrain wall is coming along. Note how the concrete foundations for each trestle bent already look like they are resting on the edges of the future terrain wall. As you go along with the cardboard webbing, you can push or pull the webbing in or out to customize the terrain to your liking. Then hot glue the joints of the card-

board strips using a clothespin at each location until the glue cools off and takes a set. It only takes a few seconds for the hot glue to cool. If you don't like what you've done to this point, just cut the strips in a few locations and change the whole effect. That's the nice thing about this scenery-making method. It is very easy to alter and reset.

The best and most common tools for this project are pictured in Photo 6. A pair of scissors, some modeling knives, maybe a flat-blade screwdriver or two, some clothespins, a couple of spring clamps, and a hot-glue gun and glue sticks should be all you need. I got most of these from a nearby hobby shop.

My project is a little tricky since I need to make some of the scenery (all the canyon walls of the roll-around module) first and then match that part of the canyon up to the rear part of the canyon so the module continues to easily separate and roll away. In addition, the joint line between the movable scenery and the fixed scenery needs to match well enough so that the modeled illusion isn't betrayed by ill-fitting scenery.

The next step is to cover this webbing with plaster cloth. This is actually the fun part of the process. But since print deadlines never seem to match the construction schedule very well, we'll have to save that for a future "Backshop." For now, go have some fun! 

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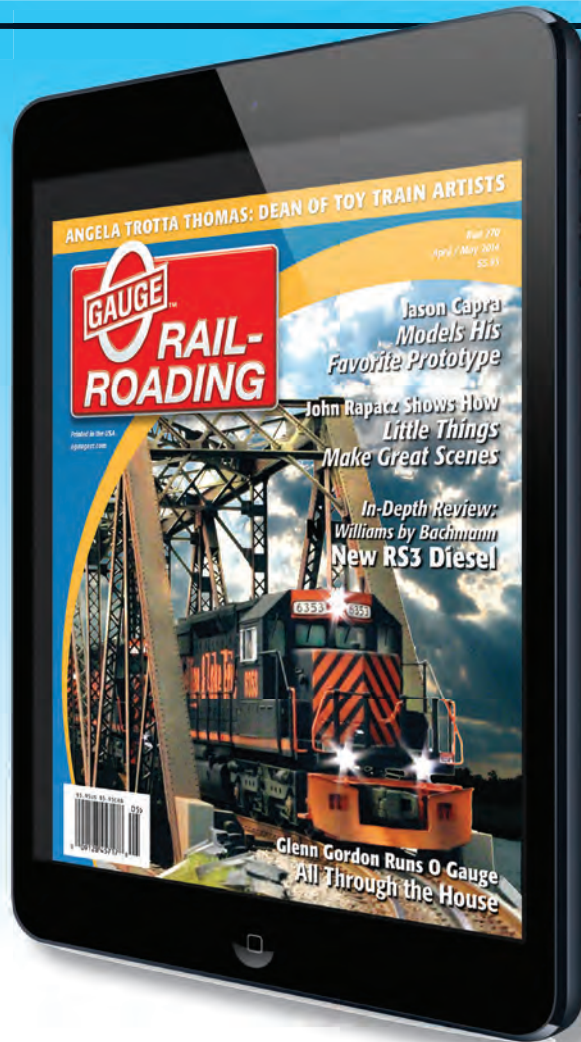


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I need to know how to boost voltage to switches from an older Lionel ZW transformer. If I use a borrowed MTH Z-4000 set to 20 volts, all the switches work great.

—Richard P. Groth

Any older Lionel O72 or O22 switch should work great at 16 to 18 volts. If it isn't, it's because the slide contacts have become carbon covered over time and the voltage is having trouble getting through the carbon deposits on the contact points. Boosted voltage will work fine for a little while, but that is the problem to begin with. The added voltage will just result in more carbon being deposited on the contact points, which will then need even greater voltage to get through the added carbon. What is really needed is to clean the sliding contact points by sharply folding over a piece of #600 wet-or-dry sandpaper and sliding it between the contact points to clean off the carbon deposits. Then using the plastic tool from a soldering kit, slide the slit in the plastic tool over the contact arm and gently twist it in a manner that will increase the pressure on the contact points. That should result in a dramatic improvement. — Jim

You responded to a reader about wiring track for DCS, clarifying that the center rail should have only one connection or wire lead to avoid "signal collision" coming from another jumper or lead to the same rail. But won't this phenomenon occur, nevertheless, each time the locomotive bridges the gap and for some brief period (not so brief with some of the new large or multiple-unit locomotives) encounters signals from both adjacent track sections simultaneously? And if so, will the locomotive recover being controlled by the TIU digital signal once it fully clears the gap and has advanced to the next single signal track section?

Also, should the side rail connections be similarly limited to one per section?

—Bill Hoerger

Yes it will, but it will be so brief that it is effectively insignificant. In fact, when measuring signal strength with that function on the locomotive, you will see periods when the signal strength will dip low or even not show up at all, but it lasts only so long as it took for the two rollers to bridge the gap as they roll along. The signal returns to full strength instantaneously when the two rollers have

cleared the gap. When the two wires are inadvertently joined together through the center rail, that entire span will show no strength at all during the time the locomotive is on that section. If it is indeed ending up along the entire length of the track, you will have no control over the locomotive at all during that time. In such times, the locomotive will remain doing what it last had a clear signal to do. Stories of locomotives suddenly speeding up and taking off happen only when the locomotive never did see a signal from the start.

No, it is not necessary or even advantageous to do this. The outside rails are only used for the AC common and, as a result, have no bearing on the DCS signal. — Jim

I have followed your answers about MTH Proto-1 and Proto-2 and the NiCad and NiMH batteries. I am mystified that you do not mention the BCR from J and W Electronics. Perhaps you don't know about or don't trust it. I only have a few Proto-Sound locomotives, but I am sold on it.

—Charles Cameron



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No, I have absolutely nothing against them at all. But since I've found that using the right rechargeable battery with the right engine works perfectly, I've just never seen the need to invest any more money in something else. I do indeed trust the BCRs because of the satisfactory results I've seen reported by so many other owners. — Jim

How long do I have to charge the batteries on my MTH engines? Can I just leave them on the track with the power turned on? How much power? And finally, what other companies' switches are compatible with MTH track?

—Jeff

The simple act of leaving them on the track as you run your layout will keep them charged or will charge them only when they need it. PS2 engines have a smart charger system that will only charge NiCad batteries when they need charging, eliminating the overcharging problem that makes them go bad. Sure, you can leave the track power on just as long as you don't leave things unattended. It's just not a safe thing to do in my book. Place the power at anywhere from 10 to 12 volts. Nearly any O gauge switch maker is compatible, but you will need to use conversion (or transition) track sections both before and after the switch you use. Due to the connecting mechanisms of MTH track, the transition tracks are necessary unless you plan on firmly anchoring down the track and the switch you plan to use. If you do that, then all you have to do is make sure to butt the ends of the rails of the switch to the track and electrically connect the power to the switch rails the same as you have connected it to the MTH track. The methods of doing this vary depending on who makes the switch you are going to use. — Jim

I have a layout up on a shelf surrounding a room and want to run a main power wire from my ZW under the shelf to attach track feeder wires to. I am using 18-gauge wire for the short feeders and have inherited a bunch of monster wire I would like to use for the main power and ground runs. Monster

wire is typically used in home theater applications and is stranded wire. I would guess it is 8-gauge wire. Is there any concern over running such a large gauge wire for my main power line? The track length is only 40' long (oval track) with one passing siding. My ZW has two 180-watt power supplies, and I could buy two more if need be.

—Steve Sherian

No, but the only concern I would have is your ability to solder this heavy wire to the track or to the 18-gauge leads. Honestly, for a layout of that size, you need wire of no larger size than 16 or 14 gauge at the most. Otherwise, go to it! One of those 180-watt power sources per loop is more than enough. — Jim

I am using a postwar ZW with 6-5906 activation buttons to perform the bell and whistle functions. My single MTH Proto-1 engine, all eight of my Proto-2 engines, and my K-Line EP5 slow down to some degree when the whistle or bell buttons are pushed (some worse than others). Only my Proto-3 engine, my Lionel Mogul, and my Atlas 0-6-0 do not slow down. Do you know why this is?

—John Warwick

The Lionel 6-5906 activation button uses some of the transformer's output to produce the bell or whistle effect. With postwar transformers, when you activated the whistle controller on the transformer, you also added a few volts to compensate for the whistle effect in the tender of the locomotive. When using the added 6-5906 button, it does not also introduce added voltage to balance the voltage used. The end result is that the locomotive slows down due to the voltage drain from the transformer caused by the button or sound device. That does not also occur in the Proto-3 engine because the board on the Proto-3 package within the engine obviously does not use as much energy to produce the effect (either the whistle or the bell) as its older counterparts. — Jim

I was wondering if you had a previous "Backshop" uncoupler project that might provide some information

regarding how many pounds or ounces of pull the magnet needs to have to make the coupler work.

—Jack Closterman

There's no way anyone has any measurement info on Lionel O or O27 uncoupler magnets that would show how many ounces of pull the coupler might have. They all vary from uncoupler magnet to uncoupler magnet because there is no way to know which ones might have been overheated or how many times that has happened in their lifetime. I did cover uncoupling magnets installed like the ones we're talking about back in Run 245, if that helps. — Jim

I have a 1946 Lionel #671 horizontal mounted E-unit and motor, which is unlike other models where the motor is pitched at a slight incline. The drive gears are loose and sloppy, and the axle bushings are shot. After several minutes of running, the armature plate and brush holders are hot as a toaster, and the unit becomes very slow. Internal bearings and com-plate are clean, and brushes and springs have been replaced. What do you think is wrong? Are parts available, if needed?

—Chuck

It sounds like you have an electrical short in your armature. This kind of thing happens after many repeated overheatings of the motor. The lacquer on the coil windings usually gets hot and melts, causing a short somewhere in the armature windings. The bad thing is there is no way to fix this short of a replacement

armature. Because such a thing is not sold new, you would have to find another motor from an old, dead 671 from some other reason but still fitted with a good armature. The likelihood of the armature being good in an old 671 is usually very good. Shorted armatures are not a common occurrence in those motors. — Jim

I have a question regarding wiring MTH building accessories. They are using what I am told is 18-gauge wire. Could I use the 16-gauge wire that I have from OGR for extending the pairs, or do I really need to extend the pairs with 18-gauge as well?

Also, I have an MTH Z-1000 power brick and want to eliminate the banana plugs that I am currently using to connect to a TIU unit. I am cutting off the barrel end of the cord that connects to the banana plug. Is there a way to tell at that point what is power and common so I can wire them to wire spades and then connect to the TIU's fixed power and common ports?

—Al Rozski

You certainly can use the 18-gauge wire that MTH has already equipped the building with. You can use 16-gauge if you want to, but you just don't need the larger wire size (16-gauge is actually a larger size wire than 18-gauge because the gauge number is opposite the wire size—the higher the number, the smaller the wire size). Save yourself some money in the long run. Buy a decent quantity of 18-gauge paired wire (try a hobby or home improvement store). You will get more wire for the money compared to buying 16-gauge.

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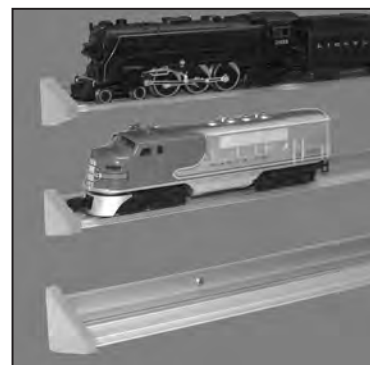


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Manufacturers usually make the wire that has the markings on it for the AC+ wire. Test by following that assumption, and then touch the output AC+ wire from your power brick to the AC+ wire of a known transformer. Touch the two AC-wires together, and if no spark results, you have the wires from your power pack correctly identified. — Jim.

lines, and the bricks will, of course, return to the brick red color of the plastic. Once that is done, spray the whole building with Testors Dullcote spray. Now the bricks will look like bricks. The Dullcote will dry to an all-flat base for all the color, making your building look like a new brick building with no glossy surfaces. — Jim

This past weekend I attended a train meet in Allentown, PA, Spring Thaw. At the OGR booth there I purchased 12 of the Ameri-Towne building fronts for my layout. On line I found a two-part video titled *How to Build Model Railroad Flat Buildings* by Train Room Gary. I found the video to be very helpful and informative, but it only covered how to make your buildings look like old beat-up buildings. Do you have or know of any videos that cover finishing your building to look new and show all the brick details?

—Neil Nederfield

My favorite trick is to spread a thin coating of watered-down flat white paint on the surface of the bricks. I use Floquil Polly Scale flat white water base paint or something equivalent. Then before the paint has a chance to dry, mop it off the bricks using several small pieces of a cut-up pillowcase. Get all you can off the brick surfaces that way, frequently water washing the cloths to remove the wiped-up paint. Follow that up with the same trick, but this time apply some paint thinner on the cloths as you work. That gets up the pesky white that didn't come up with water rags. That leaves all the remaining white paint in the mortar

I remember a past issue that covered TMCC/Proto-Sound hookup on the same layout. Is this available in the digital library? I have some past issues, but I can't seem to locate it. Can you help please?

—George Keeler

Well, this is one time when your memory and mine are in agreement, but for the life of me, I, too, can't seem to find the photo and diagram that showed the hookup! However, it is basically quite simple. Just connect the wire from the output of the TMCC Command Base to the output side of the AC Common (black leads) coming out of the left side(s) of any and all TIUs you use. The TMCC signal gets introduced to the track wiring after the TIU inserts the digital signal into the track wiring. That should do it. — Jim

I read your article in a recent OGR where you said you no longer think Homasote is necessary for sound deadening. I would like to know what you think about screwing the track to the plywood, I am using FasTrack on my new layout.

—Brad



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I was specifically referring to GarGraves or Ross track, but with Lionel FasTrack, you will definitely need to use something to help deaden the sound transmission. As I say in my article, nothing makes a layout quiet like full scenery. That is because adding things to the train table actually increases its mass and therefore reduces its ability to vibrate. In addition, soft objects such as tree foliage, grass, and so forth soften the sound waves emitted by the tabletop and the train wheels. If I were using FasTrack, I would probably use cork roadbed at the least to help reduce the noise from the trains on the track. You can screw the track to the roadbed, but try to keep the direct attachment of track to the plywood to a minimum where you can. I realize that there is a time when that is just not practical, but the fewer hard connections you make from the track back to the plywood, the quieter everything will be. — Jim

I run MTH exclusively and have had lots of problems with steamers and diesels throwing tires. Can you elaborate on CA glue, particularly on where I can find it? Can it be used on steam locomotives as well as diesels, and do you put enough on with a toothpick so that you cover the entire circumference of the tire? Someone told me that placing Lionel tires on MTH diesels would also solve the problem. If so, where can I order Lionel traction tires? Finally, I am building a small layout surrounding my pool table using MTH RealTrax. I have divided the layout into seven separate power sections by removing the copper connectors and opening a gap with my Dremel tool across all three

rails where the sections are separated. I am using the MTH power connectors. Therefore, one rail is dead when tested. Do the dead rails have to line up by having the power connectors inserted consistently on one side of the track? Should I solder the two ground rails together? Or, does it even matter?

—Tim Petta

Buying Lionel tires won't make any difference except to probably make the problem worse. Each tire is engineered for the specific wheel it is mounted on. The thickness of the rubber, the width of the rubber, and the diameter of the rubber tire all come into play. While it may have been true for some particular modeler and for some particular train(s), it is otherwise just sheer luck that it actually worked. CA glue is found at most hobby shops and at chain stores. Using CA glue on the tire is done with only two or three drops placed under the tire at equal spacing around the rim, using the tip of a toothpick. The reason tires fail is that they are stretched due to the engine pulling a hard load for some period of time. Then when they stretch, they no longer stay in the groove on the wheel. Simply locking them onto the wheel at a couple of locations usually solves the problem for years. It is not necessary to use the spray setting agent commonly used with CA glue. The spray liquid is just an accelerator; but if you use the CA without it, the cement will still set up on its own. Only a drop or two at a few locations is what you need. Maintaining a ground or AC common through both outside rails is not necessary to the operation of the engine. Only one side needs to be grounded (or attached to the black AC- post of the transformer).

—Jim Barrett

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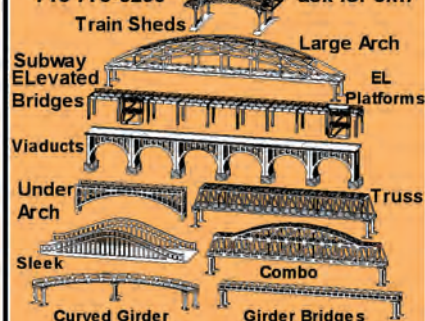
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Conventional TMCC

I've recently fielded questions about what is needed to run conventional transformer-controlled locomotives using a Lionel TMCC CAB remote controller. By a CAB controller, I mean either a CAB-1L or CAB-2. Either controller with its appropriate command base will work, but the CAB-2 could be considered an expensive overkill for TMCC operation of only conventional trains. Essentially, the minimum devices currently available from Lionel for TMCC operation of conventional 3-rail O gauge locomotives are as follows:

- 6-37147 Legacy CAB-1L/Base-1L Command Set
- 6-22983 PowerHouse 180-watt transformer
- 6-37146 Legacy PowerMaster power controller

This combination of devices outputs between 0 and 18 volts to the track, depending on operation of the throttle knob on the CAB remote. Basically, the controls on the CAB controller replace the handle and buttons on a conventional transformer to run the train. Output from the Legacy PowerMaster is pulse width modulated power, popularly known as a chopped sine wave. Most modern locomotives run well on this type of power with the possible exception of the original Proto-Sound locomotives from MTH. As a personal choice, I don't run my postwar Lionel engines with their geriatric motors on chopped sine wave power.

I'll quickly get the painful part out of the way—total cost. Prices for new examples of the three TMCC devices listed above vary according to the seller, but I have seen a total cost of around \$350 quoted in ads from discount mail-order retailers. Of course, shipping and sales taxes are additional costs. This amount is about 25

percent less than the total of the list prices. Yes, command control is definitely not cheap, even for running conventional locomotives.

A PowerMaster plus a PowerHouse or other compatible AC transformers are required for each track. For example, if the layout has three tracks that need three transformers or transformer channels to run the trains, three PowerMasters and PowerHouses are needed for conventional TMCC on all three tracks. But only one CAB-1L/Base-1L Command Set is needed as it communicates with all the PowerMasters on a layout. A compatible AC transformer can be one from any manufacturer that will run 3-rail O gauge trains and has sufficient capacity for the number and type of trains it is to power.

For the good news, if an AC transformer is already controlling a track or the complete layout, it will work in place of a PowerHouse and will reduce the total cost by approximately \$75 per track. However, the PowerMaster has a special receptacle for the input wires from the PowerHouse. Connection of any other AC transformer to a PowerMaster requires a 6-12893 Power Cable Adapter. Again, I've seen discount prices of about \$16 for this cable.

A setup with the original TMCC CAB-1, Command Base, and either a TMCC PowerMaster or a TPC 300/400 will work, but I don't recommend it. The command hardware is obsolete plus an original and fully operable CAB-1 is...hard to get. The original TMCC PowerMaster and TPC are compatible with the CAB-1L and Base-1L; however, the new Legacy PowerMaster has superior power overload management capabilities.

I asked Lionel Senior Electronics Engineer Jim Rohde about the Legacy PowerMaster's power overload management. He explained, "The Legacy PowerMaster is based on the ZW-L and uses the same current foldback circuit. Also, the software is a modified version of the ZW-L software, so essentially the Legacy PowerMaster has the same current foldback capabilities as the



Left to right: Legacy PowerMaster, Legacy CAB-1L, PowerHouse, Legacy Base-1L

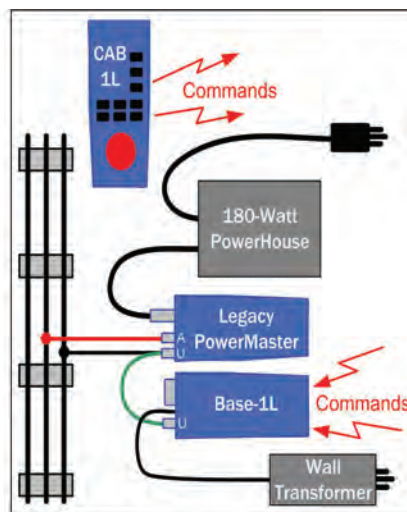


Legacy PowerMaster (left), Legacy Base-1L (right)

ZW-L. If a load draws more than 10 amps, the Legacy PowerMaster automatically reduces the output voltage to whatever value is required to hold the output current at 10 amps. Should the overload persist after three seconds, the output shuts off, and you must reset it either by entering AUX1-0 on the CAB-1L or CAB-2 or by cycling the power to the Legacy PowerMaster.”

As I understand current foldback on the ZW-L and also the Legacy PowerMaster, current limiting occurs within 1/2 cycle of the overload event occurring. However, if an overload, a short circuit, occurs with a setup of a TPC and a PowerHouse, the circuit breaker in the PowerHouse will trip before the breaker in the TPC does. The interval between the short circuit occurring and the PowerHouse breaker tripping is a fairly large number of 60 Hz AC cycles—not good!

Using a Lionel ZW-L with a CAB-1L/Base-1L Command Set is another path to conventional TMCC operation. Although the ZW-L appears to be an expensive path, its four channels of command-controlled power are all available for tracks or accessories. Considering that a PowerMaster and PowerHouse pair costs about \$150 per track, all of a sudden the operationally flexible and



responded predictably well to speed, horn, and direction commands from my CAB-1L. A favored train was my Williams Amtrak with five scale 80' aluminum cars and a pair of Genesis diesels. With the CAB-1L located over 6' from the conventional TMCC hardware sitting on my power bench, I enjoyed controlling the train as it slowly pulled into the virtual depot in front of me, stopped, and then departed through the nearby junction. What a blast! 🚂

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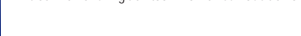
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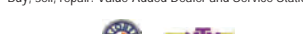
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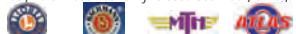
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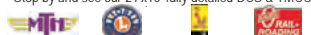
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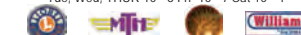
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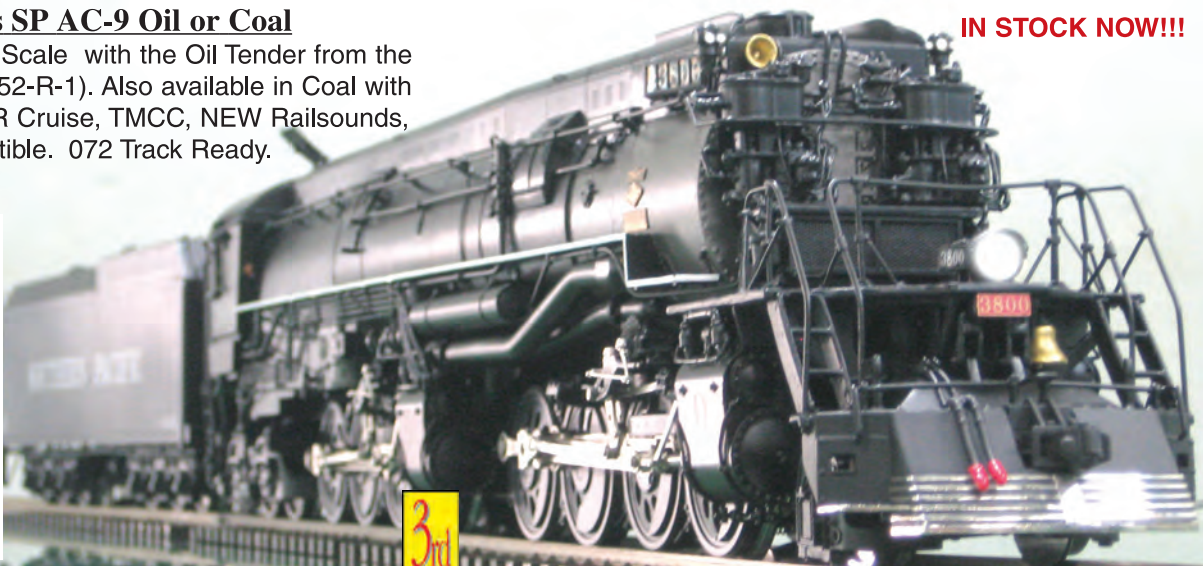
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