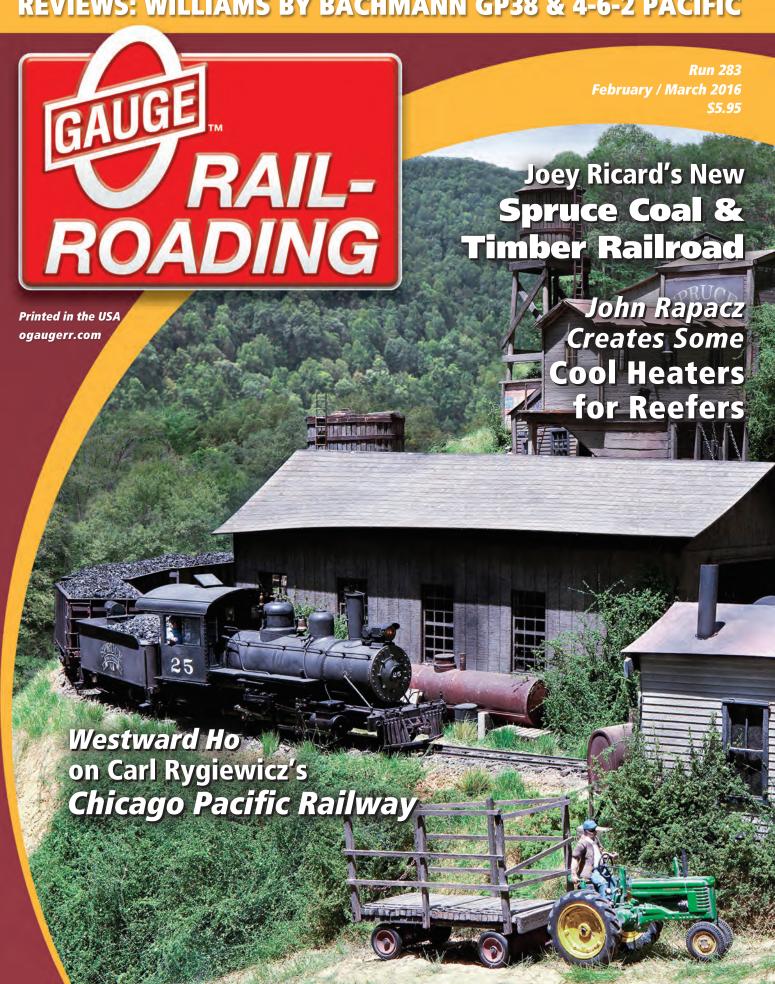
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Those of you who read our open letter published in the various magazines in the past may be skeptical of why products made in America are a better idea. While many of you know that our main competitor, Atlas, has been having little success getting track and switches from their chinese suppliers over the last year and a half (as of Feb 2015) there are other reasons as well. Here at Ross Custom we had a price increase on Jan 1st 2015, our first increase in nearly five years. I noticed that even though Atlas hasn't been available the prices in their online store keep going up and up. I thought I'd show you a comparison of regular retail prices as I write this today, of Ross Custom made in America versus Atlas made in China. Note we use switch machines made by Z-Stuff for Trains on our remotes that are made in Taiwan.

ROSS MADE IN AMERICA	ATLAS MADE IN CHINA
031 REMOTE\$89.95	036 REMOTE\$104.95
042 REMOTE\$89.95	045 REMOTE\$104.95
054 REMOTE\$89.95	054 REMOTE\$104.95
064 REMOTE\$89.95	NOT MADE
072 REMOTE\$89.95	072 REMOTE\$104.95
080 REMOTE\$94.95	NOT MADE
096 REMOTE\$99.95	NOT MADE
054/031 CURVED REMOTE\$99.95	NOT MADE
072/054 CURVED REMOTE\$89.95	072/054 CURVED REMOTE\$132.95 WOW!
096/072 CURVED REMOTE\$114.95	NOT MADE
0120/096 CURVED REMOTE\$134.95	NOT MADE
031 WYE REMOTE\$94.95	NOT MADE
042 WYE REMOTE\$94.95	NOT MADE
054 WYE REMOTE\$94.95	NOT MADE
072 WYE REMOTE\$94.95	072 REMOTE\$104.95
11 DEGREE WYE REMOTE\$94.95	NOT MADE
22 DEGREE WYE REMOTE\$94.95	NOT MADE
#4 REMOTE\$89.95	NOT MADE
#5 REMOTE\$89.95	#5 REMOTE\$129.95 WOW!
#6 REMOTE \$99.95	NOT MADE
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TRACK	NOT MADE
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036\$7.49	027\$7.95 036\$6.75
042\$7.49	045\$7.95
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	NOT MADE
092	090\$14.50 WOW!
096	099\$15.95 WOW!
0100	NOT MADE
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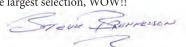




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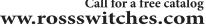


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# ON THE COVER

Old No. 25 passes the single-stall engine house in Slaty Fork on Joey Ricard's latest incarnation of his On30 Spruce Coal & Timber Railroad. Joey's new layout, like his former one, is made up of modules designed for outdoor photography and also for easy transport to shows, train meets, and various other public events.

Photo by Joey Ricard



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# **Editor's Corner**

Allan Miller



# **Starting Big**

Like many of us, Brian Mount got his start in O gauge model railroading via a train set purchased for Christmas. But in Brian's case it was not a childhood gift intended for seasonal around-thetree running. Instead, this 55-year-old owner of a crane service bought his very first O gauge set just a couple of years ago.

While driving through his Mercer, Pennsylvania, hometown on a crisp November day in 2013, Brian decided on a whim to stop at the Mercer Junction Train Shoppe in the heart of town just to see what it offered. The shop's proprietor, David Minarik, introduced Brian to the contemporary world of feature-packed O gauge trains, and Brian quickly became attracted to an MTH starter set in BNSF "pumpkin" paint scheme (orange livery remains a particular favorite of his). The die was cast, as the old saying goes, and Brian left that day with the BNSF set and a respectable amount of additional track.

Back at home well before his wife, Susan, got in from work, Brian set about constructing an extended dog bone layout on the living room floor. When Susan arrived, the first words out of her mouth were "You're not going to leave that here" (keep in mind that these words, depending on inflection, could be punctuated with either a question mark or an explanation point). Discretion being the better part of valor, Brian dismantled his fledgling carpet empire, moved everything into the garage, and promptly constructed an 8' x 16' plywood-topped and carpeted layout table for this train, two more locomotives, and additional rolling stock that would follow in the weeks prior to Christmas. There was no scenery to admire or accessories to operate, but at least Brian could run multiple trains and further explore the potential of today's O gauge railroading hobby. But the train collection kept growing... fast...and Brian's dreams of an expanded empire kept pace. And this is where the real story starts.



Brian is surrounded by the benchwork for his empire. Trains are already up and running.

First of all, it's important to understand that Brian is not what we would call an "armchair modeler." When he sets his mind to doing something, it gets done, and in very short order.

Today, less than two years after that starter set purchase and over a period of just a few short months, Brian has added a full second floor to his shop building, installed drywall and a ceiling complete with recessed LED lighting fixtures, completed initial planning, and erected the benchwork for a 24′ x 60′ rail empire. A sampling of the progress made to date can be seen in the accompanying photos.

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Bert, one of the train room's two resident cats, assists Brian in evaluating the track diagram.

Keep in mind that this could not have been accomplished in such short order without valuable assistance from Brian's ever-expanding circle of friends, including the aforementioned David Minarik who introduced him to members of the Greenville, Pennsylvania, Model Railroad Club. With input from these folks, the track plan was continually revised and fine-tuned to achieve the operational potential Brian wanted. Recently, club members show up at regular work sessions to lay track and attend to the various other activities needed to get trains up and running.

Brian envisions this being a modern freight-oriented layout with a large intermodal yard. His rapidly growing motive power roster is about 85% diesel, but Brian does not focus on a particular era—anything that suits his fancy, especially if orange is part of the paint scheme, is fair game. Track is GarGraves and switches are from Ross Custom Switches. Power is provided with MTH Z-4000 transformers, with command control handled by MTH DCS and Lionel TMCC (with Legacy to be added soon).

But we've only scratched the surface here. This column is just a brief introduction to what will most assuredly be the continuing saga of Brian Mount's involvement in the hobby. Rest assured that progress made as his empire evolves will be documented in future issues of OGR, so lessons learned by Brian can be shared for the benefit of other hobbyists. Heck, I'm hoping I'll be invited to join Brian and the crew at a good number of those regularly scheduled work sessions. Model railroading fun on a big scale!



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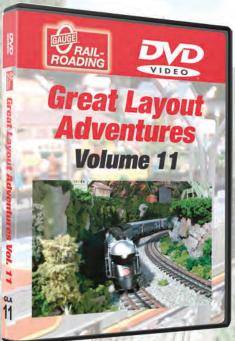








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Bob Bartizek's Pennsylvania & Western is a wonderful model of the Pennsylvania Railroad, including a 10-foot x 12-foot model of Horseshoe Curve. Bob runs his railroad just like the real thing, with helpers on the steep grades, prototypical operation lots of local switching, and several staging yards for the trains that are temporarily off stage. Bob also does three how-to segments on this DVD. He'll show you how to tune up Lionel couplers, where you can find lots of neat detail parts, and his unusual - and simple - way of staining wood.

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# **Product Showcase**



# **Iconic Memories**

For 115 years Lionel trains have captured the imagination of young and old alike, resulting in treasured memories that are passed from generation to generation. Angela Trotta Thomas, commonly known as "The Train Lady" in the toy train world, has devoted the past 25 years of her life to capturing these imaginative memories on canvas. Her recently released Painting an American Icon is a commemorative edition featuring more than 100 images that depict children of all ages with Lionel trains. The 12"x 9" hardcover book with orange cloth binding sells for \$65.00 plus \$7.00 shipping and is available from www.angelatrottathomas.com or 570-510-0082.



# **Alco Power**

This model of America's first road switcher from M.T.H. Electric Trains offers Premier line detailing at a RailKing price. The Alco RS1 diesel with Proto-Sound 3.0 (#30-20248-1) sells for \$329.95. Features include many molded-in and separately applied metal and brass details. See your local MTH dealer for this handsome New York Central locomotive.



# **Civil War Railroading**

SMR Trains announces the release of its first O scale laser-cut kit: a 28' Civil War-era arch-roof boxcar. The prototype cars were made by the thousands and used by most railroads with many lasting to the end of the century. The kit features wooden parts with numerous detail parts and extra pieces to allow dozens of variations of this car. The SMR model has operating doors and the correct early truss straps instead of the later truss rods. Sold separately are two different types of wood-beam freight car trucks in brass and two types of link and pin couplers. The kit without trucks and couplers is \$59.95. SMR also offers ready-to-run editions of these cars. Visit www.smrtrains.com.



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Williams by Bachmann is offering 55-ton outside-braced hoppers in four new road names including New York Central Big Four, Nickel Plate, Burlington, and Waddell Coal. Features include 9" long, 3-1/4" high, durable ABS plastic shell, die-cast trucks, metal wheels, operating couplers, prototypical graphics, and removable coal load. These cars will navigate O27 curves. MSRP per car is \$76.95. See these cars and the full Williams by Bachmann product line at www.bachmanntrains.com.





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# **Explore Lionel History**

Robert Osterhoff's trainpaper.com has two new DVDs available for those interested in the history and operations of Lionel. Lionel Postwar Dealer Paper, Volume VII DVD includes images of Lionel dealer price



lists, parts lists, service station tools documentation, and miscellaneous paper. Also included are the 5F Test Set manual, service station instruction manuals, and the electronic control service manual. This DVD contains fascinating and useful reference information in more than 850 pages. Cost is \$20.00 plus \$2.50 shipping. The Lionel Engineering Standards DVD includes rare postwar manuals from Lionel's Hillside, New Jersey, factory engineering department with over 675 pages of detailed parts blueprint drawings and a rare page on the secret formula for Lionel SP smoke pellets. Price is \$40.00 plus \$2.50 shipping. Order from Bob Osterhoff at www.trainpaper.com, or call 636-458-3659.

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L81811	Polar Express N5b Caboose (O Scale)	68.95
L82049	Christmas Log Dump Car	46.95
L82053	North Pole Central Ice Car	53.95
L82498	Polar Express "Letters to Santa" Mail Car	50.95
L82512	Polar Express Work Caboose w/Presents	61.95
L82514	Polar Express Reindeer Stockcar (O Scale)	64.95
L82691	2015 Christmas Boxcar	53.95
L82693	North Pole Central Santa's Helpers Crane	61.95
L82699	Angela Trotta 2015 Christmas Boxcar	53.95
L82709	Pennsylvania "Silver & Gold" Ore Car 2-Pack	93.95
L82710	Pennsylvania Ice Breaker Tunnel Car	46.95
L82711	"Santa's Favorites" Transparent Gift Car	61.95
L82737	Coca-Cola Santa Boxcar	61.95
L82741	Christmas Tinsel Vat Car	50.95
L82742	Candy Mountain Christmas Quad Hopper	46.95

	CHRISTMAS ROLLING STOCK (Continued)				
L82748 Silver Bell Casting Co. Hopper					
L82877	Kinkade/Polar Express Boxcar (Made in USA)	61.95			
L25947	North Pole Express Jack Frost Reefer	30.95			
L25962	Thanksgiving Poultry Car	50.95			
L25963	A Christmas Story 30th Anniversary Boxcar	46.95			
L26481	Boy Scouts of America Christmas Gondola	46.95			
L29633 Christmas Ornament Lighted Mint Car Ltd Qty					
L29697	North Pole Express Santa's Submarine Flatcar	50.95			
L29698	Tree Topper Star Transport Car	57.95			
L29699	Silver and Gold Christmas Mint Car SALE	44.95			
L36170	Partridge in a Pear Tree Reefer Ltd Qty	33.95			
L39364	2013 Lionel O Gauge Christmas Boxcar	43.95			
L39398	Santa's Flyer Reefer	30.95			
L81373	Candy Cane Flatcar w/Bulkheads	43.95			
L81990	Christmas Gondola with Reindeer Feed Vats	46.95			
L82001	Merry & Bright Hot Cocoa Car	50.95			

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AE47000 Ed. Hood Budalia	00000

AF47922	Erie #3360 Berkshire Quantities	309.95
	Southern #2/16 Berkshire	309.95
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AF42564	Reading Dockside Switcher (C)	79.95
AF42566	American Flyer Lines Dockside (C)	79.95
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AF48165	M&STL Baldwin Switcher (C)	244.95
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AF49844	Christmas Animated Billboard	Ltd Qty	34.95
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29366	S.P. Tank Train Oil Can Set	699.95 38497	S.P. DD35A #9914 Dummy	439.95 204131	B.N. GP-30 Diesel w/PS 3	449.95
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# Readers' Rails

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

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

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



# **Working the Late Shift**

It is one o'clock in the morning, and the night shift crew is welding a broken pantograph for a Bipolar E-3 before its 6:00 a.m. departure at the head of the Morning Hiawatha. Switcher #1483 patiently waits to pull the big electric motor from the non-electrified siding. The E-3 will make the run on time thanks to the hard work of this dedicated crew. This scene was on Don McCuaig's former Milwaukee Road 3-rail layout in California, featured in Run 248 (February 2011). Don is hard at work on a new layout at his home on Maui.

# **Generation Gap**

Late-era Great Northern steam is seen passing under first-generation **Burlington diesel power on Robert** Lang's multilevel 3-rail layout. We look forward to presenting more examples of Robert's modeling prowess in future issues.



# mi: 171104

# Sky High

The windows on a new high-rise structure on Alan Arnold's layout mirror the surrounding buildings in his extensive cityscape. In addition to being OGR's Ad Manager, Alan is also a creative 3-railer with a special interest in modeling city scenes.



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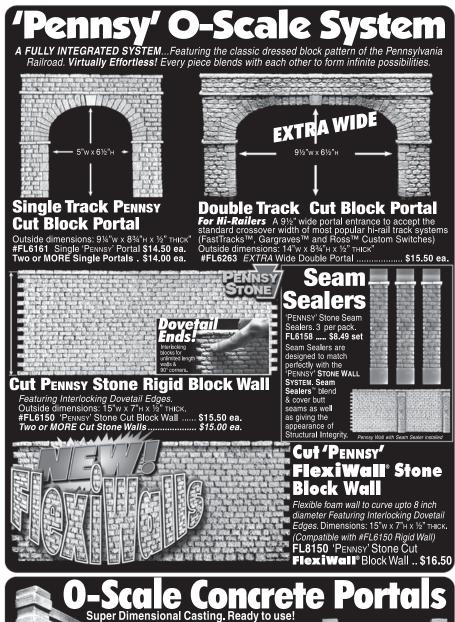
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34683	VISION LINE PRR Centipede 'AA' 1495.00		Santa'a Reserve Cocoa Tank Car	30-1180-1 Pennsylvania Camelback w/Proto 2.0295.00	20-2067-3 Northern Pacific F-3 Powered 'B'
34704	Pennsylvania Sharknose Powered B149.95	B1373		30-1254-1 Lackwanna 0-8-0 w/Proto 2.0 (LN) 295.00	20-2238-1 New Haven FA-2 ABA's wP-2.0
34705	Pennsylvania Sharknose Non-Pwd B89.95	81494	Senta's Sleigh Rocket Fuel Tank Car	30-1257-1 Union Army 4-4-0 General w/2.0205.00	20-2240-1 Great Northern FA-2 ABA's w/P-2.0
38562	D&H Sharknose Non-Powerd B-unit89.95	82002 82049	Old St. Nick Operating Billboard	30-1277-1 Baltimore & Ohio Camelback w/2.0 275.00 30-1323-1 Boston & Albany 4-6-4 Hudson w/2.0 225.00	20-2292-1 D&H Sharknose 'AB' w/2 0 (operated)
38566 38567	B&O Sharknose LEGACY Powered B 149.95 B&O Sharknose Non-Powered B-unit89.95	82050	TMCC Santa Workshop Sawmill w/Sounds 171.95	30-1331-1 Chessie Mohawk 4-8-4 w/2.0 (LN)275.00	20-2302-1 PRR HP Transfer Diesel w/Proto 2.0 395 00
38572	NYC Sharknose Non-Powered B-unit89.95	82051	North Pole Central long Station (P-n-P) 107.95	30-1384-1 Southern Imperical 0-6-0 w/2.0 (LN)275.00	20-2305-1 Great Northern E-8 ABA's w/P-2,0
38573	/76 S.P. Sharks LEGACY AA w/Pwd B499.95	82053	North Pole Central Ice Car 53.95	30-1470-1 Northern Paofic 0-8-0 wP 2.0 295.00	20-2306-1 S.P. F-3 ABA's w/Proto 2.0 (used) 425.00
38573	/77 S.P. Sharks LEGACY AA w/B-unit449.95	82545	Christmas Docksider Lionchief Set242.95	30-2244-183 PRR Aloo PA 'ABA's w/Proto 2.0,295.00	20-2430-1 Southern Pacific Dash-9 w/P-2.0
38576	S.P. Sharks LEGACY Powered B-unit149.95	B2691	2015 Christmas Boxcar 53.95	30-2251-1 Union Pacific RS-27 w/Proto 2.0	20-2444-1 Northern Pacific FT ABA's w/2.0
38577	S.P. Sharknose Non-Powered B-unit89.95	82693	Santa's Helpers Crane	30-2272-0 C&O E-8 'AA' w/Looo5ounds195.00	20-2568-1 Illinois Central SO40-2 w/P-2.0
38573	176/77 S.P. Sharknose LEGACY ABBA's .584.95	B2699	Angela Trotta 2015 Christmas Boxcar 53.95	30-2302-1 Reading C628 Diesel w/Proto 2.0	20-2747-1 Western Pacific FT ABA's w/P-2.0495.00
38760	Jersey Central LEGACY F-3 Power B 149.95	82709	Pennsylvania Silver & Gold Ore Car 2-Pk 92.95	30-2322-1 B&O SD-9 Diesel w/ProtoSound 2.0225 00	20-2747-3 Western Pacific FT B-unit
38761 38762	Jersey Central Scale F-3 Non-Pwd 'B'99.95	82710 82711	Pennsylvania foe Breaker Tunnel Car	30-2428-1 Illinois Central GP-9 w/Prote 2.0	20-3043-1 Penna. T-1.4-4-4 w/Proto 1 (new)
38763	C&NW LEGACY F-7 Powered 8-unit149.95 C&NW F-7 Scale Non-Powered '8'99.95	B2713		30-2647-3 Lackawanna MU 2-Car Non-Pwd145.00	20-3073-1 Santa Fe Light Mikado w/2.0 (used)495.00
38219	Texas Special MKT FT B-unit Non-Pwd49.95	82736	North Pole Central Water Tower	30-2775-1 Illinois Central F-3 ABA's W/Proto 2.0350.00	20-3094-1 Santa Fe 2-8-8-2 Y3 w/2.0 (used)
38860	Pioneer Zephyr LEGACY Pass. Set499.95	82737	Coca-Cola Santa Boxcar 50.95	30-2938-1 Amtrak MP-15DC Diesel w/Proto 2.0249.95	20-3105-1 NYC Empire State Hudson 2.0 (used) 695.00
38981	or 38982 B&O GP-35's274.95	82740	Winter Wonderland Xmas Aquarium Car 87.95	30-2944-1 (Vabash F-3 ABA's w/ProtoSnd 2.0 (LN), 325.00	20-3116-1 VA Allegheny (TR, Display, OB-worn), 895.00
38985	Cheseapeake & Ohio GP-5274.95	B2741	Christmas Tinsel Vat Car	30-5124-1 New Haven E33 Rectifier w/3.0 SALE!! 249.95	20-3118-1 Erie 0-8-8-0 Steam w/2.0 (OB/worn)995.00
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	Hero Boy's Home 60.95		Silver Bell Casting Co. Hopper	10-1070#116 Passenger Station Red/Cream235,00	20-20167-1 U.P. Vernada Turbine Frt Set w/3,0 899,95
	Polar Express "Letters to Santa" Mail Car 49.95		LIONEL STANDARD GAUGE	10-1139-1 Black #4694 Loco Contempory	20-65223/66223 Milw. Road 70' St. 7-Car SetSALE/399.95
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34664 6	Great Northern GP-9399.95	18128	/29 Santa Fe F-3 'AB'	16291 1998 -or- 26243 1999 Christmas Boxcar 30.00	11463 S.P. Cab-Forward AC-12 #42911224.95
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# **Product Reviews**



# **Williams by Bachmann** Semi-Scale 4-6-2 Pacific

Review and Photos by George Brown

 ${f P}$ eriodically a model locomotive arrives for review that instantly grabs not only my attention but also my admiration. The Williams by Bachmann (WbB) semi-scale 4-6-2 Pacific decorated in the green with gold stripes of the Southern Railway is one of those admirable locomotives. It's a well thought out, modest-cost model expertly finished in an attractive livery that is as pleasing to look at on my desk as it is fun to run.

By the term semi-scale, the model of the 4-6-2 is smaller than 1:48 scale in what I call traditional size. O gauge trains made by the Lionel Corporation after WWII and during the MPC era are the benchmark for this traditional size. To see how the 4-6-2 compared to another traditionally sized locomotive, I placed the WbB Pacific and my postwar Lionel 2046, a die-cast O27 Hudson with a plastic-bodied 4-axle tender, side by side on identical sections of track. The two locomotives were visually compatible with each other except that the new WbB Pacific was much more realistically proportioned and detailed than the Hudson. To get ahead of myself for a moment, the Pacific ran a whole lot better than the Hudson, too.

Not only is the Pacific new to the WbB product line, it is also the first O gauge steam locomotive in that line that produces steam sounds from the True Blast Plus sound electronics. Three other road names offered in this release of the 4-6-2 include the New York Central, Santa Fe, and Wabash. After I studied photos and specifications for the Southern Railway Class Ps4 locomotives, the WbB model proved to be remarkably similar to the real #1409. So let's take a quick look at the real one.



# **Prototype Notes**

Based on the USRA design for heavy Pacifics, Southern Railway Ps4s were built with 73" drivers instead of the 79" size specified by the USRA. With the 73" drivers, the ridged wheelbase and boiler are shorter than those on the USRA heavy Pacific. Mainly the smaller drivers gave the Ps4s the ability to pull passenger trains of 10 to 14 heavyweight cars over the moderate grades of the Southern Railway's route profile. On flat stretches of track, a Ps4 could attain 80 mph.

Although most of Southern Railway Ps4 locomotives were built by Alco in 1923 and 1925, the last five, #1405–#1409, rolled off Baldwin's erecting floor in 1928. Engine #1409 was unique in that instead of the external Worthington or Elesco water heaters of the previous members of the Southern Ps4 class, a Coffin water heater was implemented inside the engine's extended smokebox. Tenders for these last Ps4s rode on 4-wheel trucks and carried 12,000 gallons of water along with over 16 tons of coal.

The handsome color scheme of the Southern Ps4s was credited to the president of the railroad in 1925, Fairfax Harrison, who was impressed with greenpainted locomotives in service at that time in the United Kingdom.

On the Southern Railway, the Ps4 Pacifics were the last of the road's 4-6-2s to be built and were assigned to the road's name trains, such as the Crescent Limited, Piedmont Limited, Birmingham Special, and others. These locomotives also had a rather short service life of less than 25 years because of the railroad's rapid shift to diesel power in the 1940s. By 1948, the Ps4 steamers were mostly parked and ultimately scrapped. Only Southern #1401 survives today and is on display in the Smithsonian Institute, resplendent in the road's colorful livery.

# **Construction and Features**

For a moderate-cost and traditionally sized model of a steam locomotive, the WbB 4-6-2 has a number of features and details that normally appear on more expensive 1:48 scale models. See the sidebar for a listing.

In keeping with the usual architecture for 3-rail O gauge steam locomotives, the die-cast boiler with its separately cast cab sits on a die-cast frame. The boiler backhead has several cast-in details including the butterfly doors that are open to show the red glow emanating from inside the virtual firebox. I was particularly pleased with the bulkhead at the back of the cab, which is often missing on moderate-cost,





traditionally sized steam locomotives. Additionally, the boiler casting is realistically round in the area between the walkways and the frame.

Three Phillips head screws hold the boiler to the frame. Inside the easily removed boiler are the smoke unit components and the motor that is surprisingly large given the size of the engine. The worm and drive gear are exposed making for easy but judicious lubrication. Applying too much grease to the worm could make for a gooey mess with the excess grease thrown about the inside of the boiler casting.

At the driver axles, the frame is actually two pieces: the frame and a cast removable cap that holds the three driver wheelsets and their axle bushings in place. Should any of the driver wheelsets need replacement, such as the rear driver with the drive gear, all that's needed is a screwdriver and about an hour's time. Yes, the job does entail a complete teardown of the engine, but no special tools like a wheel puller, hobby press, and wheel cups are necessary.

Two center-rail pickup rollers are mounted on the frame between the first and third drivers. Both the see-through

# **WbB Semi-Scale 4-6-2 Pacific Features and Details**

- · DC can motor with flywheel
- · Smoke unit
- ·True Blast Plus 16-bit polyphonic sound system with:

Whistle

Steam exhaust chuff

Idle steam sounds

- · Opening smokebox front
- · Constant brightness lighting
- · Swinging brass-colored bell
- · Separate and illuminated green classification lamps
- · See-through spoke drivers
- · Full valve gear
- · Traction tires
- · Wire handrails and pipes
- · Separate dynamo, whistle, and pop-off valves
- · Separate air pumps and water injectors
- · Wire and chain coupler cut lever
- · Opening cab roof vent
- · Illuminated cab
- · Firebox glow
- · Painted figures of crew
- · Directional backup light on tender
- · Die-cast operating rear coupler

boiler tube style of pilot and the cylinder saddle with its prototypically polished cylinder heads are separate castings. Underneath the firebox is a Hodges style of trailing truck, which is prototypically correct for the Ps4s built by Baldwin.

In what I feel is another concession to cost and over-the-counter price, the smoke unit is little more than a basic heater with the smoke exiting the stack by convention. It is definitely not a prodigious producer, but I found the whispy smoke trail from the engine's stack rather cute and nostalgic. A slide switch on the frame underneath the right side of the cab sets the smoke unit to on or off.





The tender is a molded plastic body with the coal load and other details molded in. I was surprised to see that the tender frame was also molded plastic with some of the brake system hardware molded in. Inside the tender are the 6-amp capacity electronic reverse unit and lockout switch, True Blast Plus sound generator board, and speaker. A six-wire cable with an in-line connector arrangement electrically

connects the electronics in the tender to the electrical equipment in the engine. As a note of caution, the socket connector on the cable has a small plastic latch that locks it to the pin connector located at the back of the engine. This latch has to be disengaged before attempting to disconnect the cable from the engine.

Each of the cast tender trucks has separate springs, but they are nonfunctional.











A center-rail pickup roller is also on each truck to carry electrical power to the electronics inside the tender. Of course, the oversized tinplate operating coupler is rigidly mounted to the rear truck. Hanging beside the coupler is a plastic rendition of the air hose to the train.

As is becoming an expected feature on today's O gauge locomotives from the Orient, the colorful paint, graphics, and lettering on our Southern 4-6-2 are superb. As to the thin gold striping on the cylinders, cab, and tender and the Southern Railway logo on the cab, they are fabulous!

### At Trackside

As I expected because the 4-6-2 is a WbB locomotive, it started moving forward rather briskly at power-up. Toggling the direction button on my transformer put the engine in neutral with a second toggle initiating the reverse direction. Repeating these actions put the engine through neutral again and then into the forward direction.

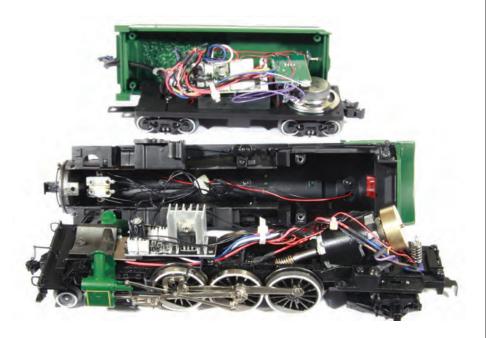
With the engine in motion in forward or reverse, the synthesized sound of the steam exhaust occurred approximately once for each driver revolution. In neutral, the characteristic hiss of steam and the random repeating pulsation of the air pump are prominent. No power-backup battery is employed in the True Blast Plus sound system, so while the track power is interrupted for direction change, the sound system goes silent.

In motion, the 4-6-2 proved to be a smooth runner, and I suspect that if the sound system could be muted, there would be little of any mechanical noise other than the whir of the wheels on the rails. Without a load on its drawbar, the engine ran rather fast at the minimum throttle and track voltage from my ZW. Coupling our standard traditionally sized passenger train to the tender slowed the colorful Pacific to a more realistic speed.

On the topic of the standard passenger train for testing the 4-6-2, the Williams 60' Madison cars, which are reproductions of postwar Lionel Madisons, are a nice visual fit, especially when traveling on the O72 loop of the editorial Carpet Central Railroad. The Pacific negotiated the O72 crossovers between my outer loop and the inner O54 mainline loop without a stumble or hesitation at minimum track voltage and speed. Although the 60' Madison cars appeared to be a little too long for my temporary loop of O36 track, the engine did well. On wide curves or tight ones down to O31, the Pacific is on its game.

# At the End of the Run

At the head of a traditional size heavyweight or streamline passenger consist, the WbB 4-6-2 could be at home on any layout, large or small. To be candid, I was impressed with the model in its Southern Railway livery. In an Internet search for prices, I found quotes in the \$360 range from several train dealers. Bottom line—I liked it!



#40802 Southern Semi-Scale 4-6-2

Retail price: \$599.95 at Bachmann dealers

Bachmann Industries; www.bachmanntrains.com

# Williams by Bachmann 4-6-2 Conventional Performance

(smoke unit: off; sound: on)

Length: 19-3/4" over couplers

19" pilot to tender sill

Distance Between Locomotive Pickup Rollers: 2-1/2"

Distance Between Tender Pickup Rollers: 3-1/4"

Weight on Driving Wheels: 4 lbs, 14 oz

Tender Weight: 1 lb, 3 oz

Power Consumption at Idle: 0.7 A, 5.6 W, @ 7 VAC

Tractive Effort: 2 lbs, 6 oz @ 10.3 VAC, 4.08 A, 42 W

**Minimum Sustained Speed:** 18 scale mph @ 6.2 VAC, 1.4 A, 8.7 W **Maximum Tested Speed:** 60 scale mph @ 10.4 VAC, 1.6 A, 16.6 W

Minimum 3-Rail Curve: 031

Power Transformer: Lionel ZW

Control System: Transformer-controlled conventional operation

Test Train

Five-car passenger; train weight, 6 lbs; pull to move train, 7 oz;

traditionally sized Madison cars from Williams

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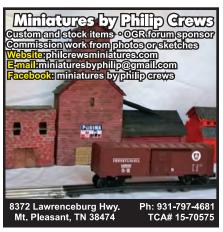
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# **Arriving Track**

# **CODE 215 3-RAIL TRACK**

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6043 0-27 FULL CURVE (8 PCS. TO CIRCLE) 6062 0-72 FULL CURVE (16 PCS. TO CIRCLE)

6066 0-36 FULL CURVE (12 PCS. TO CIRCLE)

6072 0-72 REMOTE WYE CUSTOM SUPREME SWITCH - LEFT 6073 0-72 REMOTE WYE CUSTOM SUPREME SWITCH - RIGHT

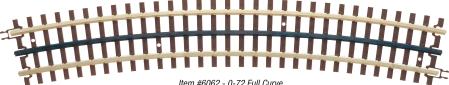
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6092 BLACK RAIL JOINERS (16 PCS./BLISTER) 6093 INSULATED RAIL JOINERS (16 PCS./BLISTER)

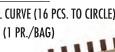


7014 49.5" RADIUS FULL CURVE (16 PCS. TO CIRCLE) 7090 TERMINAL JOINERS (1 PR./BAG)











Item #7090 - Terminal Joiners (1 pair)



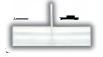


Item #7014 - 49.5" Radius Full Curve

Item #6040 - Bumper (2 pcs. - track not included)



Item #6092 - Black Rail Joiners (16 pcs.)



Item #6093 - Insulated Rail Joiners (16 pcs.)



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# **Williams by Bachmann EMD GP38**



 ${f S}$ everal years ago on these pages, I reviewed a Williams by Bachmann GP38 decorated in the colorful red and white livery of the GM&O. Today, the simple and sturdy model of the EMD GP38, which many O gauge railroaders have enjoyed for years in a variety of road names, is still being manufactured. Road names in the most recent release of the GP38 are Canadian National, CSX, and Union Pacific in addition to the ever-popular Santa Fe



featured in this review. This edition of the Williams by Bachmann (WbB) GP38 has subtle improvements over the earlier models such as the white paint on the grab portion of the handrails on our evaluation sample. And then there's the major advancement in the form of prime mover sounds from WbB's signature True Blast Plus 16-bit polyphonic sound system, which is just about as simple as the rest of the locomotive.

# **Prototype Notes**

Between 1966 and 1986, EMD delivered over 2,900 of its 2000-hp GP38 series of four-axle road switchers to the rail transportation industry. This series included the original GP38 and the improved GP38-2, which featured a new modular electrical system, improved cooling system, and other changes for reliable operation.

Most of the changes between the original and the dash-2 versions of the GP38s were internal with few external clues to differentiate the two. Those subtle visual differences included a sight glass in one of the access doors on the right side of the body under the radiator grille, which made for easy visual checking of the coolant level. Other visual indications of the dash-2 variant are the single-panel radiator grilles on each side of the body and the bolted battery box cover located under the right-side walkway just ahead of the cab. The original GP38 had no coolant-level sight glass, two short radiator grilles on each side, nor a hinged battery box cover.

Both the original and dash-2 versions were powered by the then-new nonturbocharged 2-stroke V-16 model 645 prime mover. EMD locomotives prior to the GP38 series used the venerable but power-limited 567 prime mover that dated back to the original 1350-hp FT carbody diesels of 1939. The WbB model represents a GP38-2.

For your next round of EMD trivia pursuit, locomotives with two or four small exhaust stacks are powered by the so-called normally aspirated diesel engines. These engines were actually equipped with a Roots type of gear-driven supercharger in their induction system. Those early EMD prime movers that expelled their exhaust gases through a large single stack were turbocharged for greater power output from same-displacement diesel engines. Additionally, the prime mover model numbers of 567 and 645 reflect the cubic inch displacement of each cylinder, regardless of the number of cylinders in the engine.

Stay with me for a brief road-hopping history of the real Santa Fe #2372—it's a ride and a half. The prototype for our model of Santa Fe #2372 was built in June 1977 for the Toledo, Peoria, & Western Railway as the road's #2003. The Santa Fe acquired the Geep as part of its merger with the TP&W in 1983 and initially assigned #3563 to it. In 1985, the #3563 was renumbered to #2372 and repainted to the SPSF Kodachrome color scheme in anticipation of the merger between the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific, which ultimately failed. In 1990, #2372 was again repainted, this time in the Santa Fe's second-generation blue and yellow freight scheme, which is also the paint scheme on the WbB model. Two years later in 1992, the Geep was sold to locomotive and railcar leasing company GATX where it retained its #2372 cab number. From GATX, our road-hopping Geep then went to the Kansas City Southern as #4031 where it was later renumbered to #2034. The locomotive remains in service today, or at least at this writing in early fall 2015. Several photos taken in August 2015 and displayed on the Internet show KCS #2034 at work and wearing the road's distinctive Southern Belle livery.

# **Construction and Features**

In my past reviews of locomotives from WbB, I've extolled the simple and sturdy construction of these models, and the 1:48 scale-sized GP38 is certainly no exception. One of the principal attributes of WbB road switchers, including the GP38, is the







# **Williams by Bachmann GP38 Features and Details**

- · Dual DC can motors with flywheels
- · Die-cast truck blocks with bronze axle bushings
- · Metal drive gears
- · Die-cast truck side frames, pilots, and fuel tank
- · 6-amp electronic reverse unit with direction lockout
- · True Blast Plus 16-bit digital sound of the

EMD prime mover

Horn

Bell

- · Glazed windows
- · Separate horns
- · Die-cast thumbtack-style operating couplers
- · Four traction tires
- · Spare traction tires and light bulb
- · Operation, maintenance, and parts documentation

inherent resistance to major physical damage from accidents, inattentive handling, or careless storage.

The locomotive's one-piece body is thick ABS plastic with almost all of the details molded into it. These details include the cooling grilles, grab irons, number board frames, latches and hinges on the crew entry and maintenance access doors, and even the fan blades inside the fan housings. Separate components are the molded plastic five-chime horn, red marker lenses, and clear plastic window insert. On the window insert, which fits inside the cab, crisp ridges are molded in and precisely painted to represent window frames on each side of the cab.

Inside the body a motor is mounted on each truck and drives both axles through a metal gear train. On each truck, the wheelset closest to the fuel tank has two rubber tires for improved traction. Mounted between the dual motors are electronic printed circuit boards for the reverse and sound units plus the speaker. A slide switch accessible from underneath the locomotive selects either full operation of the reverse unit or locks it into a specific direction. I'm reasonably sure that as a concession to production



cost and thereby retail price, no external provision exists for controlling the sound volume. Although I frequently enjoy realistic sounds of working diesel or steam locomotives regardless of the manufacturer, after a while they tend to get...uh, let's call it bothersome, at which time I like to either lower or mute them.

As with all WbB locomotives, the reverse unit converts the AC track power to DC for the motors and powers up in forward with the operating sequence of forward, neutral, reverse, neutral, forward. For the headlights, a bayonet type of incandescent light bulb is at each end of the frame and is powered by the track

Four easily accessed self-tapping screws hold the body to the .055" thick, single-piece stamped steel frame. All the handrails are part of the frame stamping and are formed up 90 degrees to the base. The frame and handrails certainly don't present themselves as prototypically accurate, but then I have always viewed WbB diesel locomotives as built for strength, simplicity, and moderate cost, not scale fidelity.

A single screw holds the motor to the monolithic truck block, so periodic servicing of the worm and gear with a light grease is an easy project. Of course, the bronze bushings for the axles and the center-rail pickup rollers are easily lubricated with a pinpoint oiler. As a side note, I like Permatex White Lithium Grease #WL-9 for the gears, Labelle #107 for the axles, and Labelle #108 for the roller pins.

Both the satin-finish paint and the crisp decoration on our evaluation sample were excellent. Upon close inspection, I could not find any voids, orange peel, or overspray, nor did I detect any detail-muting buildup of the paint. I especially liked the blue painted walkways and underside of the Geep's frame, which made the model much more realistic. I have a pair of Williams 1997-vintage Santa Fe U33Cs that have all-yellow frames. The visual difference between the new GP38 with its blue and yellow frame and these voting-age U33Cs is dramatic.



# **At Trackside**

The big question is how did our evaluation GP38 stack up against the several WbB and Williams locomotives I own in addition to those I've reviewed previously? In a word and if I may imitate Kellogg's Tony the Tiger-grrreat! At the initial power-up on the editorial Carpet Central Railroad with a reasonably heavy freight train coupled to it, the Geep started the sounds of the EMD prime mover and moved forward as smoothly as any of my well broken-in WbB or Williams diesels. As I've mentioned in my previous reviews of WbB diesels, the new True Blast Plus sound system produced the prototypically correct eight synthesized "rev" levels that are identifiable as from an early EMD prime mover. Plus the system generated rather neat sounds of a multi-chime horn and a bell. Advancing the throttle lever on my ZW not only made the engine go faster, but it also automatically increased the revs at voltage levels predetermined within the sound system. Conversely, retarding the throttle decreased the rev levels. Both the horn and bell responded reliably to my pressing the respective button on the transformer.

Unless the Geep is loaded really heavily, it could likely go fast enough to leave the rails in a curve before the sound system gets much past the so-called run 4 or 5 of the rev levels—the 4th or 5th step. Yes, the GP38 is geared quite tall and is thereby a confirmed speed merchant, as are most WbB and Williams diesels. Plus, considering its moderate weight, our model of Santa Fe #2372 proved to be a competent puller. It's no "streetcar" in that the Geep is not only fast but also has some muscle.

Because the incandescent lighting is track-powered, it's fairly dim at low voltage and gets brighter as the track voltage is increased. Additionally, the headlights at both ends of the locomotive are illuminated whenever there is power on the track.

As to the GP38's overall physical size, I coupled it to a dummy Atlas O scale GP60B in a multiunit lashup. The two units coordinated with each other amazingly well. In fact, the Santa Fe duo was a visual delight pulling its train on one track alongside a pair of 1:48 scale Santa Fe SD40s that were working on the adjacent track. On the CCRR's Atlas O54 and O72 curves and turnouts, the GP38 was truly a handsome locomotive at the point of a late 20th-century freight train, or even a contemporary one of the 21st century. It also looked and ran good on a temporary loop of O36 curves and turnouts. According to details displayed on the Bachmann website, the GP38 model will negotiate curves down to O27.

# At the End of the Run

For the O gauge railroader who likes to run conventionally controlled locomotives that are technically simple in addition to being physically rugged, the GP38 from Williams by Bachmann is hard to beat. A search on the Internet showed prices in the range of \$260-\$320 advertised by several model train dealers.

# **Williams by Bachmann GP38 Performance**

(sound: on)

Length: 15-1/2" over couplers

14-1/2" between end sills

Distance Between Pickup Rollers: 7-3/4" Weight on Driving Wheels: 4 lbs, 9 oz

Tractive Effort:

1 lb, 14 oz @ 9.0 VAC, 4.4 A, 39.6 W

**Minimum Sustained Speed:** 

16 scale mph @ 6.3 VAC, 1.1 A, 6.9 W

**Maximum Tested Speed:** 

60 scale mph @ 10.9 VAC, 2.6 A, 28.3 W

Minimum 3-Rail Curve: 027 Power Transformer: Lionel ZW-L

Control System: Transformer-controlled

conventional operation

### Test Train

15-car mixed freight; train weight 13 lbs; pull to move train 7 oz; recent-production 0 scale cars from various manufacturers

21225 Santa Fe GP38 #2372

Suggested retail price: \$419.95 at Williams by Bachmann dealers

Bachmann Trains; www.bachmanntrains.com







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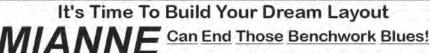
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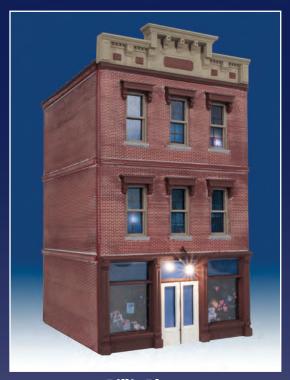
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Genesis w. Sound	\$229.00
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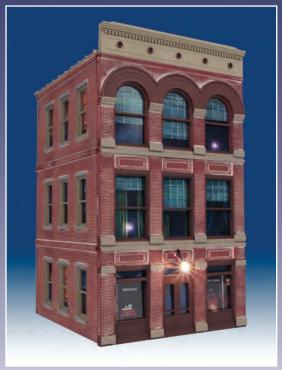
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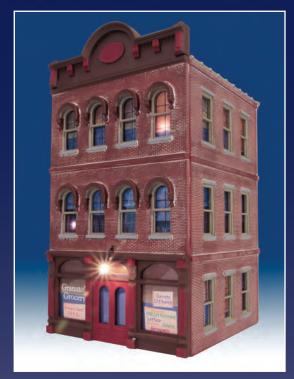
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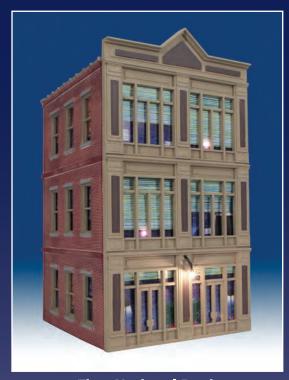


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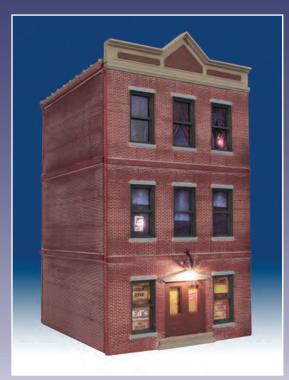


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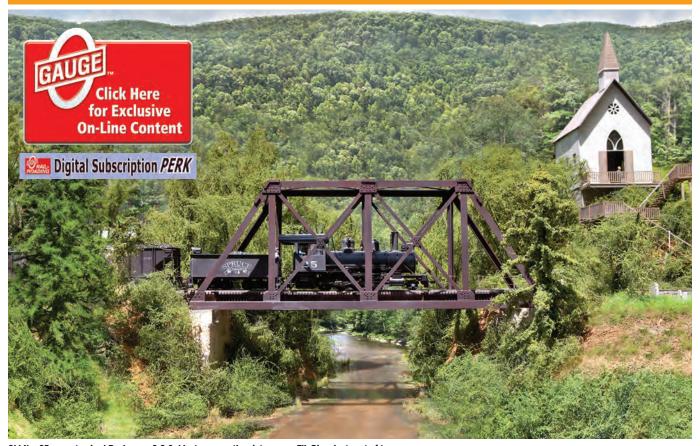






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### Old-time Appalachian railroading



Old No. 25, a customized Bachmann 2-8-0, blasts across the picturesque Elk River just east of town.

# The New Spruce Coal & Timber Railroad

Article, Diagrams, and Photos by Joey Ricard

**A**lthough it can be a great achievement to complete a layout, I feel that it serves no purpose if it cannot be shared with others. That very philosophy produced the vision that enabled me to create the current rendition of the Spruce Coal & Timber Railroad (SC&T) in On30 gauge.

Unlike the original layout (Run 269, February/March 2014), my new layout was designed for larger locomotives and

rolling stock with even more emphasis placed on scenery and construction for a wider range of scenic elements. Both the original and new layout were set in Appalachian West Virginia and portray the years between 1901-1960 with no set date, time, or specific season other than the warmer months. The side-byside specifications sidebars highlight the major construction differences between the two layouts.

#### **Techniques and Concepts**

My techniques and concepts are nothing new in the hobby, and many of them were, in fact, identical to those used on the earlier layout. All are the result of the hard work and tried-and-true techniques used by those dedicated hobbyists who came before me. Their experience has allowed me to utilize and expand upon their ideas to come up with my new layout.

The biggest challenge in the design and construction of the new layout was to incorporate all that I wanted in a given space that would still allow the layout to be portable. Although I have ample space in my workshop, a more important consideration relates to the space available in the trailer that is used to transport the layout to shows, meets, and other events. Layout scenes were planned accordingly and constructed to fit on separate cart-type sectional modules. Each module contains a specifically modeled scene, and all of them blend together with a natural appearance when joined to showcase the full layout.

#### **Benchwork**

My new layout encompasses four separate modules, each measuring 60" wide by 30" deep and intended to be viewed from the front and each side (Diagram 1). It is usually placed against a wall and is designed so the back area can accommodate the addition of two more modules for future expansion. The back features two bridge sections that complete the loop out of the sight of viewers. Each module consists of a frame base that sits on a wooden cart with wheels for easy transport. The previous layout was designed this way and worked very well.

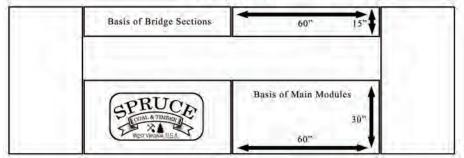
The height of the layout at the rails is about 55" above the floor, which is slightly higher than the previous layout. When the modules are placed together during setup, I use large wooden dowels to initially align them together. After both track and scenery are aligned, bolts with wingnuts securely fasten the modules together with a seamless effect.

#### **Scenery and Structures**

More than a dozen mini scenes are tied together in a series of dioramas, but when viewed from a distance, they come together for an overall theme of the layout. Each scene was designed to be viewed or photographed separately. If framed carefully, such scenes can be photographed individually and not include the others.

Realistic, scale-proportioned backdrops work directly with the foreground scenery to give the effect of life beyond the scenes. Interactive elements in my Trackside Scenery backdrops create roads and streams that actually seem to go somewhere.

#### Module System



Front

Diagram 1



Postmaster Melvin Richards takes a coffee break during a lull in the daily action at the Slaty Fork Post Office.



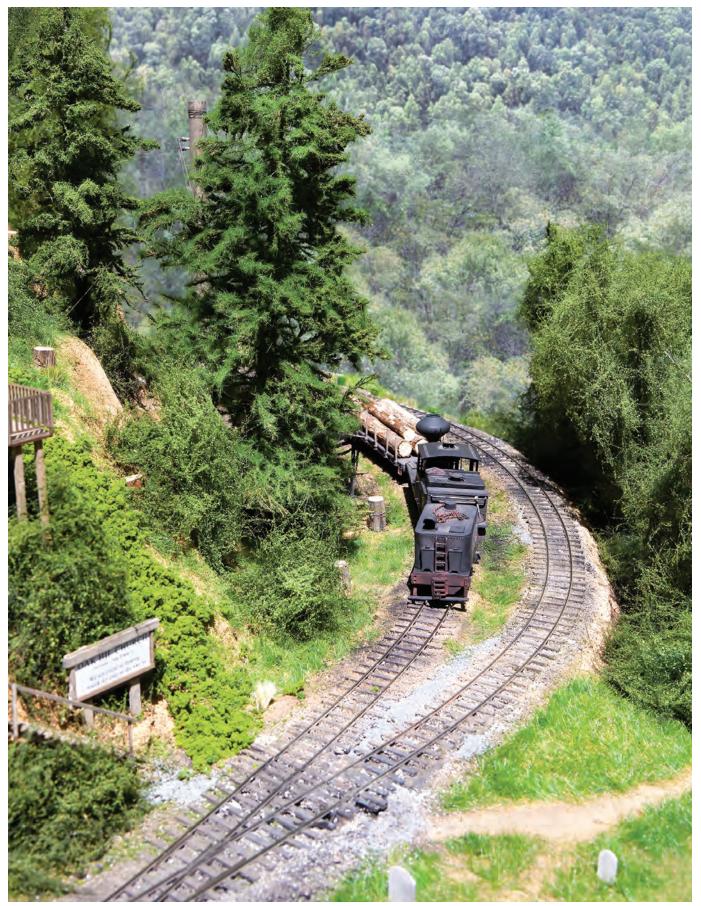
No. 25 passes the Spruce Coal Company tipple.



Here is a closer view of action at the Spruce Lumber reload. The loader crane, built from an HO flatcar and crane, is an adaptation of the popular Barnhart loaders used by many lumber companies in the eastern United States in the early 1900s.



No. 27, a customized Bachmann 2-8-0, rounds a tight curve as No. 22 prepares to take on water at the Slat Lick water stop. This scene is on an adjoining module.



Shay No. 9 waits for the crew to finish loading more logs at the Spruce Lumber reload.



No. 27 shoves empties up to the tipple in the late afternoon sun.

#### Specifications for the Original SC&T RR

Scale: 1:48

Style: Self-sufficient, modular, portable, sectional on carts

Size: 24"x 42" - approximately 7 square feet

Track: Hand-laid code 83 rail

Turnouts: Hand-laid, jig built, powered by Tortoise switch machines

Roadbed: 1/4" drywall

Benchwork: Frame-based open grid, mounted on wheeled cart

Fascia: 1/8" Masonite

Minimum Radius: 9" on main loop, 6-1/4" on siding Scenery Base: Blue insulation foam (extruded polystyrene)

Control: DCC, NCE Power Pro System



The Slaty Fork Country Store features a detailed interior with lighting provided by incandescent bulbs and a 12-volt power supply that powers all the structures. The old soda cooler was scratchbuilt from basswood, and the bottle tops were created from pencil tips. Kitchen salt produces a realistic rendition of ice when glued in place with super glue.



No. 27 is spotting empties.



No. 25 blasts across the Elk River in the bright afternoon sun.



Rupert McCoy works the still in the hot afternoon sun.

#### Specifications for the New SC&T RR

**Scale:** 1:48

**Style:** Self-sufficient, modular, portable, sectional on carts

**Size:** 15 ′ x 5 ′

Track: Micro Engineering Flex-Trak, Code 83 rail

**Turnouts:** Micro Engineering On30 Code 83, powered by

Tortoise switch machines

Roadbed: 1/4" drywall

Benchwork: Frame-based open grid, mounted on wheeled cart

Fascia: 1/4" pine board Minimum Radius: 22-1/2"

Scenery Base: Blue insulation foam, plaster over screen

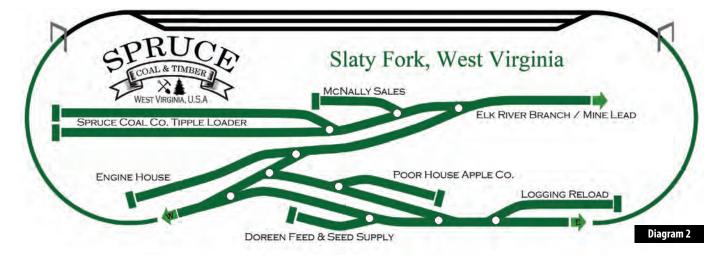
Control: DCC, NCE Power Pro System



A farmer is returning to his fields.



This is an early morning view of SC&T's only galloping goose. This unit is an executive inspection vehicle.



In starting over with the new layout, I made use of certain elements and features of the old layout including making full use of many of the previous scratchbuilt structures. Some new structures have also been added, and in most cases they were prototype structure kits that are currently being offered by my Trackside Scenery enterprise. All structures have interior lighting, in addition to some exterior and pole lighting.

#### **Track**

O scale in a small space can sometimes be challenging in terms of track placement. The fact that I was using On30 track and equipment helped, but making things work together and look right still required experimentation. In the end, I created a rural downtown switching area that flowed nicely and provided plenty of operational opportunities (Diagram 2).

On previous layouts, I always handlaid my track and turnouts as this seemed to give everything a more realistic appearance. I have since discovered that my current track weathering techniques provide realistic results that are just as convincing with sectional track. I paint the rails with rust-colored chalk and the ties with white acrylic paint. I then dust the entire roadbed and track with black chalk for a dull and natural weathered appearance.

There are a total of ten powered turnouts on the scenery portion and seven hand-thrown turnouts are out of sight and housed on the rear bridge sections. Turnouts are controlled by a switch panel I built from a small glass picture frame. I used Berrett Hill Touch Toggles mounted behind a printed track diagram.



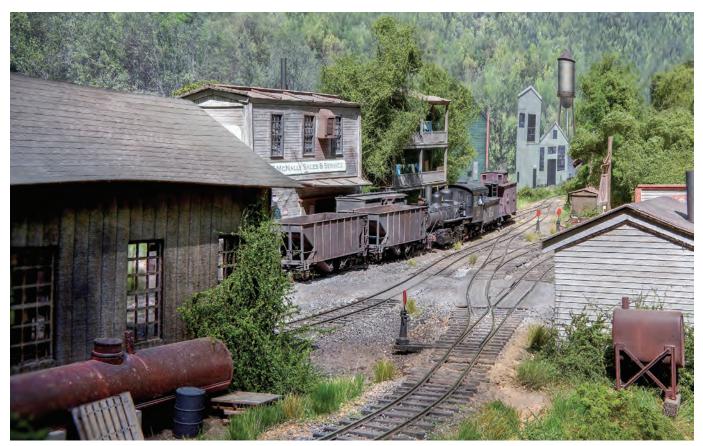
Jake Pauley is hard at work.



Station master Miller Allan and track foreman Matt Williams are on a mid-morning break at the Slaty Fork station.



Here is a long view from a neighboring hillside.



No. 27 shoves empties up to the tipple.

#### Electrical

The layout is built with a single-point power connection for track power and also features realistic sound effects. On the far right of the layout, mounted in a shack, is a 2"x 2" speaker that plays a mix of natural sound effects. This sound originates from a CD player mounted on a shelf underneath the layout and provides looped ambient sounds that include birds chirping, running water, howling wind, and various other natural sound effects. Occasionally, I mix in some bluegrass songs to really reflect the modeled area of rural Appalachia.

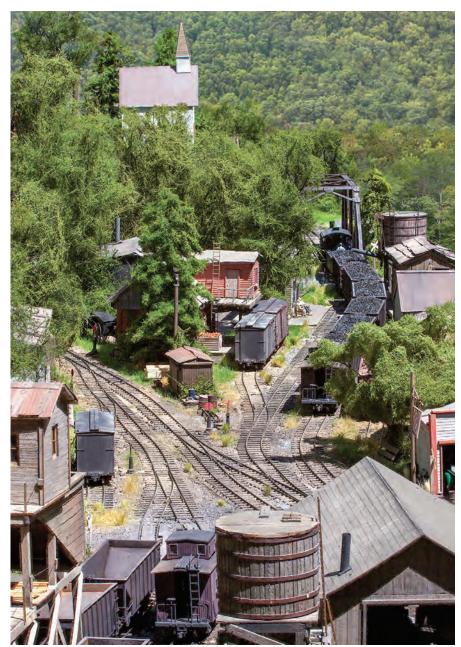
#### **Locomotives and Rolling Stock**

Locomotives on my new SC&T layout reflect a gritty backwoods railroad with a hard-working appeal. All of them have been painted, weathered, and decaled with the Spruce Coal & Timber logo and numbering. These locomotives feature DCC sound decoders. Currently, the layout runs with Bachmann On30, 2-8-0s and 4-6-0s, 4-4-0s, and Shays. Rolling stock consists of loaded and empty coal cars, boxcars, flatcars, and gondolas plus the usual cabooses and passenger coaches.

#### **Operations**

The new version of the SC&T layout provides lots of action in and around Slaty Fork. There is no shortage of assignments for operators, and it is not uncommon to see three or four locomotives working separate jobs at the same time.

Coal mine operations are centered on the Spruce Coal Company tipple located in the downtown area. Empties are shuffled in while loads are dragged out and taken to a spot in the rear of the layout. A local train picks up and sets out cars at the various industries including McNally Sales, Poor House Apple Co., Doreen's Feed & Seed, and Jake's. On one side of the layout is the Spruce Timber Company log reload that is serviced daily by the Shay-powered log train, which arrives from and disappears to the rear of the layout. A gas-powered boxcab leads a daily maintenance train that works to protect the right of way. Additionally, a passenger train made up of a locomotive and Bachmann coaches makes a daily stop in picturesque Slaty Fork.



A coal train makes a mainline water stop in this view.



Moe's Garage, Slaty Fork Country Store, and Doreen Feed & Seed are seen in this panorama view.



Large wooden dowels were used to align the modules and keep them tightly together.



This photo shows the outside photography staging for the images you see in this article. It shows how the wheeled carts create a layout from individual modules.



This poster shows the audio system's configuration.



#### **About the Author**

Joey Ricard works as a photographer and graphic artist in West Virginia and also owns Trackside Scenery (www.tracksidescenery.com), which produces model railroad products with an emphasis on backdrops. Visit his Spruce Coal & Timber Railroad blog at www.facebook. com/sprucemodel in addition to the how-to and scenery demonstration at www.youtube.com/ tracksidescenery. He also enjoys spending time in the great outdoors with his better half, Doreen.

# Ready **Kilowatts**

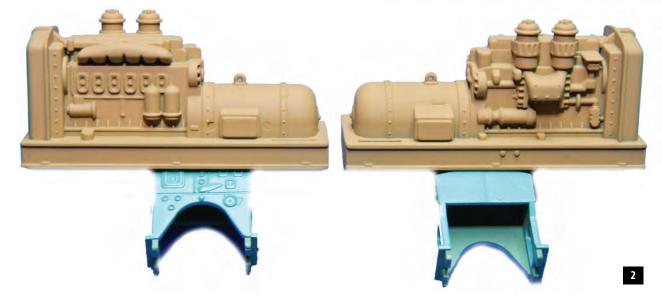
#### **Article and Photos by Daniel Kleine**

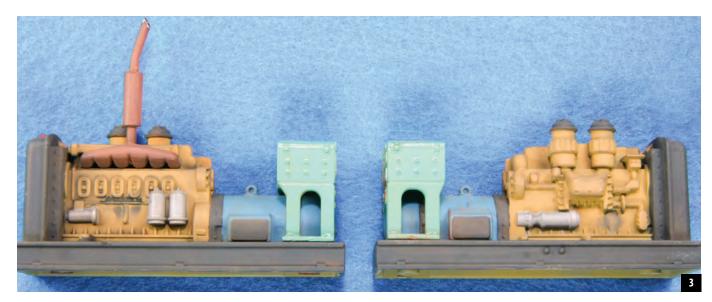
 ${
m T}$ he MTH RailKing 2-Piece Generator Set (#30-50028) is generally used as a railcar load (Photo 1). It is a nice accessory as is, but painting and weathering brings out the detail, and adding an exhaust pipe and muffler makes it an even more realistic piece of trackside equipment. I used this item as a backup electric generator near my roundhouse. Backup and add-on generators can be used in just about any area where a consistent and dependable flow of electric power is required. With the addition of a concrete pad, fence, and fuel tank positioned nearby, these generators make interesting little accessories that can be employed in a variety of layout scenes.

There are two generators in the MTH blister pack. I could paint two almost as quickly as one, so I proceeded with both. I started by removing the control panels from the castings. I airbrushed Armour yellow on the engine and generator portions to provide a base color and hand brushed the control panels with Pacemaker green (Photo 2). Then I hand painted the detail items using grimy black, gray, rust brown, and other colors. Weathering washes and powders were then









used to tone down the overall effect. There are lots of photos of generators on the Internet for painting and weathering ideas. I made an exhaust pipe and muffler with two pieces of brass tube that I stuck into a piece of plastic tube. The plastic tube had a thick wall, making it look like a muffler. Cutting the brass tube at an angle and bending it slightly added interest. A coat of rust brown paint makes the pipe and muffler assembly look rusted (Photo 3).

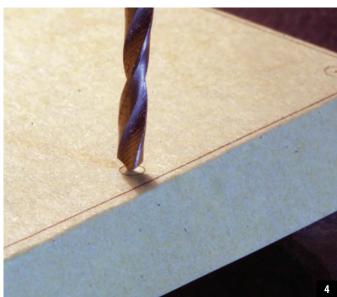
#### **Making the Pad**

Any thin plywood or hardboard can be used to make the concrete base. Cut the base to size and mark out 15 holes for the fence posts and 2 holes to screw the generator to the base. To make this easier, computer drawing software could be used to create a drilling template and then printed out and temporarily glued to the base material. By drawing a template you can adjust the pad size and post spacing to your liking. Painting the base a concrete gray and weathering it with washes and powders makes it ready for the posts.

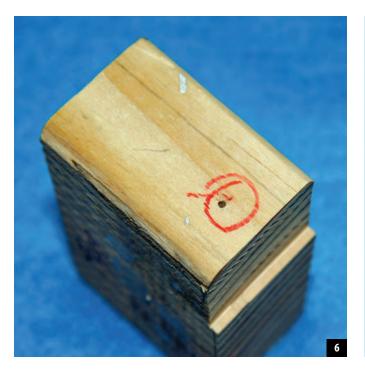
#### **Making the Fence Posts**

Code 55 rail is used for the fence, with brass rod, tulle, and copper wire for the gate. Either HO or N rail can be used to make believable O scale fence posts. Rail drills and solders well and is readily available. Code 55 rail is harder to drill than the larger sizes but yields a more realistically sized post in O scale. To drill the postholes in the base, use a #56 bit for Code 55 rail (Photo 4). You want the hole slightly smaller than the rail size so the posts fit snugly to the base. You may want to experiment on a piece of scrap material before choosing a drill size. A 1.6" rail translates to a 6' 4" post in O scale—a 6' high fence with a little extra to insert into the base (Photo 5).

I made a wood block cutting guide to produce reasonably consistent fence posts. A piece of shrink tube or tape can be used to mark the drilling depth. This drill bit should be a slightly larger diameter than the rail. I used a #49 bit, drilling a hole straight into a piece of scrap wood to the marked depth. It may take a couple of attempts to get the right depth (Photo 6).









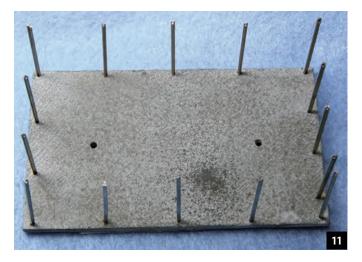






To cut the posts, insert a piece of rail into the wood block and clip it off flush with the top of the wood (Photo 7). When cutting the posts, try to be consistent with the cutting process and make a few extra. Check the posts for consistent height by lining them up between two rulers, filing down any that are too long and recycling any that are too short.

Add a pipe along the top to make the fence look more realistic. Drill a hole into each post slightly larger than the rod that is being used as pipe (Photo 8). For .032" wire, use a #65 bit, spacing each hole the same distance from the top of the post. A drill press and a jig is pretty much a requirement for this step. Sliding the posts onto a rod as they are drilled makes it easier to keep track of them and verifies that they are drilled properly (Photo 9). To make the post and pipe parts easy to solder, soak and agitate them in a jar of clean, full-strength household ammonia (Photo 10). Follow the warning label on the bottle. Use an old strainer to drain







and rinse the parts with hot water, allowing them to dry thoroughly on a clean rag.

#### **Planting the Posts**

Dip the bottom of each post in a little slow-drying glue and press each of them into the predrilled holes on the base (Photo 11). Set the corner posts at an angle and the line posts with the large edge parallel to the base edge. Square up and straighten the posts and then thread the pipe (brass rod) through the holes in the posts, leaving them a little long on the corners.

Apply some flux to each joint, verify that everything is square and straight, and solder each joint with a 23-watt pencil iron and 60/40 solder. After the solder has set, clip the rod flush with the post corners as needed. Make a gate with copper wire and bend it around a dowel. It may take a few attempts to get it right. Solder the gate into place, open or closed as you like (Photo 12). Rinse the joints with hot water to wash off any remaining flux and set the assembly aside to dry.

#### **Stretching the Fence Fabric**

Cut the tulle so the pattern is diagonal, like chainlink fence, making it a little wider and longer than necessary. Stretch the fabric around the posts and fasten it with thread. Then trim the fabric to size with scissors. Paint the posts and fabric with a combination of silver and rust.

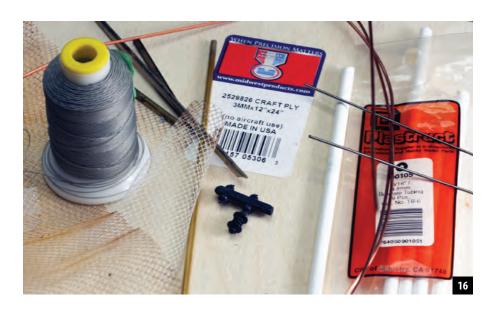


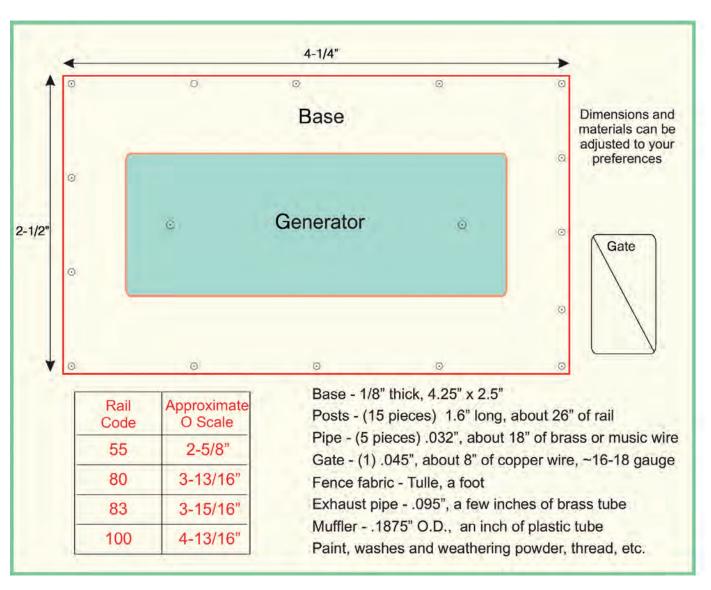


#### **Finishing Touches**

Screw the painted generator to the base (Photos 13 and 14). To complete installation on my layout, I cut a Lionel insulator in half and glue the halves to the top of the control panel (Photo 15). Black thread running from the insulators to a pole connected the generator to the grid. A fuel tank nearby was made from a piece of dowel, rivets, and scrap wire.

Other than the generator, the materials used for this project came from my scrap collection (Photo 16). You can adjust the design and dimensions to utilize parts you have on hand. For example, music wire will also work in place of the brass rod. Many variations and configurations are possible. I am planning to use the other generator from the MTH set as backup power for my grain elevator. I will place this one on a larger concrete pad with an 8' high fence, Code 80 posts, and a corrugated metal roof. Best of all, the techniques used here can be applied to other creative projects.





### The Chicago Pacific Railway



A Rio Grande excursion train headed by early steam power contrasts with that road's early diesel power operating in the background.

# PHOENIX RISING

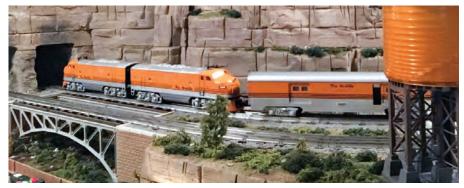
#### **Article and Photos by Carl Rygiewicz**

 ${
m T}$ he Chicago Pacific Railway is an operator's layout using Lionel and MTH trains, Lionel tubular track, and Lionel and American Flyer accessories in a prototype railroad setting. Scenery is inspired by Colorado prairies, mountains, and canyons. The steam to first-generation diesel era is modeled with focus on western roads operating between Chicago and the Pacific coast. When my wife, boys, and I built a house with a nice dry basement, I

developed plans for a huge D&RGW HO empire. Alas, this never got beyond the planning stage.

After my parents sold their house and my brother brought my boyhood trains to me at Christmas in 1972, I opened the boxes to show my sons my childhood treasures. I was overcome by a wave of nostalgia as the embers of my boyhood Lionel dreams burst into flames. Like a phoenix, visions of a vast Lionel empire rose again. That dream layout would become the current Chicago Pacific Railway.

I began pursuing my dream layout in earnest during the following spring. I thought about past layouts and realized that boredom and loss of interest would result if a toy train layout with endless loops and meaningless routes was built. My layout had to have a purpose and offer prototypical operation. Why not build a model railroad using Lionel equipment



From motive power to rolling stock to scenery, the layout has a distinctly western U.S. flavor.



Postwar Lionel operating cars, such as this twin-bin dump car, see plenty of action on this operation-oriented layout.



This overview shows one section of the layout.

complete with realistic scenery like the Lionel showroom layouts I admired as a youth? Lionel's accessories and operating cars could provide plenty of industry and operating potential, and they had to be a prominent feature of my layout. I studied Frank Ellison on Model Railroads, John Armstrong's Track Planning for Realistic Operation, and Bill McClanahan's Scenery for Model Railroads and identified the basic layout elements I wanted.

#### **Track Plan and Benchwork**

The layout is located in a 400 square foot L-shaped room. I chose sectional O gauge tubular track. The layout table area was drawn on a floor plan of the train room with main lines, sidings, and yard areas sketched in to see what would fit. After iterations to allow for industrial sidings, accessories, switch motors, yard tracks, grade adjustments, and other clearances, a final track plan was drawn. Figure 1 shows the as-built track plan. This plan consists of two folded dogbone loops, each with two passing sidings connected by a pair of switches wired together to make a single, long, continuous, twice-around, multilevel loop with four passing sidings. A 3 percent spiral reverse loop between the upper and lower loops reverses direction of trains between the two loops with a 10" change in elevation. A reverse crossover near the main terminal also reverses direction of trains. The track plan has a passenger terminal and yard, a freight terminal and classification yard, a diesel engine yard, and a steam engine yard with a turntable and a roundhouse. Various industrial spurs are located along the sidings.

The open-grid benchwork is made of rectangular modules of 1x4 lumber supported by 2x4 legs with 1x2 cross braces bolted together after being leveled by leg height adjustments. All lumber is fastened together with screws. The basic table is 33" above the floor. Terminals and yards are on the main level 40" above the floor, and the upper siding is 47" above the floor. The roadbed base is 1/2" plywood supported by 2x4 risers in the level terminal, yard, and siding areas. Graded single tracks are 4" wide plywood strips supported by 1x4 risers. Homasote, glued to the plywood with track fastened with screws, provides a quiet roadbed.

I used Lionel O22 and O72 switches for their versatility and nonderailing features, which fit with my plans for signaling and train control. I cut switch bases back to provide closer spacing for greater track densities in the yards.

#### **Control Panels**

Three control panels are spaced so multiple operators can run the layout without physical interference. The main panel has ZW transformers and track controls for the main line and main

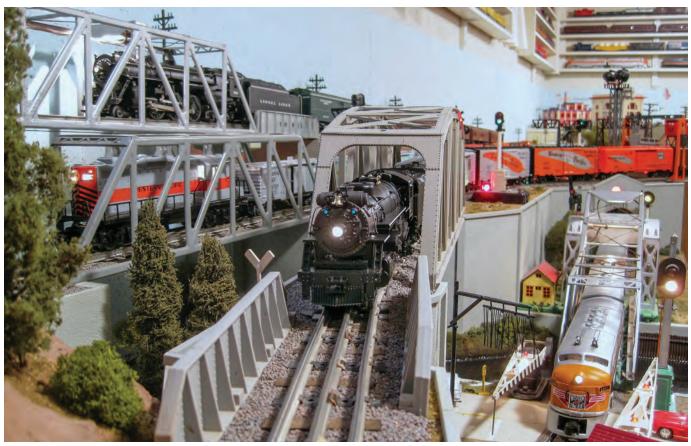
freight siding. The yard panel has track and accessory controls for the passenger, freight, and engine yards. The auxiliary panel located along the lower-loop siding has a Lionel 1033 transformer and controls to operate trains between the upper and lower industrial spurs via the reverse loop independent from the main panel.

#### **Electrical**

The layout is powered by a dedicated 20-amp circuit distributed to a master on/ off switch that routes power to an outlet

bus strip under the yard panel and a fourplug outlet box at the auxiliary panel into which all transformers and power supplies are plugged.

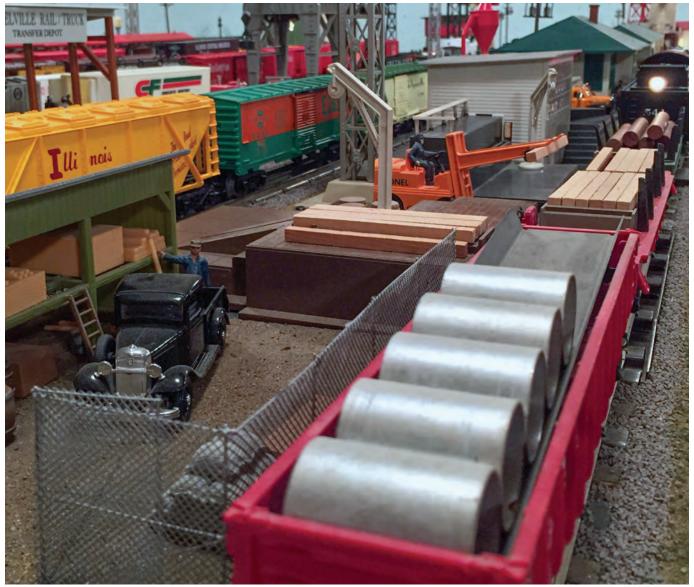
There are four type Z transformers located on a shelf under the yard for power to switches, UCS, accessories, and lamps. Lionel type R and V transformers located at the auxiliary panel power the coal mine, accessories, lamps, switches, and UCS on the upper and lower sidings. Two 24-VDC power supplies provide relay power, and a variable output DC power supply powers the turntable.



Bridges of all types, most of them from Lionel, span sections of all levels.



A logging train moves between tunnels on the high level.

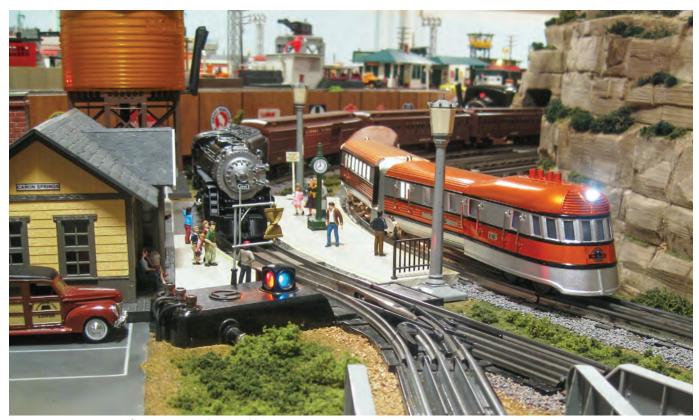


A load of culverts will be moved to the Lionel culvert loader/unloader soon after that flatcar behind it receives its load of freshly milled lumber.

Power is categorized according to function: track, block, switch, UCS, lamp, signal, accessory, turntable, and relay. Some are divided into subcategories such as automatic and operating accessories, mainline and yard switches, and so forth with wire color coded accordingly. Power and ground are distributed by 10-12 AWG wire from the transformer binding posts to terminal blocks and a single-point common ground copper bar located near the control panels. From there, wires are distributed to other terminal blocks located at strategic points around the layout from which track connections are soldered with 10-16 AWG wire, and accessory and switch voltage plug connections are 18-20 AWG wire.



This yard accommodates both freight and passenger cars.



The road names represented reflect the steam-to-diesel transition era.



Western scenery dominates in the mountain section.

Track power is supplied by three ZW transformers. One ZW powers the freight and diesel engine yards by one handle and the passenger and steam engine yards by the other handle. Two ZWs power the main line that is divided into four power zones, each controlled by a ZW handle. Each zone is the single track running between passing sidings. Track power is switched by an AC relay into the siding track the train is entering; that is, power follows the train into the siding thereby providing independent control of it through the siding. Power to insulated track blocks is provided by the ZW accessory control with the dials set to 6-8 volts, which is just enough to keep E-units alive. When the block goes dead, a relay switches main track power to low-voltage block power thus preserving the train's direction until the block goes active again.

#### Signals and Interlocking

A diode-relay logic train control system allows multitrain bidirectional operation chosen because it is simple, reliable, and interfaces easily with 3-rail operation. Insulated track sections sense the presence of trains and control DC



It's evident that the Denver & Rio Grande Western is a favorite road.

relays to provide location and direction signals. AC relays across the switch motor terminals sense switch position to provide routing signals. These signals are processed to control and interlock the movement of trains.

Each pair of siding entry switches is wired to throw together so trains traveling in opposite directions enter the siding on opposite tracks and safely pass. A train cannot leave the siding until the other train has cleared the entry switch, nor can the train proceed to the next siding if the track between sidings is occupied by another train traveling in the opposite direction. All siding blocks also have a switch for manual control.

All trains traveling in the same direction are rear-end protected by a conventional block control scheme. If a train is in a passing siding, its rear-end protection is interlocked by the entry switch. If closed, the normal rear block control is active. If open, a following train will enter the other siding track and stop if the forward train is clearing the siding or pass the forward train if it is stopped.

The reverse crossover is interlocked when the switch pair is thrown to the crossover position. The train through



The Lionel Bascule Bridge is raised to let the boat through.



A saddle tank switcher prepares to depart the O. L. King coal tipple after depositing its load of black diamonds.

the crossover has the right of way. Trains approaching on the through route stop until the switches are thrown to the through route. The reverse loop is protected so trains cannot enter the loop from either end in opposing directions.

#### Scenery

A variety of techniques and materials were used to construct scenery. The mountain area was formed by a grid of interlaced cardboard strips covered with nylon screen and Hydrocal-soaked paper towels or plaster cloth, and textured with Hydrocal to form a hard-shell base. Tunnels were lined with heavy-duty foil lightly crushed to form a rough, blasted-rock look.

Numerous handmade latex molds were used to make plaster rock formations. The mountain area transitions into a river

canyon imitating Colorado's Glenwood Canyon, which was made from layers of extruded foam cut with a box cutter using different cutting techniques. Surface features were formed with Surform tools, plastic hairbrushes, combs, files, and knives. Then they were stacked, glued, and brushed with layers of Hydrocal.

The scenery was painted with watercolors and acrylic paints and highlighted with pastel chalks. Ground cover was made from commercially available scenery materials. Trees were made from kits or homemade. A river, creek, and pond were made using Woodland Scenics Realistic Water and Water Effects. Except for a couple of ready-made building flats, all structures were made from kits or kitbashed. In keeping with the steam-to-diesel transition theme, structures and vehicles were selected appropriate to the era.

#### **Operation**

My layout was originally designed to operate postwar Lionel trains and accessories and was named the Lionel & Western RR to reflect my interest in running western road names with Lionel Lines lettered equipment. Over the years, as I acquired modern-era Lionel trains, I retired the postwar trains, except for the operating cars, to shelf display. When I added MTH trains to the roster and some postwar American Flyer accessories, the original layout name became inappropriate and was changed to its current name. Other changes were the replacement of mainline American Flyer prewar O gauge curves with O42 curves and O22 switches with O72 switches and larger radius curves in the yards, which greatly improved operation.



There's always plenty of activity to be seen at the main passenger terminal with multitrack accommodations for several trains.



Burlington passenger and freight units meet on a double-track bridge.

The layout provides numerous operating scenarios to simulate real railroad operation. Multiple levels with connecting grades require hands-on control as if I were the engineer and dispatcher. Yards and sidings provide lots of switching operation potential. The layout can be operated with TMCC or traditional transformer control or both simultaneously. Theoretically, I can run up to four trains on the main line. The yards and main line can be simultaneously and independently operated with control of the main passenger siding interlocked from the yard panel.

Locomotives and rolling stock are rotated every four months from a roster of 12 western road names, which changes the flavor of the layout and reduces wear.

Finally, after 40 years my boyhood dream of a large Lionel train layout is fulfilled! The journey to achieve the dream was most rewarding. The challenges confronted, problems solved, skills learned, train shows attended, layouts visited, and most of all the acquaintances and friends made along the way were the source of a lifetime of fun and pleasure.



#### **About the Author**

Carl Rygiewicz was born and raised in the industrial southeast side of Chicago near the Carnegie Works of U.S. Steel where his dad worked. Growing up in "Rail City" literally surrounded by trains contributed to Carl becoming a "train nut," and playing with toy trains as a youngster sparked an interest in electricity. This led him to pursue and obtain degrees in electrical engineering. He also enjoys mountain climbing, hiking, snowshoeing, fat tire biking, running, skiing, fly-fishing for trout, and spending time with four grandchildren who live nearby.

## Heaters for perishable shipments



## RUNNING HOT AND COLD

#### Article and Photos by John Rapacz

Do you know what the figures in Photo 1 are doing? Well, we are all aware that perishable shipments had to be iced to prevent spoilage in warm climates, but these same perishables had to be prevented from freezing temperatures also. Heaters were placed in refrigerator cars as frequently as ice. And yet, even though many model train layouts have an icing station, an ice house, or an operating Lionel ice depot, I have never seen a "heater track" on any model railroad layout.

Here is a short history lesson, partially from books and Internet research and partially from my 10-plus years as a car checker with the MStL and C&NW railroads in 1959-1970.

Train No. 20 left the Cedar Lake yards in Minneapolis daily at 4:00 a.m., and as it traveled 20 miles from our yard, it passed through a small town called Hopkins, which had a large concentration of grocery warehouses. The reefers and cars at the head end of the train were set out in Hopkins to be switched and spotted by the day crew, and No. 20 went on to Albert Lea, Minnesota. Those cars filled with perishables sat in our yard in the cold and

waited to be switched and unloaded. Their contents had to be protected against freezing from the cold air, and that was the responsibility of the heater crew.

Railroads have used heaters since the 1800s, and the majority burned charcoal. The heat they produced could not be controlled. The Railway Age Gazette in April 1856 reported that some perishables had been lost because they had become overheated by the charcoal fires. There really was no effective way to control the charcoal heat, so denatured alcohol was recommended by the Western Railway Club Newsletter of Chicago in November 1911. Both alcohol and kerosene were rejected in some states and on some railroad lines because it was feared that the constant motion of the railcars would cause splashing and spillage that could lead to fires, especially in wood-lined reefers. However, these same motions also caused the charcoal to settle and actually helped in the burning. A thermostatically controlled charcoal burner was patented in 1942 by the Hoch and Baxter Company.

All the heaters that I saw burned charcoal. After the cars were spotted on the track next to an access road, the heater team would scramble up the ladders and open the hatches allowing the compartment to air out for a while. The air in the compartment must have been totally carbon monoxide by that time, and the heater men always had stories to tell me of the crew member who climbed into the compartment to untangle his hook or the tramp that had sneaked inside to keep warm. Both died before they could get out. Some crew members claimed that just leaning over a freshly opened hatch would cause lightheadedness.

After a safe period of time, the heater man would lower a rope with a hook and pull out the used heater. He would then hook a freshly filled and smoldering heater, pull it to the top of the car, and lower it into the now empty compartment. The heaters must have been heavy when empty and even heavier when a full 40-pound or heavier bag of charcoal was added, but these experienced men seemed to have no trouble lifting them. After all the cars were serviced, the hatches would be closed and locked, and the crew would move on to the next yard. If I recall correctly, the crew boss kept track of the serial number of every heater and into which car it was installed.

I hated walking and checking that heater track. The heat from the heaters waiting to be loaded would melt the snow, causing slush and mud. Then when the heater was removed, everything would refreeze quickly at -10 degrees or below. So we clerks were always walking in mud or slipping on ice. But the worst was the blowing black charcoal dust that seemed to dirty everything from the snow to our clothes, our faces, and our paper train lists.

Of course, oil-fired steam generators now both heat and cool passenger and freight cars. To model an old heater track, only three easy-to-make components are needed.

#### **Heaters**

I assembled all of my heaters from scrap pieces (Photo 2). I used a 3/8" button for the base. I sanded the top flat and then glued four beads onto the flat area as legs. I glued a 3/4" piece of 3/8" dowel to the button and a 1/4" button to the top. I also found a 3/8" tube that I used for two of the heaters with open doors. A small







piece of flexible rubber cut from a leftover brick sidewalk became the lower door with a piece of round toothpick for a barrel hinge and another bead for the handle. Although it was not necessary, I had some HO gauge windows left over from another project and used parts of these for the upper louvered vents. I sprayed everything with metallic paint and weathered them with a black paint and water mixture. For handles, I glued #14 cable tracker staples to each side. The finished heaters are as I remember them from 55 years ago (Photo 3).

#### Charcoal

It may be possible to find some small bags suitable as charcoal containers on the Internet, but I made my own because I had some specific ideas. I used Super Sculpey to make full bags, a small pile of empty paper bags, a few broken spilled bags, and one bag being dumped into a heater. This product is easy to mold, hardens nicely at 225 degrees, sands easily, and takes paint well. Photo 4 shows the bags after their heating. I then sprayed them with a semi-gloss paint, copied a computer image of Rockwood Charcoal, shrunk it to approximately the bag size, made multiple copies until I had a full sheet, and then made decals that I transferred to the bags. Photo 5 shows some of the finished bags of charcoal.

#### **Figures**

From experience, I knew the crew needed two men unloading heaters and charcoal from a truck, a man dumping a bag of charcoal into a heater, a crew boss lighting the new charcoal, plus four men to empty the reefer bunkers, lower the burned out heaters, and lift and install the newly filled heaters. I chose eight figures from Arttista Accessories because they can be bent carefully to different positions. They take paint well after priming and have good detail despite being made of pewter. Now if you have a heater track in warm weather, you can just pose the figures and paint them. However, I had a winter scene, so I had to dress the figures in warm clothes by mixing some JB Weld and applying it to the figures. Some figures needed earflaps, some needed hooded sweatshirts, some needed scarves, and the bare-chested man needed a complete hooded parka. The plain figures can be











seen in Photo 6, and the extra added IB Weld can be seen in Photo 7. After the JB Weld dried, I used a hobby knife and small file to simulate wrinkles in the new clothes. Then the figures were primed, painted, and posed.

Photo 8 shows the truck being unloaded. Photo 9 shows charcoal being dumped into a heater and the crew boss lighting a full heater. Photo 10 shows the man unloading and reloading the reefer.

If you have a winter layout, you can keep your heater track active all year. If you have a summer layout, but one that has a mountain run, you still have an excuse for a heater track display to protect the perishables at high and cold altitudes.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at jrapacz@comcast.net.



### A space-saving, easy-to-build, and prototypical accessory



# **POWER TOWERS**

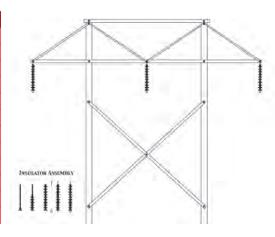
#### Article, Template, and **Photos by Bob Glorioso**

 ${f M}$ any model train layouts have utility poles, and some even have wires, but very few have the high-voltage lines that bring power to cities and villages. The only commercial high-voltage tower available in O scale is the MTH High Tension Tower. This is a well done but rather large and imposing structure. When a friend asked if I could build him some smaller wooden H-frame high-voltage towers, I accepted the challenge.

The electrical grid in the U.S. consists of three parts: 138-765 KV high-voltage transmission lines from generating stations to substations (the MTH towers carry these), 69-138 KV high-voltage subtransmission lines from substations to smaller substations, and 3.3-25 KV distribution lines from smaller substations to utility pole transformers. The wooden H-frame high-voltage towers I chose to model would carry the subtransmission lines (Photo 1).

#### **Parts List**

Supplier	Item	Number	Length
Mt. Albert	2x6 basswood	2	6-1/4"
Mt. Albert	2x6 basswood	1	9″
Mt. Albert	2x4 basswood	4	2-11/16"
Evergreen	0.080" styrene angle	1	5″
Evergreen	3/32" styrene rod	3	1"
	1/4" dowels	2	18"
Tichy 8144	Nut-bolt-washer	14	
Michaels	Eyelets 1/8" SKU 318155	30	
Grandt Line	5085 styrene eyebolts	3	
	24-gauge wire	3	1/2"
Berkshire Junction	Heavy 0.020" EZ Line		
Berkshire Junction	Fine 0.010" EZ Line		









#### Design

I photographed and measured a tower near my home. Most of the parts could be constructed with scale lumber and plastic angle stock. The biggest challenge was the insulator. Some modelers have tried using nylon automotive body fasteners, but they are really not close enough to the prototype. Small top-hat-shaped grommets available in a Michaels store provided the answer. When tacked together, these grommets make a credible model of an insulator.

Before proceeding with the project, I recommend creating a full-size template using the small sample on the previous page. To help you in sizing your template, the long horizontal crossbar measures 9".

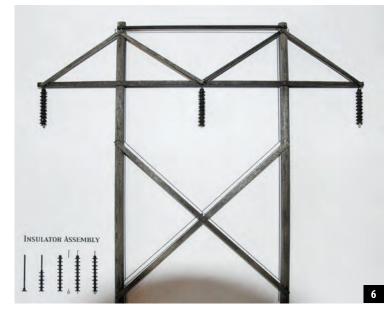
#### **Construction**

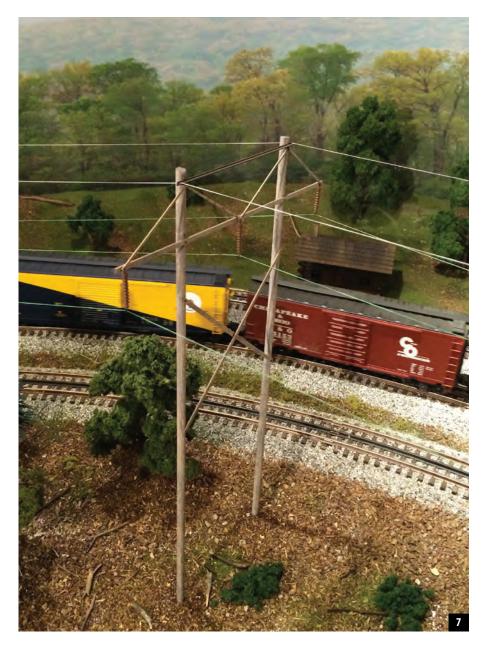
After cutting to length the parts listed in the table, stain the wood parts. I use Hunterline Cordovan Brown or Light Gray, but India ink in alcohol works fine as well. Paint the plastic angle iron gray or brown.

Now move on to assemble the insulators. Apply a drop of CA glue near one end of a white 3/32"x 1" rod and thread an eyelet over it. Eyelets should be oriented like a top hat (upright). When secure, thread eight more eyelets stacked on top of the first (Photo 2). Put another drop of CA above the top of the stack and thread the 10th eyelet over it. Repeat to construct two more insulators.

Bend three L-shaped 1/16"x 3/8" wires. Glue the long end into the hole







on top of each insulator rod (top of the top hats) so that 3/16" is showing (Photo 3). Glue an eyebolt into the bottom of each insulator rod. Orientation of the eye should be perpendicular to the L.

Lay the 9" crossbeam on the template and mark the location where the three insulators will hang. Using a #64 drill bit, drill three holes in the crossbeam at the marks. Lay the crossbeam over two small model paint jars (Photo 4). Now dip the end of each stack's L-shaped wire in CA and insert it into the three holes. Straighten the stacks so they are suspended vertically until the glue dries securely (about 15 minutes). Paint the insulator assemblies brown.

For easy assembly of the towers, pin the template to cork, Homasote, or an old ceiling tile. Secure the two poles 4-1/4" apart onto the template with pins or weights and then attach the two 6-1/4" diagonal braces to the poles. Apply CA to the two contact points on the braces and lay them on the poles using the template as a guide. Before mounting the second brace, add a dot of CA where the braces cross. Hold together for a minute until the CA sets (Photo 5).

To attach the 9" crossbeam to the poles, apply CA to the two contact points on the poles and lay the crossbeam over the poles 1-5/8" below the tops of the poles in line with the template, with the stacks attached

to the underside of the crossbeam.

Attach the four short braces over the poles and crossbeam with CA, overlapping all ends (Photo 6). Attach the angle iron right above the short braces near the top of the poles (angle down). Scrape off any paint at the contact points before applying glue.

With the #64 drill bit, drill holes at each joint for the molded nut-bolt-washer (NBW) as positioned in the template. Holes should be 3/16" deep over the poles and all the way through the strip wood in other locations. Put scrap wood under the crossbeam to support it while drilling. Cut each NBW from the sprue. Include the full length of the bolt shafts. Then glue an NBW into each hole by picking it up with fine tweezers, dipping the shaft in CA, and inserting it into the hole. The bolt shafts greatly strengthen the structure.

Use Heavy (0.020") EZ Line from Berkshire Junction for the three main wires. EZ Line can be stretched and relaxed to achieve a prototypical droop and then fixed to the eyebolts with a small drop of CA (Photo 7). Optionally, you can add lightning protection wires. Using small wire posts or styrene eyebolts, drill holes in the top ends of the poles and glue the eyebolts into the holes. Install Fine (0.010") EZ Line wires for lightning protection wires at the tops of the towers. EZ Line comes in a variety of colors. Although high-voltage wires are uninsulated aluminum, they look black against a sky and light gray or white against a forest background. So pick your color based on how they will be viewed. Space the towers on your layout 3' to 4' apart.

Two towers can easily be assembled in a single evening. Kits are available with all parts precut and include an assembly template: two towers for \$15.00. This will save you the time and trouble of finding and cutting all the parts. There is also a kit for a corner tower of the type used to change the direction of power lines.

I hope you'll agree that these towers are both interesting and realistic. They will enhance the appearance of any layout without taking up a whole lot of space or being an overpowering (pardon the pun) visual distraction. You can contact me as rrdoc on the OGR forum or at rrdoc@comcast.net.

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### Collector's Gallery

Ed Boyle





### **Neil Young Signature Line: Collectible with a Pedigree**

The 2014 Signature Edition of the Lionel catalog announced two desirable passenger sets presented under the Neil Young name: the very colorful and shiny red, silver, and yellow-accented Texas Special and the sober-hued Brunswick green F3 A-As pulling four elegantly decorated, Tuscan Fleet of Modernism streamline cars. I chose the satin-finished, sober-looking set to buy and present to you.

### **Shapes and Sizes**

The shape of the Neil Young Pennsylvania F3 A-A diesels can be traced back in a direct line to the 2343 Santa Fe F3s of 1950 (Photo 1). The tooling for the Neil Young Signature diesel A units faithfully follows the shapes and contours of the postwar originals, including their near-scale proportions and what became a trademark of the Lionel F3 tooling: the "squinty-eyed" cab front windshields (Photo 2). The very dark green F units also carry the distinctive Pennsylvania Railroad radio antennas (Photo 3). The front of the cab has nose grab irons as well as two engineer figures sitting behind those squinty-eyed windshields (Photo 4).

### **Contents**

The large set box for the Neil Young Pennsylvania F3 passenger set serves as an orange billboard for the Lionel circular logo (Photo 5). The label on the side of the 6-11195 box details the





contents as the powered and non-powered A units and the four 15" aluminum passenger cars (Photo 6). It also helpfully mentions that the set is "For Ages 14 to Adult."

### **Motive Power**

The basic set comes with two traditional-size A units that are packed with a long list of high-end 21st-century product features that are usually found with Lionel's top-of-the-line, scaleproportioned locomotives (Photo 7). Both units carry the 9502 number in gold on their Brunswick green flanks and in white on their number boards, with a small 9502A on the rear sides of the powered A and a 9502C in the same position on the non-powered A. The powered A unit product number is 6-39545 and the non-powered unit is 6-39546. They make a highly detailed and attractive pair, and even though they are not scale-proportioned, they are "scale detailed" in Lionel parlance.

George Brown described their Legacy performance in detail in his review of the powered Neil Young Signature Line F3 A and non-powered A unit in his product review in Run 275 (January 2015). This is significant for collectors because the two diesel As and the B units were available for over a year before the Neil Young Signature Line sets were shipped.

The number for the Pennsylvania Neil Young Signature Line F3 A-A locomotive set is 6-81453 and is described on the label as "Texas Special F3 A Powered" and "Texas Special F3 A Non-Powered" (Photo 8). When the whole process of ordering the Neil Young Signature Line trains was all over, I wound up with two sets of A-A units (more on this in the next section).

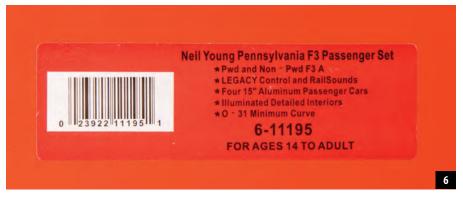
The B unit came in two flavors: a truly non-powered B unit with non-operating couplers, product number 6-39547, and a powered B unit, 6-39548, both of which look the same (Photo 9).

### **Passenger Cars**

The only way you can order the four cars of the basic Neil Young Signature Line Set without a dealer breakup is to specify the 6-11195, which includes the two A-As as part of the package. The four cars are not sold as a separate

















grouping. Since we wanted to test the Pennsylvania Neil Young Signature F3s as soon as they became available, I found myself with one set of cars and two sets of Pennsylvania F3 motive power. This was one time when patience would have saved us money, but we really wanted to give the feature-laden A-As a workout to see just how special they were. They were very special, as George found out in his review, and deserving of the Neil Young name, so it was worth a little cash to bring you the word on them as soon as we could.

The four cars can trace their lineage back to the Lionel postwar 2500-series aluminum streamliners of the early 1950s, but other than their 15" length and aluminum bodies, they have very little in common with their postwar ancestors. Their two-tone Tuscan and gold accented

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Fleet of Modernism finish is flawlessly applied. In contrast to earlier iterations of the Lionel 15" aluminum passenger cars, they have underbody detail on their frames rather than just a blank sheet of stamped metal. The die-cast truck frames are like the earlier ones, but they have actual working springs as part of their truck assemblies.

The 6-25753 Neil Young Baggage Car has Pennsylvania in gold on the upper sides, a Railway Express Agency sign in the middle of the car, and 4270 on a riveted plaque below the agency sign (Photo 10). The baggage car doors are full-length, and you can see some tan-colored detail when you open them (Photo 11). The tinted dark green windows of the 6-25754 Combo Car reveal seated passengers inside the car as well as a full-length cargo door. The number 6702 is riveted on the sides (Photo 12). A reasonable complement of passengers sits inside the green-tinted windows of the Neil Young Pennsylvania Coach, 6-25755, with 4269 riveted on its sides (Photo 13). The most striking car in the consist is the square-end 6-25756 Observation Car, which follows the Pennsylvania prototype, but car 1121 marks a true departure from the endless series of aluminum boat-tail



observations Lionel has produced over the decades (Photo 14). There is a scale-size, non-operating coupler on the rear of the observation (Photo 15).

All the cars have flexible diaphragms on their ends, as you can see on the coach (Photo 16).

#### The Last Word

Is this set collectible in an O gauge market that is as oversaturated with product and as picky as it can be? My answer is yes. Neil Young has the last word on why I think this is true with "...the postwar glory of Lionel's classic F3 diesel locomotive meets our 21st-century technology in the new Neil Young Signature Line. Like the postwar engines in this line, the traditional-size postwar-inspired streamliners are now equipped with all the detail of our modern aluminum passenger cars."

Enjoy your trains (Photo 17)!

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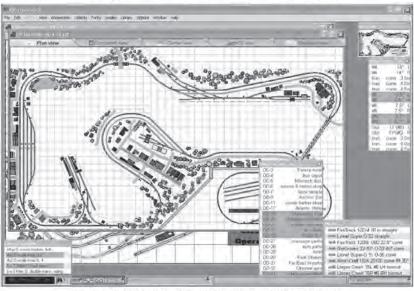






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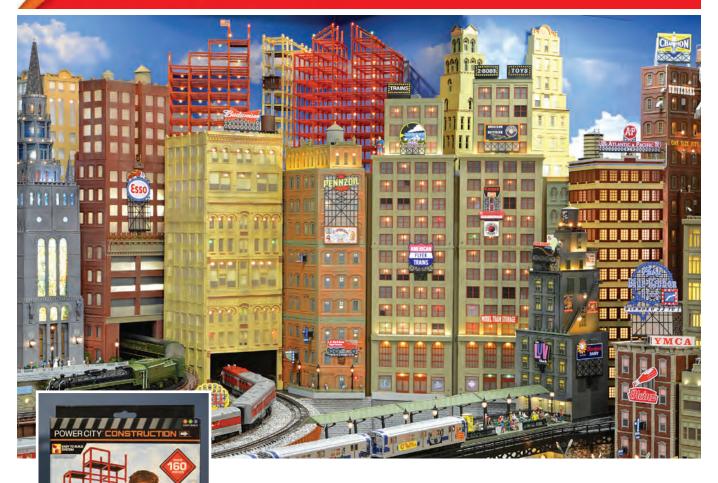
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20-20410-1	CSX SD40-2 Diesel Engine w/3.0 (Box Car Logo) .\$439.95
20-20412-1	Milwaukee Road SD40-2 Diesel Engine w/3.0 \$439.95
20-20421-1	BNSF Dash 8 Freight Set w3.0 \$699.95
20-20422-1	CNW SD50 Diesel Engine w/3.0. \$439.95
20-20423-1	NS SD50 Diesel Engine w/3.0 \$439.95
20-20424-1	Chessie SD50 Diesel Engine w/3.0\$439.95
20-20425-1	Denver Rio Grande SD50 Diesel Engine w/3.0 \$439.95
20-20429-1	Electro Motive SD70ACe w/3.0 - Yellow \$439.95
20-20430-1	Electro Motive SD70ACe w/3.0 - Blue \$439.95
20-20433-1	Norfolk Southern SD80Mac w/3.0. \$439.95
20-20435-1	CIT Rail Resources SD9043 Mac w/3.0 \$429.95
20-20439-1	DM&I SD40T-3 Tunnel Motor Diesel w/3.0 \$429 95
20-20440-1	B&LE SD40T-3 Tunnel Motor Diesel w 3.0 \$429.95
20-20441-1	NS SD60M Diesel w/3 0 \$439.95
20-20443-1	St. Louis Southwestern SD45-T-2
	Tunnel Motor Diesel w 3 0 \$439 95
20-20445-1	BNSF SD60M Diesel w/3 0 \$439.95
20-20446-1	CSX SD60M Diesel w/3 0 \$439.95
20-20447-1	UP SD60M Diesel w/3 0 \$439.95
20.20453/54/5	5/56-1 GP38-2 Diesel w/3 0 LIP/SF/B&M/CN
20 20 100/0 1/0	FACH \$439.95
20-20464-1	20-65252/66/67/68 ACL F-6 ABAw 3.0
	with 9 Passenger Cars \$1 499 95
20-20479-1	NS GP38-2 MOW Freight Set w/3 0 \$699 95
20-2220-1	GN E3 ABA w/P1 4 motors with BCR NEW \$449.95
20-2695-3	Jersey Central F-3 B unit non-nowered \$159.95
20-2921-3	Boston & Maine E3 B unit non-powered \$150.00
20-3154-1	NYC 4-4-0 Steamer w/2 0 NFW \$609.95
20-3430-1	PRR 2-8-0 H-3 Steam Engine w/3 0 NEW \$609.95
20_3479_1	Clinchfield 4-6-6-4 Challenger w/3 0 \$1 395 00
20-3481-1	LIP (Two-tone Gray w/Yellow Strine) 4-6-6-4
20 0101 1	Challenger w/3 0 \$1 200 05
20_3517_1	PRR 4-4-4 T-1 Dupley w/3.0 \$1.299.95
20-3518-1	PRR 4-4-4 T-1 Dupley w/3 0 \$1 299 95
20-3510-1	PRR T-1 Sleet of Modernism Page
20 00 10 1	Set w/3 0 \$1 449 95
20_3520_1	PRR T-1 Express Mail Freight Set w/3 0 \$1 449 95
20-3537-1	B&O Y3 2-8-8-2 Steam Engine w/3 0 \$1 399 95
20-3542-1	NYC Niagara Steam Engine
	w/3 0 Poofer Set \$1 275.05
20_3544_1	Reading 4-8-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3 0 \$1 025 95
20-3544-1	Reading 4-8-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95
20-3544-1 20-3549-1	Reading 4-8-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,225.95 Blue Mtn & Reading 4-8-4 T1 Steam Freight Set w/3.0 \$1,229.95
20-3544-1 20-3549-1 20-3554-1	Reading 4-8-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Mtn & Reading 4-8-4 T1 Steam Freight Set w/3.0\$1,229.95 Western Mandand 2-8-0 H9 Freight Set w/3.0. \$944.95
20-3544-1 20-3549-1 20-3554-1 20-3563-1	Weading 48-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Mtn & Reading 4-8-4 T1 Steam Freight Set w/3.0\$1,229.95 Western Manyland 2-8-0 H9 Freight Set w/3.0\$949.95 PRR 2-8-0 H-10 w/3.0
20-3544-1 20-3549-1 20-3554-1 20-3563-1 20-3567-1	Reading 48-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Mtn & Reading 48-4 T1 Steam Freight \$5 tt W/3.0
20-3544-1 20-3549-1 20-3554-1 20-3563-1 20-3567-1 20-3569-1	Reading 4.8-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Mit & Reading 4.8-4 T1 Steam Freight Set w/3.0. \$1,229.95 Western Maryland 2.8-0 H9 Freight Set w/3.0. \$949.95 PRR 2.8-0 H-10 w/3.0. \$829.95 NKP 2.8-4 Berkshire #755 w/3.0. \$1,099.95 NKP 2.8-4 Sexenger Set #766 w/3.0 \$1,249.95
20-3544-1 20-3549-1 20-3554-1 20-3563-1 20-3567-1 20-3569-1 20-3570-1	Reading 4.8-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Mit & Reading 4.8-4 T1 Steam Freight Set W/3.0 \$1,229.95 Western Maryland 2.8-0 H9 Freight Set w/3.0\$949.95 PREP 2.8-0 H-10 w/3.0\$10,099.95 NKP 2.8-4 Passenger Set #766 w/3.0\$1,249.95
20-3544-1 20-3549-1 20-3554-1 20-3563-1 20-3567-1 20-3569-1 20-3570-1 20-3573-1	Reading 48-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Mtn & Reading 48-4 T1 Steam Freight Set W/3.0
20-3544-1 20-3554-1 20-3563-1 20-3563-1 20-3569-1 20-3570-1 20-3573-1 20-3573-1	Reading 4.8-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Min & Reading 4-8-4 T1 Steam Freight Set W/3.0. \$1,025.95 Western Maryland 2.8-0 H9 Freight Set w/3.0. \$4,99.95 PRR 2-8-0 H-10 w/3.0. \$829.95 NKP 2-8-4 Bassenger Set #766 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 NKP 2-8-4 Freight Set #750 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 NKP 2-8-4 Freight Set #750 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 N&W 1 w/3.0 Passenger Set #607 \$1,299.95
20-3544-1 20-3549-1 20-3554-1 20-3563-1 20-3569-1 20-3570-1 20-3570-1 20-3573-1 20-3575-1	Reading 4.8-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Mth & Reading 4.8-4 T1 Steam Freight Set W/3.0
20-3544-1 20-3549-1 20-3563-1 20-3563-1 20-3567-1 20-3570-1 20-3573-1 20-3574-1 20-3575-1 20-3575-1	Reading 48-8 Steam Engine #2100 w3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Min & Reading 48-8 4T1 Steam Freight Set W3.0. \$1,025.95 Western Maryland 28-0 H9 Freight Set w3.0. \$949.95 PRR 2-8-0 H-10 w3.0. \$829.95 NKP 2-8-4 Berkshire #755 w3.0. \$1.099.95 NKP 2-8-4 Passenger Set #766 w3.0. \$1.299.95 NKP 2-8-4 Preight Set #750 w3.0. \$1.299.95 NKP 2-8-4 Passenger Set #766 w3.0. \$1.299.95 NAW J #612 Steam Engine w3.0. \$1.999.95 N&W J #619 Passenger Set #607 \$1,249.95 UP Big Boy 4-8-8-4 Oil Burner #4014 w/3.0. \$1,499.95 NYC 4-8-4 J1 w 3.0. \$1.999.95
20-3544-1 20-3549-1 20-3554-1 20-3563-1 20-3563-1 20-3569-1 20-3570-1 20-3573-1 20-3575-1 20-3582-1 20-3582-1	Reading 4.8-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Mitn & Reading 4.8-4 T1 Steam Freight Set W/3.0. \$1,025.95 Western Maryland 2.8-0 H9 Freight Set w/3.0. \$949.95 PRR 2.8-0 H-10 w/3.0. \$949.95 NKP 2.8-4 Berkshire #755 w/3.0. \$1,099.95 NKP 2.8-4 Passenger Set #766 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 NKP 2.8-4 Preight Set #750 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 N&W J#612 Steam Engine w/3.0. \$1,099.95 N&W J W/3.0 Passenger Set #607 \$1,249.95 UP Big Boy 4-8-8-4 Oil Bumer #4014 w/3.0. \$1,499.95 NYC 4-6-4 J1e w/3.0. \$1,099.95 Boston & Albany 4-6-4 J1e w/3.0. \$1,099.95 Boston & Albany 4-6-4 J1e w/3.0. \$1,099.95 Boston & Albany 4-6-4 J1e w/3.0. \$1,099.95
20-3544-1 20-3549-1 20-3554-1 20-3563-1 20-3563-1 20-3569-1 20-3570-1 20-3573-1 20-3574-1 20-3575-1 20-3582-1 20-3583-2 20-3584-1	Reading 4.8-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Mth & Reading 4.8-4 T1 Steam Freight Set W/3.0
20-3544-1 20-3549-1 20-3554-1 20-3563-1 20-3569-1 20-3570-1 20-3570-1 20-3573-1 20-3575-1 20-3583-2 20-3584-1 20-3584-1	Reading 4.8-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Min & Reading 4-8-4 T1 Steam Freight Set W/3.0. \$1,025.95 Western Maryland 2.8-0 H9 Freight Set w/3.0. \$949.95 PRR 2-8-0 H-10 w/3.0. \$949.95 PRR 2-8-0 H-10 w/3.0. \$1,099.95 NKP 2-8-4 Berkshire #755 w/3.0. \$1,099.95 NKP 2-8-4 Passenger Set #766 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 NKP 2-8-4 Freight Set #750 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 N&W 1 w/3.0 Passenger Set #607. \$1,299.95 N&W J w/3.0 Passenger Set #607. \$1,249.95 NYC 4-6-4 J1e w/3.0. \$1,099.95 NYC 4-6-4 J1e w/3.0. \$1,099.95 NYC 4-6-4 J1e w/3.0. \$1,099.95 NYC 4-6-4 J1e Passenger Set w/3.0. \$1,099.95
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20-3544-1 20-3554-1 20-3563-1 20-3567-1 20-3568-1 20-3569-1 20-3570-1 20-3573-1 20-3574-1 20-3582-1 20-3583-2 20-3583-2 20-3588-1 20-3588-1 20-3588-1	Reading 4.8-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Min & Reading 4-8-4 T1 Steam Freight Set W/3.0. \$1,025.95 Western Maryland 2.8-0 H9 Freight Set w/3.0. \$1,229.95 Western Maryland 2.8-0 H9 Freight Set w/3.0. \$4,99.95 PRR 2-8-0 H-10 w/3.0. \$829.95 NKP 2-8-4 Bassenger Set #766 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 NKP 2-8-4 Passenger Set #766 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 NKP 2-8-4 Freight Set #750 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 N&W J #612 Steam Engine w/3.0. \$1,099.95 N&W J w/3.0 Passenger Set #607 \$1,249.95 UP Big Boy 4-8-8-4 Ol Burner #4014 w/3.0. \$1,999.95 NYC 4-6-4 J1e w/3.0. \$1,099.95 NYC 4-6-4 J1e Fassenger Set w/3.0. \$1,099.95 NYC 4-6-4 J1e Freight Set w/3.0. \$1,249.95 NYC 4-6-6 J1e Freight Set w/3.0. \$1,249.95 New Haven EP-5 w/3.0 (McGinnis Yellow) \$4,19.95 PRB RB-1E-fettir Red Roff Rats w/3.0 \$60.5 \$60.5
20-3544-1 20-3549-1 20-3563-1 20-3563-1 20-3563-1 20-3569-1 20-3570-1 20-3570-1 20-3575-1 20-3575-1 20-3582-1 20-3583-2 20-3584-1 20-3588-1 20-35680-1 30-1413-1	Reading 4.8-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Min & Reading 4.8-4 T1 Steam Freight Set W/3.0. \$1,025.95 Western Maryland 2.8-0 H9 Freight Set w/3.0. \$949.95 PRR 2.8-0 H-10 w/3.0. \$1,229.95 WKP 2-8-4 Berkshire #755 w/3.0. \$1,099.95 NKP 2.8-4 Passenger Set #766 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 NKP 2.8-4 Passenger Set #766 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 NKP 2.8-4 Freight Set #755 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 N&W J #612 Steam Engine w/3.0. \$1,299.95 N&W J w/3.0 Passenger Set #607. \$1,299.95 NWO 4/6-4 J1e w/3.0. \$1,099.95 NYC 4/6-4 J1e W/3.0. \$1,099.95 NYC 4/6-4 J1e Passenger Set w/3.0. \$1,299.95 NWC 4/6-4 J1e Passenger Set w/3.0. \$1,249.95 NYC 4/6-4 J1e Passenger Set w/3.0. \$1,249.95 NWC 4/6-4 J1e Freight Set w/3.0. \$1,249.95 NWC 4/6-4 J1e Freight Set w/3.0. \$1,249.95 NWC 4/6-4 J1e Reserver W/6 w
20-3544-1 20-3549-1 20-3554-1 20-3563-1 20-3563-1 20-3570-1 20-3570-1 20-3573-1 20-3573-1 20-3574-1 20-3583-2 20-3585-1 20-3588-1 20-35862-1 20-35862-1 20-35862-1 20-35862-1 20-3588-1	Reading 4.8-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Min & Reading 4-8-4 T1 Steam Freight Set W/3.0. \$1,025.95 Western Maryland 2-8-0 H9 Freight Set w/3.0. \$1,229.95 Western Maryland 2-8-0 H9 Freight Set w/3.0. \$49.95 PRR 2-8-0 H-10 w/3.0. \$829.95 NKP 2-8-4 Berkshire #755 w/3.0. \$1,099.95 NKP 2-8-4 Passenger Set #766 w/3.0. \$1,249.95 NKP 2-8-4 Freight Set #750 w/3.0. \$1,249.95 N&W J #612 Steam Engine w/3.0. \$1,299.95 N&W J #612 Steam Engine w/3.0. \$1,299.95 N&W J #612 Steam Engine w/3.0. \$1,299.95 NW J w/3.0 Passenger Set #607. \$1,249.95 UP Big Boy 4-8-8-4 Olf Burner #4014 w/3.0. \$1,499.95 NYC 4-6-4 J1e w/3.0. \$1,099.95 NYC 4-6-4 J1e Freight Set w/3.0. \$1,249.95 NYC 4-6-4 Steam Engine w/3.0. \$695.95 CB&Q 4-6-4 Steam Engine w/2.0 New \$379.95 CB&Q 4-6-4 Steam Engine w/2.0 New \$379.95
20-3544-1 20-3549-1 20-35549-1 20-3563-1 20-3563-1 20-3569-1 20-3570-1 20-3574-1 20-3574-1 20-3582-1 20-3583-2 20-3588-1 20-3588-1 20-3588-1 20-3588-1 20-3588-1 20-3588-1 20-3588-1 20-3588-1 20-3588-1 20-3588-1 20-3588-1	Reading 4.8-4 Steam Engine #2100 w/3.0.\$1,025.95 Blue Min & Reading 4-8-4 T1 Steam Freight Set W/3.0. \$1,025.95 Western Maryland 2.8-0 H9 Freight Set w/3.0. \$1,229.95 Western Maryland 2.8-0 H9 Freight Set w/3.0. \$49.95 PRR 2-8-0 H-10 w/3.0. \$1,229.95 NKP 2-8-4 Passenger Set #766 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 NKP 2-8-4 Peright Set #750 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 NKP 2-8-4 Freight Set #750 w/3.0. \$1,299.95 N&W 1-24-0 Passenger Set #607. \$1,299.95 N&W 1-24-0 Passenger Set #607. \$1,299.95 NYC 4-6-4 J1e W/3.0. \$1,099.95 NYC 4-6-4 J1e W/3.0. \$1,099.95 NYC 4-6-4 J1e Passenger Set w/3.0. \$1,299.95 NYC 4-6-4 J1e Freight Set #750. NYC 4-6-4 J1e Freight Set W/3.0. \$1,249.95 NYC 4-6-4 J1e W/3.0.
	Leland Detroit Mono Rail Set w/3.0
20-3544-1 20-3549-1 20-3554-1 20-3563-1 20-3563-1 20-3570-1 20-3570-1 20-3573-1 20-3578-1 20-3582-1 20-3582-1 20-3585-1 20-3585-1 30-5680-1 30-5680-1 30-1614-1 30-1621-1	DM&I 2-6-6-6 Imperial Allegheny w/3.0\$629.95
30-1614-1 30-1621-1	DM&I 2-6-6-6 Imperial Allegheny w/3.0\$629.95 SP Daylight 4-8-4 Steamer w/quillable whistle w/3.0.
30-1614-1 30-1621-1	DM&I 2-6-6-6 Imperial Allegheny w/3.0\$629.95 SP Daylight 4-8-4 Steamer w/quillable whistle w/3.0.
30-1614-1 30-1621-1	DM&I 2-6-6-6 Imperial Allegheny w/3.0\$629.95 SP Daylight 4-8-4 Steamer w/quillable whistle w/3.0.
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30-1614-1 30-1621-1	DM&I 2-6-6-6 Imperial Allegheny w/3.0\$629.95 SP Daylight 4-8-4 Steamer w/quillable whistle w/3.0.
30-1614-1 30-1621-1	DM&I 2-6-6-6 Imperial Allegheny w/3.0\$629.95 SP Daylight 4-8-4 Steamer w/quillable whistle w/3.0.
30-1614-1 30-1621-1	DM&I 2-6-6-6 Imperial Allegheny w/3.0\$629.95 SP Daylight 4-8-4 Steamer w/quillable whistle w/3.0.
30-1614-1 30-1621-1	DM&I 2-6-6-6 Imperial Allegheny w/3.0\$629.95 SP Daylight 4-8-4 Steamer w/quillable whistle w/3.0.
30-1614-1 30-1621-1 \$425.00 30-1632-1 30-1638-1 30-1642-1 30-1647-1 30-1650-1E 30-20128-1/3 30-20130-1/3	DMAI 2-6-6-6 Imperial Allegheny w/3.0 \$629.95 SP Daylight 4-8-4 Steamer w/quillable whistle w/3.0. Pittsburgh & Lake Erie 2-8-4 #9400 w/3.0 \$409.95 B&O 4-6-0 Camelback w/3.0 \$399.95 PRR 2-8-2 L1s Mikado w/3.0 \$399.95 Erie Triplex Freight Set w/3.0 \$729.95 SP 4-8-8-2 Cab Forward Freight Set w/3.0 \$799.95 NYC Alco PA ABA w/3.0 \$399.95 American Freedom PA ABA w/3.0 \$399.95 American Freedom PA ABA w/3.0 New \$385.00 Amtrak Genesis Diesel w/3.0 #156 Like New \$239.95
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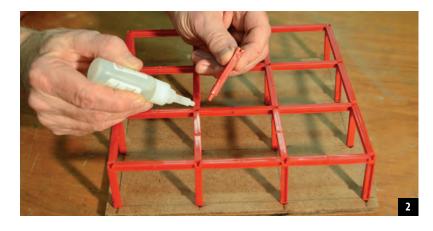
## **Hi-Rise Girders for** the Steel Monkeys

**Article and Photos by Bill Bramlage** 

I am always looking for a photo of a building that is eyecatching, easy to build, appropriate in scale, and available at reasonable cost. My Tower City buildings located within three to four feet of the viewer are scratchbuilt or kitbashed utilizing O scale kit parts. The top floors of buildings taller than ten stories and buildings more than four feet away from the viewer will have a slight decrease in the size of the doors, windows, and general details in order to create the illusion of distance. Look at any photo of a real-world large city and notice that the foreground structures appear larger and the more distant buildings and bridges appear somewhat smaller. This forced perspective is an important element in layout construction, regardless of scale.

While browsing the post-holiday sale items at Toys "R" Us, I discovered the Power City Construction kits for kids ages eight and above (Photo 1). That is in my age range, so I gave the Power City 160-piece Extension Pack a try. These kits sell for around \$8 per kit. The resulting steel girder structure measures 2" between floors, which would amount to an 8' height per floor in 1/4" scale. This would be slightly under size for a front row O scale building. However, the scale of this model steel skeleton looks just about perfect when positioned four or more feet away from the viewer and is especially effective when used as a backdrop building.

To build the girder system, I began with a predrilled Masonite base. One drop of CA cement was used at the molded pin at the



base of the vertical girder (Photo 2). This location of the adhesive will lock together all the vertical and horizontal components of the structure.

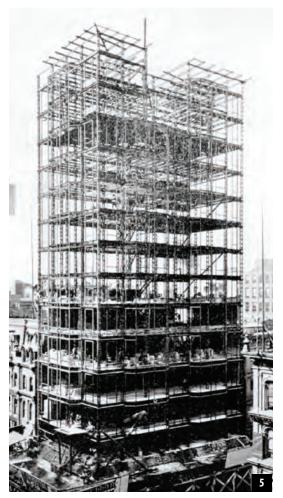
The open appearance of the girders and I-beams trimmed out with construction LED lights results in an eye-catching focus in the busy city landscape. I use this steel girder framework both as a separate backdrop structure and also as a girder framework in the upper half of a partially constructed building (Photo 3). In Photo 4 a completed girder structure has been added to the top of a partially completed building constructed with Korber parts. This combination of Korber panels and steel girder parts effectively simulates a building under construction. After construction lighting has been added to the building that has been detailed with a construction crane and supplies, the structure becomes an interesting focus in a city block.

Modern steel girder engineering began during the industrial revolution in the late 1800s. In 1880 most buildings had exterior weight-bearing walls, and by the year 1900, most construction involved steel framework. In the early

1900s, photos of buildings under construction look very similar to the open-girder system of this Power City Construction kit (Photo 5). In those early days, the entire steel framework was completed before the floor and wall structures were built. Photos from those early days show no safety fences and no floor structure. This open-girder cage system would not be compliant with the many structural and safety regulations mandated by today's building codes. Steel girder structures produced from these Power City kits are visually interesting, are easy to build, and have an acceptable size. The scale of the girder buildings blends perfectly with the completed skyscrapers of Tower City. These unfinished steel girder buildings are frozen in time. Construction crews work every day, but these Tower City buildings will always remain "under construction."













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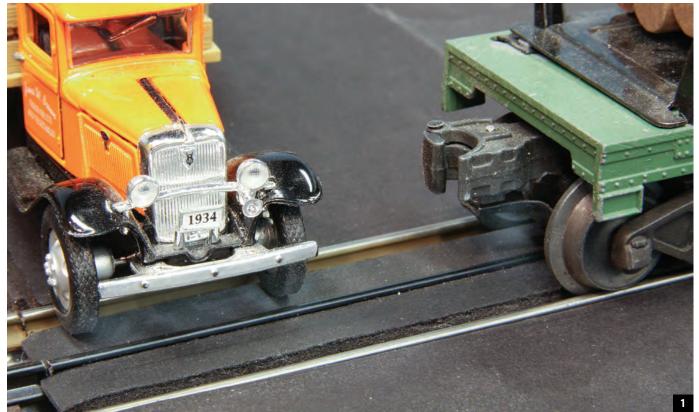




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### **Building a Layout: Grade Crossings** on Curved Track

When you make grade crossings (where a road crosses the tracks) on a train layout, it is always best to make them on straight sections of track (Photo 1). If you're using GarGraves or Ross track, the height of the center rail above the ties is always .215", or just a little over 7/32". That makes constructing grade crossings pretty easy due to one nice simple fact. If you use 3/16" thick foam core board for the road filler material between the rails, the actual thickness measures out to be just about .180". The rail stands up .215", so the rail will stick out above the road filler material by .045", or just a hair above 1/32".

That little 1/32" will help ensure that the locomotive's center-rail pickup roller maintains good electrical contact with the center rail while it goes over the road. Even if the roller is slightly worn, as long as the roller doesn't have a gap deeper than 1/32", it will still pass over the grade crossing and stay in full contact with the rail.

The width of the foam core board filler material between the center rail and the outside rail must leave a wheel flange slot at least .170" (just under 3/16") to pass wheel flanges through the grade crossing smoothly. Both modern-style fast-angle wheels and postwar-style wheels will pass easily through a slot of that width. Don't forget to bend down the ends of the foam core board to allow a slight ramp for operating car slide shoes to jump up and ride smoothly over the grade crossing. But reality being what it is, it sometimes just isn't possible to make a grade crossing on straight tracks. My layout has just such a problem. Due to space restrictions, I ended up with a two-lane road that must cross right over a double-curve main line as it runs through town (Photo 2).







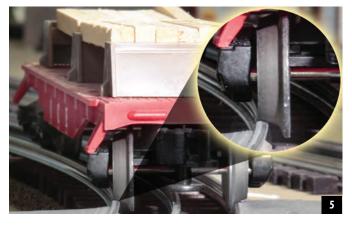








Photo 3 shows how I made the road come up to the outside rails of the grade crossing by gluing down the foam core board to the tops of the ties on the curves. In Photo 4, I've finished off the surface of the road with Woodland Scenics #ST1453 Asphalt Top Coat paint. This is wonderful stuff that makes modeling road surfaces easy. Photo 5 shows something very interesting and very important about what happens to fast-angle wheel sets when they go through a curve. If you look closely, you can actually see that the wheel set rides up on the outside of the curve until the outer wheel flange catches the outside rail. Because of the angle on the wheels, that actually adds to the realism, too. It will cause the railcar to lean over just a tiny bit as it goes through the curve simulating banking of the track, also called superelevation. As you can see, the result is the inside wheel actually pulls away from the rail leaving a gap between the wheel flange and the inside rail. That gap becomes very important when you make a grade crossing on curved track because you have to allow for a wider gap on the inside of the curve than you do on the outside of the curve.

My tests and measurements show that the wheel flange gap on the inside rail on a curved track needs to be every bit of .185" wide, a little more than 3/16", while the outer rail needs only a gap of about .130", or 1/8" wide. Anything less on the inside of the curve









will result in some wheel flanges catching on the road material, jumping out of the flange slot, and derailing the train.

The foam core board that fills up the area between the center rail and the wheel flange gap also needs to bend a little to form a curve as it follows along on the track curve. I have found that if you cut foam core board wide enough to fill the whole gap between the center rail and the wheel slot, it then does not want to bend enough to follow the curve of the track without buckling up on the surface. That just isn't going to work.

The cure is to cut the strip of foam core board narrow enough to allow it to bend easily to follow the track curve and then glue it down so that you can control the wheel flange gap as you go. Sure, that will end up leaving a gap between the center rail and the foam core board, but don't worry about it. I have a cure for that, as you will see.

When you cut the foam core board filler strips, make them only 5/16" wide (Photo 6). That is narrow enough to gently







bend the foam core board filler strip to follow the curve of the track without buckling up on the surface. When you cut them to length, make them an inch or so too long for the width of the grade crossing itself. On one end of each strip, cut a bevel (Photo 7) so it ends up looking like the ones shown in Photo 8. Then notice how much past the width of the grade crossing the strip needs to go, and cut the strip to the length needed to allow the remaining end to be beveled.

In Photo 9, I've done a trial run using some steel T pins (Woodland Scenics #ST1432 Foam Nails) to force the foam core board strip into a curve to follow the curve of the track. When you push the T pin through the foam core board and into the track tie, the material follows the curve of the track very nicely without buckling up on the surface.

Make a gap spacing tool out of material that is 3/16" thick. I used a stick of plastic that I found to be 3/16" thick. Then put down a bead of Elmer's glue on the ties near the center rail of the











foam core board and the center rail. If it is too thick, add just a drop of water and stir to a thinner consistency. Smooth off the top of the Smooth-It paste so that the filler comes out the exact same height as the top surface of the foam core board. I used a coffee stir stick to fill in the gap and a chisel-blade hobby knife as a small putty knife to smooth off the top surface (Photo 14). Keep the edge of the knife tight against the center rail as you sweep away the excess paste. Be sure to trim off the excess paste on the ends with a knife or the rounded end of the wooden stir stick.

inside of the curve (Photo 10). Using your gap tool to space the foam core board away from the outer rail, push in a T pin through the foam core board and into the wooden tie (Photo 11). I found that I could do that on every other tie. Later I found that it was just as easy to do it on every tie, making sure that the gap remained the same all the way along. When I finished my double-track main line, it looked like what you see in Photo 12. In the inset, you can see the unwanted ugly gap that results on both sides of the center rail. This was necessary due to the need for the foam core board strips to be narrow enough to bend smoothly and follow the curve of the track. When the glue has dried, carefully remove all the T pins.

When the paste filler has hardened, sand the surface smooth with a sanding stick designed to fit in small spaces (Photo 15). Sand it so that the filler material is at the same level as the top of the foam core board filler. Also be sure that you have that center rail still sticking out that all-important 1/32" above the top of the pavement height.

Photo 13 shows Woodland Scenics Smooth-It #ST1452. This is what you will use to fill the gap on both sides of the center rail. Mix it half-and-half with water, pushing it in the gap between the

To finish this project, paint the surface of your grade crossing using some more of the asphalt top coat (Photos 16 and 17). Be sure to wipe the paint off the top of the center rail and the wheel rails with your finger to keep the rails clean for good electrical contact. When the paint dries, it should look like the grade crossing in Photo 18.

Add some white striping for the road edges (1/16" wide Chartpak Tape #BG6210M or 1/8" wide #BG12510M found on-line and in art supply stores). The finished result is shown in Photos 19 and 20. Grade crossings that look good and perform well are an important touch on a train layout. It's another part of the illusion that makes the whole scene a lot more believable.

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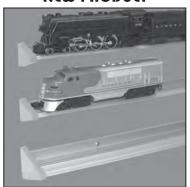
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### The Helper Engine

George Brown





### From Ridiculous to Sublime

Over my years as a product reviewer, I've worked with a broad cross-section of locomotives from just about all the major suppliers. As can be expected, these products were all great, but a few stood above all the rest for one reason or another.

With most of the OGR staff at last week's fall TCA meet in York, here at the OGR Southwest Office, also irreverently referred to as the Fort Comanche outpost, we troops held our own train meet resulting in a vote for the most ridiculous and the most sublime locomotives reviewed over the past decade. The envelopes please!

For the most ridiculous product of the decade, the hands down winner is...the MTH Coors Light Silver Bullet Train Set from Run 225 (Photo 1). The Coors train garnered an instantaneous nomination as well as an undisputed and unanimous vote. It was a technologically complex train set with its outlandish locomotive plus three freight cars that were styled like a huge beverage cooler one might see in the back of a bistro or meeting hall. The set was actually well engineered and it ran great. Aside from the brilliant chrome plating that necessitated donning my Ray-Bans before switching on the floodlights for the photo shoot, it was also terminally weird appearing and sounding, just like the train in the Coors Light beer ads. Each car had a large door on one side that opened on command from the DCS handheld controller. When the door opened, smoke representing a cold vapor billowed out of the cold blue illuminated interior of the car with simulated cases of beer stacked inside on pallets.

For our sublime category, the cornucopia of really great locomotives to choose from created several spirited discussions among the troops—actually, more than several. The sheer volume of nominations that were called out quickly became unmanageable, and also rather noisy, which ultimately precipitated a

compromise. There would be both a winner and a runner-up in two categories: diesel and steam. To be considered, a nominee had to be 1:48 scale with exceptional detail and excellent running characteristics. To quote the Google definition of sublime, the winners and runner-ups would be "of such excellence, grandeur, or beauty as to inspire great admiration or awe."

After several rounds of votes, the winner of the decade's most sublime model of a diesel locomotive is the

Atlas O Lackawanna Phase 1 F3 reviewed in Run 229 (Photo 2). In a unique marketing paradigm for 3-rail O gauge locomotives, Atlas offered powered and dummy A and B units as individual items. Several mixes of powered and dummy units from one A unit to a bankrupting number of A and B units could be assembled, depending of course on the size of the hobbyist's wallet or credit card limit. All units were correctly numbered, and B units were only available in road names that actually owned the real ones. Both A and B units had die-cast frames and also featured working diaphragms that looked





and worked great between the closely coupled multiple units. Each unit had prototypically correct external options, such as stacks for a steam generator, according to its road name and unit number. Additionally, A units were shipped with a scale pilot and coupler that the hobbyist could install if wanted. Scale fidelity was excellent, and each unit was acoustically sealed for awesome sound from the Lionel-licensed RailSounds system. Best of all, our evaluation lashup of powered A and B units plus a dummy A was fabulous on the rails.

For the runner-up diesel, the vote went to the MTH Premier Line Santa Fe Dash 8-40CW from Run 254 (Photo 3). The model's details included opening crew doors plus separate external air pipes and electrical conduits, see-through screens and grilles, hand-painted valve handles, and more. Then there's the glorious Super Fleet color scheme that was perfection in the painter's art. For a finishing touch, the Proto-Sound 2.0 recording of a real GE 7FDL16 diesel startup was awesome. As to the Dash 8's operation under DCS control, what can I say—it was great!

Limited-production, hand-built brass locomotives frequently have a strong advantage in detail over similar die-cast steam locomotives. With that stated, the vote for steam locomotive of the decade elected the exquisitely detailed and excellent running Y6b from 3rd Rail, reviewed in Run 242 (Photo 4). Nearly indiscernible attributes like sprung driver journals with realistically articulating side rods were hard to beat, and the big N&W Mallet had two sets of them. In fact, all the axle journals on the engine and tender were sprung.

Hangers on the boiler that supported the running boards were yet another in a long list of subtle and realistic details. One feature that

is totally out of sight is 3rd Rail's signature drive mechanism that uses a large Pittman motor to turn a parallel drive shaft through a toothed carbon fiber belt. Best of all, the drive shaft runs in ball bearings. Electronics included the then-popular Engineer-On-Board speed control with the Lionel-licensed TMCC and RailSounds 4.0.

Capturing a close second place in the vote was the Lionel Vision Line Big Boy from Run 278, a technological masterpiece with its copious number of standard and innovative operating features and details (Photo 5). One of these operating features was the simulated coal load in the tender bunker that visually dropped as the engine ran, with the rate of the drop increasing or decreasing depending on how far the virtual throttle was opened. With its Legacy control and realistic RailSounds, the Big Boy put on an outstanding show on the rails and also presented an impressive stature when on display. As a built-to-order locomotive, its price tag was equally...uh, impressive.

One last honor that wasn't on the ballot for the ridiculous to sublime vote was this product reviewer's all-time favorite O gauge locomotives. This category caught all the voting troops by surprise because I reviewed the engines more than 10 years ago. The group of course protested vigorously, but you see, as the reviewer I had

the "super vote." My absolutely favorite set is the three-unit Atlas O diesel lashup in Photo 6. All three units were actually from Atlas O's second release in 2006, which we didn't review. The prototypes for the two powered Dash 8-40BWs and the dummy GP60B decorated in the Santa Fe Super Fleet livery were the locomotives that rekindled my interest in real and O gauge trains in the early 1990s.







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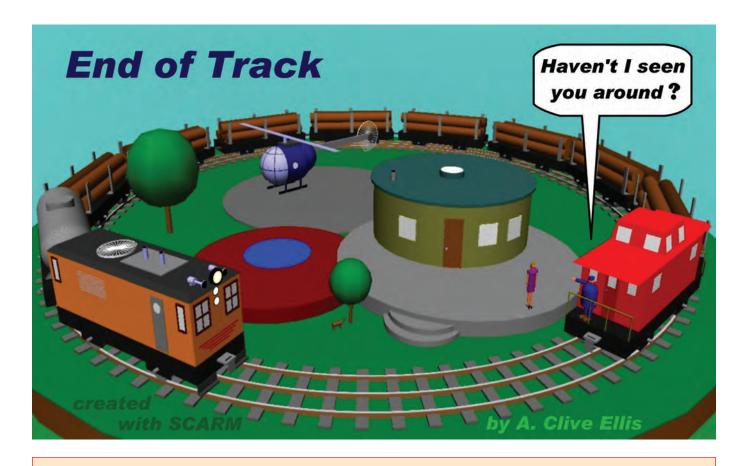




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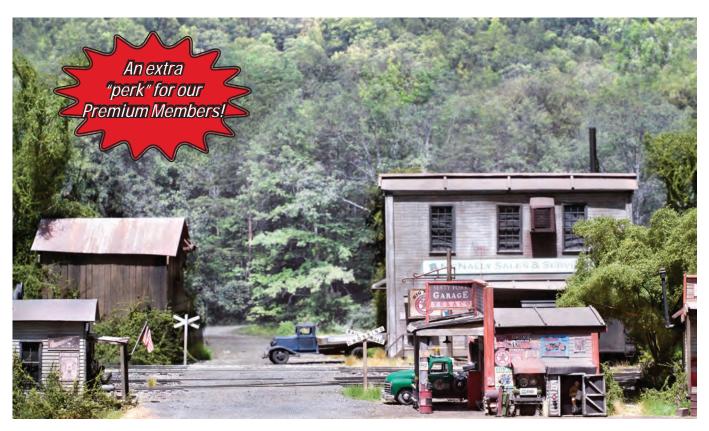
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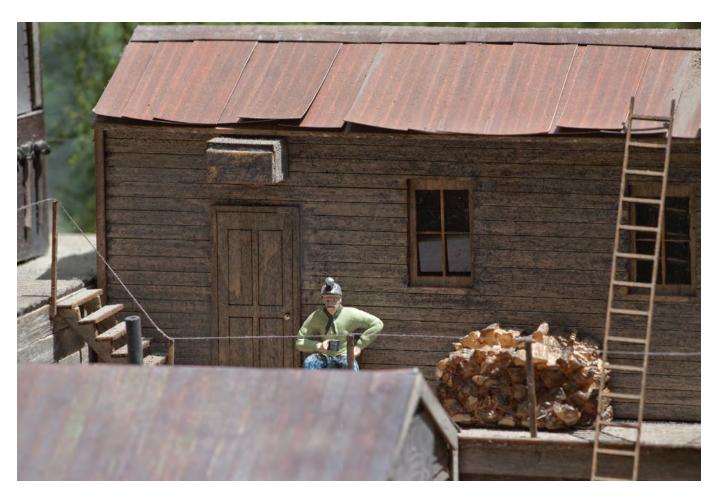


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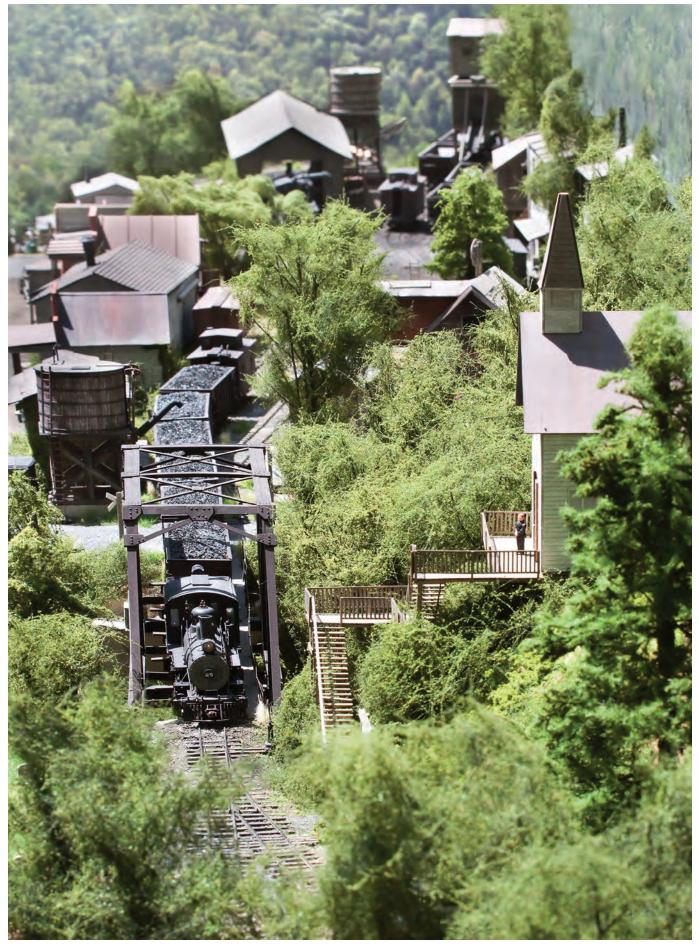


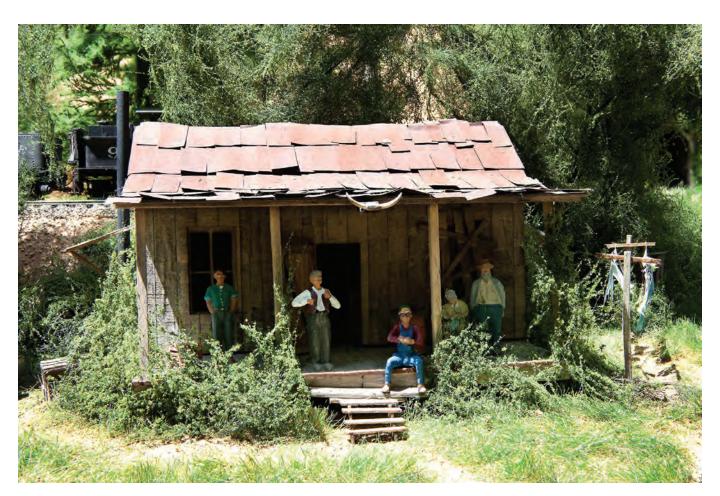






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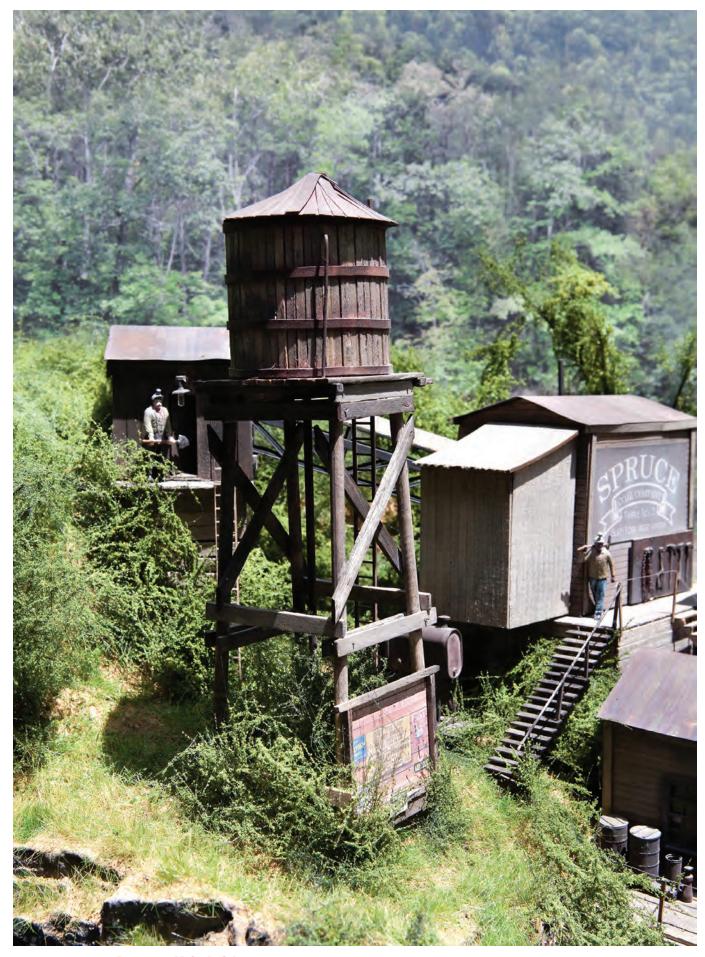




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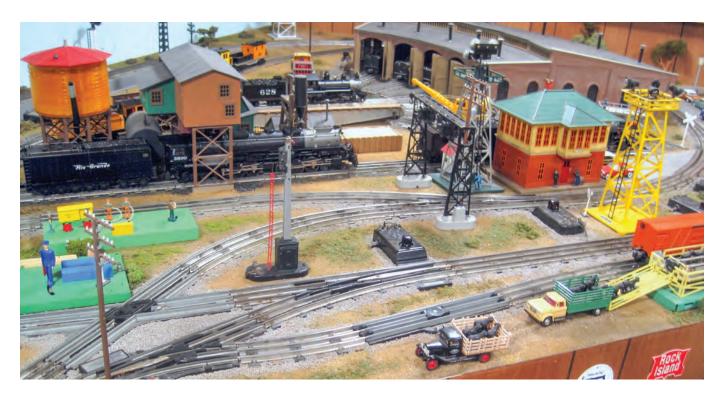


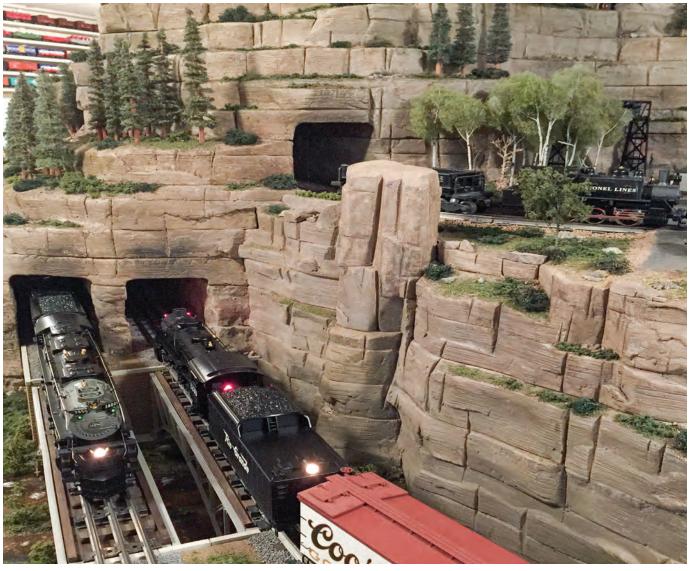
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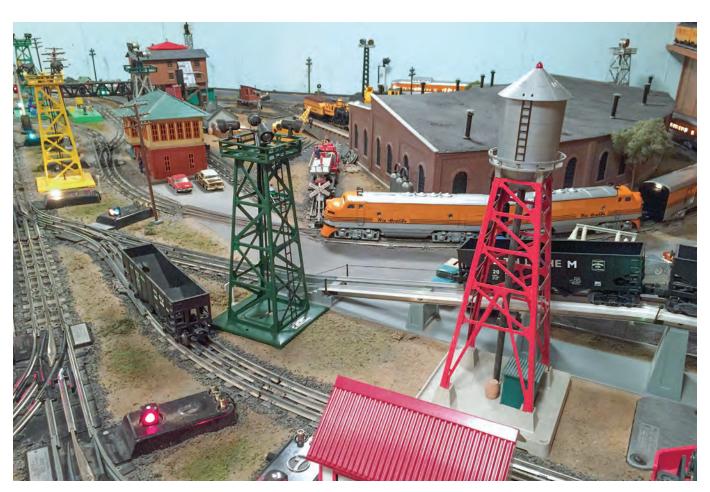








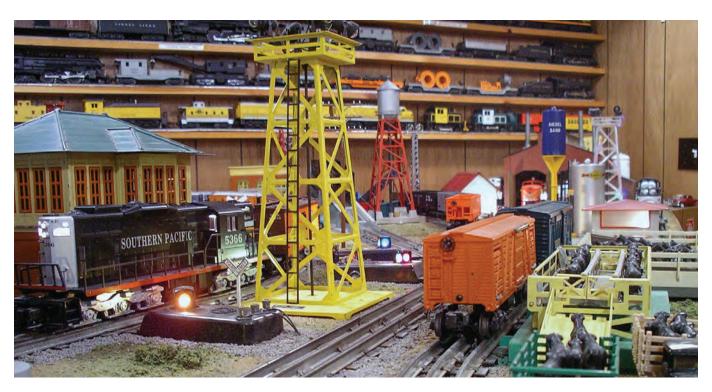






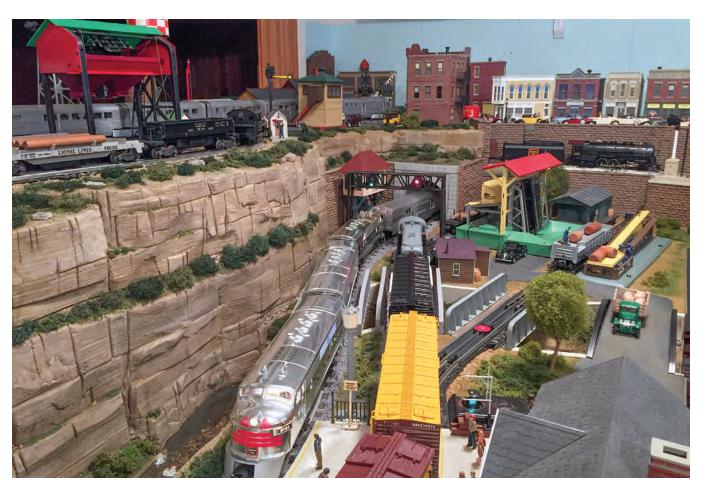








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