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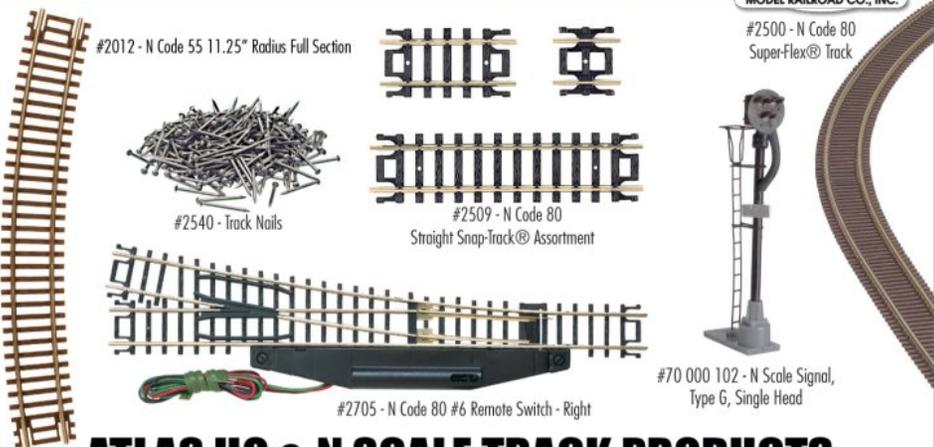
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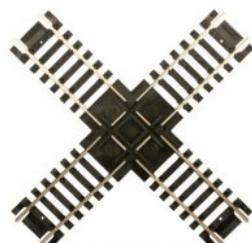
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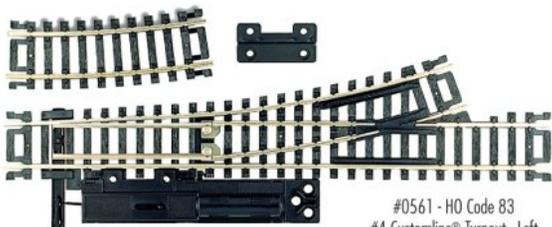
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Model Railroad Hobbyist |

February 2024 | #168

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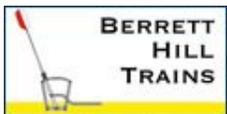
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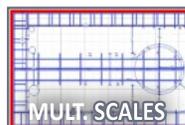
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PETER RANDERSON



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Compiled by the MRH STAFF



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RICHARD BALE and JEFF SHULTZ



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PUBLISHER'S MUSINGS



Model Railroad Hobbyist | February 2024

VIEW READER
COMMENTS

JOE FUGATE: WHY READY-TO-RUN IS NOT
KILLING HOBBY CRAFTSMANSHIP ...

IT'S COMMON TO SEE SOMEONE POST IN ONLINE FORUMS THAT READY-TO-RUN (RTR) HAS KILLED HOBBY CRAFTSMANSHIP. Let's delve into *why* this is definitely not true. Ironically, this notion has been around since the 1960s. Just for fun several years ago, I looked through letters to the editor in *Model Railroader* from the 1960s because I wanted to see what modelers were discussing back then.

One of the biggest concerns for modelers back then was hand-wringing over ready-to-run plastic models "killing the hobby." Reminds me of what the wisest man who ever lived, King Solomon, once said: "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun."

Kinds of model railroaders

It's true that in the middle of the 20th century, train sets were once a fad toy and every kid wanted to have one so they could run a train around the base of the Christmas tree. Even today, there's a percentage of the public that still sees running a train around the base of the Christmas tree as being a holiday tradition.

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The trainset crowd consists largely of what I would call casual model railroaders. Fun is more important than realism to this group of model train enthusiasts.

These days, this group is largely Thomas the Tank Engine fans, Lego Trains fans, or Polar Express fans. Google search trends show these train topics remain quite popular with the general public, especially around the holidays.

While all these genres of toy trains do serve as a way to introduce some to more serious scale model railroading, I would also say that the trainset crowd population has dwindled somewhat since toy trains were a fad holiday gift in the 1950s and 60s. Train shows still cater to this more toy train side of the hobby today when it comes to enticing the general public to attend.

I don't think the train set crowd ever represented the craftsman side of the hobby when trainsets were a popular fad toy, nor do they represent the craftsman side of the hobby today.

Meanwhile, I think the scale model railroading crowd has been fairly consistent as a interest group distinct from the train set crowd ever since the hobby blossomed in the 50s and 60s. I would argue that this more serious group has never been a huge part of the total population, even when train sets *were* a popular fad toy.

For purposes of this discussion, let's call this group of serious scale model railroaders the model railroading *hobby core*. These are the ones who I believe folks mean when they say RTR is killing hobby craftsmanship.

The hobby core and RTR

For the hobby core (the serious scale model railroaders), realism is paramount. In the hobby core, the trend over the last several decades accurately representing real railroading has become very popular. Pure freelancing is less popular now among this group.

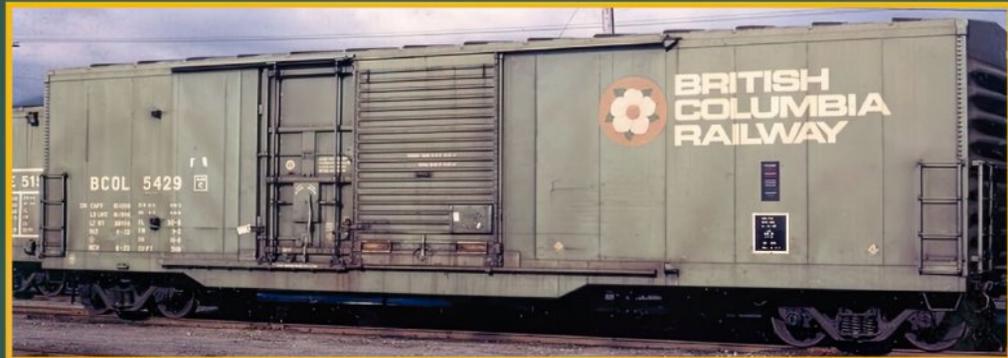


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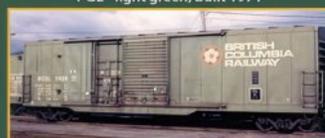



National Steel Car 5092 cf Combo Door Box Car 1971 - present





PGE - light green, built 1971



BCOL - light green, built 1972



BCOL - large italic lettering, built 1986



BCOL - 80,000 series, re-built 1990



The Pacific Great Eastern / British Columbia Railway received 1,785 of these boxcars from National Steel Car between 1971 and 1973, making them the most numerous boxcar on the railway. They were seen all across Canada and the United States in forest product service. From 1989 some were re-built for pulp service and many have continued in service with CN since 2004. North American Railcar Corporation will produce HO & N scale models representing the cars built in 1971 and 1972, and those re-built for pulp and forest product service.






PGE - dark green, light green door, built 1971



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BCOL - 100,000 series, re-built 1990 w/vents

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Modeling a real railroad accurately is now seen as the highest hobby goal by the hobby core. If you're going to freelance, then proto-freelancing is preferred.

If RTR is going to work for the hobby core, then you must be able to buy everything instead of building it. But if you're going to model a real railroad accurately right down to the locos, rolling stock, and structures, it doesn't take long to realize you *can't buy everything*. You will have to kitbash or scratchbuild some of your locos, rolling stock, and structures.

Thanks to RTR, it's possible to build a nice sized prototype-based layout in HO and *buy* a good portion of the models you need as to locos and rolling stock. Once you weather them and put them on the track, that only gets you part way there. The rest you must kitbash or scratchbuild.

More kitbashing/scratchbuilding, not less

Let me give you a personal example.

In building my prototype-based Southern Pacific layout, the Siskiyou Line, I am able to buy a lot of the SP equipment that goes on the track as RTR, that's true. But I need Tractive Effort Booster Units (TEBU slugs) for my Coos Bay coast branch (you can [see a TEBU here](#) in this issue]. I can't buy those RTR, so I need to heavily kitbash a couple U25B chassis units with a scratchbuilt shell in order to have a couple TEBU slugs I can run on the layout - I'm just trying to follow my prototype, remember!

Next, I need water cars for the layout to put on trains that climb a grade to be prototypically accurate in the summer months, which I model in my op sessions. I need at least six of those water cars. They sometimes get offered in brass for \$300 a car, which is not a price I'm willing to pay, so I must scratch build six, count 'em, *six* of these cars.

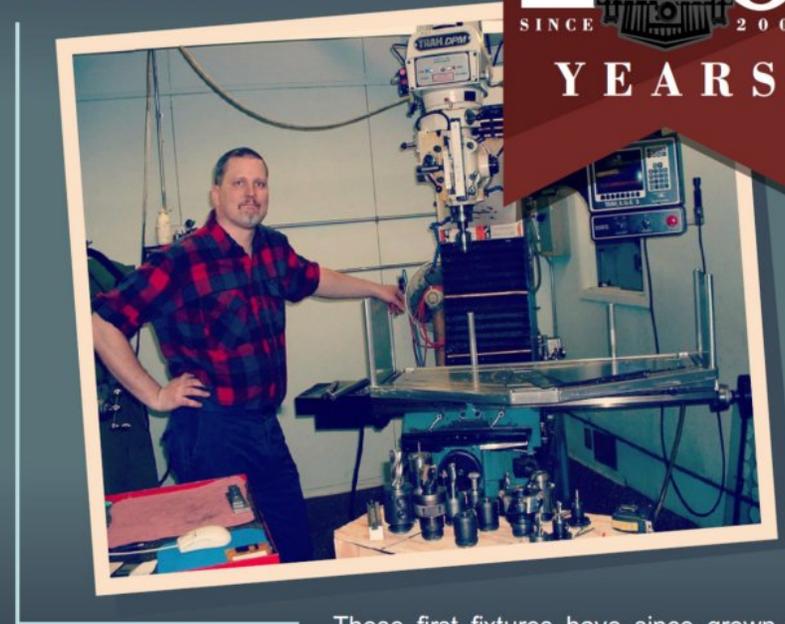
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I also can't buy all the cabooses I need (they don't make them in any scale, much less in HO), so I have maybe six to eight cabooses that I need to kitbash/scratchbuild because I can't just buy them.

I want to model an accurate wood chip train for my 1980s era, and I'll need maybe 20 wood chip cars in a style I can't buy anywhere. And on it goes. For me, roughly 20% of what I need to put on the track needs to be kitbashed or scratchbuilt.

Then there's a ton of signature structures and bridges that I need to scratchbuild for the layout, I can't buy those. That adds dozens more kitbashing / scratchbuilding projects to my list!

All RTR has done for me is made it possible for me to get a great start on my prototype-based layout in HO, but because I



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can do such a large layout now thanks to RTR, I literally have a hundred or more kitbashing/scratchbuilding projects I need to do to fully populate my layout.

What about other scales?

The idea that RTR may be reducing the need to scratchbuild stuff may seem valid on the surface for HO, but that quickly becomes a naive notion once you move beyond modeling in HO standard gauge.

Roughly two thirds of the hobby core models in HO standard gauge. The other one third of the hobby core models in some other scale or gauge.

Clearly, you can't buy as many RTR models once you get beyond HO standard gauge. So if for no other reason, a third of the hobby core simply can't do RTR as much as the HO modelers. *They have to* kitbash and scratchbuild more.

This means that for at least a third of the hobby, the notion that RTR is all you need is simply not true.

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Hard core craftsmanship

Some might say, "but kitbashing or simple scratchbuilding using a simple material like styrene is not hard-core craftsmanship. Hard core craftsmanship such as working in metal in the hobby is dead."

Okay, let's explore this idea of "hard-core craftsmanship."

I'm guessing this considers craftsman to be modelers who scratchbuild in brass, turn their own drivers on a lathe, and such. Okay, but I think there's a lot more to what constitutes craftsmanship.

Times have changed and more than a few hobby core modelers these days are designing and doing 3D printing of parts. Others have access to a laser cutter and are designing / cutting their own parts.

Still others are exploring CNC milling and cutting of parts.

Don't you think becoming savvy in computers and CAD drawing is 21st century craftsmanship? Is it only doing things the "primitive" way with only hand tools considered craftsmanship?

In the early days of the hobby, more than a few modelers built models out of cardstock – wasn't that craftsmanship too? The 21st century version of modeling with cardstock is still very much alive as building cardstock models from photo-realistic printouts on cardstock.

I'll never forget when I visited the Clever Models table at the Amherst Model Railroad Hobby show in Springfield, MA. The Clever Models folks had many nice structures on display and a modeler walked up, totally impressed with the structures. "How did you make such *great looking* models?"

One of the owners, David Miecznikowski, explained how they make photo-realistic images of the walls, roof and details on a computer, then you print it out and some simple assembly is all



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you need. The fellow suddenly looked extremely disappointed and he walked off without saying a word.

I know back in the middle of the 20th century, a “craftsman” modeler who might employ clever ways to shortcut the fabrication process with some special tools was hailed as a hero. Why is it that ultra low tech only qualifies as craftsmanship in some people’s minds?

In Summary

Bringing this back around to the original concept that RTR has killed craftsmanship in the hobby, I think you can see all RTR does is give you a starting point, especially if you’re in HO. From there, 21st century craftsmanship flourishes in the hobby core, more than ever. ☑

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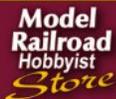
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February issue ...

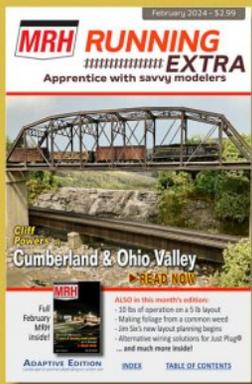


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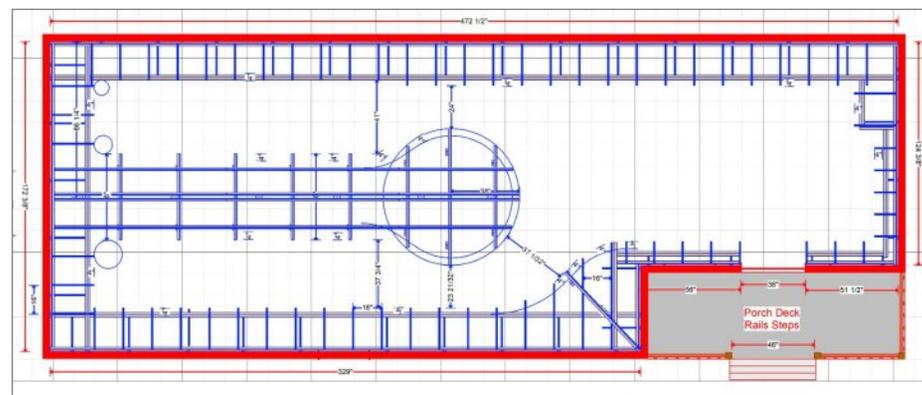
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Best of the
MRH FORUM
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mrhmag.com
THIS MONTH

Model Railroad Hobbyist | February 2024

Compiled by **JOE FUGATE**



Pushing the layout do-over button

MRH forum member **Ryan Boudreaux** started a new thread about his layout do-over. He says, "After much discussion and great ideas from the forum on my previous plan, and after reading several books, I've decided to start over from the ground up with a new plan. The work in progress plan is underway now ..."

Follow Ryan's progress via the link below.



[View the full thread on the MRH website](#)

► **MRH'S MONTHLY GREAT MODELER POSTS**

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1. MRH forum member Shawnee started a thread to discuss at what date did cabooses stop having roofwalks?

Caboose roofwalks?

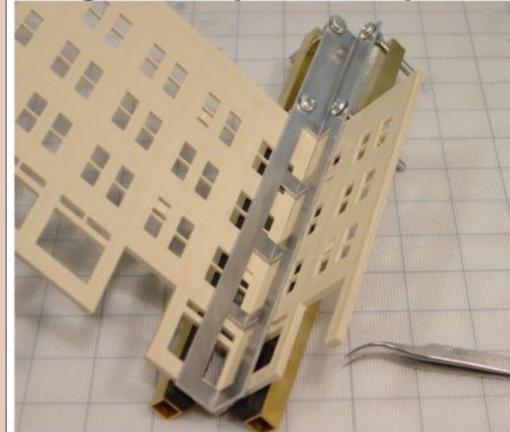
MRH forum member **Shawnee** kicked off a thread to discuss the if he could get away with cabooses not having roofwalks on a layout modeling the 1960s.

“I am aiming to model some 1958-1963 action, and am wondering if my roof walk-less cabooses will be an anachronism - something misplaced in time. Did all cabooses have roof walks prior to 1966, when the FRA roof walk removal edict was announced? Come to think of it, why did cabooses have roof walks to begin with? Why would employees need to scramble on the top of a caboose?”

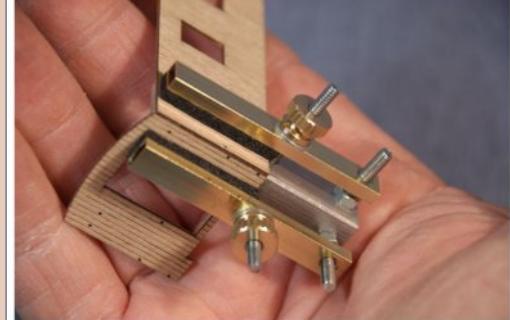
Several other MRH forum members have posted some interesting replies. Read the full thread for more!

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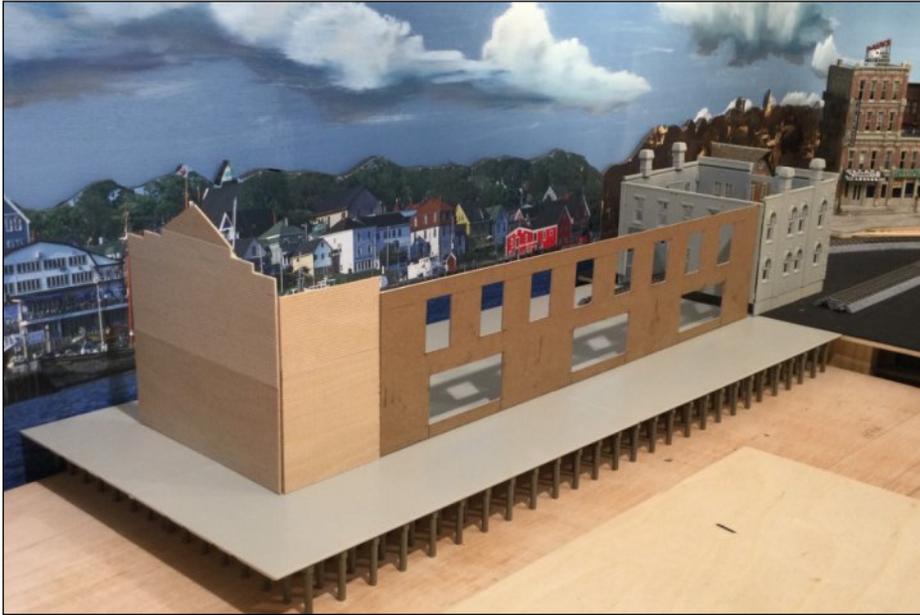
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BEST OF THE *MRH* FORUM | 3

2. *MRH* forum member **J Emerson** has recently done a restart on his Emerson Coast layout (layout restarts seem to be a theme this month), and he is documenting his new pier and warehouse build for us.

Pier and warehouse for the Emerson Coast

MRH author **J Emerson** is doing a new scene on his Emerson Coast layout.

“I’m constructing the large pier and accompanying warehouse that will sit adjacent to the train ferry. I’m putting the Walthers pier and crane kit to use for this project. I began by gluing four piers together to give me the length and width I’ll need. I made a few walls to see how this structure would fill the space.”

Follow along with this build at the link below.

View the full thread on the *MRH* website

Floquil/PollyScale stash running out?



MRH has mapped the old familiar colors to new readily-available acrylic paints.



MRH's Floquil / PollyScale Paint Equivalents Conversion Chart - 1						MRH's Floquil / PollyScale Paint Equivalents Conversion Chart - 2					
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Woodland Green/Black			MRH 4792	ML 29002 WMA 71.024	16-05	Railroad Teal Brown			MRH 4583	ML 29000 WMA 71.029	16-020* Closest match to Floquil 71.021 See 16-04
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Railcar White			MRH 4632	ML 29004 WMA 71.027	16-02	Road			MRH 4575	ML 29005 WMA 71.023	16-102
Going Black			MRH 4687	ML 29002 WMA 71.025	16-02	Concrete			MRH 4576	ML 29007 WMA 71.021 See 16-05	16-117
Concrete Red			MRH 4687	ML 29002 WMA 71.025	16-08	Light Concrete			MRH 4576	ML 29007 WMA 71.021 See 16-05	16-117* Closest match to Floquil 71.021 See 16-05

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3. MRH author **TimGarland** moved a couple years ago and he's journaling the process of building his new layout on the MRH forum.

The new Seaboard Central layout

MRH author **TimGarland** has been doing a journal on his new Seaboard Central layout since 2022. He moved and is now building a new version of his layout following TOMA-like modular construction method.

Tim's a real life railroader in his day job, so it's interesting to follow his layout planning, operating, and building methods. His TOMA-like building approach illustrates how to build a home layout using a modular approach.

Tim's a big fan of the ProtoThrottle and realistic op sessions. It's enlightening to how his modular methods allow the layout to become operational as early as possible.

Follow Tim's journal/ blog on the MRH forum for more!

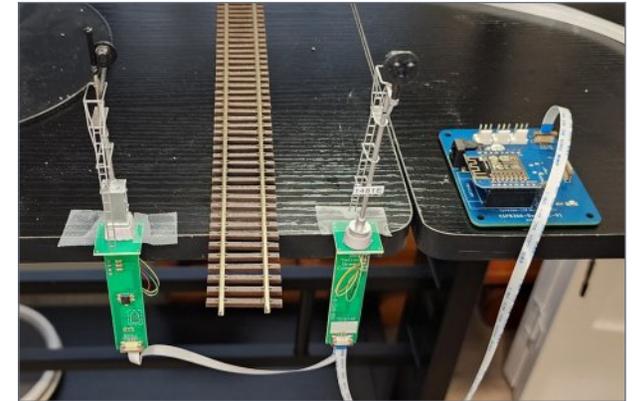
[View the full thread on the MRH website](#)

Monthly what's on your workbench thread

Every month kicks off a new What's on your workbench thread on the forum. Here's a couple of the more inspiring projects posted recently.

[View workbench thread on MRH website](#)

4. MRH forum member **BNML2** posted his signal testing project at the "workbench." This setup allows him to experiment with various mounting methods and to check out some of the signal circuitry.



5. **Ralph Renzetti** (CN6401) posted a structure project he's doing on the workbench thread. Ralph was fond of an out-of-production kit so he found a PDF copy of the instructions and is building his own kit!

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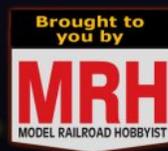
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WHAT'S NEAT

column



Model Railroad Hobbyist | February 2024

KEN PATTERSON COVERS THIS MONTH:



- BROADWAY LIMITED HO SCALE GP30s
- LAYOUT VISIT: PRAIRIE SCALE MODEL RAILROADERS
- JENNIFER KIRK VISITS THE TRAGO MILLS MODEL RAILWAY
- NEW PRODUCTS FROM BACHMANN



FEBRUARY 2024

WHAT'S NEAT with Ken Patterson

Prairie Scale Model Railroad layout

click to play video

PHOTOS AND VIDEO OF SUPERB MODELS

THIS MONTH, Ken shows off the product photos he's taken of new HO scale GP30 models from Broadway Limited, and visits the 7,000-8,000 sq. ft. Prairie Scale Model Railroaders. Jennifer Kirk tours the Trago Mills Model Railway in the United Kingdom. Finally, Bachmann's Matt Stern shows off some new models coming soon.

New from Broadway Limited



1. Broadway Limited sent Ken two of their new EMD GP30 models in HO scale. This model is painted for the Union Pacific Railroad.

in the JANUARY 2023 MRH RUNNING EXTRA!

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2. The other model represents the high short-hood version of the GP30 owned by Southern Railway.
Info: broadway-limited.com

Prairie Scale Model Railroaders



3. In the further adventures of the "What's Neat" crew in the Chicagoland area, they visited the Prairie Scale Modelers, an 80-person-strong club. Here Ken interviews Randy Kobiella as the voiceover for the tour.



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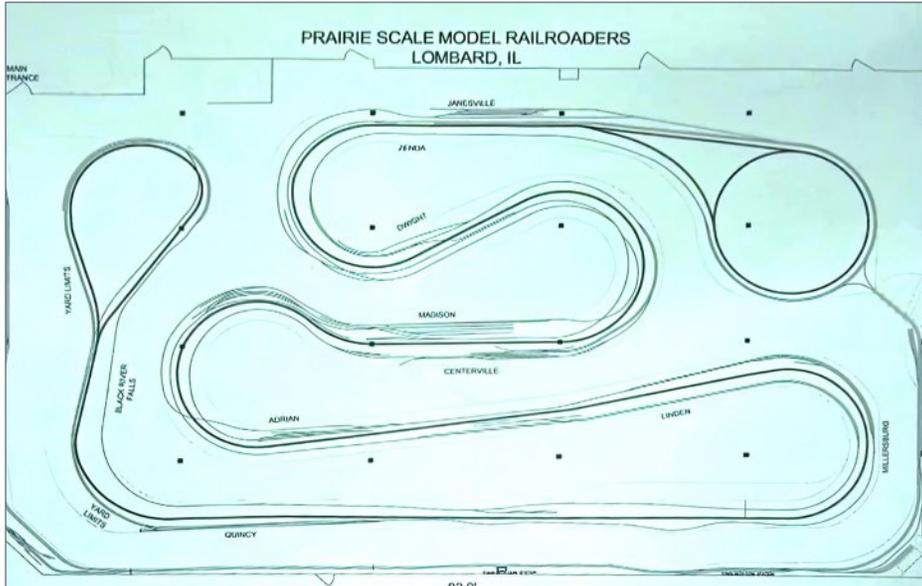
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4. The club was founded in 2001 and is working on a 7,000-sq-ft. multi-deck layout. They have laid approximately an actual quarter mile of track so far.



the top level with 20 to 25 members. They believe with the coming completion of the bottom layer they will be able to support 50 or more operators at a time.

5. The layout is 60-70% complete and models the Midwest, radiating out in four directions from Chicago. They've had operating sessions on



6. The mainline is almost all code 83 Peco track with some custom turnouts, and it is controlled by an NCE DCC system connected to JMRI for WiThrottle support.



7. All club members have a key, so if they want to come in at 3am to run trains, they can.

Jennifer Kirk visits the Trago Mills Model Railway



8. Located in Leisure Park at the Trago Mills shopping centre in Newton Abbot, United Kingdom, the Trago Mills Model Railway is 88' x 14', making it one of the largest 00 scale model railroad layouts in the UK.



9. Built by a team of 18 modelers, the layout was finished in 1989 after a year of construction.



10. It features four stations, goods yards, and real locations such as Canterbury Cathedral, Stonehenge, and the Liverpool Albert Docks, seen here.



11. A funicular railway is one of the many details to see on the layout, many of them controlled by pushbuttons on the fascia. Info: www.facebook.com/p/Trago-Mills-Model-Railway-100083044133284

New Products from Bachmann Trains



12. Ken connected via Skype to Matt Stern, the marketing director for Bachmann Trains, who had several new items to show off, including this GP38-2 decorated for Amtrak maintenance-of-way service.



13. Finishing up the line of N scale SD40-2s from last month's "What's Neat" is this model decorated for Santa Fe.

Clicking on the video link at the beginning of this article will show you the new Broadway Limited GP30s, the complete video of the tremendous Prairie Scale Model Railroaders layout, Jennifer Kirk's presentation on the Trago Mills Railroad, and all the products presented from Bachmann Trains. ☑



14. New in HO scale are the Siemens Venture cars in the Amtrak Midwest scheme. They include full interiors and lighting, including marker lights which are found on the Amtrak cars but not the ones built for Via Rail. The marker lights are controlled by switches concealed in the roof.



15. Finally, Matt showed the pieces making up the new Acela II train sets. The train sets will include two power cars (one powered, one dummy), a first class car, a café car, and a business class quiet car. Six additional cars will be offered separately to allow modelers to run the entire nine-car train set. Info: bachmantrains.com



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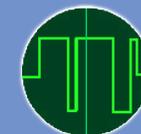
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In pursuit of a tidy decoder installation



Electrical
Impulses

Model Railroad Hobbyist | February 2024

1. The subject of this project: a Kato SD80 MAC loco and a LokSound 5 Direct decoder.



PETER RANDERSON EXPLORES HOW TO MAKE THE ULTIMATE TIDY DECODER INSTALLATION ...

OVER THE YEARS, I have installed quite a few decoders. I intend to make each new installation tidier than the last. Read on to see what sort of mess I can make this time around with an HO Kato SD80 MAC and a Loksound 5 Direct decoder.

THE PLAN

Besides the decoder, my plan includes these other items:

- Add LED lighting for the headlight, rear light, front ditch

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A TIDY DECODER INSTALLATION | 2

lights, front and rear number boards, cab light, wheel lights, and front and rear step lights

- Add a sugar cube speaker for sound
- Add a home-brewed stay-alive unit.

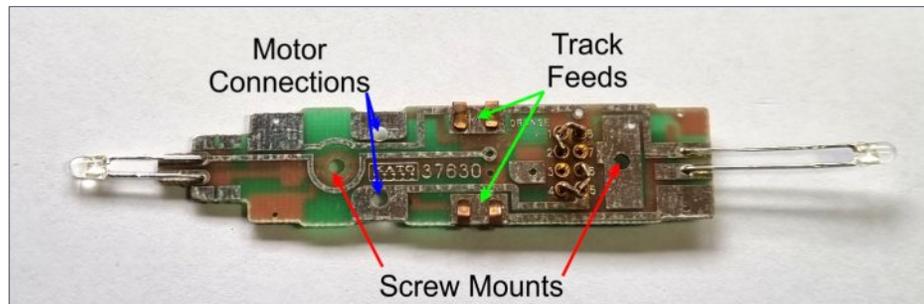
Of course, no plan survives first contact with the enemy! Upon closer examination of the shell and chassis to devise strategies, I had to readjust.

The wheel lights would be difficult due to the location of the shell mounting tabs – they couldn't have been more in the way if they had tried! Maybe I should contemplate walkway lights instead.

I purchased this loco second hand, but it was effectively new-in-the-box. Unfortunately, I discovered some of the detail parts were missing, including the number boards. I decided to fashion my own.

THE STARTING POINT

The loco comes fitted with a rudimentary motherboard that has two fitted LEDs for forward and reverse lighting, contact points for the motor connections, and clips for track feeds. It also boasts



2. The original Kato motherboard. Both the motor and the track feeds use brass strip connections to the mother-board in this configuration.

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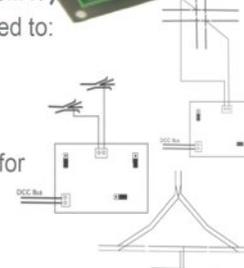
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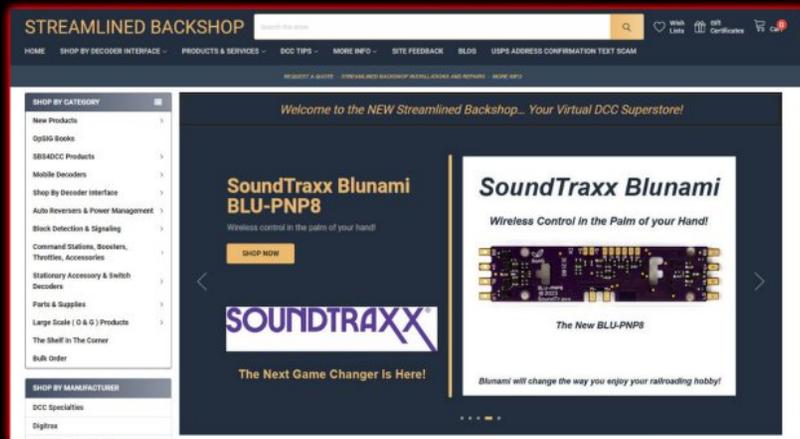
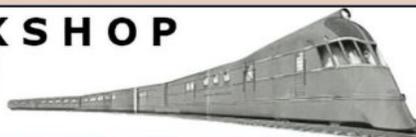
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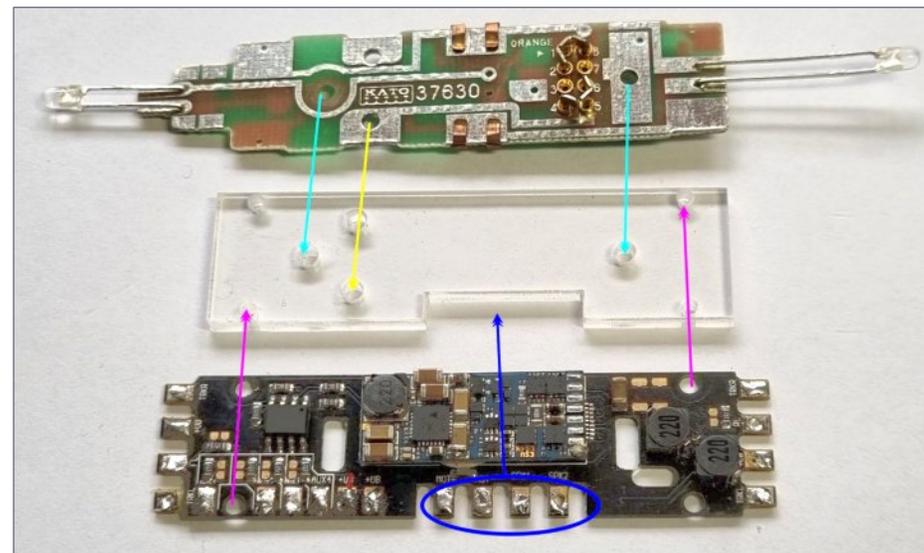
A TIDY DECODER INSTALLATION | 3

an 8-pin mounting plug for a DCC decoder. In other words, it's DCC-ready for a basic two-function, non-sound decoder, but that's not very useful for a full-blown sound-and-lights installation [2].

The motherboard LEDs feed clear light pipes to the front and rear headlights and that branch off to the front ditch lights. My experience with these light pipes has been less than satisfactory, so I removed most of them except for some small sections where they mount on the loco shell.

A NEW DECODER MOUNT

Since it's designed to replace several formats of loco motherboards, one would think a LokSound 5 Direct board should mount directly to the same two screw points used for the Kato motherboard. Unfortunately, this was not the case, and I did not want to rely on a single mounting screw [3].



3. The holes for the mounting screws on the Kato motherboard (top) are farther apart than the LokSound 5 Direct (bottom). I made a mount adapter to bridge the difference (center).

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A TIDY DECODER INSTALLATION | 4

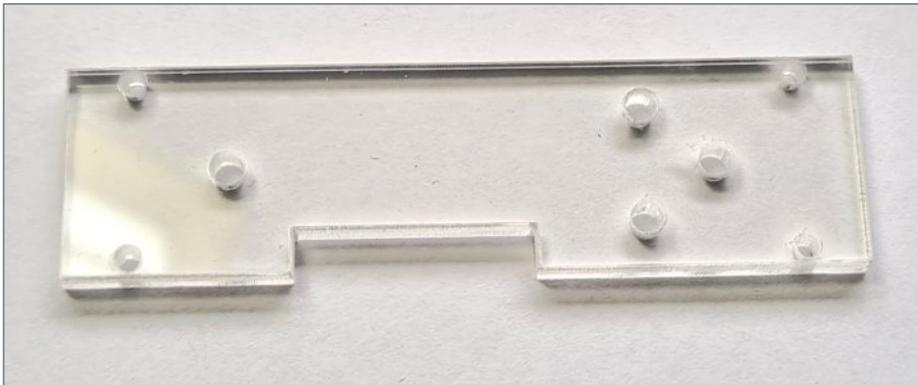
After some careful measurements, I manufactured my own decoder mounting board to securely screw-mount the Loksound Direct board and keep things nice and neat [4]. I used the original motherboard to locate the mounting holes in the adapter. I then located the holes from the Loksound Direct, and used its format to design the shape for the mounting board to fit.

I have previously cut this type of board from 2 mm (0.060"-0.080") styrene by hand. Access to a laser cutter allowed me to whip up a design in LightBurn to cut a new mount using 3mm thick (1/8") acrylic.

I tapped the four ESU mounting holes for 2 mm screws, and wrapped the acrylic mount in Kapton tape to ensure the two motor feeds don't touch the decoder board contacts or traces. I countersunk the two Kato mounting holes to accept the original Kato mounting screws (cyan arrows in [3]).

See this issue's bonus downloads [mrhmag.com/magazine/mrh2024-02/bonus-extras]. I have included both the Lightburn file and a PDF drawing if you're interested in this mounting board.

Editor's note: If you have access to a 3D printer, you also can use these measurements to design and print the mounting board.



4. I made this decoder mount from 3mm (1/8") acrylic.



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A TIDY DECODER INSTALLATION | 5

I trimmed the two brass motor connections back close to the motor and soldered wires that I extended up into the two yellow holes on my acrylic board. I ended up wrapping a piece of Kapton tape around the acrylic for extra insulation between the metal mounting screws these motor feed wires.



J. Regier

CLIPPING MOTOR CONNECTORS

The Kato electrical and mechanical design has remained largely unchanged for decades because its simplicity just works. Wires or brass strips connected to the trucks channel track power to the motherboard, and the Kato HM5 motor connects to the board with brass strips, sometimes connecting directly to the two brass rods carrying track power. It works well for DC applications, but you must undo those connections for DCC, where you need all power to be routed to and distributed from the decoder.

Just as the author did, I like to clip the brass connectors to within 1/8" to 1/4" of the motor terminals. I then solder wires to the brass connector stubs for routing the power, and cover any exposed wire or brass connector with shrink tubing. This provides a nice, neat, isolated channel from the decoder to the motor, without having to worry about what the motor's original brass connectors might touch. ■

STAY-ALIVE

I made a DIY stay-alive using the circuit diagram in [5].

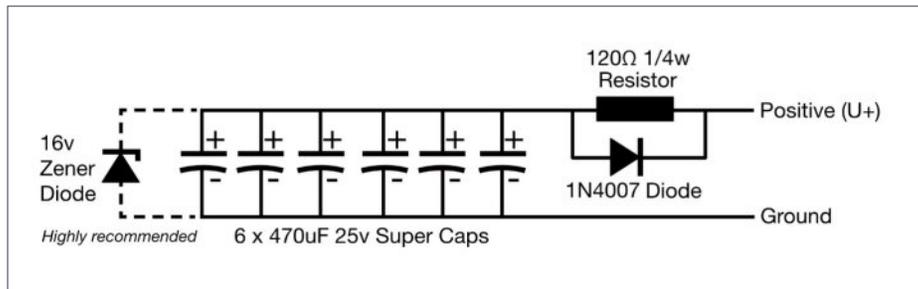
The basic components were 6 x 470uF 25V super caps with a 1N4007 diode and a 120-ohm 1/4-watt resistor.

A TIDY DECODER INSTALLATION | 6

Editor's note: Peter did not use a Zener diode in his circuit – we have added it to the circuit diagram and strongly recommend including it. Without a Zener diode, your DIY stay-alive circuit has no over-voltage protection and there's a risk of damage if you get an accidental track short involving the loco.

The capacitors are wired in parallel [6]. This made the package 8mm wide x 48mm long. It will keep power on for a few seconds to cope with dirty track and poorly manufactured turnouts. The Kapton tape provides a bit of insurance against contact with metal parts.

The stay-alive wiring connection to the decoder per the ESU manual [7].



5. DIY stay-alive circuit diagram.



6. My homegrown stay-alive.



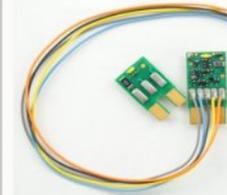
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A TIDY DECODER INSTALLATION | 7

MAKING SPACE

One struggle with adding more components besides the decoder and keeping things neat is to find a good place for everything.

First, I had the trick of fitting a stay-alive inside the loco and keeping it tidy. In this case, the slot above the rear drive shaft is long enough, but at 6mm wide. It's too narrow to fit the 8mm-thick stay-alive pack.

I ran an 8mm end mill through the slot to create a shelf for the stay-alive above the drive shaft. I am fortunate to own a light milling machine, so making the slot was easy. A motor tool with a cut-off disk also would work; it just takes longer and requires more care.



J. Regier

DISMANTLE BEFORE MILLING

Before milling or filing the locomotive frame, it is very important to dismantle the chassis to remove the motor, drive shafts, and trucks. These moving parts are susceptible to the shards of metal created by milling, so keep them away from your work area.

Once the milling work is finished and the frame cleaned of any dust, it is safe to reassemble the chassis. ■

Next, I had another lump to fit: the speaker. Kato made no allowance for adding a speaker either above or below the shell line. I decided to mount it at the rear of the walkway shell, in the gap for the rear wheels.

CONCERNS WITH STAY-ALIVES

Nick Santo of Decoder Buddy fame raised some good points about two-wire stay-alives and ESU decoders. An ESU-

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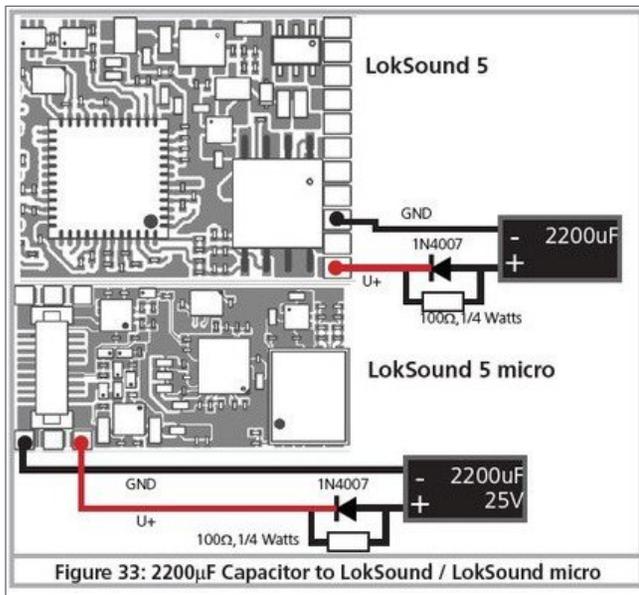
branded stay-alive (called a Power Pack) includes a third wire to enable turning the stay-alive on or off with just a CV setting.

Trying to program a loco with an active stay-alive on the programming track can be a challenge, but ESU's ability to turn their ESU-branded stay-alive off neatly solves this problem. With other stay-alives such as my version, you need to open up the locomotive and manually disconnect the stay-alive, which is a pain.

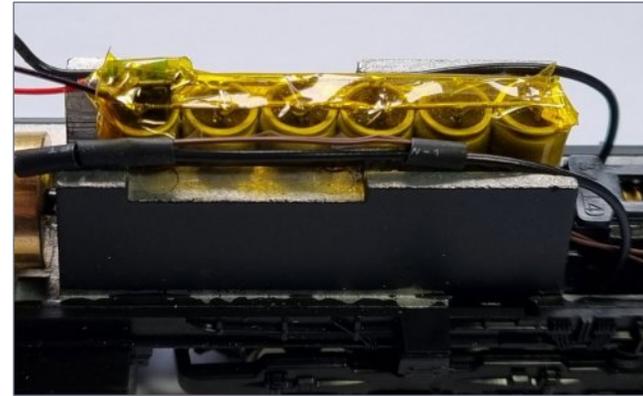
My homemade two-wire stay-alive is essentially as recommended in the ESU manual [7].

It's been helpful to have a young electronics guru (Chris) in our club. I was having some problems with stuttering performance in a couple of other locos fitted with ESU Loksound decoders. Chris offered to fit them with the my stay-alive circuit.

The improvement in reliable performance was instant and dramatic. I own a LokProgramer, and have had no issues with



7. ESU Stay Alive wiring diagram.



8. Milled out slot to accommodate Stay Alive.

loading or updating decoder settings with an stay-alive fitted. But your mileage may vary, and it may work differently for you.

Some have told me “that’s sure is a space hog for just a second or so of stay-alive.” The only reason I fit these is to get reliable performance from the loco with less-than-perfect conductivity.

Believe it or not, this brief time is enough to dramatically improve performance reliability. That said, I also have concerns with a loco running off the edge of a layout because the stay-alive will run the loco for 10 seconds or more.

Another strategy for making space is to take weight out of a loco to make space for other components. From my RC aircraft hobby background, I know all about weight management, which in the case of RC aircraft means removing weight.

For model railroading, it’s just the other way around. If I have a loco that can't pull at least 30 cars, then I look to either add weight or get it off the roster.

GETTING LIT

This project had 14 LEDs (would have been 16 with the wheel lights), and all were tiny surface-mount devices. This was

where the concept of doing a tidy decoder installation really paid off.

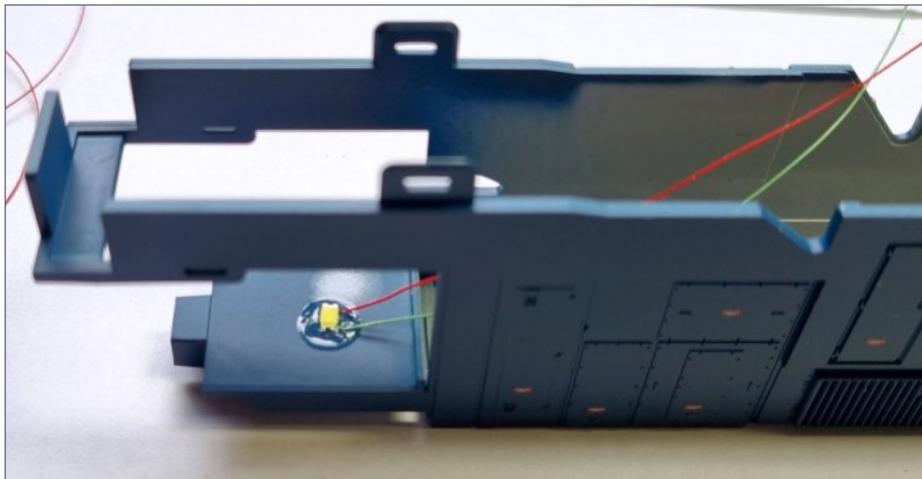
Installing the LEDs required complete disassembly of the loco shell. First, I installed the cab light, and secured it in place with canopy glue [9].

I love canopy glue because it helps make installing surface-mount LEDs simple and tidy. It dries clear and fast, and remains flexible, making it ideal for this application.

For the headlights, I chopped the lens portion from the Kato light pipe, glued the LED to the back of it, and then covered the rear with heat-shrink tubing to prevent light bleed.

Right beside the headlight, I applied the two LEDs for the front number boards. These also required adding black paint to prevent light bleed [11].

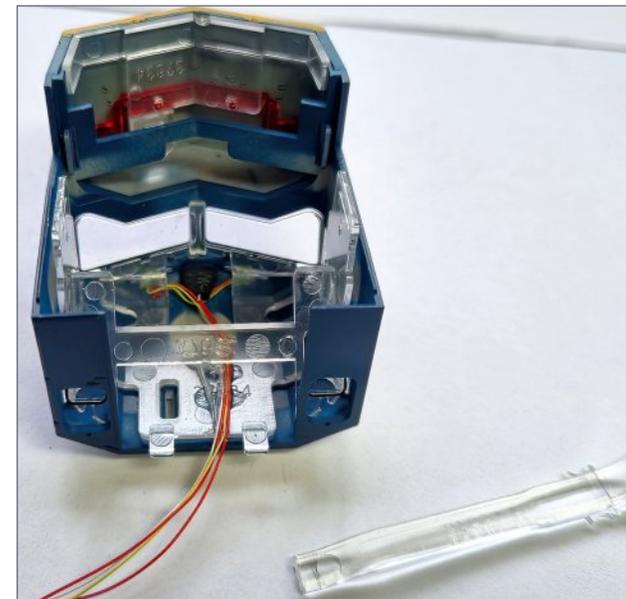
I used canopy glue to hold the wires in place and keep them from flopping around.



9. I installed the cab light LED using canopy glue.



10. I used canopy glue to install the LEDs.



11. LED installation for the cab headlight and number boards. Canopy glue also secures the wires.



I gave the rear headlight and number board lights a similar treatment [12]. Note again the use of heat-shrink to minimize light bleed on the cut-down Kato light pipe/lenses.

I mounted the ditch and step lights at each end of the walkway frame [13].

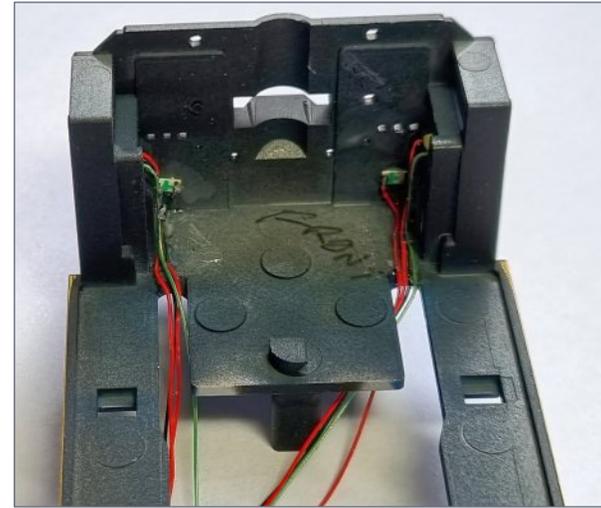
KEEPING THE WIRES TIDY

Now we're getting to the meat of the matter when it comes to a tidy decoder installation – the wires.

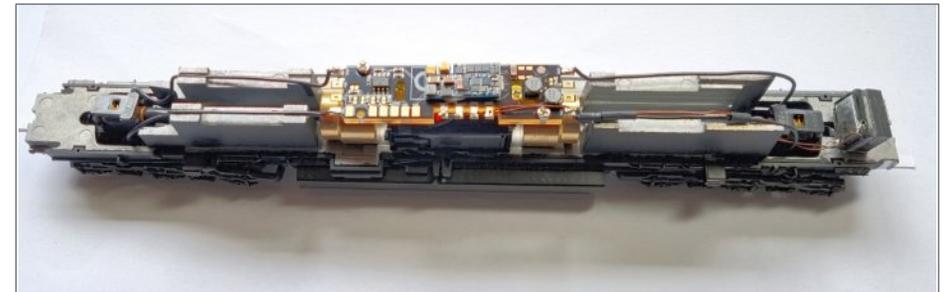
Wire is notorious for going everywhere other than where you want it to go, and for getting in the way inside the loco. To tame those wires, I'm using a couple of new tricks.



12. Rear headlight and number boards LED installation.



13. The Ditch and Step Lights were mounted at each end of the walkway frame.



14. With just the decoder installed and the speaker placed on the rear, this looks tidy. But now the fun begins as we manage the LED lighting wires.

In [14] you can see that the decoder has been installed on its acrylic mount and that I've soldered the motor leads to the ESU decoder. I laid the four track feeds loosely in the grooves supplied by Kato, and used unshrunk heat tubing as a conduit for even better wire management. Very neat so far, but we have many more wires to add.

In [15] I have put the walkway in place and added wiring from the ditch and step lights through heat-shrink. (I added shrink

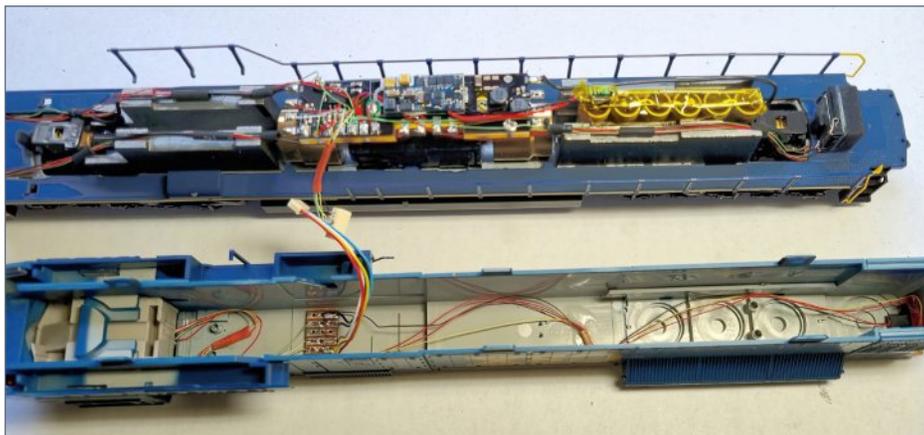
tubing to the other three track feeds too.) I don't shrink the tubing, but rather slide each piece to various points to help tame the wires.

Now to address the main body shell. To tame the wires there, I glued a piece of PCB to the shell roof. This has six solder tracks: one for the common positive and one each for the headlight, number boards, rear light, and cab lights, and one spare slot. I used canopy glue and more heat-shrink to help keep the wires in place.

You may notice the wires lead to some sort of plug connector. These are some of the smallest commercially made JST connectors I have found. These plugs make servicing the loco relatively straightforward. Just take care when separating the two plugs so you don't accidentally break the wires.

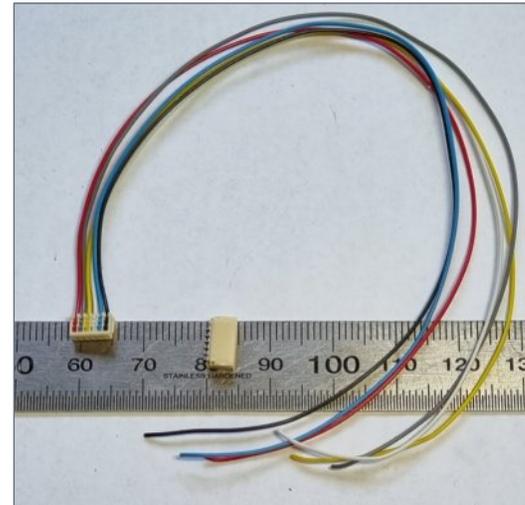
CONCLUSION

I hope these tips help you get more tidy decoder installations. With all the wires needed to add five or six LED lighting functions, a rat's nest can proliferate quickly. I have found getting a



15, 16. Key element of wire taming – a PCB glued to the roof of the body shell.

tidier installation helps keep things manageable and makes these complex decoder projects more of a pleasure than an exercise in frustration. The reward comes when I put one of these fully equipped locos into operation. ☑



17. This JST style connector allows the shell and chassis to be separated for servicing.

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G. Bunza

JST CONNECTORS

In Peter's picture, the male and female connectors look like 1.0mm JST connectors. The wires inserted on the left connector also indicate it's an insulation-displacement-connector (IDC) – each wire is inserted between metal pieces that pierce the insulation and make contact with the wire inside, speeding up construction.

The "JST" once referred to a specific type of connector by a specific manufacturer that has now been cloned. You can get JST connectors with 1.0, 1.25, 1.5, 1.75, 2.0, and 2.5 mm pitch (the distance between the pins). They can also be found with round pins, square pins, and bladed pins.

If you try to mix the types, you will have problems. Stick to one manufacturer and one type. Note also the second connector Peter shows without wires. Those pins usually get soldered to a PC board for stability and not point-soldered to more wires. They barely have enough room to make a soldered connection on a PC board.

Nonetheless, you can solder wires to them if you're very careful. Once you have soldered the wires, use CA, epoxy, or canopy glue to "seal" the connection and add some rigidity.

JST-type connectors are not made for many repeated connection/disconnections. The force needed to separate the connector often is also sufficient to pull out the wire. You can ease disassembly by carefully filing or slicing off the minuscule nubs that provide friction to hold the connectors together.

You might also note the two slide "rails" on either side of the connector can be filed thinner to make assembly/disassembly easier. With practice you can find a "sweet spot" where you still have plenty of friction to hold the connectors together and tolerate vibration, yet make it easier to disassemble the connector without ripping out the wires. ■

PETER RANDERSON



Like many, Peter started in the hobby at a young age. A 34-year career flying Iroquois helicopters and fixed wing transport aircraft in the New Zealand Air Force meant a lot of moves to some diverse parts of the world including Antarctica, Singapore, and the Sinai.

After leaving the Air Force, he owned and managed a small business in the construction industry for a further eight years.

Following retirement nine years ago, he now has the time to devote to model railroading and other interests – which include cabinetmaking along with building and flying radio-controlled aircraft.

Peter has been married for 47 years, and has three adult children and three grandchildren. ■



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15 years of great model railroading photos

Part 2: 2016-2023



JOE FUGATE CONTINUES HIS LOOK BACK AT SOME OF THE BEST PHOTOS POSTED ON THE *MRH* FORUM ...



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LAST MONTH, we looked at some of the best *MRH* forum photos from 2009 - 2015. This month, we continue by looking at some of the best photos posted from 2016-2023.

As I said last time, we've enlarged the photos using AI enlargement, applied AI sharpening, done some color correction, brought out shadow details, and lightened some of the darker areas when needed. I'm happy to say, these photos *have never looked better*.

Let's get the photo fun started!

2016 (1-7)

It's hard to believe 2016 is now seven years ago!

As I said last time, if I've featured a given modeler's photos already, I want to use other modelers' photos instead to give more folks a chance for their work to be shown here as well.

That said, if a photo really stands out and it's by a modeler whose work I've already shown, I may just break that rule now and then. The first photo I show is one such example [1].

2017 (8-14)

The great American Eclipse gave us an unforgettable spectacle in 2017, while in the hobby the NMRA National Convention came to Orlando. White River Publishing acquired the Narrow Gauge & Shortline Gazette, and Kalmbach ceased publication of Model Retailer, a trade magazine aimed at hobby retailers.

Meanwhile, the great photos being posted on the *MRH* forum continued unabated. Here's some of the more interesting photos from that year [8-14].

2018 (15-19)

South Korea hosted the winter Olympics and the embassy in Jerusalem opened. The NMRA National came to Kansas City and Iowa Scaled Engineering announced the ProtoThrottle. And we've now reached the year we started *MRH Running Extra*, our second no-ads monthly magazine.

Lots of great photos posted, let's take a brief look at a few of them [15-19].

2019 (20-25)

With Brexit in the news, the last year of the 2010's decade has many more great modeling photos being posted. In hobby news, the 2019 NMRA National came to Salt Lake City – and Barry Silverthorn of TrainMasters TV fame debuted Roomettes at the Amherst Railroad Hobby Show, his new company making structure interior detail kits.

On to some of the best photos of 2019 [20-25]!

2020 (26-31)

We all know how crazy things became as 2020 unfolded. With everyone having to stay inside a lot more, *MRH* saw record levels of forum traffic. All the weekly photo fun threads had 50+ photos posted, so picking just a few really great photos was a tough job, indeed.

Here's just a sampling – a lot of amazing model photos fill each of the weekly photo threads all year long, so if you want to check them out, go try the forum search function and to get all of 2020, put in specific search dates like 1/1/2020 to 12/31/2020: [fo-
rum.mrhmag.com/search?keywords=photo+fun](http://forum.mrhmag.com/search?keywords=photo+fun) [26-31].

2016



1. Gary Christensen posted this photo and I elected to use it even though I've featured another of Gary's photos previously. What stands out in this photo is how effectively Gary has modeled the interior of a boxcar that has open doors. I've seen these cars with open doors on the SP

when railfanning back in the 90s, and Gary has captured it perfectly. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-aug-5th-thru-11th-12204356?pid=1331173063

2021 (32-37)

The pandemic was still affecting the NMRA National Convention, so the Rails by the Bay convention in Santa Clara pivoted from a live event to an online virtual event. I attended this online convention and found it to be amazingly well done and hope to see more virtual events like this in the future.

MRH had a record level of online traffic in 2021, and we saw a lot of great modeling photos get posted to the forum. Here's just a few of the more memorable photos [32-37].

2022 (38-43)

By this time, the old *MRH* forum was really showing its age. We worked throughout 2022 to move to new more modern forum hosting. Finally, after a lot of testing, in December of 2022, we moved to the new hosting. The *MRH* forum works much better with mobile devices like phones and tablets, as well as provides a private messaging feature that works well, unlike the old forum.

We're grateful our new forum hosting provider worked hard to move all the threads and photos from the old forum over to the new one – otherwise, we would not have been able to review all these photo threads from the past.

On to 2022 photos [38-43]!

2023 (44-50)

Last year was our first full year on the new *MRH* forum and we've picked up a lot of new members. That means a lot of great new photos for the weekly photo fun threads.

Here's just a sampling. I had to pass up hundreds of fantastic photos in order to narrow it down to just the few I show here. Visit the *MRH* forum regularly and check out the weekly photo fun thread for many more inspiring model photos just like these [44-50].



2, 3. Neil Schofield posted these two photos taken on his layout and they're real crowd pleasers on the forum. Comments like, "Neil, this is a model photo thread, you need to post those photos

over on the prototype photo thread where they belong" regularly follow Neil's layout photo posts. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-december-2nd-to-december-8th-2016-12205410?pid=1331187376 and forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-april-29th-to-may-5th-2016-12203613?pid=1331162713



4. MRH forum user mu26aeh (Adam H.) posted this unique photo. I selected it because it's rare you see two similar models (HO and N), fully weathered, side by side in two scales. You have to admit, it's some cool modeling and a neat photo. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-january-1-to-7-2016-12202346?pid=1331146327



5. MRH forum user jpachl (Joern P.) posted this vintage-looking photo. He admits it's been photoshopped, but it's seamlessly done and the vintage look really adds to the image. Looking closely, this looks like N scale, and it's some exceptionally well-done N scale modeling at that. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-november-5-november-11-12205192?pid=1331184132



6. Scott Sanders posted this "drone" photo of his modeling on a diorama taken outside in the sun. Rather than do the typical front-on diorama shot with some real scenery off in the distance, Scott has chosen to model the terrain on both sides of the roadbed for quite some distance from the track. Including vehicle access roads and the telegraph poles takes the entire diorama to a new level. The effect is extremely realistic and shows some first-rate scenery skills. For more see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-february-5th-12th-2016-12202797?pid=1331151715



7. MRH forum member gogebic (Hans S) posted this photo of a recently complete layout scene with a photo backdrop. Hans has seamlessly integrated the photo with the 3D scenery to

make a real eye-catching scene. Kudos! For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-january-1-to-7-2016-12202346?pid=1331146483



8. I continue to be mesmerized by the photos posted by MRH forum user jpachl (Joern P.), so I picked one of his photos again from this year. He has a real knack for taking a simple foreground model scene and making it totally pop by seamlessly adding an amazing background with Photoshop. In this case, he says he got the background image from a video game of all places! For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-december-18-to-december-25-12208531?pid=1331231660



9. Paul Gillette (duckdogger on the forum and one-time host of the MRH audio podcast) posted this cool photo. Paul says, "The lead unit is a 5-year-old Genesis I upgraded to Tsunami 2 with three close-coupled sugar cube speakers. The trailing unit, a Genesis SDF40-2, came with a factory installed Tsunami 2." Nice models in some great scenery, what's not to like? For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-december-18-to-december-25-12208531?pid=1331232090



10. Jeff Whitney, one of the Weathering Shop guys, posted this unique photo. I actually like the chain link fence and the debris. Shooting *through* a chain link fence is every railfan's bane, yet here Jeff deliberately stages his photo to shoot it with that otherwise annoying view block. I like it when modelers take the road less traveled for a model photo and do something that's all too typical in prototype railfan photo settings. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-1127124-12208377?pid=1331228929



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11, 11a. Tim Garland posted this bird's eye view of his layout [11, top photo], an unusual layout photo angle to be sure. Reminds us of a Google Maps photo! We noted the dark

weathering around the turnout points, so we checked a real Google Maps satellite photo of a rail yard [11b, bottom photo] and what do you know – Tim nailed it, see the yellow arrows indicating the real rail yard's turnout points. Tim's a real railroad engineer, so his attention to detail by weathering his points makes perfect sense. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-1127124-12208377?pid=1331229397



12. Mike McGinley (Mikeonsp on the forum) says of this photo, "A brand new Athearn NP Z-8 shows off her pin stripes and driver tires to the westbound in the siding

at Marathon. The caboose is a modified Walthers DM&IR 24-footer sold in NP colors. This is my first MRH picture post." Not bad for a first time photo post! For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-january-6th-to-january-26th-2017-12205731?pid=1331191368



13. I really like this high cube 40-footer shot, and dang if it isn't another Neil Schofield photo! I picked the photo before I realized Neil had impressed me yet again.

Ironically, Neil says he followed a similar car prototype photo to get the weathering pattern, only to later find an actual photo of MILW 4601 and to discover the weathering was all wrong. I won't tell if you won't. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-january-6th-to-january-26th-2017-12205731?pid=1331192360



14. If anyone can win a “yes, it’s a model” photo contest, it’s got to be Lance Mindheim. Can you find anything in this amazing photo that says it’s a model? We can’t. From the palm trees to the cars in the parking lot, to the background structures (all models by the way), we’re completely

awestruck by the modeling and the photography Lance exhibits in this photo. We’re honored he chose to share it on the MRH forum. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-827922017-12207651?pid=1331217465

2018

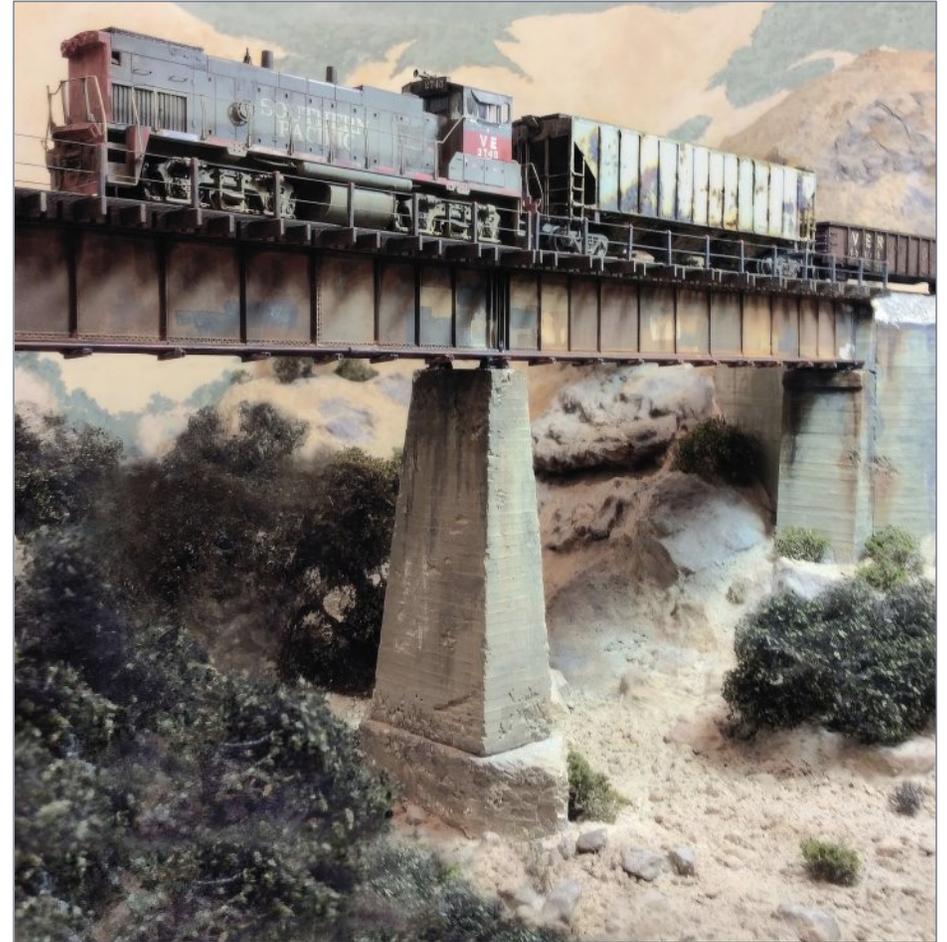


15. This is a Jim Six iPhone image shot on Tom Johnson's shelf layout. The tall grass in the foreground and the ivy (kudzu?) growing up the telegraph poles is a detail I've never seen

modeled. Jim took his steam train to Tom's layout and ran it, taking pictures like this one. For reference, Jim says this is a Broadway Limited PRR class H10 loco. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-aug-511-2018-12210528?pid=1331266299



16. MRH forum member dolson (Dale O.) says of this photo: "Having fun running trains on On30guy's Ruphe & Tumbelle Railway. This is the afternoon passenger train passing Cresco Tank on its way to Thumbelle." Nice modeling, good lighting, a great photo, and a cool backwoods railroading subject. Does it get any better? For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-sep-1622-2018-12210851?pid=1331271675



17. MRH forum long-time regular Rick Sutton posted this photo of his layout. Rick's modeling a freelanced line out of San Diego into the dry desert mountains and he's done a wonderful job capturing that dry look. The subtle form lines and the aged look of the concrete pier and abutment are exceptional. We also like Rick's simple but effective painted backdrop. It adds a sense of depth without upstaging the trains. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-july-8%25E1%25B5%2597%25CA%25B0-july-14%25E1%25B5%2597%25CA%25B0-12210332?pid=1331263264



18. MRH forum member rayo (Ray O.) posted this photo, titling it “Just another Railbox.” That may be so, but this is anything but just another model photo! Such well executed modeling with

the industry wall and all its details – vents, lights, roof downspouts, and numbered rollup door spots. Add to that debris, weeds, and weathering, all perfectly executed. Well done! For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-july-8%25E1%25B5%2597%25CA%25B0-july-14%25E1%25B5%2597%25CA%25B0-12210332?pid=1331263302



19. MRH forum member Don Mitchell, long time member of the famed La Mesa club, posted this closeup photo of the Caliente station located in Caliente

Loop. You can see the other side of the loop in the distance continuing upgrade toward Tehachapi. This club has modeled the Tehachapi Loop line at one third actual scale in HO. The result is a massive and breathtaking layout. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-july-8%25E1%25B5%2597%25CA%25B0-july-14%25E1%25B5%2597%25CA%25B0-12210332?pid=1331263432



20. If John Allen was still with us and he updated his Gorre & Daphetid to be more modern, what might it look like? MRH forum member modeltruckshop (Steve H.) posted this photo, with apologies to John Allen. I don't think any apologies are needed – it's fun to imagine what John might be modeling in the 21st century if he was still with us and he kept up with the times. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-oct-2026-2019-12213909?pid=1331321708



21. MRH forum member hobbes1310 (Phil H.) posted this photo that he found of a loco he had weathered “way back when” and had taken a photo of it. If that's what he was doing back in his early days in the hobby, he has nothing to be ashamed of! He used a realistic low railfan perspective for the photo, and his simple scenery and pure blue backdrop look remarkably good for a “beginner.” For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-oct-2026-2019-12213909?pid=1331321808



22. MRH forum member Mike H. posted this fascinating photo of his gloved hand holding an N scale switcher he has just detailed. I know N scale is small, but

wow, does this photo ever emphasize how small! Model railroaders in the 40s and 50s would be blown away that anyone in future decades could model effectively on something this tiny. In those days, HO scale was seen as tiny. Nowadays, somewhere in the neighborhood of 20% of the hobby model in N. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-oct-2026-2019-12213909?pid=1331321860



23. Brian M. (bxmoore on the MRH forum) says of this photo, "AC-5 SP 4120 runs east through Guadalupe, California with Train 918, four weeks before its final retirement which took place on October 6th, 1954." We don't get a lot of black and white model photos on the forum, but the ones we do get such as this one often really stand out. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-jun-915-2019-12212996?pid=1331306468



24. MRH forum member SD40-Fan (Chris S.) posted this photo of his HO model of Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific GP38-2 #4373. Not only is Chris' modeling and weathering first rate, we love his low upward-pointing railfan view in this photo. Extremely low angle model photos like this are rare, so they grab the eye when they're well lit and in sharp focus like this photo. Kudos Chris! For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-apr-2127-2019-12212710?pid=1331301977



25. MRH forum member PennCentral99 (Terry P.) says of this photo, “a Southern Pacific ES44AC, patched out for the Union Pacific, drags a mixed freight with a wrapped lumber load up front, through the desert.” Although I lament my beloved SP being gobbled up by rival UP, this southwestern scene just exudes a dusty dry desert feel. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-oct-2026-2019-12213909?pid=133132217



2020



26. MRH forum member Ensign (Greg S.) posted a series of photos showing trains working a dock area. Modeling a well done scene like this takes years of effort, so our hats are off to Greg. You don't see this pre-container era of water-to-rail freight transfer being modeled very much. Excellent model

photos of seaport scenes on the MRH forum from this era just beg to be featured in this collection. For more, see: [forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-mar-1521-2020-12215033?pid=1331339671](https://www.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-mar-1521-2020-12215033?pid=1331339671)

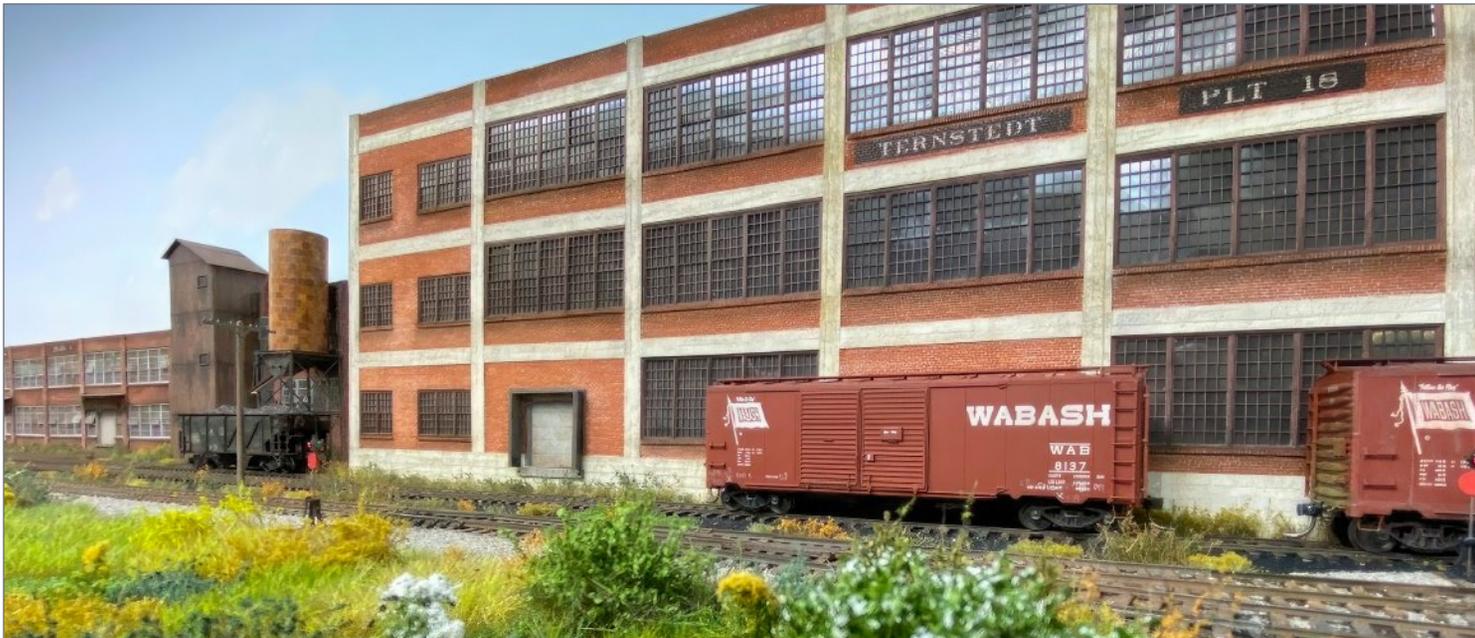


27. We focus on North American railroading here at MRH, but I couldn't let this photo review series go by without picking at least one really nice foreign model railroading photo from the MRH forum.

Member struck2soon (Andrew T.) posted this diorama photo of this 4-6-2 in gorgeous green and gold livery with a dramatic rainbow sky background. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-nov-17-2020-12216917?pid=1331365681



28. A TEBU slug between two GP40 mother units! Kevin N. posted this photo and it immediately got my attention, not only for its nice composition but also because it features a TEBU (Tractive Effort Booster Unit). Bashed by the prototype from a U25B, it is essentially a set of two trucks with traction motors under blocks of concrete (for weight) inside a low hood. It has no prime mover, getting its electrical power from the two specially-equipped GP40 mother units lettered for the Cotton Belt (SSW). The SP ran these three unit sets on the Oregon Coast branches during the 1980s, and the Siskiyou Line 1 layout has a set of these in its loco roster. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-jan-1218-2020-12214530?pid=1331331787



29. David Karkoski posted this photo. I like how it shows an industry that's clearly large enough to need rail transport with a fairly modern (for the transition era) loading door modeled. The weeds and wild bushes add to the "other side of the tracks industrial sector of town" feel. David says of this photo, "This is the Ternstedt auto parts plant located along the Union Belt. Photo is taken from the grade crossing on Livernois Ave between Fort St and Jefferson." For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-aug-2329-2020-12216403?pid=1331359456



30. Richard Deuso (rtld614 on the *MRH* forum) posted this photo. I selected it because I love the clean narrow benchwork construction and the expert blending of the 3D vegetation to the photo backdrop behind the long deck girder bridge. Richard says, “I just finished this bridge over the Connecticut

River in time to move on to Dole Junction on my B&M Ashuelot Branch.” We hope Richard posts more photos of his layout – if they look anything like this, we’re in for a treat! For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-mar-2228-2020-12215093?pid=1331340757



31. We've already posted a photo by Rick Sutton in last year's photo section, but I just could not pass this one by. This is a yes, it's a model candidate if I've ever seen one. The low camera angle and the scenery detail is stunning, it's hard to tell this is a model. It feels like I could step right into the photo. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-mar-2228-2020-12215093?pid=1331340760



2021



32. Who doesn't like a classy Bicentennial paint scheme? Dom Bourgeois posted this eye-pleasing photo and says this, "The throaty bark of 7FDL's and 251B's in run-8 echoes off the walls of the old Borst & Burhans buckwheat flour mill in Cobleskill, New York. Bicentennial-painted U23B 1776 leading a

southbound D&H freight gathers momentum for the imminent climb up Richmondville Hill in October, 1975." For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-jul-410-2021-12218792?pid=1331393841



33. Sometimes it's the simple that's the most elegant. The eye-pleasing gentle curve past this industry and winding off into the distance fires the imagination of what railfanning delights here

could await when things get busy. The lone boxcar at the corrugated metal building and the power pole cluster of transformers out front all speak of freight needing to get to market. Rich S. posted this photo, noting that's the Southern States Co-Op hosting the lone boxcar. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-oct-2430-2021-12219503?pid=1331403660



34. Bill Gill posted this photo of cows at the watering hole. Bill says, "The cows don't even look up anymore as

the C&V daily rattles past through the countryside." That's some artful watering hole modeling, and those cows look like they've been "weathered" to include mud and grime from around the watering hole. Nicely done, Bill. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-aug-17-2021-12218983?pid=13313968411



35. Michael Tondee, past *MRH* Imagineering columnist, posts regularly to the photo fun threads. This, he says, is his one sky replacement photo. We like the vertical angle and the dramatic sky does add to the mood of the scene. Michael is a fan of John Allen's modeling – his scenery and detailing does carry a Gorre & Daphetid vibe. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-mar-713-2021-12217996?pid=1331382030



36. Robert Thomas posted this marvelous steam era photo. We like how things are painted and weathered to reflect a prosperous hard-working railroad that maintains its locos and rolling stock. No rust buckets or equipment on its last legs here. The static grass foreground field and the background trees set the scene off nicely. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-jan-39-2021-12217418?pid=1331373165

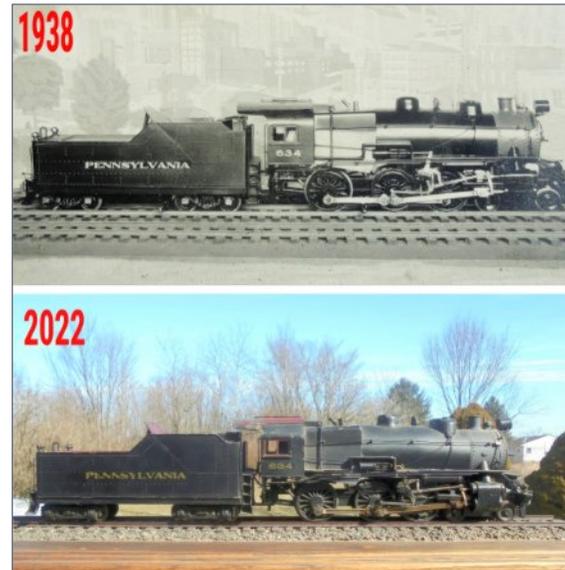
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37. Some photos have the “money shot” look like this one by Tom Haag. I can easily see this photo on the cover of one of the model railroading magazines. It feels like the photographer is on an overpass capturing a train about to pass underneath. The excellent modeling and the dramatic composition makes for a truly great photo. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-jan-39-2021-12217418?pid=1331373379



38, 38a. Cliff Powers took these photos of a lumber mill scene on his Cumberland & Ohio Valley layout. Cliff plans to occasionally run night op sessions, so he's added full lighting to the structures. As you can see, this makes for some stunning nighttime layout photos. For more on Cliff's layout, see this month's Running Extra.



39. Rarely if ever do you see such a fabulous callback to the hobby's past like these two photos. *MRH* forum member PRRK4s958 explains, "It's rare you see the very same model locomotive over a span of 84 years. Here is an O Scale PRR G5s 4-6-0 custom built by Herman Kloppenburg built circa 1938. I was lucky to acquire it some years back and even luckier to find the builder's photo in a cabinet on the premises. After all these years, little has changed other than a few paint chips here and there." For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-apr-2430-2022-12335694?pid=1332463908

FINAL THOUGHTS

This second section wraps up our sampling of photos from 2016 to 2023. It's been a fun trip down memory lane. Here's looking forward to another 15 years of great model photos on the *MRH* forum! ☑

The photos continue on the following pages ...





40. Derrell Poole posted this black and white photo with a rich sepia tone to enhance its vintage feel. Derrell says, "Here's Southern Pacific no. 18 pulling some D&RGW boxcars on the Colorado & Southern RR east of Trout Creek Pass." Another example of how you can almost always expect the rare black and white photo to be among some of the best on the forum. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-dec-2531-2022-12522060?pid=1334115363





41. A good number of the weekly photo fun photos show a single piece of rolling stock. This gondola photo posted by King Coal (Robert A.) is one of the best. The minute details and weathering makes for a model you love to look at and study. Many of us would love to have a car this nice in our roster! For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-apr-2430-2022-12335694?pid=1332464505



42. Another amazing layout is Tom Johnson's shelf layout. Tom shows what you can do with a small layout to create something really fun and special. This railfan view along a grain facility looks perfect and very typical of a midwestern granger line in the fall. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-dec-1117-2022-12513304?pid=1334040642



43. Mark Mathu posted this well-done photo on the MRH forum. Right away, you notice the crisp in-focus image from front to back – possible these days thanks to photo stacking software. Mark says of this photo, “A Green Bay & Western manifest freight climbs through a cut on the North American Prototype Modelers HO scale layout in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.” He explains he’s testing his DCC install in this loco set on the club layout with trains made of up club-owned rolling stock. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-oct-1521-2023-12757793?pid=1336124320

2023



44. Neil Schofield just keeps hitting them out of the park, and I have to post one of his photos again this year even though I've posted others in previous years. Neil's use of a photo backdrop and his ability to blend the 3D scenery with a photo backdrop continues to blow me away. What amazing realism – we

definitely want to get Neil's layout featured in *MRH* and on TrainMasters TV. Stay tuned! For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-feb-2026-2022-12275246?pid=1331905036



45. This photo also stood out to me, so I added it to my collection for 2023. Only later did I realize it's also a Mark Mathu photo, also on the North American Prototype Modeler's HO layout in Milwaukee, WI! Mark adds this caption: "Great Northern 4-8-4 #2550 meets Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe 4-8-4 #3751 west of Hillsboro. Although most railroads referred to the

4-8-4 wheel arrangement as 'northerns,' the Santa Fe never adopted the naming practice and referred to theirs as 'heavy mountains' instead." For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-dec-1723-2023-12796236?pid=1336540777



46. Thom Driggers posted a number of photos from George Sellios' Franklin & South Manchester. Thom, who is younger than George, acts as his right-hand helper on the F&SM. We're thrilled to see Thom giving us an updated glimpse of this well-known layout and some of the more recent projects he &

George have been working on. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-dec-1723-2023-12796236?pid=1336541366



47. Lyndon S. posted this photo right after Christmas. He says, "a Christmas present for me! Just bought this pristine Accurail Western Maryland boxcar off eBay. Came already equipped with Kadees and metal wheelsets. Now all it needs is some weathering!" I love the railfan photo angle and the figures included so the photos tells a bit of a story. And I'm agreed, add some weathering and then reshoot this photo. It's a nice photo now, with weathering it should be superb. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-dec-1723-2023-12796236?pid=1336577669



48. MRH forum member americaN (Bernd S.) posted this photo and titled it "Derailment at Moyie Lake." Based on his handle, we're assuming this in N scale. If so, it's extremely well done. The realistic lakeside scenery puts this scene a cut above most, and the photogenic curve shot is a dandy. As for the derailment, studying the photo reveals it looks as if the loco leading truck is on the ground. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-nov-511-2023-12770542?pid=1336276480





49. (Top) Terence B. has posted a lot of fantastic rolling stock shots, so it wouldn't be right to not feature at least one of his photos here in this best of forum photo review. Terrance says this is a Walthers Trinity Ethanol Tank car that he weathered and photographed. His outdoor diorama lighting coupled with his expert weathering and detailing work makes almost every one of his photos a "yes, it's a model" candidate. For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-jul-915-2023-12672134?pid=1335482135

50. (Bottom) I'm ending on this photo because of its cleverness, more than anything. *MRH* forum member thewizard1 (Charles D.) posted this photo recently with the comment, "Dang it, JoeF, how many times do I have to tell you not to paint graffiti on my railroad?" Of course, this "graffiti" refers to me and my wife Patty, the *MRH* office manager and pasteup guru. That's one way to get the attention of the *MRH* owners, hah! For more, see: forum.mrhmag.com/post/weekly-photo-fun-dec-1723-2023-12796236?pid=1336558925

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Magnetic signal mounts



Model Railroad Hobbyist | February 2024

A cantilevered signal mount guards two converging lines. Detachable magnetic bases protect fragile signals from accidental bumps.



MICHAEL ANTEAU USES BREAKAWAY MAGNETIC MOUNTS TO PROTECT FRAGILE MODEL SIGNALS FROM DAMAGE ...

I DESIGNED MY HO SCALE NICHOLAS & ASHLEY CREEK RY to operate with ABS signals. Operating signals add another layer of realism to model railroad operations.

I chose Oregon Rail Supply www.oregonrail.com signal kits. They have signals based on my C&O prototype that are nicely detailed and relatively inexpensive compared to other options.



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These signals are mostly plastic, so they are potentially easier to damage than etched brass models. Many of my signals are close to the edge of the layout. I wanted a way to mount them so they look permanent, but also to prevent damage from errant elbows and shirt sleeves.

I considered installing plexiglass barriers, but decided they would distract from viewing the trains and scenery. A friend used metal posts with rubber tips inserted near his signals, but since my layout top is foam it wouldn't support them well.

I decided to make my signal masts detachable by using neodymium magnets. With a washer glued to each signal mast's base, the magnets would hold the masts in place semi-permanently, but detach easily with a bump. This would allow the signal mast to move or even fall over without damage.

I chose neodymium magnets from Apex Magnets (www.apexmagnets.com), but an online search will reveal many retailers that offer them. The specific magnets I use are 1/8" diameter x 1/4" length cylinders [1]. Many shapes and sizes are available to fit all scales and uses.



1. 1/8" x 1/4" cylindrical neodymium magnet with a penny for scale www.apexmagnets.com/media/catalog/product/cache/80f51f316204d767db2aa2dd8a8b30d6/m/1/m18x14cylruler-2.jpg. *Apexmagnets photo*

TEST THE MAGNET STRENGTH FIRST



J. Regier

While you want magnets powerful enough to hold your signal mast or bridge upright, you don't want them so powerful that the protected object breaks before they release it. We recommend trying the magnets out on a test jig before applying them to your signal masts.



M. Dodd

Select a washer the same diameter of the signal's base, and glue the end of a small dowel or styrene tube to the washer. Drill holes for your magnets all the way through a piece of scrap wood. Insert the magnets in the holes, tack-gluing if necessary, so the tops are flush with the top of the wood. (When you're done testing, you can poke a nail up through the holes to remove the magnets.)

Place the washer on the magnets, and then tap the dowel gently to get a feel for how easily the magnets release it. If the magnets release with a light bump, they should work to protect the signal masts.

If the magnets hold so tightly the signal mast could be damaged, insert a piece of cardstock between the magnets and the washer to increase the spacing and reduce the force. Tap the dowel again and judge the force.

Repeat until you're comfortable with the release force. Count the cardstock layers and cut that number of cardstock disks for each signal base. Glue the disks to the underside of the washers attached to the signal bases.

MOUNTING SINGLE MASTS

Oregon Rail Supply signal masts have 1/2-inch diameter round bases. I dug through the parts drawers on my workbench and found some 1/2-inch steel washers. I glued one washer to the signal base with CA [2]. After painting, the washer practically disappeared.

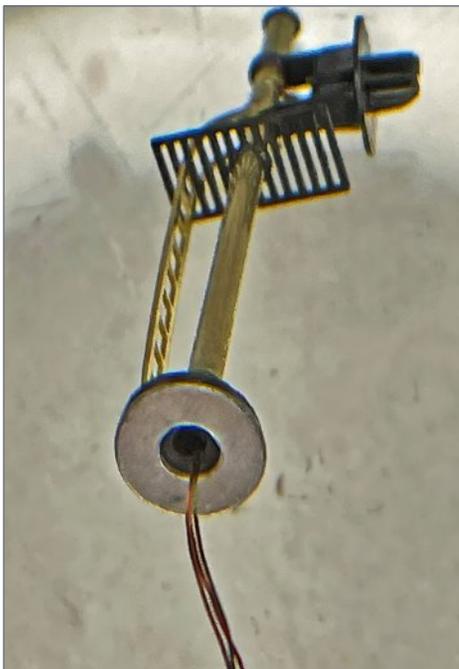
MAGNETIC SIGNAL MOUNTS | 4

My signals are approximately 18 scale feet tall, and I wanted to mount them so their base was approximately the same level as the track. I used cork roadbed to create a level footing for the signals, set at the correct height [3].

When the glue on the cork had dried, I drilled a hole into the footing and through the foam benchtop to accept a 5/32" styrene tube. The tube's smooth interior made the signal wires easy to pass, and allowed them to move in the event of a bump [4].

I drilled a 7/64" hole into the cork on each side of the styrene tube for the magnets. Though the holes were slightly smaller than the 1/8" diameter of the magnets, the cork stretched to make a snug fit (hard materials such as plywood would require 1/8" holes). I secured the magnets with a couple of drops of white glue [5].

After the white glue set, I fed the signal wires through the hole, and "snapped" the signal into place [6]. The magnets held the signal



2. I glued a washer to the base of each signal mast.

MAGNETIC SIGNAL MOUNTS | 5

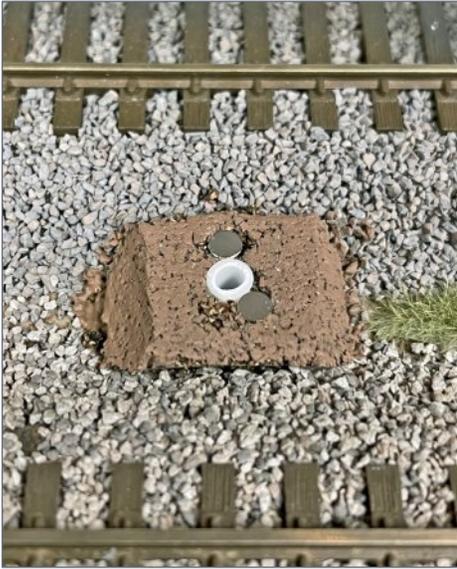


3. A cork footing for the signal mast sits between two tracks. The cork sets the height for the signal base even with the bottom of the rails. I made the base level in both directions.



4. A 5/32" styrene tube passes signal wires through the cork footing and the foam benchtop.





5. The magnets are in place on either side of the styrene tube.



6. The completed signal, mounted securely in place.

securely, but still allowed me to rotate it for exact alignment. I looped the signal wiring under the layout to provide slack.

If bumped, the signal simply tips over, and usually snaps right back into place [7]. I can remove it completely for maintenance.

After ballasting, the magnets and mount are completely hidden [8]. As a bonus, the signals can still be rotated slightly toward the aisles for better crew visibility during operation, or to proper alignment with the tracks for photography.

MOUNTING SIGNAL BRIDGES

The signal bridge bases from Oregon Rail Supply were hollow and rectangular, so they required a different mounting method. I superglued two magnets to opposite corners of the signal base. Because the neodymium magnets have a strong attraction to each other, it was easiest to glue one magnet at a time.



7. The signal easily breaks free from the magnets if bumped, preventing damage.



When the glue set, I attached two more magnets to those glued in the base. I applied a generous amount of marker ink to the ends of this second pair of magnets, then properly oriented and pressed the signal onto its location to mark where to drill [9].

I then drilled holes for the second pair of magnets and placed them in the layout as I did for the standard signals. Here it was important to have the magnets oriented properly so they attract, rather than repel, the magnets on the signal bridge base. With that, I set the signal in place [10].

With this, my signals were securely held in place with magnets, protected from mayhem. I have about half of my layout signaled now, and am very pleased with the durability of this method. I'm now considering using magnets to mount signs, structures, and other details near the edge of the layout. I encourage you to give it a try. ✓



8. Ballasting hides the magnets and washer.

MICHAEL ANTEAU



Michael comes from a railroading family. His grandfather was an engineer for the C&O, and his father was an engineer for CSX.

Michael was first bitten by the model railroad bug watching his dad's Lionel trains, and he built his first 4x8 layout at the age of ten. Michael is now working on his "dream" layout, a prototype-freelanced coal hauling railroad set in transition-era West Virginia.

Michael lives in Northwest Ohio and works in information technology. He is married and has two grown children. When he is not working on the Nicholas & Ashley Creek RY, Michael enjoys playing piano, biking, hiking, and traveling. ■



9. The magnets have been glued into the tower base, with the second pair mounted to mark where to drill on the layout. The second pair will be glued into the holes to secure the signal bridge to the layout.

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10. The mounted signal is operational and ready for scenery (also see lead photo).

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- Kevin Rhodes, MRH forum member

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Proto2K GP7 Decoder & Light Install

In this 36-minute video done a few months ago, YouTuber **Kurts Trains** steps through the entire process of installing a decoder and all the lighting in a Proto2000 GP7. We're talking front and rear headlights, lit numberboards, working class lights, and a rotating beacon on the roof.

VIEW READER
COMMENTS

About the only thing we might change in this how-to would be upgrading to SMD LEDs for the front and rear headlight instead of incandescents. Great how-to, in any event. ☑

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Join us for the PCR 2024 Virtual Convention

April 25-27, 2024



The 2024 PCR Convention is Silicon Valley will be available on-line for virtual participants from around the world. The event is being hosted by the same team that did the legendary 2021 NMRA National Convention. Join us for great fun!

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Clinics

One clinic room will be in a hosted Zoom meeting. Virtual participants will choose clinics for the virtual tracks.



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Hosts will take virtual attendees along on the Prototype tours. A knowledgeable host will join both the SPCRR and Niles Canyon tours with an iPhone/gimbal in Zoom.



Train Show

Virtual Train Show with vendor segments

Breakouts

Breakouts were one of the best parts of the 2021 National. At PC20-24, there will be Birds of a Feather, Vendor, SIGs and more in breakouts – see old friends, make new ones, meet vendors and more!!!!



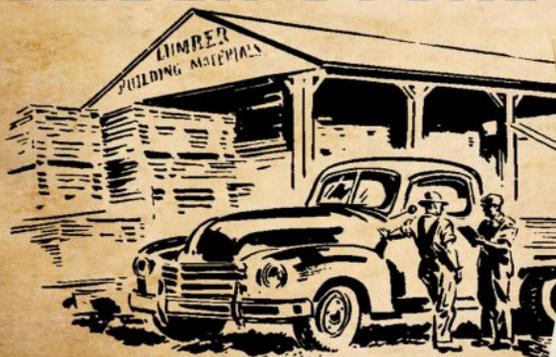
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FEBRUARY NEWS

column



Model Railroad Hobbyist | February 2024

RICHARD BALE AND JEFF SHULTZ
REPORT THE LATEST HOBBY
INDUSTRY NEWS ...



INDUSTRY NEWS

West Springfield, MA. Officials of the event report that 22,657 people attended the Amherst Railroad Hobby Show held January 27-28, 2024. Non-paying volunteers and exhibitor employees pushed the total to more than 26,000.

NEW CLUB CARS



The **Amarillo Railroad Museum** is booking preorders for an HO scale model of a Gunderson 5188 cu. ft. triple-bay covered hopper decorated for FURX-Agrium, a supplier of bulk agricultural products. ScaleTrains is supplying the fully-detailed ready-to-run model from its Rivet Counter product line. Availability is planned for August 2024.

Info: www.amarillorailmuseum.com

THE LATEST MODEL RAILROAD PRODUCTS, NEWS & EVENTS

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The **Northern Utah Division of the NMRA** is selling a line of HO scale Utah Oil Company (UTOCO) tank cars manufactured by InterMountain Railway.

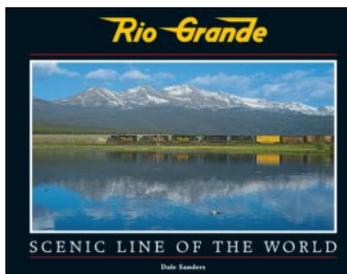
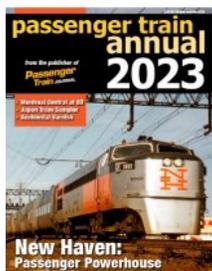
The cars feature a build date of 8/45 and a test date of 9/28/51. Originally intended to be the convention cars for the 2019 NMRA convention in Salt Lake City, supply chain issues prevented the cars from arriving on time. Offered in six road numbers, the cars have metal wheelsets and Kadee couplers.
Info: www.northernutahnmra.org/club-car

NEW PRODUCTS FOR ALL SCALES



Ring Engineering has announced the HC-3 and HC-3-SUN handsets for the RailPro train control system. Improvements over the HC-2 include a smaller size, lighter weight, twice the memory, better battery performance, four customizable buttons and a lanyard eye ring. The HC-3 still includes the color touch screen, networking features, and rechargeable battery of earlier HC models. The HC-3-SUN is designed for use outdoors in bright light.

Info: www.ringengineering.com



White River Productions has released the 2023 *Passenger Train Annual* that features passenger-train history and contemporary

coverage from the United States, Canada, and Japan. The 112-page perfect-bound book includes in-depth articles by Carl Graves, Geoffrey H. Doughty and a series of color photos by Thomas J. Donahue.

Also new from White River is the second edition of *Rio Grande: Scenic Line of the World*. Author Dale Sanders has expanded this edition to 208 pages. The 223 color photographs and nine illustrated maps tell the story of the railroad that was built through the Rocky Mountains, not around them.

Info: shop.whiteriverproductions.com

HO SCALE PRODUCT NEWS



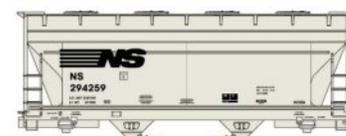
The list of new HO scale freight car kits from **Accurail** begins with a 36' Southern Railway double-sheathed wood boxcar. The model represents a prototype built in November 1923.



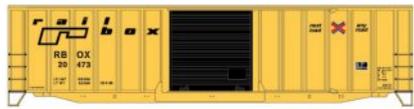
A more modern car is this Pullman-Standard triple-bay covered hopper car built in 1974. The Illinois Terminal lettering includes the slogan *The Road of Personalized Services*.



This ACF twin-bay Center Flow covered hopper car is available from Accurail decorated for Southern Railway. The model is also available decorated for Norfolk Southern individually and in 3-packs with different road numbers.



Completing Accurail's list of new releases is a 50' Railbox exterior post boxcar with sliding doors. The model is available in a 3-pack with different road numbers.



All Accurail HO scale car kits come with appropriate trucks with Delrin wheelsets and Accurail knuckle couplers. Info: www.accurail.com



R. Bale

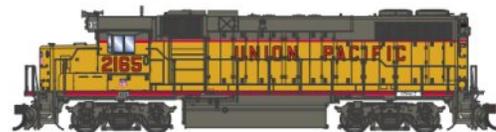
EMD GP38-2 DIESEL ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE

Electro Motive Division's GP38-2 was a popular moderate speed road switcher produced between 1972 and 1986. Top speed was limited to 65 mph. The GP38-2 was powered by EMD's reliable 2,000hp 645E V16 diesel prime mover. The essential difference between the GP38-2 and the basic GP38 was the Dash 2 used modular electronics. There were no significant exterior differences between the two locomotives.

Athearn is preparing a new group of HO scale GP38-2 locomotives for release in June 2025. New features on the Genesis series model will be operating classification lights and operating number boards. Each road name will be available with road-number specific details.

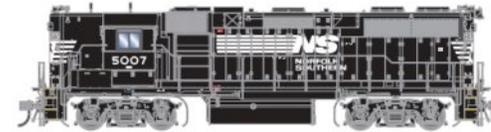


In the mid-2000s Union Pacific began completely rebuilding older GP38-2s. Retained features on the ex-Southern Pacific units included corrugated grilles, dynamic brakes, front and rear ditch lights and 3,600 gallon fuel tanks. For roster purposes UP renamed the rebuilds GP38N.



The spotting feature of GP38-2s inherited by UP in the 1982 merger with

Missouri Pacific is the lack of dynamic brakes. It was a mixed bag with some having 3,200 gallon fuel tanks while others had 3,600 gallon tanks.



Ex-Southern GP38-2s in Norfolk Southern paint can be identified by the full height nose and with controls set up for operation with the long-nose forward.



Athearn's version of a large group of GP38-2s GMD delivered to Canadian Pacific in the mid-1980s will have switcher style steps, tri-light class lights on both ends, front ditch lights, a winterization hatch, a Shute style blower housing and 3,600 gallon fuel tanks. Decorating schemes include a Golden Beaver version.



The 1980s blue and gray Blue Down paint scheme was one of the first liveries used by the newly formed CSX Transportation. Spotting features on the early equipment include a chicken wire grille and a 3,200 gallon fuel tank.



Seaboard System was established in the early 1980s from the merging of Seaboard Coast Line, Louisville & Nashville and Clinchfield railroads. Although folded into CSX in 1986, the SBD scheme continued to be seen well into the 1990s. Most units, but not all, had corrugated grilles and 3,200 gallon fuel tanks.



Thirty-one new GP38-2s Conrail purchased from EMD in the late 1980s featured a large front

anticlimber, corrugated grilles, cab signal box, and dynamic brakes with a paper air filter box. Many lasted through the life of CR until its demise in 1999 when they were acquired and repainted by CSX and NS.

Athearn will offer GP38-2 DC models with DCC-ready features including a 21-pin NEM connector. DCC sound equipped GP38-2 models feature SoundTraxx Tsunami2 sound and dual cube speakers.

In 1978 Union Pacific placed an order with International Car Co. for 100 new bay-window cabooses. Delivery of the new class of cabooses with innovative upgrades including large protected end porches and National 70-ton swing motion trucks began in May 1979. Borrowing features from the Missouri Pacific RR's new class of bay-window cabooses, the bay window design also saved about \$12,000 per caboose over a cupola design.



Athearn is preparing new tooling for an HO scale version of the UP class CA-11 bay-window steel caboose. The new Genesis models will have a fully

detailed interior, clear windows and multiple LEDs. Three road numbers will be available in this as-delivered 1980-1985 decorating scheme.



Three road numbers will also be available for similarly decorated CA-11 cabooses with modified boxed porch supports, additional door-side grab irons and two window screen options.



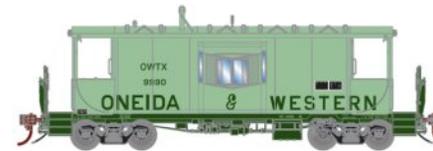
Included in this release is UP caboose No. 25833 named the Madera Flyer. The name comes from a long reverse maneuver

near Fresno, CA that encountered many dangerous road crossings requiring the Madera Flyer to be equipped with a headlight, air horn, and roof-mounted bell.



Additional unique CA-11 cabooses are UP Nos. 25809 and 25872 that were nicknamed Snowbuses. Their porches were

fully enclosed and they were equipped with MU and signal hoses so they could be positioned between back-to-back locomotives. The Snowbus would ferry crews to locations otherwise unreachable in extreme weather.



Additional road names in this release will be Oneida & Western and Idaho Northern & Pacific.

Features on all versions of Athearn's Genesis CA-11 cabooses include a fully-detailed interior including conductor's desk, stove, sink, bathroom and radio stand; wire formed grab irons, etched metal coupler platforms, coupler lift bars, trainline and brake hoses, see-through end platforms and steps, etched metal window screens and flush window glazing.



Underframe details include an air brake reservoir, control valve, and brake cylinder with plumbing and brake rod details. The models come with caboose trucks with axle generator details and machined metal wheels sets with rotating roller bearing caps.

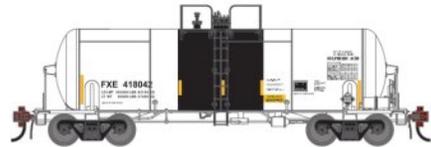
LED lighting features include single or dual roof markers, or end-mounted marker lights as appropriate to the prototype being modeled and LED interior lights with brightness control. Sound equipped models have air horn or trainline air whistle, clickety-clack with optional wheel flat spot sounds, brake set/release sounds including retainers and brake squeal, Big Hole emergency brake application sound, handbrake tie-down/release and adjustable flange squeal. The air horn and bell sounds function correctly with Soundtraxx locomotive sound decoders.

Non-sound equipped models include an on-board DCC decoder by NCE that operates in DCC and analog (DC) with lighting functions controllable in DCC.

Athearn has included an HO scale 13,000 gallon acid tank car in its June 2025 production schedule. Both early and late body phases will be available in this release as well as different loading platforms as appropriate to the road name being modeled. Four road



numbers each will be available for Union Tank Car, Procor, Ferromex, Rhodia, Inc., and Asarco, Inc.



Additional details include separate wire grab irons and handrails, coupler lift bars, trainline hoses, brake hoses, and hardware, double-shelf knuckle

couplers, complete underframe detail including air brake reservoir, control valve, and brake cylinder with plumbing and brake rod details.



HO scale 50' Evans boxcars with double 8' plug doors are listed in Athearn's June 2025 production schedule. In addition

to full underbody detail, the model will feature separately-applied grab irons, stirrup steps, brake wheel, brake stand and correct end ladders.



Road names will be Illinois Central, Ralston Purina, Western Pacific, Boston & Maine, Weyerhaeuser, and Thomasville Furniture.



Athearn has upgraded the molded-on details of its 52'

mill gondola. Changes to the HO scale model include new top-chord details and refined end-sheet details. Placement of the molded-on grab irons has also been corrected.



The first release of Athearn's upgraded gondola will be in June 2025. Road names will

include CSX, Herzog, SMBC Rail Services, Boston & Maine, Gondola Connection and Trinity Industries Leasing.



A three car set of railroad maintenance of way equipment is coming from Athearn in June 2025. Each set will consist of a repurposed oil tender, 40' flatcar with a derrick, and a 52' steel gondola. The equipment will have individual wire grab irons.



Decorating schemes will be Burlington Northern, Conrail, Canadian National, Denver & Rio Grande Western, Union Pacific, and generic MOW (orange). All Athearn models mentioned in this report come with McHenry knuckle couplers.

Info: www.athearn.com



Bachmann Trains is shipping an HO scale model of a Baldwin 2-8-0 Consolidation steam

locomotive. Decorated for Boston & Maine, Lackawanna, Pennsylvania, and Santa Fe, the model includes SoundTraxx Econami Sound/DCC, an operating headlight, completely hidden drivetrain, separately applied details, and EZ-Mate Mark II couplers.



Also announced by Bachmann is the Siemens Venture Passenger Car in HO scale. Used by Via Rail

Canada as well as Amtrak in the Midwest and California, these models were developed in collaboration with Siemens and will feature roadname specific details. Currently announced cars include Via Rail Canada Business and Coach cars, which are equipped with full lighted interiors, separately applied details, blackened machined metal wheelsets with RP25 contours, and optional close couplers.

Info: shop.bachmanntrains.com



Bowser has completed the latest production run of its 100-ton triple-bay coal hopper. The HO scale Executive Line model is based on a

prototype designed in 1960 by Norfolk & Western as the H-11 class. The design was subsequently ordered by several coal hauling railroads with over 130,000 cars built.

Distinctive features of the H-11 class include roping eye with integral end buffers, end slope sheets at a steeper angle than the hopper sheets, and 13 riveted side posts with the middle two panels wider than others.



Other details on the Bowser model include Wine bay door locks, full height side ladders and appropriate trucks with 36" machined metal wheels.



Road names on this latest release include Bessemer & Lake Erie (baby blue with black panel), B&O, C&O, CSX, N&W, Pittsburgh & Lake Erie,

Reading & Northern, The Rock, Western Maryland, Wheeling & Lake Erie and two schemes each for Chicago North Western, Detroit

Mackinac and Western Pacific.
Info: bowser-trains.com

Broadway Limited is developing HO scale heavyweight passenger equipment for delivery later this year. BLI officials



at the recent Amherst Railroad Hobby Show announced that among the initial release would be Pennsylvania Railroad PB70 baggage/coach combine, P70 coaches, and a Z74D business car.



The cars will be available separately and in a five-car set in PRR paint schemes from the 1930s, late 1940s and 1950s.

The plastic injection molded cars will have separately applied details, interior lighting, correct interior paint colors and operating sprung diaphragms.
Info: www.broadway-limited.com



ClassOneModelWorks has announced they will be producing the American Railcar Industries (ARI) 5200 hopper in

HO scale. A triple-bay covered hopper, the prototype was produced beginning in 2005. Road names in the first run of cars include CIT Equipment Finance (CEFX), Chicago Heights Terminal Transfer (CHTT), CIT Group (CITX), Crab Orchard and Egyptian (COER), Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha (CMO (UP)), Kansas City Southern, Transportation of America (TCMX), and Union Pacific.



The cars include owner specific loading hatch configurations, including trough hatches, trough

hatches with dual square loading hatches, round roof loading hatches, and combined round and trough hatches. Both 11 and 12 panel body styles are being produced, as well as multiple types of discharge gates and other details. Metal wheels with Brenco Blue bearings and Kadee-compatible knuckle couplers are standard.

Info: classonemodelworks.com



English's Model Railroad,

Division of Bowser Mfg, has announced plans to produce a new HO scale model of an Alco C-415 center-cab switcher. The model replicates a prototype

built by the American Locomotive Company from 1966 to 1968. A preliminary list of road names include Alco Demo, Rock Island, Spokane, Portland & Seattle; Burlington Northern, SP&S/BN, Southern Pacific Burlington Junction, Columbia & Cowlitz and Chehalis Western. 3D-printed sample shells were on display in the Bowser booth at the Amherst Railroad Hobby Show. Additional information is expected to be announced soon.

Info: www.bowser-trains.com/new/C415.html



Home Shops LLC has announced the imminent arrival of Rapido PC&F 5258 boxcars in HO scale in a

number of freelance model railroad paint schemes. Road names in this run include Joe Loggans' Arkansas Valley, Brian Sopke's Benton & Southern, Sheldon Frankel's Quebec & New England, the late Dr. Richard Kamm's Sue Line, Jim Abbott's Superior Transfer, Christopher Palmieri's Texas and Great Northern Railway, Robert Welke's Wisconsin & Upper Michigan, and Sam Meehan's Wyoming Valley & Western.

Each road name includes four road numbers, with only 50 cars in each road number produced. Different road names include



different door styles, either Superior double sliding doors with three or four forklift grooves or Youngstown double sliding doors. Factory

installed Rapido semi-scale knuckle couplers and 70-ton trucks with turned metal 33" wheels are standard.

Info: homeshops.net



R. Bale

GP16 LOCOMOTIVES

In a successful effort to avoid the cost of purchasing new motive power in the late 1970s, Seaboard Coast Line remanufactured 155 aging GP7, GP9 and GP19 locomotives. The program included replacing dynamic brakes with a new type 26L air brake system, installing a new high-voltage cabinet, remanufacturing the Blomberg B two-axle trucks, generators and traction motors; improving visibility by lowering the nose of the car body, retrofitting the cab with a standard AAR control stand and upgrading the prime mover with EMD 645 components that resulted in a 1,600hp rating which gave rise to the GP16 designation. But wait...there's more! In the late 1960s the Missouri Pacific repowered their entire roster of high-hood Alco RS-11s with EMD 567 series diesel engines. MP designated them GP16 presumably to reflect their new horsepower rating. In 1978 the ICG shops at Paducah rebuilt six GP7s for Clinchfield and named them GP11. When the CSX merger occurred in 1973 the GP11s were grouped as GP16s.



InterMountain has announced release dates for a new production run of GP16 locomotives. The HO scale model represents a

group of EMD GP7, GP9 and GP19 locomotives rebuilt by

Seaboard Coast Line in the late 1970s. InterMountain plans to deliver the model in two groups with the first release date late this month. Road names will be CSX, Family Lines System, RJ Corman, Indiana Railroad, Louisville & Indiana, Pioneer Railcorp, Santa Fe Southern, United States Army and Aberdeen, Carolina & Western.



The second release of GP16 locomotives is expected in April 2024. Road names will be Seaboard System, Genesee & Wyoming - York

Railway, Pee Dee River, Everett Railroad, South Carolina Public Railways, Buckingham Branch Railroad, Burlington Junction Railway and South Central Florida. InterMountain's HO scale GP16 locomotive will be available with a choice of DCC or DCC with sound.



InterMountain is selling an HO scale 4750 cu. ft. triple-bay covered hopper car. The HO scale rib-sided model has etched metal roof walks, 100-ton roller-

bearing trucks with 36" machined metal wheelsets and knuckle couplers. A minimum 22" track radius is recommended.



Road names on this release include Santa Fe (Built in 1975, rebuilt in 1986), Union Pacific (New 1974), GATX (Built 1972), RCP&E patch on Ex-CNW (Built 1981), Illinois Central (Built 1973) and Burlington Northern (Built 1980).

Info: www.intermountain-railway.com



Kadee has released a 40' PS-1 boxcar decorated for Ann Arbor Railroad, a subsidiary of Wabash. The HO scale model



accurately replicates a prototype car built by Pullman-Standard in 1965. The ready-to-run model is painted boxcar red with black ends.



Details include 6' Youngstown sliding doors, proprietary PS steel ends, see-through running board and brake step, full-height ladders and Bettendorf-type plain-bearing trucks with metal wheelsets. All Kadee rolling stock models are supplied with Kadee Magne-Matic metal couplers.

Info: www.kadee.com



National Scale Car is selling a mini-kit for refitting Tichy's well-regarded HO scale boom car kit with deep fishbelly side sills. The mini-kit includes resin fishbelly

side sills with rivet detail, styrene sheet and strip material and detailed instructions to complete the conversion. The hobbyist must supply the Tichy car boom car kit.

Info: www.nationalscalecar.com





R. Bale

EMD FL9 DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE

The FL9 was a unique dual-power locomotive developed in the mid-1950s for the New Haven Railroad for service out of New York City's Grand Central Terminal. The locomotive could run as a diesel or as an electric off a third rail. With the exception of its three-axle trailing truck, the FL9 otherwise resembles a standard FP9. In the 1980s the 30-year old locomotives were rebuilt with new electronics, modern HEP equipment, and a fully upgraded braking system. Notable among the rebuilds were four units that were sold to ConnDOT - the Connecticut Department of Transportation, where they continued in service wearing their original New Haven McGinnis livery. Two units were later repainted in a fictitious but eye-catching New York Central Lightning Stripe scheme for service on the Hudson Line. The rebuilt FL9s remained in service until 2009, becoming the last F-units in daily mainline passenger service in the United States. Two units, former Amtrak Nos. 488 and 489, went on to see further service on the Maine Eastern until 2015.



include complete underbody details, optional operating ditch lights, correct horn castings per road number, separately applied wire grab irons and Mo-Power capacitors.



Rapido Trains has announced a new release of FL9 locomotives including a new body style. Both HEP and steam generator versions of the HO scale FL9 will be available in this new release. General features

The original steam generator versions of the FL9 will feature all of the as-built details. Decorating schemes will include Penn Central, Conrail, Metro-North (Blue with yellow patch) and Metro-North.



Major spotting features of the Morrison-Knudsen FL9 rebuilds is a large 36" rooftop HEP fan, a flat rear end with two marker lights, a rear headlight, a larger cab side window and M-K or chrome crankshaft body details.

Road names will be ConnDOT scheme (MK rebuild, McGinnis scheme) and Metro-North (Beachball scheme, Chrome Crankshaft rebuild)



Each version will be available for DC-silent operation or DC/DCC ESU LokSound V5 decoder. The order deadline for Rapido's FL9 is May 15, 2024 with delivery TBA



R. Bale

4-6-0 STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

During the second half of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries the 4-6-0 was constructed in large numbers for both passenger and mixed freight service.

Known as a Ten-Wheeler, the locomotive had a four-wheel leading pony truck and six powered drive wheels. The lead truck gave good stability at speed and allowed a longer boiler to be supported, while the lack of trailing wheels gave a high adhesive weight for the drivers. The 4-6-0 was exceptionally stable at up to 100 mph pulling lightweight wooden passenger equipment. The primary limitation of the 4-6-0 was the small size of the firebox, which limited power output. It was eventually superseded by the 4-6-2 Pacific whose trailing truck supported a greatly enlarged firebox.



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Photo courtesy of Jon Riddell

Rapido has announced plans to produce an HO scale version of a Canadian National class H-6d/g 4-6-0 steam locomotive. Initially announced in 2019, Rapido elected to suspend development of the HO scale model due to a lack of advance reservations. Renewed interest has led to relaunching the project.



Built by Montreal Locomotive Works for the Canadian Northern Railway, the prototype H-6 class 4-6-0 was a

light, general-purpose locomotive well-suited to freight or passenger work across the entire CNR system. In 1919 the newly established Canadian National inherited almost 800 locomotives from the Canadian Northern Railway of which nearly half were 4-6-0 Ten-Wheelers



Rapido's HO scale version represents 20 subclass H-6-d locomotives built in 1910 and 1911. They lasted in regular service into the late 1950s. Visual modifications over the years included installing steel cabs to



replace the original wooden type, adding wooden extensions to tenders to increase coal capacity, and converting some tenders from coal to oil. Additional options on Rapido's HO models include manual or power reverse appliances, vertical or horizontal slat pilots, bell locations and headlight sizes.



The Rapido HO Scale CNR H-6 will come available in two paint schemes – the vermilion herald will be applied to the tender

level or tilted – plus two painted/unlettered variations. The

tender is also available separately. DC models will be DCC-ready. Sound equipped models will have custom synchronized sound decoders. Lighting effects will include headlights, marker lights, number boards and a flickering firebox.



Rapido is developing an all-new 46' Pennsylvania Railroad class G22 steel gondola. The HO scale model is based on the more than 5,700 prototypes built between 1915 and 1917.

Rapido's new model is based on the G22 class with both single- and three-rib ends.



Starting in 1930, many G22 gondolas were equipped with 100-ton trucks and assigned to container service. They typically hauled multiple small containers of PRR design which were used for various dry

aggregate materials. Rapido is developing both G22 and G22b container cars.



Paint schemes on the initial release will be G22 PRR (Circle Keystone, K or AB brakes), G22B PRR (Circle Keystone with containers), G22 PRR Shadow Keystone (AB brakes), G22B PRR Shadow Keystone with

containers, PRR MOW, PC MOW and undecorated. Decorated cars will be available in multiple road numbers. Rapido's HO version will feature a diecast underframe, inside and outside rivet details, K or AB brake systems as appropriate, PRR containers, separate wire grab irons and 70- or 100-ton trucks with machined metal wheels.

The order deadline is May 15, 2024. Delivery is TBA.



Additional new projects underway at Rapido include an all-new HO scale model of a 50' exterior post boxcar based on 799 prototypes built by PC&F in 1979. The cars were rated at

either 5241 or 5317 cubic feet depending on the interior configuration.



The cars became known as the "Berlin Mills Boxcar" because of the iconic paint scheme on the group of 399 cars that went to the New Hampshire short line. The balance of the original production went to Boston & Maine and Olympic Railroad in Washington State.



Road names on Rapido's initial release will be Boston & Maine, Berlin Mills, Pan Am (B&M), OLYR-Olympic Railroad, B&M Guilford, St. Lawrence & Atlantic, Saratoga & North Creek, two EEC schemes and three BKTY (UP) schemes.



Rapido new PC&F boxcar will be available with three door styles, full underbody detail, wire grab irons, metal knuckle couplers and appropriate trucks with machined metal wheels. The deadline for ordering is May 15, 2024. Delivery is TBA.

Info: www.rapidotrains.com



ScaleTrains is taking preorders for the first five CSX Heritage Unit ES44AH locomotives in HO scale.

Produced in cooperation with CSX, ScaleTrains was provided with the paint codes for each locomotive, and each model will include locomotive specific cabs, dynamic brakes, doors, grilles, and other details.



LED lighting effects include front, rear, and side walkway lights, prototype specific ground lights,

lighted number boards, and ditch lights. The models will be equipped with ESU LokSound 5 DCC/Sound decoders with a two-super capacitor Power Pack included.



Heritage paint schemes in this release include Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Chesapeake & Ohio Railway,

Chessie System, Conrail Quality, and Seaboard System.



Also announced is a new locomotive model, the EMD GP40. Identifiable by its three 48" radiator fans, the four-axle GP40

used a turbocharged 645 prime mover to generate 3000hp. Through the years GP40 locomotives have been rebuilt with modular electronics, had their turbochargers removed to become GP38s, and modified in various other ways.



The Rivet Counter HO scale GP40 model will be available in two Chicago & Northwestern paint schemes, D&RGW,

Louisville & Nashville, Milwaukee Road, Penn Central, and three Western Pacific paint schemes, including two Bicentennial schemes. Five different phases are included in this release – Ia, Ia3, IIa2, IIb, and IIc.



The models will include the typical Rivet Counter roadname and number specific details, as well as full LED lighting effects per the prototype.

Preorders for the ES44AH and GP40 models are due Monday, February 26th for a late 2024 delivery.



In the ExactRail Evolution Series, ScaleTrains has announced an early fall delivery for the HO scale Evans 4780 covered hopper.

Roadnames in this release include Louisiana Midland Railway, Lake Erie, Franklin, & Clarion Railroad, Archer Daniels Midland (UELX), Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas Railroad, and Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana.

The models feature Morton-style running boards with and without side extensions, separately applied brake wheels,



separately applied etched Morton coupler crossover platforms, ASF Ride Control 100-ton trucks with 36" machined metal wheels, and

Kadee #58 couplers in a narrow-style draft box that features shank wedges, striker castings, and full nut and bolt detail.

Info: www.scaletrains.com

Smokebox Graphics has released a limited run of an AAR triple-bay coal hoppers decorated for Grand Trunk Western and Detroit & Illinois Eastern. The HO scale ready-to-run model is based on a 70-ton prototype with offset sides built in the early 1950s.



Features include wire grab irons, removable coal load, appropriate trucks with metal wheelsets and metal knuckle couplers.

Info: smokeboxgraphics.com/collections/rolling-stock



Tangent announced the immediate availability of a new HO scale Bethlehem Steel 3350 cu. ft. quadruple-bay coal hopper car at the Amherst Railroad Hobby Show.



A Louisville & Nashville H-8 class version of the car (above) wears the original black scheme as delivered by Bethlehem in 1978.

The B-end of the model features an Elcon National brake wheel and Morton brake step. The model is available in 24 road numbers.



This model replicates an SBD / CSXT black repaint from 1987. It is an ex-L&N car Bethlehem built in 1976. The model is available in 24 numbers.

Patched for Wisconsin Central this model represents one of the several-hundred ex-Clinchfield Bethlehem-built hopper cars WC acquired from CSXT in 1992. The B-end of the model features a Universal 7400 high handbrake, a modern brake wheel and a Morton brake step. This model is available in four road numbers.

Specific details for each road name include seven brake wheel housing options, see-through brake step platform, two ABD valve options, two retainer valve mounting options and two different routing board options. Additional details include wire grab irons and coupler lift bars, rubber air hoses, Kadee knuckle couplers and Tangent 100-ton Barber S-2 trucks with separate brake beams, 36" machined metal wheelsets and rotating bearing caps. Coal load options include both flood or tipple style.

Info: www.tangentscalemodels.com



R. Bale

EMD FP7 DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE

EMD produced the 1,500 horsepower FP7 diesel from the summer of 1949 until the end of 1953. Four feet longer than a standard F7 unit, the P designation indicated the locomotive had an auxiliary water tank and steam generator to supply steam heat to passenger cars. Although originally intended for passenger service, FP7 locomotives were regularly assigned to freight service.



Walthers is planning a mid-summer release for a new production run of EMD FP7 diesel locomotives. This will

be the first availability of the Proto series FP7 model since 2021. The release will include individual FP7A units as well as matching FP7A-FP7B sets.

Walthers FP7s decorated for CP Rail will come with ditch lights, a Nathan M-3 horn, Sinclair antenna and an extended winterization hatch.



Features on Walthers Soo Line FP7s include dual headlights, a Pyle 360 beacon, a Leslie S2-M horn,

Firecracker radio antenna and working rear backup lights.



Details shared by Chesapeake & Ohio and Southern Pacific locomotives include Nathan

M-5 horns, etched metal sunshades and whip antennas including appropriate conduit. SP units will also have working rear backup lights, a snowplow pilot and etched metal rooftop icicle breakers on the front and rear of A units.



Walthers Proto series FP7 models will be available for DC operation and for DCC operation with ESU LokSound 5 Sound.



Walthers has released an HO scale model of a 40' AAR steel boxcar. The Mainline series model represents a 1948-era boxcar that has been modernized with the running board

removed and the ladders on the A end of the car shortened. The full height ladder on the B end was retained to provide access to the Ajax hand brake wheel.



Additional details of the original 10-panel car with an interior 10' 6" height include a diagonal panel roof, 6' Youngstown sliding doors and Improved Dreadnaught 4/4- ends with a rectangular top rib. The model

comes with plain bearing Bettendorf-type trucks with 33" machined metal wheels and metal knuckle couplers.



Road names include Santa Fe, Burlington, Union Pacific, LAPX-Linde Gas, United Parcel Service and Louisville, New Albany & Corydon.

Info: www.walthers.com

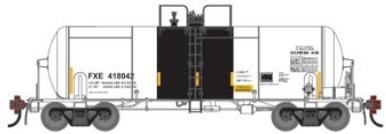
N SCALE PRODUCT NEWS



Athearn has included an N scale 13,000 gallon acid tank car in its June 2025 production schedule. Both early and late body phases

will be available in this release as well as different loading

platforms as appropriate to the road name being modeled. Four road numbers each will be available for Union Tank Car, Procor, Ferromex, Rhodia, Inc., and Asarco, Inc.



Additional details include separate wire grabs and handrails, rubber trainline hoses, double-shelf knuckle couplers, full underframe detail including air brake reservoir, control valve, and brake cylinder with plumbing and brake rod details.

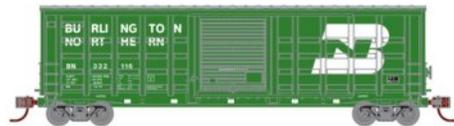


Athearn has upgraded the molded-on details of its 52' mill gondola. Changes to the N scale model include fine scale stirrup steps.



The model is scheduled to be released in June 2025 with the following road names: CSX,

Herzog, SMBC Rail Services, Boston & Maine, Gondola Connection and Trinity Industries Leasing.



An N scale 50' waffle side boxcar decorated for Burlington Northern, CSX, Illinois Terminal, Delaware &

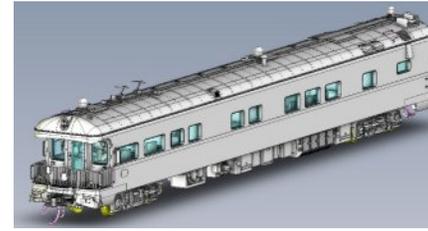
Hudson, Seaboard System and Maine Central is included on Athearn's June 2025 production schedule. This is the first time this model has been available since early 2019. The model features short ladders, low-mounted brake wheel and a sliding Youngstown corrugated steel door.



All Athearn N scale models mentioned in this report come with McHenry knuckle couplers and screw-mounted

trucks with machined metal wheelsets.

Info: www.athearn.com



Broadway Limited announced that it is working on a group of N scale Union Pacific business cars. Early 3D drawings were shown at the recent Amhurst Show for business cars St. Louis (left), Lone Star/Lincoln, Cheyenne,

Feather River, and Kenefick. BLI officials pledged that the final product will be correctly decorated for modern day UP heritage and excursion equipment. Features will include individually controlled ditch, marker, and interior lights. Information on delivery dates is pending.

Info: www.broadway-limited.com

Eastern Seaboard Models has scheduled the third release of its N scale GSC well car for June 2024. The original tooling has been refurbished and relocated to a new production partner.



Road names on this release will be Delaware &

Hudson, Lehigh Valley, Penn Central, Conrail, Department of Defense, Canadian Pacific and Reading.



The release includes a Conrail car

decorated for cancer awareness with profits from the sale of this car going to the American Cancer Society.



Also scheduled for release in June are ESM's ASF Ride Control truck refitted with roller bearing journals.

Info: www.esmc.com





R. Bale

EMD SD40-2 DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE

The SD40-2 was one of EMD's most popular locomotives. During its 17 year production run that began in 1972, EMD produced nearly 4,000 of the 3,000hp SD40-2s. Although higher-horsepower locomotives were available, the reliability and versatility of the SD40-2 made it one of the best-selling models in EMD's history. The SD40-2s principal improvement over the SD40 was its modular electronic control systems. A variety of low front noses ranging from 81" to 123" in length housed additional electronic gear along with a more commodious toilet for crew members.



InterMountain's N scale SD40-2 diesel locomotive announced last July, is being released in two stages.

Santa Fe and Milwaukee Road versions of the model were released earlier this month. SD40-2 locomotives decorated for Canadian Pacific, CSX, Union Pacific, FURX (ex-BN patch), G&W Marquette Rail and Iowa, Chicago & Eastern will be available in February.



Due to supplier changes InterMountain will not be able to offer a DCC non-sound version of the SD40-2 on this release.

Info: www.intermountain-railway.com



Newly released N scale models from **Micro-Trains Line** include this B&O Chessie System PS-2 twin-bay covered hopper car. The model is based on an all-welded

prototype built by Pullman-Standard in 1957. The model comes with appropriate Bettendorf-type plain-bearing trucks.



ACF leased this triple-bay covered hopper car to Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, a large sugar beet processing firm active in the 1980s. Micro-Trains N scale model is equipped with Barber roller-bearing trucks.



New from Micro-Trains is this 40' Santa Fe boxcar with plug doors. The car has the running board removed but still has full height ladders and a brake wheel

mounted high on the B end.
Info: Contact a dealer.



Lowell Smith's **RailSmith** is taking deposits for N scale GN F7A and F7B locomotives in Big Sky Blue as part of the 1967 Empire Builder. Made by Broadway Limited, the locomotives will be equipped with Paragon 4 DCC/Sound.



RailSmith is also taking deposits for Northern Pacific F5A (F3A) and F7B locomotives in N scale, produced by Broadway Limited, for use with the 1954 North Coast Limited passenger train set. Info: lowellsmith.net



Rapido Trains has announced plans to produce an N scale Budd Rail Diesel Car. This is a

conditional release meaning that a minimal number of advance reservations must be received to justify investing in tooling and other production startup costs.



The project will include both Phase 1 and Phase 2 body styles as well as both fabricated and cast truck frames. Features will include all-wheel electrical

pickup to a single-motor and an all-wheel drive mechanism. Additional details include directional headlights, red marker lights, interior details, flicker-free interior lighting and tinted windows.



Phase I RDCs will be available decorated for Amtrak, Santa Fe, MTA Metro North, New York Central, Southern Pacific, New Haven,

Baltimore & Ohio and unlettered. Decorating schemes for Phase II RDCs will be Reading, VIA Rail, BC Rail, CP Rail, CN and Boston & Maine.



Operating options include DC-silent (DCC-ready) or DC/DCC/with ESU LokSound. As a conditional release,

reservations placed before the March 15, 2024 deadline will get a 5 percent early bird discount.

Info: www.rapidotrains.com



ScaleTrains.com has announced preorders for an N scale version of the Trinity

82' 7883 reefer in the Rivet Counter line. The model features prototype specific features such as Carrier or early or late Thermo King HVAC units, conspicuity stripes, and different lettering styles.



The cars include photo-etched stainless steel see through coupler crossover

platforms on the B-end, ASF Ride Control trucks with 36" machined metal wheels, body mounted Type E Micro-Trains compatible knuckle couplers, factory applied ladders, metal grab irons, coupler cut levers, trainline hoses, separate brake plumbing and other details.



Also in N scale, ScaleTrains has announced a Rivet Counter line EMD SD40T-2 locomotive. Features

planned for this model includes see-through radiator intake compartment, 81", 88", and 123" noses, etched-metal radiator exhaust grilles with visible radiator shutters, two radiator door versions, see through dynamic brake fans with visible fan blades, two fuel tank sizes, "as delivered" and modified SP L-windows, Rio Grande MARS or Gyalite as appropriate, and SP appropriate light packages (not fully functional).



Between the three nose options, light options, lettering options and paint schemes, there are two Rio Grande versions, four Southern Pacific versions, and two Union Pacific versions in the first run. Additionally, two Rio Grande versions and two Southern Pacific versions without numbers will be available.

Pre-orders for both the reefers and the SD40T-2s are due Monday, February 26th for a late summer delivery.

Info: www.scalettrains.com

NEW STRUCTURES & SCENIC SUPPLIES

Athearn's next production run of HO scale Ford F-100 pickup trucks is scheduled for release in June 2025. Although



patterned after Ford's 1955 edition, similar pickups were produced into the mid-1960s. Pickups decorated with railroad names will include Santa Fe and New York Central.



F-100 pickups with commercial names will include Ford, Bethlehem Steel, Mountain Lumber and Liberty Feed Co.



A model in Athearn's faded Prime for Grime paint represents a pickup under restoration. All versions of the HO scale F-100 will have a molded cab interiors with a separately applied steering wheel, clear window glazing and rubber tires.



A yard tractor with interior details, photo-etched steps, clear windows and an adjustable 5th wheel is included in Athearn's June 2025 schedule. The tractor will be available with a 45' container and chassis decorated in a choice of CMA CGM, MOL, APL, Horizon Lines, Water Front and Scandinavian Container Services.



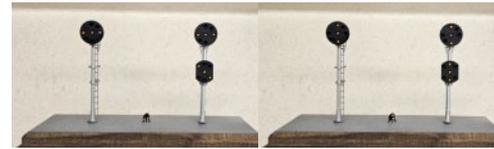
The 45' containers, without the chassis, will also be available in 3-packs in the same decorating schemes.



Twenty-eight foot containers on single-axle chassis decorated for UPS and Fastrac Intermodal are included in Athearn's June 2025 production schedule.

Info: www.athearn.com

East Coast Circuits has announced a new set of Pennsy-style signals in HO scale. Powered by 9-12V DC, the signals include a



single head 3-aspect seven light signal, a dual-head multi-aspect signal, and a 3-aspect dwarf signal. The signals are available separately.

Info: eastcoastcircuits.com



Eastern Seaboard Models has introduced a new product line named Trailers By Rail. The line features limited run kits that build into mid-20th century trailers. The N scale kits consist of 3D-printed resin bodies, floor and underframe: injection-molded plastic secondary parts and appropriate decals. The initial release will be an N scale kit for a Strick 35' drop-frame trailer decorated for Stone's Express. The kit includes special decals prepared by Circus City.

Info: www.esmc.com



Fos Scale Models plans to release an HO scale kit for The McCauley Steam & Hydraulic Packing Co. later this month. The craftsman kit uses a combination of Hydrocal cast brick and laser-cut

wood walls. Additional components include both 3D printed and metal cast detail parts, scale lumber, laser-cut details, plastic injection molded windows and color signage. The assembly instructions feature 3D drawings and diagrams. The assembled model has a footprint 3.5" x 12". Painting and assembly are required.

Info: www.fosscalmodels.com



Frenchman River Model Works has released a kit of the McHenry Blacksmith shop in O and HO scales. A wooden false front building with a stone back wall, the kit contains numerous resin parts and details. It measures 5.25" x 6.375" x 4.5" in O scale and 2.75" x 3.5" x 2.5" in HO

scale. Photo is of the O scale structure.

Info: frenchmanriver.com



In N scale from **Jacksonville Terminal Company** is the KLLM Intermodal 53' 8-55-5 corrugated side high cube container, available in a 3-pack. The containers feature new door style tooling, JTC containers feature different doors and fronts to match prototype photos, specific scheme tooling for detail placement, IBC pins in scale ISO 40' locations, and the JTC Magnetic connecting system featuring magnets on the bottom and metal plates affixed to the inside roof.

Info: jtcmodeltrains.com



Minifer is selling a unique structure kit titled A Silo in Mont-sur-Guesnes. The HO scale kit consists of laser-cut wood and cardboard components and illustrated assembly instructions. The built-up model is 11.81" tall. It has a footprint of 6.10" x 5.5". Painting and assembly are required.

Info: www.minifer.fr



miniprints has released a new line of 3D-printed products, Beneath the Tracks: Subterranean Scenes. Leading off the new product line is Timmy Fell Down the Well, based on the familiar trope involving accident-prone Timmy and his intelligent collie. Designed to be incorporated into the layout fascia, the Well+Timmy+Collie combination is available in N, HO, S, and O scale.

The second Subterranean Scene is appropriate for the late 1950s and 1960s – a backyard nuclear fallout shelter. The 3D-printed product is available in HO scale and was designed by Spencer Barclay. It includes the shelter, hatch, lid, and mounting template.

Info: www.miniprints.com



Oak Hill Model Supply has available Roadmaster Series tie rods for hand laid turnouts. Designed from prototype drawings, the throw bars and tie rods use a friction fit. They are available in HO scale for code 55 and 70/83 track. The throw tie rod includes holes in the middle and end that will accept 0.032" music wire.

Info: www.ohrtracksupply.com

NEW DECALS, SIGNS & FINISHING PRODUCTS | 36

NEW DECALS, SIGNS AND FINISHING PRODUCTS

Dan Kohlberg of **icgdecals** has developed five new water slide lettering sets specifically for the newly released Tangent IC Centralia quad-bay coal hopper car.



The decals provide accurate lettering for black Illinois Central cars delivered in 1968 (above) and repainted Illinois Central Gulf cars circa 1972-1978 (below).



Additional lettering sets cover black INLX Inland Steel Centralia quad coal hoppers delivered in 1968, black ICG Illinois Central Gulf Centralia quad coal hoppers delivered in 1972 and black Illinois Central Gulf Centralia quad coal hopper cars dated from 1977 forward. All of the decal sets include accurate lettering diagrams and painting information matching real cars. The high-quality water slide decals were printed in Italy by Cartograf.

Info: www.icgdecals.com



National Scale Car is selling decals for Louisville &

Nashville double-sheathed steel underframe ventilated boxcars built in 1923 by the Tennessee Coal & Iron. The decal set will letter one car, in either the early or later schemes. The decals were developed for the 2024 Prototype Rails Shake-n-Take program which used an Accurail #1300 36' double-sheathed kit as a starting point for the project.

Info: nationalscalecar.com

The decals provide accurate lettering for

Additional lettering sets cover black INLX Inland

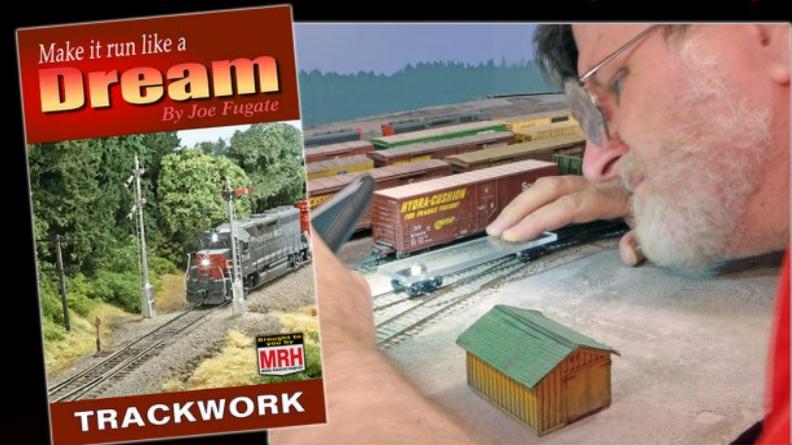
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! BRIEFLY NOTED AT PRESS TIME ...

New from William Mosteller **Great Decals** is a white N scale lettering set for SRCX-Sid Richardson ACF 3586 CF Center Flow carbon black hopper car. Data includes the SR herald, road numbers, dimensional and capacity info and car specific lettering ...

The advance reservation period for **InterMountain's** HO scale GP10 Paducah locomotives and AAR 10'-6" boxcars ends March 31st ...

Morning Sun has released author Stephen Timko's Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Power ...

RailSmith is booking reservation for an Alco S-2 diesel switcher decorated for the Portland Terminal Railroad. The N scale model is being produced by Atlas ...

New HO scale cast resin detail items from **Rusty Rail** include a horizontal boiler, a rural gas station and a small water or fuel tank on skids ...

DCC/Sound versions of **Piko's** new HO scale Krauss-Maffei ML 4000 diesel-hydraulic locomotive are scheduled for release this month. A video of the model is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=FW9MIWrhKPE ... ■

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FEBRUARY

Please check with any organization hosting an in-person event for the latest status of the event.

Ongoing 2024

ONLINE, Zoom, dates vary, see website. Operation Special Interest Group Meetups – limited attendance available.
Info: www.opsig.org/Virtual
Archive: www.opsig.org/Virtual/Past

ONLINE, Zoom & YouTube, Wednesday & Saturday, see Facebook page. “New Tracks” Meetup, hosted by Jim Kellow, MMR.
Info: newtracksmodeling.com
YouTube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCMA_VhPb5pjdkAYTdXLceJA

ONLINE, Facebook & YouTube, dates vary, see Facebook page. “NMRAX” organized by Gordy Robinson, Martyn Jenkins, Gert Muller, Jordan Kramer.
Info: www.facebook.com/groups/nmragroup

ONLINE, YouTube, every other Saturday. 4th Division, Pacific Northwest Region, NMRA hosts online layout tours and clinics.
Archive: www.youtube.com/c/4DPNRMovies

ONLINE, Zoom, Second Tuesdays, 8pm Eastern. "Off the Beaten Track" featuring Narrow Gauge layouts, clinics, and manufacturers.

Info: groups.io/g/NNG

AROUND THE USA, IN-PERSON, Various dates. ScaleTrains.com Road Trip.

Info: www.scaletrains.com/roadtrip

February – March 2024

ONLINE, YouTube, March 18-21, 2024. NERx, the annual Northeastern Region, NMRA Virtual Convention.

Info: nerx.org and www.youtube.com/c/NMRAORGModelRailroading

ALABAMA, MOBILE, March 2-3, 2024. 2024 SWARM Model Train Show. Mobile Via Health, Fitness and Enrichment Center, Arlene F. Mitchell Campus, 171 Dauphin Street.

Info: Gasamuel@aol.com

CALIFORNIA, BAKERSFIELD, March 2-3, 2024. 30th Annual Bakersfield California Model Train Show, sponsored by the Golden Empire Historical and Modeling Society. Kern County Fairgrounds, 1142 South P St.

Info: gehams.club

GEORGIA, CARTERSVILLE, March 9-10, 2024. The Piedmont Division Model Train Show. Clarence Brown Conference Center, 5450 GE Hwy 20.

Info: themodeltrainshow.com

GEORGIA, MACON, March 22-23, 2024. Central Georgia RPM (fmly Savannah RPM). Howard Community Center, 5645 Forsyth Rd.

Info: www.facebook.com/centralgarpm

ILLINOIS, MACHESNEY PARK, March 16-17, 2024. Rock River Valley Train Show. Harlem High School, 9229 N. Alpine Rd.

info: www.rrvd-nmra.com

ILLINOIS, WAUCONDA, March 23-24, 2024. Lake County Model RR Club Open House. 107 S. Main St. Rear Entrance.

Info: lcmrr.org

INDIANA, NAPPANEE, March 16, 2024. 19th Annual Train Show by the Elkhart Model Railroad Club. Claywood Event Center, 13924 N 1100 W (County Line Road).

Info: www.emrrc.com

KANSAS, LAWRENCE, March 2-3, 2024. Lawrence Train Show, sponsored by the Lawrence Model Railroad Club. Crown Toyota Used Car Kingdom, 3400 S. Iowa St.

Info: lawrencemodelrailroadclub.org/TrainShow24.png

MICHIGAN, HOLLY (Detroit), February 24-25, 2024. Detroit Model Railroad Club Open House, 104 N. Saginaw.

Info: www.dmrrc.org

NEW YORK, HAMBURG, February 17-18, 2024. WNYRHS Train & Toy Show, sponsored by the Western New York Railway Historical Society. Fairgrounds Event Center, 5820 South Park Ave.

Info: wnyrhs.com

NORTH CAROLINA, HIGH POINT, February 24, 2024. RPM – Carolinas. 4045 Premier Drive.

Info: www.facebook.com/groups/1895473627515807

NORTH CAROLINA, NEW BERN, February 24-25, 2024. Carolina Coastal Railroaders 28th Annual Model Train Show. New Bern Riverfront Convention Center, 203 S. Front St.

Info: www.carolinacoastalrailroaders.org/trainshow

OHIO, WEST CHESTER (Cincinnati), March 9, 2024. 2024 Annual Division 7 NMRA Model Train Spring Flea Market & Trade Show. Lakota West Freshman School, 5050 Tylersville Road.

Info: cincy-div7.org

OKLAHOMA, TULSA, March 22-24, 2024. Indian Nations 2024 Layout Design and Operations Weekend. Akdar Shrine Center, 2808 S Sheridan Road.

Info: ldopsigmeet.tulsanmra.org



OREGON, PORTLAND, March 2, 2024. 2024 Willamette Model Railroad Club Swap Meet. Kliever Armory, 10,000 NE 33rd Dr.
Info: wmrrc.com

PENNSYLVANIA, MALVERN, March 22-24, 2024. Railroad Prototype Modelers – Valley Forge. Desmond Hotel Malvern, a DoubleTree by Hilton, One Liberty Blvd.
Info: www.rpmvalleyforge.com

SOUTH CAROLINA, EASLEY, February 16-17, 2024. Central Railway Museum's Model Train Expo 2024. Rock Springs Church – Impact Center, 207 Rock Springs Road.
Info: www.crmha.org/trainshow

TEXAS, PASADENA (Houston), February 15-17, 2024. Where The Eagle Meets The Chief, 2024 NMRA Lone Star Region Convention. Pasadena Convention Center, 7902 Fairmont Parkway.
Info: turbotrains.com/2024lonestar/index.html

TEXAS, PASADENA (Houston), February 17, 2024. 2024 Greater Houston Train Show, sponsored by the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club Inc. Pasadena Convention Center, 7902 Fairmont Parkway.
Info: sanjacmodeltrains.org

WISCONSIN, MADISON, February 17-18, 2024. 56th Annual Mad City Model Railroad Show and Sale. Exhibition Hall, Alliant Energy Center, 1919 Alliant Energy Center Way.
Info: www.nmra-scwd.org

Future 2024 by location

CANADA, ALBERTA, CALGARY, April 20-21, 2024. Supertrain 2024, Canada's largest model train show. Genesis Centre, 7555 Falconridge Blvd NE.
Info: www.supertrain.ca

CANADA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, SURREY, May 22-26, 2024. Surrey Excursion, NMRA PNR 2024 Convention. Sheraton Vancouver, Guildford Hotel, 15269 104th Avenue.
Info: www.pnr2024.7divpnr.ca

CANADA, ONTARIO, PRESCOTT, April 13, 2024. Bytown and Prescott Model Railroaders Group Train Show. Leo Boivin Arena, #444 Prince Street.
Info: ronlipsett@hotmail.com

NEW ZEALAND, ASHBURTON, July 6-7, 2024. Ashburton Model Train Show. Tinwald Memorial Hall, Graham Street, Tinwald.
Info: ashburtontrainshow.co.nz

NEW ZEALAND, MOSGIEL, May 4-5, 2024. Dunedin Model Train Show. 12 Wickliffe Street.
Info: www.facebook.com/groups/159812677415713

ALABAMA, DECATUR, June 20-23, 2024. River Rails 2024, SER Convention. Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Decatur Riverfront, 1101 6th Ave NE.
Info: midsouthnmra.org/Convention.html

ARIZONA, MESA, May 2-4, 2024. 2024 Sn3 Symposium. Sheraton Mesa Hotel at Wrigleyville West, 860 North Riverview.
Info: sn3symposium.com

CALIFORNIA, CROCKETT, April 13-14, June 22-23, August 24-25, September 14, October 26-27, December 7-8, 2024. Carquinez Model Railroad Society Open House. 645 Loring Avenue.
Info: cmrstrainclub.org

CALIFORNIA, LONG BEACH, August 4-11, 2024. Surfliner 2024 NMRA National Convention. Westin Long Beach, 333 East Ocean Blvd.
Info: surfliner2024.org

CALIFORNIA, MILPITAS, April 24-28, 2024. The Tech Line, PCR Convention 2024. Sonesta Hotel, 777 Bellew Drive.
Info: www.pcrnmra.net/conv2024

COLORADO, DENVER, April 6-7, 2024. Rocky Mountain Train Show – Spring 2024. National Western Complex, 4655 Humboldt St.
Info: rockymountaintrainshow.com/Default.aspx

KANSAS, HERINGTON, April 27-28, 2024. Herington Kansas Railroad Days Model Railroading and Railroad Memorabilia Show. Herington Community Building, 810 S. Broadway.
Info: heringtonhistory.org/heringtonrailroaddays

ILLINOIS, COLLINSVILLE, July 19-20, 2024. St. Louis RPM. The Gateway Center, 1 Gateway Center Drive.

Info: stlrpm.com

ILLINOIS, NAPERVILLE, October 10-12, 2024. RPM Chicagoland 2024.

Info: www.rpmconference.com

INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS, April 26-28, 2024. New York Central System Historical Society 2024 Convention. Indianapolis Airport Crowne Plaza, 2501 S High School Rd.

Info: www.nycshs.net/NYCSHS-Convention-2024--Indianapolis-IN-April-26--28-2024_c_23.html

INDIANA, SOUTH BEND, May 2-4, 2024. Around The Bend, Midwest Regional Convention. The Century Center, 120 Doctor M.L.K. Jr Blvd.

Info: www.mwr-nmra.org/aroundthebend.html

MARYLAND, BALTIMORE, September 6-8, 2024. Mid-Atlantic RPM. DoubleTree by Hilton BWI.

Info: www.marpm.org

NEVADA, SPARKS, October 16-19, 2024. San Francisco Overland, 2024 SPH&TS Convention. Nugget Casino Resort, 1100 Nugget Avenue.

Info: sphts.org/convention

NORTH CAROLINA, DURHAM, September 26-29, 2024. Piedmont Junction 2024, Mid-Eastern Region NMRA Convention. Raleigh-Durham Marriott.

Info: piedmontjunction.cpd13.org

OHIO, MARION, October 10-12, 2024. Central Ohio RPM. Marion Union Station.

Info: centralohiorpm.wordpress.com

OHIO, MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS (Cleveland), May 16-19, 2024. North Coast Limited, Mid-Central Region 2024 Convention. Crowne Plaza Hotel, 7230 Engle Rd.

Info: northcoastlimited2024.org

OREGON, ELSIE, April 6, 2024. Pacific Model Loggers Congress, Camp 18 Restaurant and Logging Museum, 42362 Highway 26.

Info: pacificmodelloggerscongress.org

OREGON, PORTLAND, October 5, 2024. Bridgetown RPM Meet. Shilo Inn Portland Airport, 11707 NE Airport Way.

Info: www.brpmm.com

PENNSYLVANIA, HARRISBURG, September 21-22, 2024. Anthracite Railroad Modelers Meet XII. Reading Railroad Heritage Museum, 500 South 3rd Street.

Info: readingrrmm.com

PENNSYLVANIA, PITTSBURGH, September 11-14, 2024. 44th National Narrow Gauge Convention. Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Pittsburgh – Green Tree, 500 Mansfield Avenue.

Info: www.44nngc.com

TEXAS, FOREST HILL, June 24, 2024. Red River RPM Event. Forest Hill Civic Center, 6901 Wichita Street.

Info: redriverrpm.org ■



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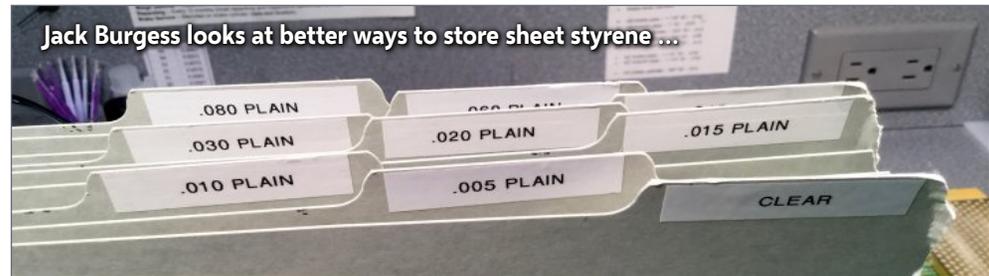
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