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Model Railroad Hobbyist |

May 2025 | #183

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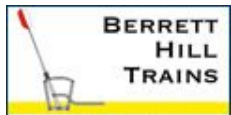
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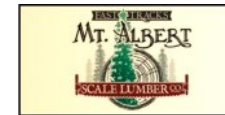
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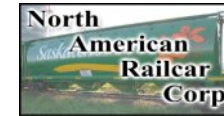
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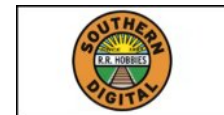
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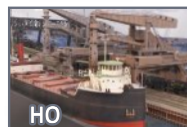
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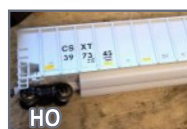
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PUBLISHER'S MUSINGS



Model Railroad Hobbyist | May 2025

JOE FUGATE WONDERS IF THE TIME HAS COME
FOR A MODELING INDUSTRY BHAG PROJECT ...



GIVEN ALL THE ANGST OVER HUGE CHINA TARIFFS IN THE LAST MONTH PLUS, I'm wondering if it isn't time for the model railroading industry to rethink how they make product. In other words, maybe it's time to put a plan B in place to produce product without involving China.

I get that a plan B isn't something that can be done overnight, but we might as well get started since we don't know when the next "Oh no" moment will happen with China. If we have a few years, then all the better – that may give us enough time to make real progress on a plan B.

With the China tariff dropping from 145% to a more reasonable 30%, we've dodged a bullet for now. We all hope this temporary 90-day verbal deal turns into a final deal that all parties sign and keep for many years to come.

For plan B, I'd like to suggest we make it a BHAG – a **Big Hairy Audacious Goal**.

What's a BHAG?

No, a BHAG is not some caricature villain like Witch Hazel in those Bugs Bunny cartoons. And it's not a code word for a secret Mission Impossible mission either.

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A BHAG (pronounced “bee-hag”) is actually serious business concept introduced by Jim Collins in the book *Built to Last*.

A big, hairy, audacious goal is a clear, compelling goal that seems unreasonable and out of reach, but something in you is bold enough (and crazy enough) to believe you just might achieve it anyway.

Model railroading industry BHAG

As the BHAG for the model railroading industry, I'd like to suggest we completely rethink the process of making rolling stock and locomotives with methods that would allow us to onshore as much of the manufacturing as possible.

I believe we could use modern 21st century technology to thoroughly re-invent how we make these products.

I'm talking about modern robotics, modern methods using computerized control, and modern manufacturing techniques like 3D printing for parts. You can get small-time automated painting and masking machines here in the US, as well as small-time injection molding machines.

For instance, could we simply make the body using injection molding and then make all the parts using 3D printing?

We might need to rethink the consumer end of this as well. Having the modeler install a few extra detailed parts on a ready-to-run model could make it cost less. If adding those extra detail parts in the US is cost prohibitive, then add some *modeling* back into model railroading!

There's also looking into places like Mexico, Central America, or South America for less costly labor. Anything that avoids major cross-ocean shipping from the eastern hemisphere is what I'm thinking of.

Remember I'm talking about a BHAG here. It should sound ambitious, maybe even slightly crazy and not easily done.

The book *Built to Last* gives some examples of a BHAG. The most

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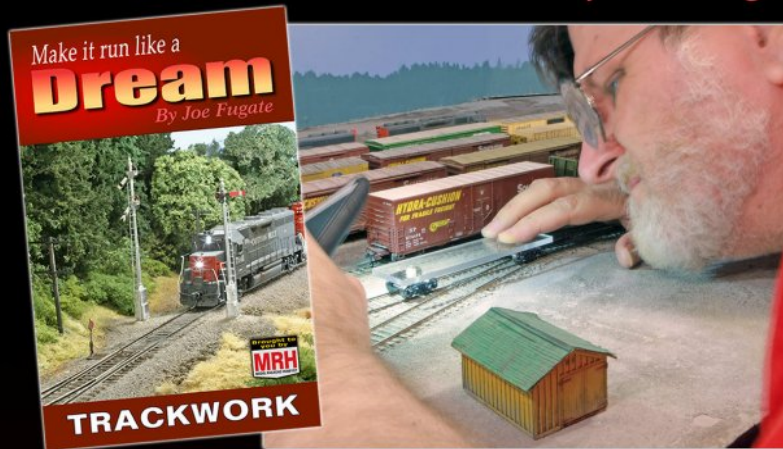


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powerful example is President Kennedy's famous 1961 declaration: "This nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth."

The result, of course, was the historic moon landing in 1969.

The point is let's not go back to business as usual and get caught flat-footed the next time something goes sideways with the current made in China production process.

We need to learn from the latest episode and start the plan B BHAG rethinking right away. We won't have gained anything from the souring of China-US relations if we just stick our heads in the sand.

Mark my words: US-China relations will sour again, so let's get going on plan B. Hopefully we have time to make some progress.

Could this have been the end of the hobby?

What if the sky high China tariff was to continue – or to return after the 90 days is up? Is that curtains for the hobby as some have been saying?

In a word, no, the hobby will not die because of this. If you go back and read through letters to the editor from old hobby publications, you will quickly learn the hobby has been dying since the 1940s.

1940s: The war and rationing will kill the hobby

1950s: Plastic models will kill the hobby

1960s: Popularity of slot cars will kill the hobby

1970s: Ready-to-run (RTR) will kill the hobby

1980s: Lack of train set popularity will kill the hobby

1990s: Radio control cars and game consoles will kill the hobby

2000s: The internet will kill the hobby

2010s: High prices will kill the hobby

2020s: Covid and/or foreign policy will kill the hobby

The farther back you go through this list, the more amusing it becomes. No, rationing did not kill the hobby, no plastic models did not kill the hobby, and no slot cars did not kill the hobby ... and so on.

Keep in mind the model railroading hobby finally got put on the map in the 1930s, during the great depression. Hard times and model railroading have been through a lot together, and it seems during hard times the hobby manages to flourish even more as a healthy escape from the difficulties of life.

No doubt, if the 145% tariff was to continue, some hobby businesses would be unable to adapt and they would fold. Other hobby businesses would figure out how to move forward somehow.

The sky high tariffs were a serious hit to the hobby, but the hobby's not going to end even if all the firms who make stuff in



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China close their doors – which is very unlikely.

Remember, there's still the 15-20% of the hobby who model in scales other than HO, N, or O – and they've never depended on models from China. And of those who do model in HO, N, or O, they've never been able to buy everything new RTR only (as in models from China).

Basically, what would happen is eBay would become a prime source for people to get locos and rolling stock, and kitbashing /detailing would come into vogue again with 3D printing details becoming a hotter item than ever.

Kitbashing has never really stopped, all the China RTR supply has done is it's enabled modelers to focus on other modeling projects instead for the stuff they could not buy.

So the hobby will continue, regardless. Those who have figured out how to make locos and rolling stock outside of China will likewise be in a very prominent position because they will still be able to make new product.

Assuming the other firms all folded, what would happen is

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some enterprising folks will arise after a few years who will have figured out how to make locos and rolling stock affordably without China being in the mix.

After a decade or so a whole new crop of firms will exist that are prospering making models without involving China at all. And the hobby will be as active as ever.

In short, history has shown all the hand-wringing over the hobby dying has never been accurate. The hobby manages to not only survive, but even thrive regardless.

Reiterating our call for more articles

As I mentioned last month, our article backlog is getting kind of thin, so we could use more submissions.

We like scenery, weathering, and DCC/electrical articles the most, but we also could use more articles on structures, rolling stock, and locomotives.

And of course we can always use an article on a cool tool or technique that you've discovered.

With us, the photos and illustrations make the article. If you can write a coherent email, then you can write well enough for us. We have copy editors who can make your text sound good, and word processors make editing text straightforward enough.

It's the photos that need to be done with the most care. A poorly lit photo or one that's poorly composed or poorly focused can be next to impossible to fix. An article with great text but poor photos will get rejected, so take your time putting together good photos for your piece.

Start your article with a photo of the finished project in a nice layout scene, if possible. What you want to do is illustrate to readers what the end product looks like as a way to tell them why what you discuss in the article is worth the effort. Leading with a nice final result shot does that.

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double check the full-sized image focus. Don't trust the thumbnail – bring up the full-sized image and check that it's sharp and not blurry. Unfortunately, many articles we get have one or more blurry images in the collection.

We have AI software that can sometimes save a blurry image, but it's better not to chance it. Make double sure that image is sharp as you go. If it's not sharp, retake it until you get it sharp. If you rely on the thumbnail and then later find out the image is blurry, it may be too late – the project is done and you can't easily retake the in-process step image again.

Also, if you include any photos that have callouts in them (text and arrows pointing at something), please include the raw photo without the callouts in your submission as well so we can add callouts consistent with our formatting.

The August 2019 *MRH* has an in-depth article on writing articles for us. Check it out to get all the details:

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- 2nd** Let's talk ops: Trailing- and facing-point turnouts
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Most liked articles in [April 2025 issue](#) of *Running Extra* ...

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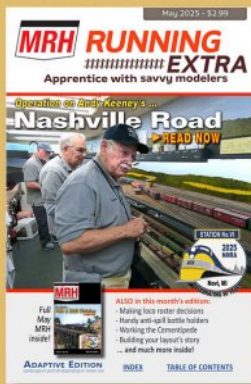
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May issue ...



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Best of the

MRH FORUM

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THIS MONTH

Model Railroad Hobbyist | May 2025

Compiled by **JOE FUGATE**

FSM kit “copycat” build

MRH forum regular **thewizard1** (Charles D.) has a thread showing how he “copied” an old Fine Scale Miniatures kit.

The kit is no longer available, but Charles likes the looks of this kit a lot, so he set about trying to copy it and posting every step of the project along the way.

Charles’ approach includes several clever building techniques and fun solutions to eliminate problems. See the full thread for all the details!



View the full thread on the MRH website

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

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1. MRH forum member **Distracted Perfectionist** (Neil S.) posted this photo in answer to **cbaygull**'s question about making engine handrails.

How to make or repair HO engine handrails

MRH forum member **cbaygull** (John H.) posted:

"I have an Intermountain ES44SDC engine dating probably from about 2011. Recently I've had to take the shell off to figure out why the decoder shorted out. In taking the shell off, the handrails started breaking into several pieces (thought I was being careful). I'm trying to order a replacement from Intermountain, but what other options are there either sources to buy or methods to repair/make new handrails?"

A number of experienced MRH forum members chimed in to provide method for fashioning nice looking, more bulletproof handrails. One of the best posts was by Neil S. above.

For more, visit the full thread using the button below.

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

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2. *MRH* forum member **AndyZ** asked if members knew of any models made of end-door boxcars like the SP one pictured above. Forum member **air1rav** posted a photo of an HO P2K boxcar in ATSF livery (bottom photo).

SP End-door boxcars?

MRH forum member **AndyZ** asked if anyone knew of any models of end-door automobile transport boxcars like the SP photo he posted [2]. Member **air1rav** posted a model photo, saying “I have an older Proto 2000 one in Santa Fe.”

Read more about this unusual car and finding models of it using the button below.

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

Recent photo fun thread

These images posted on a recent *MRH* forum Photo Fun thread show some quite nice modeling.

[View list of recent Photo Fun threads](#)

3. Frequent *MRH* forum contributor **sanchomurphy** (Sean M.) posted this shot. Sean says, “Great Northern FT #258, ready for time freights in central Minnesota in the 1950s. I also wired it and added sound!”



4. Forum member **SP_SD9** (Rene K.) also posted this eye-catching photo of some well worn SP SD9s. Rene says, “After setting out SP 4320, the crew can’t figure out why it’s not working...I think I forgot to tell them it’s a dummy!”



Model Railroad Hobbyist | May 2025

Getting started with realistic ops:

More on determining what trains to run

DAVE HUSMAN, AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE MRH FORUM, PASSED away in August of 2024. On the topic of determining what trains to run, Dave posted great words of wisdom, so I'm using them in this month's ops column. Dave said:

How do you determine what trains the prototype ran? Passenger trains are easy, since railroads published public timetables, and Official Railway Guide has passenger schedules.

Freight trains are more complicated. Most freight schedules were internal documents, and were harder to find, and they were a more ad hoc operation. Even after finding what trains operated, there's figuring out what cars they carried, since different trains carried different cars for different destinations.

The second trick is distilling that down to operation on a model railroad. We generally don't have room to include *all* the trains with *all* the cars. We also don't have the length of run to use the train schedules directly.

All railroads have a distribution network, that is a type of hub and spoke system, to move cars. The key is figuring out what the railroad did in general and what your layout can support – and then adapt what your layout will support to what the prototype did.

LET'S TALK ABOUT OPS | 2

If you lack specific information on a given prototype, then using a general concept of how a railroad works will suffice.

A railroad has a layer of local and switch operations that gather cars from industries. They bring them to yards, where they bundle the cars into "blocks" that are going the same general direction.

Through freights carry the blocks from yard to yard, and the cars may be switched several times at various yards along the way. Eventually the cars arrive at a yard that originates a local that serves the destination industry. The cars get switched into that local's train and delivered to the final customer.

Not all locals serve all industries, most industries get switched only once a day. Typically we modelers switch industries way more than the prototype does to create more fun activity for our operators.

The era also matters. If your railroad operates with a "division point" system, then it gets switched way more than a more modern railroad with inter-divisional runs that skip intermediate yards.

When I worked on the UP, a car going from Pine Bluff, Arkansas to Portland, Oregon would be picked up by a traveling switch engine at Pine Bluff. It would be put into a Little Rock block, picked up by a train from Louisiana and taken to Little Rock. It would be switched there and put into a Kansas City block on a train from Little Rock to Kansas City.

At Kansas City it would be put into a N Platte block and put into a train going to N Platte where it would be switched again, this time into a Hinkle, OR block. A train would take it to Hinkle, where it would be switched into a Portland block, and a train would take it to Portland. At Portland it would be switched into the local that served the destination industry.

If a car is interchanged, it follows a similar path, it just changes railroads and may get switched a couple extra times.

Depending on how big your layout is will determine how much of that operation you can include. ☑

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WHAT'S NEAT

column



Model Railroad Hobbyist | May 2025

KEN PATTERSON COVERS THIS MONTH:



VIEW READER COMMENTS

- EXTENSIVE HOW-TO ON REBUILDING A MODULE IN THE BASEMENT
- BUILDING A SCENE AND THEN SHOOTING THE BACHMANN CATALOG COVER



WHAT'S NEAT with Ken Patterson
Rebuilding a layout section:2

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FOR THE MAY “WHAT’S NEAT,” Ken begins by taking us through deconstructing and reconstructing the base of an 8-foot module in his basement. For Bachmann’s 2025 catalog they wanted a cover replicating a dramatic picture of the New York Central Railroad – and it was up to Ken to do it in model form.

Rebuilding a module in the basement



1. Ken describes how he’s going to have three or four tracks going through the module he is rebuilding and across the top of the washer and dryer.

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2. Ken already has a large piece of foam he’s going to use to replace the top sheet on the module.



3. Ken also has some plywood to replace what is currently glued to the metal backbone crossing over the washer and dryer.



4. Ken rediscovers that the module has an oak plywood back that all of the foam is glued to, necessitating relocating the module to his workshop for access. Fortunately Ken makes all his modules removable, and has carts to move them around – including outdoors for photo shoots.



5. Since he'll need to cut up against the plywood, Ken forgoes using a chainsaw in favor of this oscillating multi-tool to remove the foam.



6. Ken uses a hand saw to finish the cuts.



7. A pry-bar is the appropriate tool to use for removing the top layer of foam from the two layers beneath it. Since there is more than one piece of foam forming the top layer, it isn't going to come up intact. Some track Ken was hoping to salvage isn't going to make it.



8. Most of the top layer of foam can be removed intact, but the section to Ken's left came out in pieces, with the resulting destruction of track. Microscale has resumed making track and Ken recently took delivery of 280 feet of it.

Info: microengineering.com/ProductInfo.html



9. Cleaning up the Liquid Nails (brown) and Great Stuff Pro (orange) on top of the middle foam layer creates a smooth surface to glue the new top layer of foam to.



10. Before Ken could continue, he realized that he needed to cut out a little more of the existing layout in order to fit the remodeled layout in place.



11. Ken loves Great Stuff Pro foam adhesive and will happily admit that he probably uses too much of it. After placing the new foam sheet in place, he'll cover it with weights, since the Great Stuff Pro has a tendency to expand.

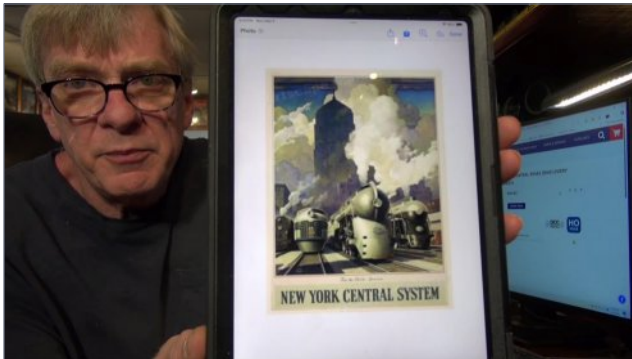




12. With the new foam sheet in and painted a dark color, Ken is ready to start laying track and landscaping for what will be a passenger station.

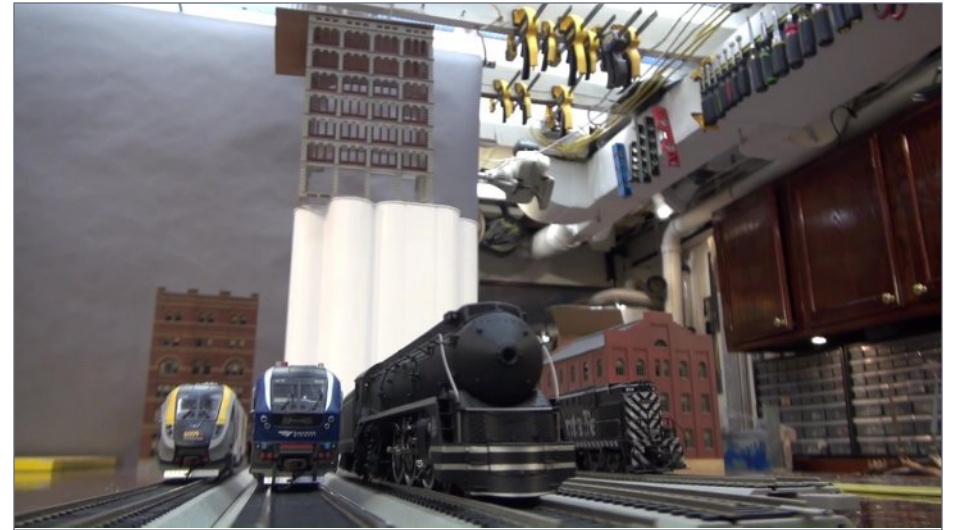


Bachmann Catalog cover shoot



was commissioned to recreate it in model form.

13. Bachmann wanted a photo inspired by the New York Central calendar back painting by Leslie Ragan entitled *For the Public Service* for the cover of the 2025 Bachmann Catalog and Ken



14. Since the models that were going to be used in the photo weren't available yet, Ken started mocking-up the scene using other Bachmann models to stand in for them.



15. Even though Ken had taken the photo for the box cover of the Bachmann Spectrum Cityscapes structure model, the model he had used was pre-built. Here Ken finally gets the opportunity to build it himself, using masking tape on the inside of the windows to represent window shades.



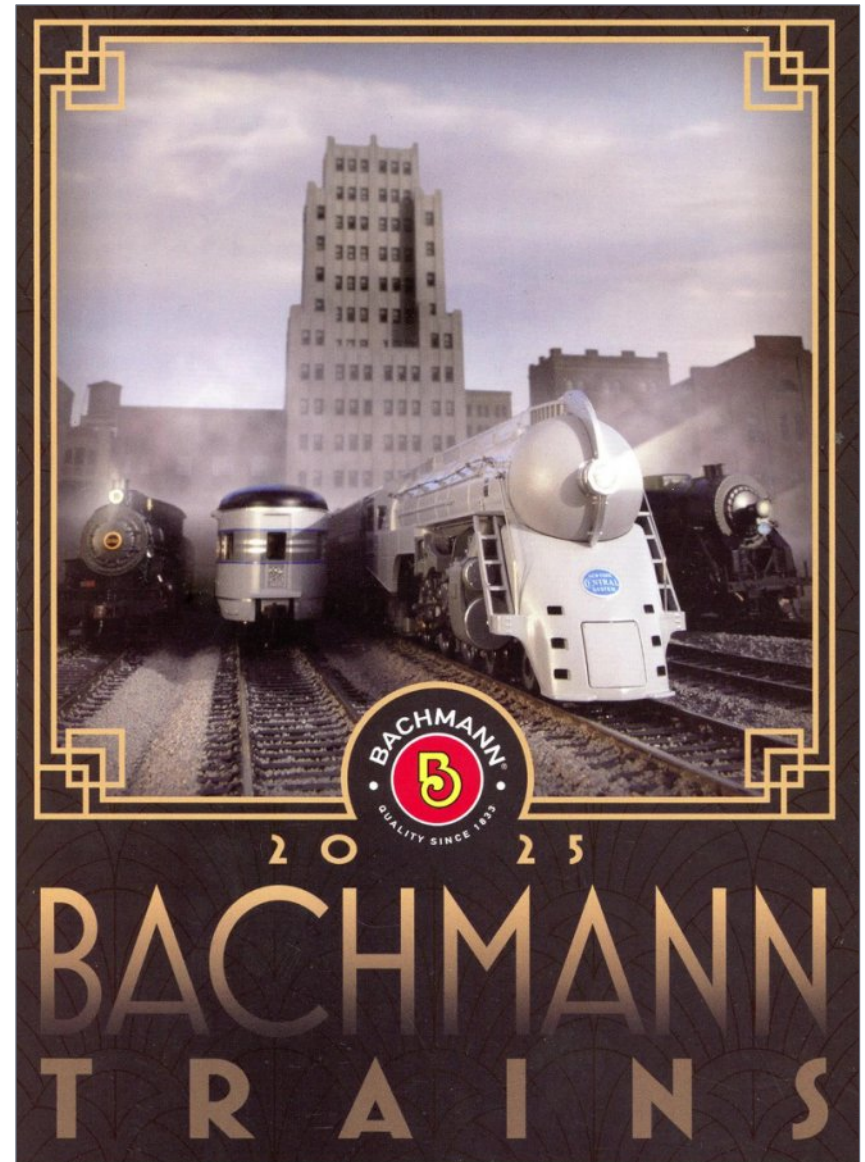
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16. Outside on shooting day with the finished Cityscenes building, the correct Bachmann models including the Dreyfuss Hudson, ballasted EZ-Track, and several other background buildings.

To see all the work Ken did to tear apart and re-top his module for a level surface and the full prep for the Bachmann catalog cover photo shoot, click on the link to the video at the beginning of this article. ☒



17. The photo Ken took for the catalog cover.



18. Bachmann's art department used photo manipulation software to change the color palette, and add light, smoke, and cloud effects for the final illustration.

Info: bachmanntrains.com

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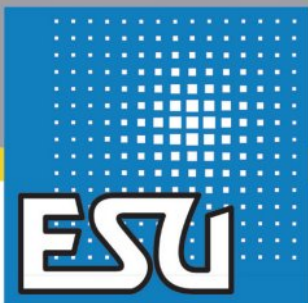
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Deep cleaning your track



Electrical
Impulses

Model Railroad Hobbyist | May 2025

1. This part of Jeff's layout had been unused for over 30 years, and was recently incorporated into the layout. After all this time of inactivity, the track needed a thorough deep cleaning.



JEFF JOHNSTON OUTLINES HIS THOROUGH TRACK CLEANING PROCESS ...

I BUILT THE CENTRAL CAMP PORTION OF MY SUGAR PINE Lumber Company layout in the early 1990s, and it has seen almost no operation other than testing a couple of new track sections since. I finally incorporated it into the main layout recently.



J. Fugate

USING EFFECTIVE TRACK CLEANING METHODS

Jeff cleans the track with mineral spirits after removing heavy oxides with very fine-grit sandpaper. His choice of mineral spirits is not random – it's very deliberate based on MRH's findings about how to keep track clean longer. Odorless mineral spirits are fine as well.

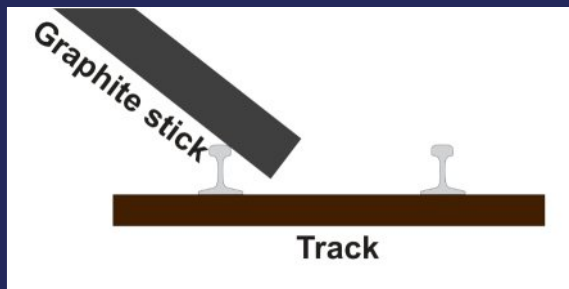
In past articles, I have referenced the findings that non-polar solvents keep track clean longer by inhibiting the "black gunk oxides" that form largely from electrical micro-arcing. It's also been shown the simple friction of wheels against the rail head also can create metal oxides, although not nearly as fast as micro-arcing.

If you instead clean with a polar solvent, it can get the track very clean, but it leaves the metal surface primed for micro-arcing. In other words, the track will get dirty again very quickly if you clean it with a polar solvent – so that's a no-no. Non-polar solvents, on the other hand, inhibit micro-arcing, which keeps the track clean a lot longer.

In addition, we have found adding a light application of graphite to the top inner rail head further inhibits micro-arcing [1a].

Track cleaned and treated with graphite as Jeff shows can stay clean for hundreds of hours of operation. We've had reports from modelers who operate their layout regularly that they do not need to clean the track again after such deep cleaning for one to two years.

I provide a list of non-polar and polar solvents in a table here. I recommend the red solvents as the very best ones to use. Note that a very light application of graphite is non-polar, but a heavy application of graphite becomes polar and is ineffective. With graphite, it's the very light application (you won't be able to see it) that does the magic.



1a. Apply the 4B graphite stick lightly to the top inner rail head only.

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DEEP CLEANING YOUR TRACK | 3

USING EFFECTIVE TRACK CLEANING METHODS CONTINUED...

Solvent	Dielectric constant
Kerosene	1.8
Deluxe Materials Track Magic	1.9
WD-40 contact cleaner	1.9
CRC contact cleaner & protectant	2.0
DeoxIT D5	2.0
Gasoline	2.0
Neverstall	2.0
Diesel	2.1
Mineral spirits	2.1
Wahl clipper oil	2.1
Turpentine	2.2
Carbon tetrachloride	2.2
No-Ox-IDA	2.3
Go-Go	2.3
WD-40 (regular)	2.4
Graphite (microscopic thin layer)	1.8-3.0
CRC 2-26	4.6
Automatic transmission fluid	4.8
Rail-zip	4.8
Bachmann track cleaner	4.8
Butyl acetate	5.1
Butyl cellosolve	5.3
Ethyl acetate	6.0
Graphite (thick layer)	10.0-15.0
Isopropyl alcohol (IPA)	18.0
Methyl Ethyl Ketone (MEK)	18.9
CRC QD contact cleaner	20.0
Lucas contact cleaner	20.0
Acetone	20.7
Vinegar	24.0
Ethyl alcohol (e.g. vodka, wine)	25.0
Radio Shack electronics cleaner	25.0
Ammonia solution	31.6
Propylene glycol	32.0
Lacquer thinner	33.6
Glycerine	47.0
Hydrogen peroxide	60.0
Water	80.4

Non-polar

Semi-polar

Polar

Table 1. Solvent dielectric-constant chart. The red non-polar items are recommended. Don't use the strike-through solvents, however – they have other negative side effects.

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DEEP CLEANING YOUR TRACK | 4

The nickel silver rail heads were amazingly oxidized after close to 35 years of inactivity. I knew it would take significantly more than a casual dust-off and wipe with mineral spirits to get it going.

Some have asked me for the details on my “deep track cleaning” methods – which differ from normal day-to-day cleaning and maintenance. This article covers my process.

BACKGROUND

There are probably as many ways to clean track as there are modelers. I’m detailing how I do “deep cleaning” on part of my layout that had not been cleaned for quite some time. The layout is in a clean room, and calls for only an occasional run-by with a dragger car, pushed ahead of an engine, to knock the dust off the rail heads prior to operation.

The process illustrated here works very well. It’s not an experiment; I devised this system to use tools I have on hand – I have used these same tools for some time now to do more thorough track cleaning.

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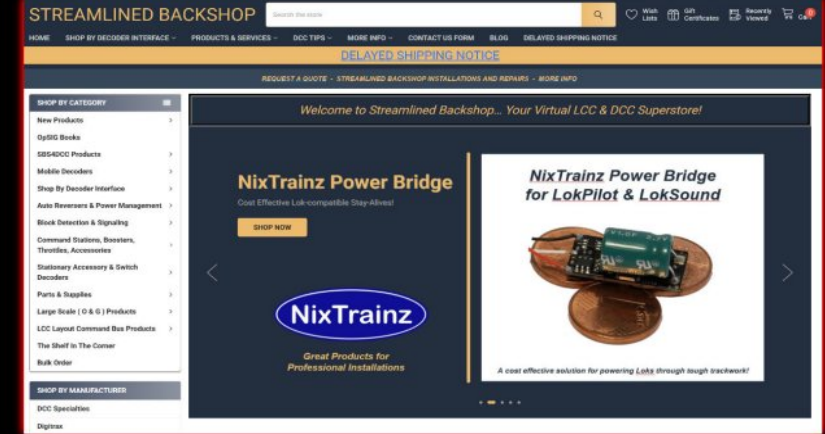
2. I start with a piece of 1500-grit wet-or-dry sandpaper wrapped around the end of a Homasote scrap, and never touch the rail heads with anything more abrasive than the 1500-grit. This extra-fine sandpaper removes the worst of the oxidation without

making any troublesome scratches on the rails.

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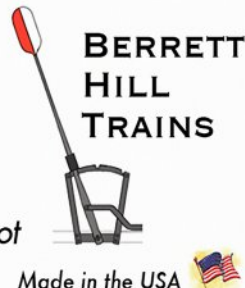
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DEEP CLEANING YOUR TRACK | 5



3. I keep the working surface of the sandpaper wet, and frequently wipe it with a clean rag, wet it again, and so on. The water helps keep the sandpaper from clogging and also lubricates the working surface.



4. I sand with the moist 1500-grit sandpaper to remove the ancient oxidation. Then I follow that with a 2500-grit wipe to leave the rail heads smooth and polished.



5. After the initial sanding, I clean the rails by wiping them with a dry Homasote block. These little blocks are really handy for various track-related cleaning and treatment jobs.

If you don't have any scraps of Homasote, Amazon sells a

12" x 12" square of ½" Homasote for a few dollars. See the shopping list link at the end of this article for details.

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CLEAN THE POINTS



6. I push a folded-over and moistened piece of 1500-grit through each set of points where the rails meet. I do this on the “closed” points, and the spring tension provides just the right pressure to do the job effectively. My switches all have hard-wired frog-to-point power, so this step isn’t completely necessary. But if you rely on point-to-

rail contact for power routing, then it’s vital.



7. Next, to clean the points further, I moisten a small piece of cardstock in mineral spirits to act as a “wiper.”

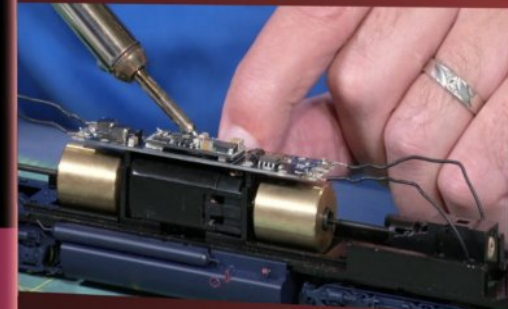


8. I pass the mineral spirits-moistened cardstock through the point contact area a couple of times to clean any sanding debris from the area. I wipe in the direction away from the frog end, toward the throw bar.



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TREAT THE TRACK WITH MINERAL SPIRITS

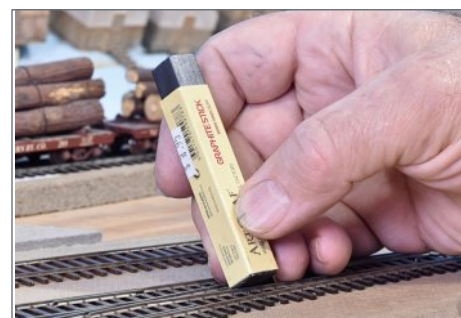


9. Next I dribble mineral spirits on one end of a Homasote cleaning block. I keep a variety of these blocks on hand for various cleaning purposes, and label them as to which liquid is applied to each.



10. I rub the rail heads with the mineral spirits-moistened Homasote block as the last cleaning step.

APPLY LIGHT COAT OF GRAPHITE



11. As the final step, I apply 4B graphite to the top-inner contact area of the rail head. A little goes a long way. If you add too much, it can cause wheel slippage and reduce a locomotive's pulling ability. Just a bit here and there will be spread around by the passing trains.

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FINAL THOUGHTS

These steps combine to effectively clean the rails and help keep things running smoothly and reliably for a very long time. It's been great fun seeing this part of the layout fully operational after all these years. ☑

View this article's shopping list here.



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JEFF JOHNSTON



Jeff works in video and film production along with being a career-long automotive journalist. He has been a model railroad enthusiast since his teenage years. Technical guidance by his hobbyist-uncle Dick helped establish his modeling and mechanical standards, and honed the artistic side of his work. Jeff and his wife Pam (a skilled modeler in her own right), model the Sugar Pine Lumber

Company circa September 1927 in HO scale, and look forward to setting up operating sessions on the layout. ■



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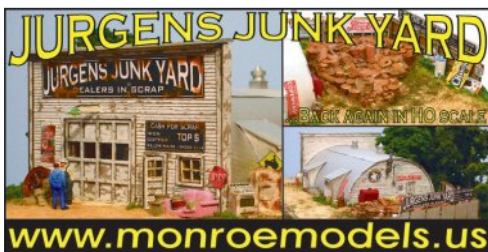
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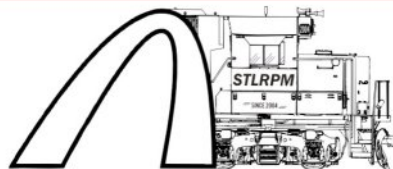
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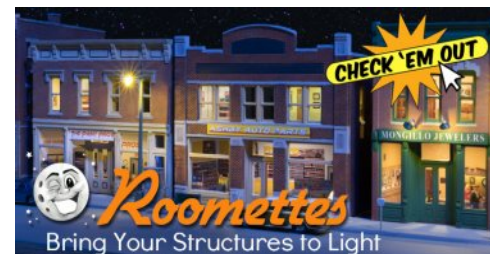
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Black Primer	MRH 4010	MRH 71007	10-02	
Grey Black	MRH 4012	MRH 71009	10-03	
Black Primer	MRH 4014	MRH 71011	10-04	
Black Primer	MRH 4016	MRH 71013	10-05	
Black Primer	MRH 4018	MRH 71015	10-06	
Black Primer	MRH 4020	MRH 71017	10-07	
Black Primer	MRH 4022	MRH 71019	10-08	
Black Primer	MRH 4024	MRH 71021	10-09	
Black Primer	MRH 4026	MRH 71023	10-10	
Black Primer	MRH 4028	MRH 71025	10-11	
Black Primer	MRH 4030	MRH 71027	10-12	
Black Primer	MRH 4032	MRH 71029	10-13	
Black Primer	MRH 4034	MRH 71031	10-14	
Black Primer	MRH 4036	MRH 71033	10-15	
Black Primer	MRH 4038	MRH 71035	10-16	
Black Primer	MRH 4040	MRH 71037	10-17	
Black Primer	MRH 4042	MRH 71039	10-18	
Black Primer	MRH 4044	MRH 71041	10-19	
Black Primer	MRH 4046	MRH 71043	10-20	
Black Primer	MRH 4048	MRH 71045	10-21	
Black Primer	MRH 4050	MRH 71047	10-22	
Black Primer	MRH 4052	MRH 71049	10-23	
Black Primer	MRH 4054	MRH 71051	10-24	
Black Primer	MRH 4056	MRH 71053	10-25	
Black Primer	MRH 4058	MRH 71055	10-26	
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Black Primer	MRH 4064	MRH 71061	10-29	
Black Primer	MRH 4066	MRH 71063	10-30	
Black Primer	MRH 4068	MRH 71065	10-31	
Black Primer	MRH 4070	MRH 71067	10-32	
Black Primer	MRH 4072	MRH 71069	10-33	
Black Primer	MRH 4074	MRH 71071	10-34	
Black Primer	MRH 4076	MRH 71073	10-35	
Black Primer	MRH 4078	MRH 71075	10-36	
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Black Primer	MRH 4084	MRH 71081	10-39	
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Black Primer	MRH 4088	MRH 71085	10-41	
Black Primer	MRH 4090	MRH 71087	10-42	
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Black Primer	MRH 4094	MRH 71091	10-44	
Black Primer	MRH 4096	MRH 71093	10-45	
Black Primer	MRH 4098	MRH 71095	10-46	
Black Primer	MRH 4100	MRH 71097	10-47	
Black Primer	MRH 4102	MRH 71099	10-48	
Black Primer	MRH 4104	MRH 71101	10-49	
Black Primer	MRH 4106	MRH 71103	10-50	
Black Primer	MRH 4108	MRH 71105	10-51	
Black Primer	MRH 4110	MRH 71107	10-52	
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Black Primer	MRH 4120	MRH 71117	10-57	
Black Primer	MRH 4122	MRH 71119	10-58	
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Black Primer	MRH 4130	MRH 71127	10-62	
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Black Primer	MRH 4180	MRH 71177	10-87	
Black Primer	MRH 4182	MRH 71179	10-88	
Black Primer	MRH 4184	MRH 71181	10-89	
Black Primer	MRH 4186	MRH 71183	10-90	
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Black Primer	MRH 4194	MRH 71191	10-94	
Black Primer	MRH 4196	MRH 71193	10-95	
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Jim Tilley's PY&A Division of the PRR & B&O

JOE FUGATE VISITS JIM TILLEY'S DELIGHTFUL
TRANSITION-ERA LAYOUT ...

1. Two Hulett ore unloaders offload ore on Jim Tilley's layout. If you look carefully, you can see a mirror that nicely adds depth to this scene.



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JIM TILLEY HAS A LARGE HO SCALE LAYOUT IN

THE greater Detroit area that will be open for tours during July as part of the 2025 National NMRA Convention. To learn more about this convention/to register, please visit this website: nmra2025.com

I visited Jim's layout, taking photos and video. He has a delightful layout with impressive iron ore loading/unloading dock facilities and some magnificent bridges. Learn more about this layout in the interview below.



1a. Jim Tilley.

MRH: Jim, how did you first get started in the hobby?

Jim: I got started in the hobby around 1956. I had a very small layout with two engines, six cars, and a piece of plywood.

I spent a couple of years modeling as a teen. Then I stopped modeling to pursue cars and girls. After that, it took me quite a while to come back around to model railroading.

In 1998 I finished-off the basement of our house myself, and I started to draw a layout plan. That took me a good part of a year because it's a fair-sized layout. I drew it 1/8" to the foot, and had all the information that I needed to start with the benchwork.

I started the benchwork around 1999. I got a good part of it done that year, because benchwork is pretty easy to put together. After that I used my drawing to lay out the train movements.

I had dimensions on the drawing that I could look at and say, "Well, this is about five feet long, and this is where I need to put a switch or whatever." That worked out very well because of all the dimensions already laid out on the layout plan.

MRH: So, tell us about this layout space and how you determined what to model.

Jim: When I have a visitor who comes down the stairs here, usually the first thing they say is "Wow!" They tell me that it looks like a museum exhibit because of the neat presentation and the nice fabric curtains that I have underneath the layout.

I explain to the visitor what I model, what year the layout is modeled for, and what railroads I run. I model two main railroads, which are the Pennsy Railroad and the B&O. I decided to model 1956 – modeling from Ashtabula, Ohio to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Once I got started, I realized that there are a lot of gentlemen out there who love to operate trains.

I started the layout in Ashtabula and, because there was water there (the Great Lakes), I had to take that into consideration in my design. By the time I got to the other end of the railroad, we were in Pittsburgh.

I kept to this side of Pittsburgh to make the modeling simpler. I found an old map of the B&O and Pennsy railroads, and I used that to name all my towns. By the time I went from Ashtabula to Pittsburgh, guess what? Pittsburgh is where they interchanged, so it worked out perfectly. Great fun!



MRH: What time period are you modeling and why?

Jim: I'm modeling 1956. This is during the transition era, so I model both steam and diesel. The transition era is because of the two locomotives I had back in 1999 – one steam loco and one diesel loco – I still have them.

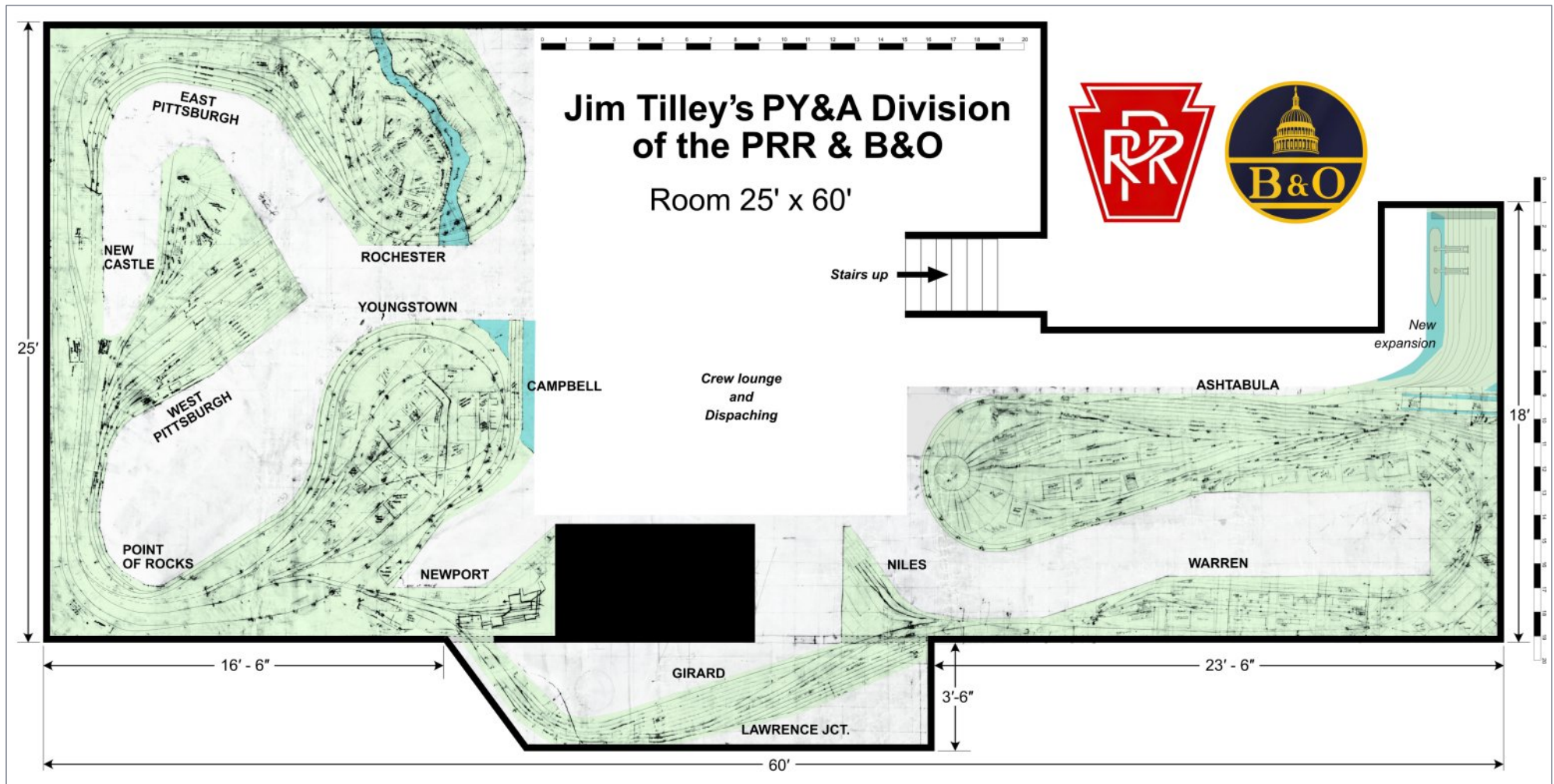
MRH: How did the track planning go?

Jim: When I did the track planning on the tracing paper, I made a lot of mistakes and made a lot of corrections, but it all worked out. I was able to use my drawing to lay out and build the layout, because all the dimensions were there on the drawing for me to reference.

As mentioned, I wanted to model Ashtabula to Pittsburgh. Both the Pennsy and B&O railroads ran in parallel along that route, and the route was called PY&A Division.

MRH: When you were building the layout, did you have any problems that came up? If so, how did you deal with them?

2. Jim models the transition era, with lots of steam still in operation, as you can see in this coaling tower scene at the south end of Ashtabula yard.



3. This track plan was adapted from Jim's tracing-paper drawing of his layout. He has recently added the Hulett ore dock unloading scene in the far upper-right [1]. The layout has a low and mid-level route that's the Pennsy, and has a high-level route that's the B&O.



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Jim: I was lucky because I had this drawing, which did 1/8" to the foot. I had absolutely no problems. In other words, I wasn't building by the seat of my pants.

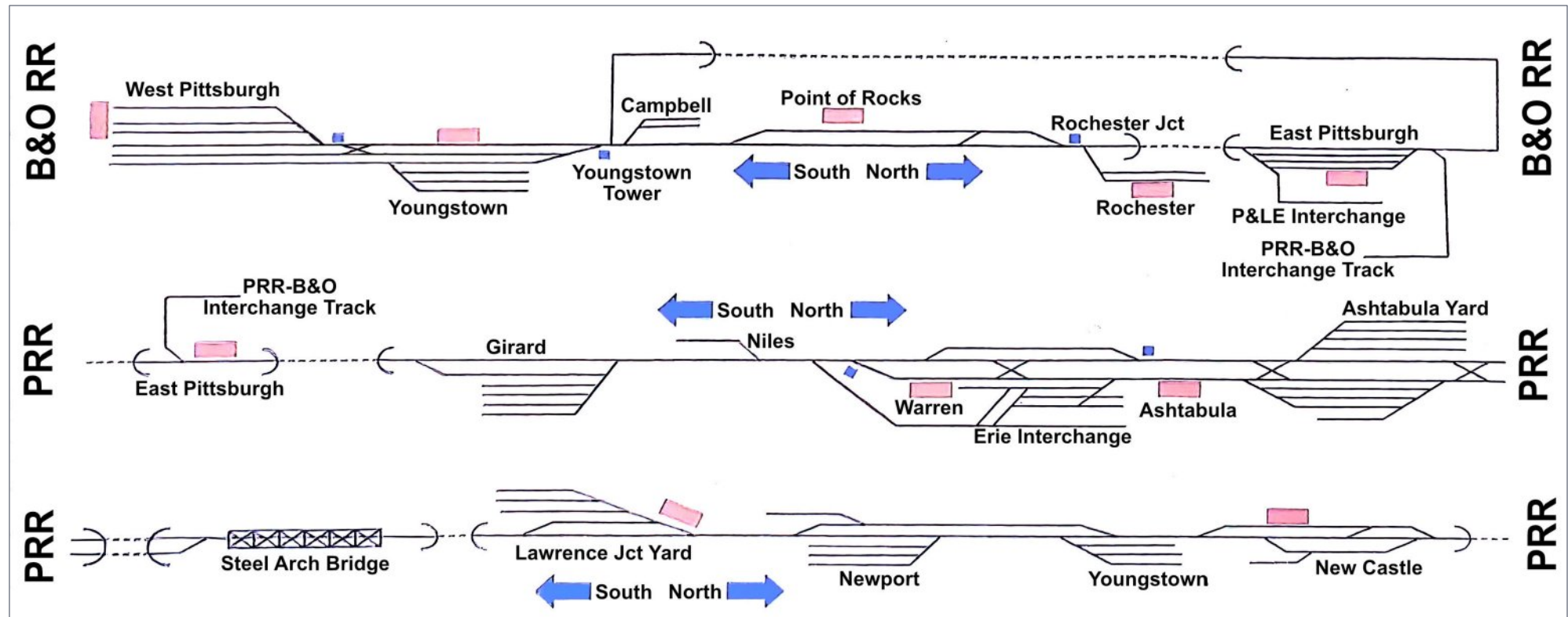
Recently, I did have a nasty surprise, however. My sump pump gave out on me, and I was not bright enough to put in a backup. I had water that came out into the layout room floor approximately 15 feet along one wall.

I rushed to get the vacuum, and got a couple of neighbors to help. We spent the evening getting rid of all the water, and things dried out nicely.

Oh, I did have one other surprise. When I was building the layout toward Ashtabula, I had a problem with the different levels through this part of the layout. Some of the joists were too high, so I finally notched out a bunch of the joists to get the track elevations low enough.

That was a lot of work, but I got it done and it has worked out nicely.

MRH: What do you like most about your layout? And what do you like least?



4. This track schematic of Jim's layout shows the PRR and B&O routes. See [5] for how Jim uses this schematic to dispatch the layout during op sessions.

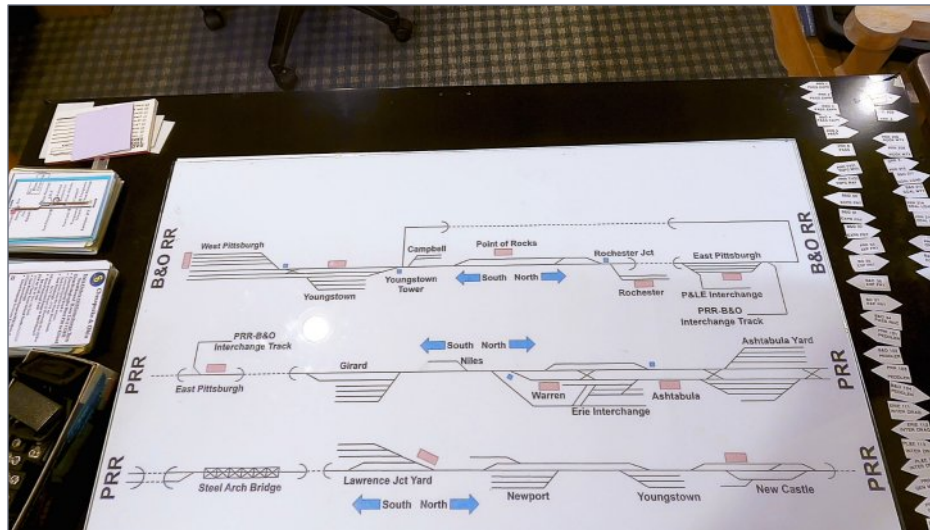


Jim: I like the way I designed it because I did it basically to get some nice scenery. As I said before, I had no idea that folks were so into operating these layouts prototypically when I designed this layout.

As far as [what I like] least is concerned, I didn't like the height of the railroad. I made a mistake. In working on the corner in East Pittsburgh, I had incorporated some of the trackwork from my old layout. I felt the height was perfect. I liked the fact that I could go underneath the layout with a scooter and work comfortably without banging my head.

But, by the time that I got over on the Pennsy side with the mid-level and the low level lines, the layout was too high for me, so I ended up lowering the other end of the layout by six inches and increasing the grade to the B&O high line.

MRH: Speaking of layout height, how high is the layout?



5. Jim has the schematic in [4] under glass, and he places train markers on it to dispatch the railroad during op sessions. The train markers are on the right.



6. A double-headed ore train rolls past the Ashtabula roundhouse as it approaches the main yard.

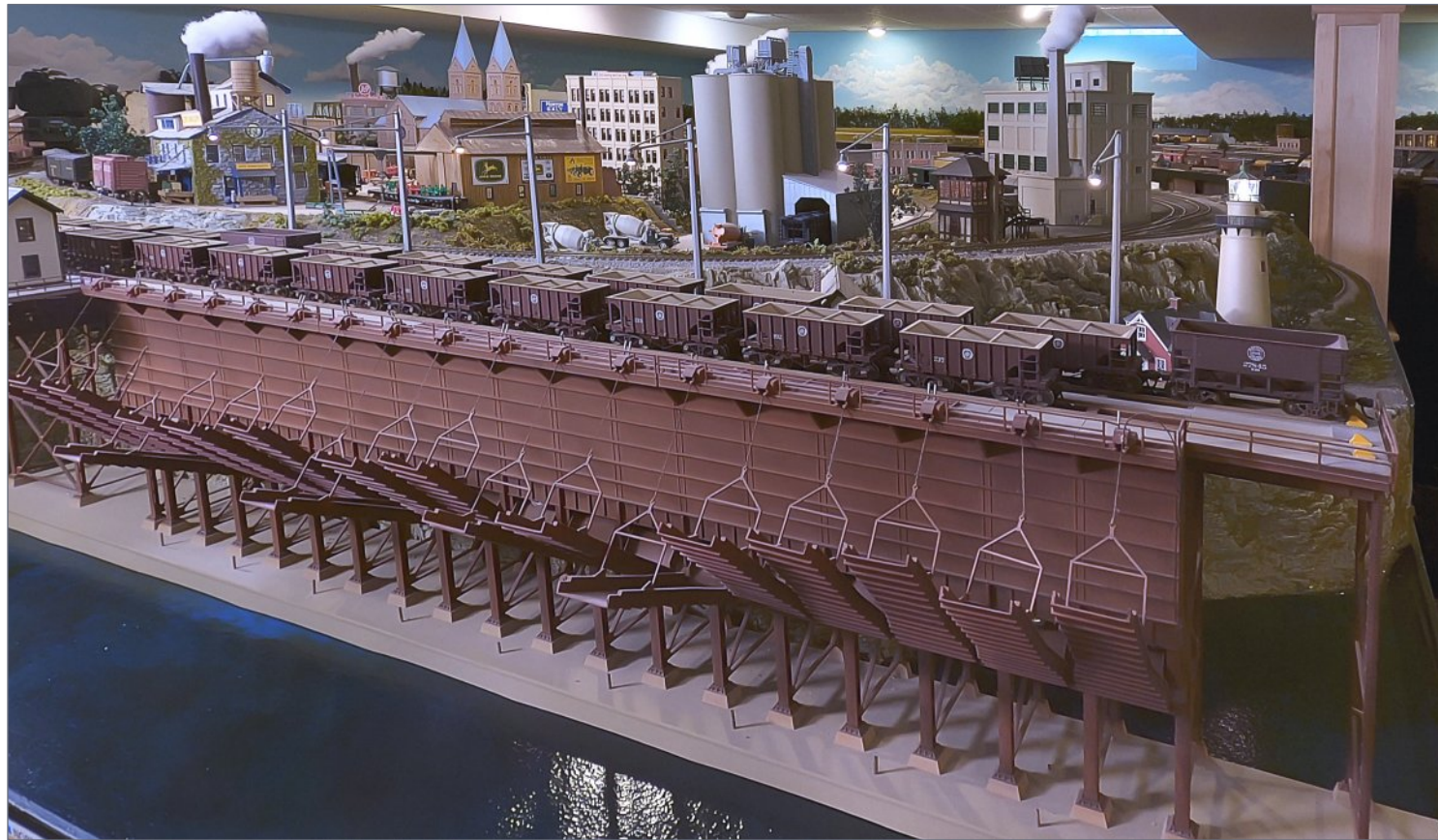


7. Speaking of ore, Jim's layout features this impressive ore dock at Campbell. Note the lighthouse on the right – it actually flashes bright and dim, see [9].

Jim: My layout height is almost to the ceiling on the Rochester branch, and the lowest part at Ashtabula is probably in the 50-inch range.

The ruling grade I have, or shall I say, the worst grade that I have is probably about one-and-a-half percent. That's in the helix, which is on the end of the layout where East Pittsburgh and the PRR-B&O interchange is. I tried to camouflage the helix with scenery, and I feel it turned out pretty well.

I do have some access hatches in the middle of the peninsulas. There's also a space behind the limestone mine at Newport



where I can pop up from the back. You can't see it from the aisle, but it's there.

MRH: If you had it all to do over again, would you do anything differently?

Jim: I might change the height. Other than that, I'm very well satisfied.

I'd probably drop it six inches. As it sits right now, I do enjoy the view, because this is what you see when you're standing or waiting for a railroad crossing to be free. It's closer to eye level.

But I've had complaints like, "I can't see this, I can't see that." Well, that's what step stools and milk crates are for!

MRH: What type of control system are you using and why?

Jim: I operate Digitrax Simplex wireless. I purchased it at the Novi Train Show in 1998. I had the gentleman that I purchased it from install a sound decoder in my Pennsy passenger engine – a B unit.

To this day, the system and that loco run perfectly.

8. Here's another view of Jim's Campbell ore dock, located on the B&O line. Very nice!

MRH: What's your least-favorite part of doing a layout and why? How do you motivate yourself to do it anyway?

Jim: I think everybody would agree with me as to the least favorite part of doing a layout: I hate track cleaning.

What makes me want to go ahead and do the track cleaning anyway is that I have a round-robin group that regularly comes and operates.

So I take pride in my trackwork. I don't want any stalling or derailments, and I take pride that. So the track and wheels need to be clean.

MRH: Tell us about your backdrops. They look to be mostly painted.

Jim: Back when none of the bench work was up, I found a gal from high school who was taking art classes. I had her come



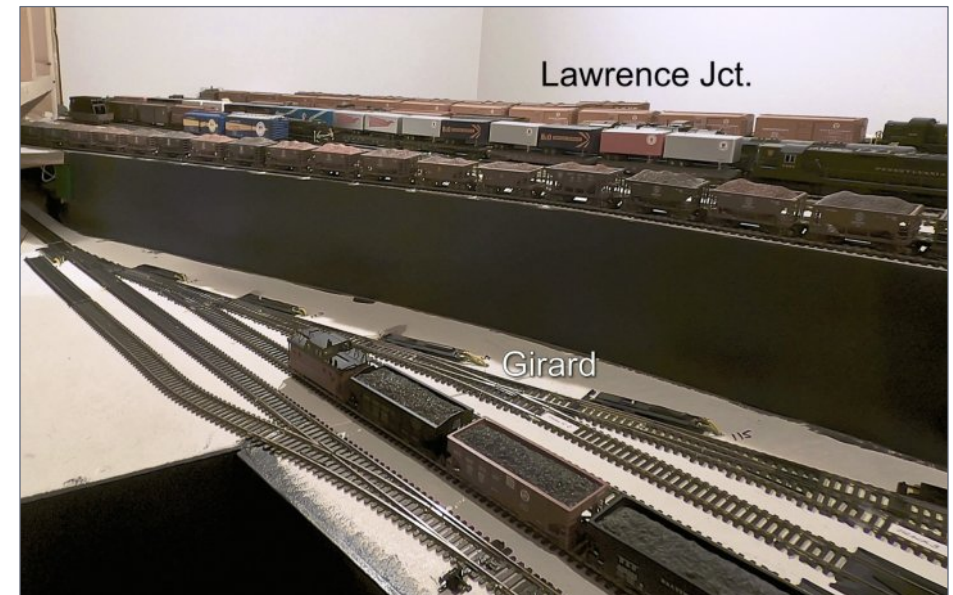
9. As you can see here, the Campbell lighthouse near the ore dock actually works, periodically flashing bright just like a real lighthouse.

over, and I asked her, "Can you paint clouds?" She said, "Sure!" She ended up painting all the clouds, including the thunderstorm over at Newport.

As for the backdrop itself, I tried to hide much of it with trees. In one part of the layout where Ashtabula is, I took pictures off the internet and had them blown up to approximately three-by-four feet.

After I got the photos home, I cut off the horizon, and put all the pieces in place here and there. I decided that this was what I wanted the background to look like. I ended up gluing them on the wall on certain parts of the backdrop, and then layered them one on top of the other to give more depth.

MRH: How do you do your scenery?



10. The staging area between Niles and Newport is in an alcove behind the furnace. The PRR yards of Lawrence Jct. (high-level) and Girard (mid-level) fill this room.

Jim: I did my scenery all myself. I had no help whatsoever in building this layout, including the scenery.

I had some rocks that I picked up in Pennsylvania, and I matched maybe seven or eight colors of my rock colors to them. I colored the city-area rocks in the corner to match some of those rock colors.

MRH: What kind of locomotives do you have here?

Jim: Since I model the transition era, I have both steam and diesel. I run anywhere from a Mallet to a 40-tonner diesel.



11. Niles sits on the mid-level PRR just past the high line arch bridge – you can see the entrance to the staging area behind the furnace [10] in the background. The Niles mine is a rich source of ore for the railroad.

I have a mixture of brands in both my locos and rolling stock. I try to stick with the brands that have the least amount of trouble. Mostly I picked Atlas for my rolling stock. I run some other brands of rolling stock, which I've never had problems with.

As far as locomotives, I've got Atlas locomotives, and Proto 2000. I do have some Kato. I also have some blue-box engines that have Kato drives in them. I have some brass steam.

That's about it.

MRH: Tell us about the structures on this layout. Scratchbuilt, kitbashed, or what?

Jim: I have a mixture. I have a lot of scratchbuilt buildings throughout the layout. I have some kitbashes, but I would say it's probably 50% kitbash, and the other half scratchbuilt. I really enjoy scratchbuilding.



My goal is that if I have enough time want to take some of the kits and swap them out for buildings that are scratchbuilt with different materials. I made a lot of these buildings out of wood, or combinations of wood and plastic. I even have some buildings that I made out of plaster.

In the helix area, I have a stone arch bridge that is 100% plaster. I made a piece of it, then made a mold of it, and then cast the rest of the pieces for the bridge. The hardest part was to get the angle between the front and the rear of the bridge correct, since it's on a curve.

I knew what the radius was, so I drew out the radius on paper on the floor, and that's how I determined the angle for the interior side of the bridge as compared to the outer side.

I have several more bridges on the layout. Most of them I built from kits, but I have maybe three or four bridges that I scratchbuilt.



12. Just past the other end of the staging area sits the town of Newport and this limestone production facility.

One of them is the high steel arch bridge, which took me 180 hours to build. Underneath that bridge is a scratchbuilt timber bridge (see this month's *MRH* cover photo as well as [1a]).

The timber trestle bridge below the steel arch (between the approach and exit) is something that you don't really see very much. I made it out of logs.

I also have a bridge over in East Pittsburgh that was originally a wooden bridge, but it's been enhanced with some steel girders. The story goes that the city decided they wanted to put a road underneath this wood bridge. They cut off the bottom of the bridge, installed steel girders underneath it, and mounted those on concrete piers. That's how they managed to get the traffic through there. After you go underneath this trestle, the roadway enters into a tunnel.

That was a challenge to build, and it's something unique on the layout.



13. Each booster district on Jim's layout has a nice pull-out drawer with all the electronics placed neatly on it. This one is just below West Pittsburgh yard.

MRH: Do you host regular operating sessions?

Jim: I have op sessions about every six weeks, and I invite over 20 people at a time because not everyone appears. One time I had 18 people show up, and I was able to put hostlers to work too. That's it as far as operations go.

MRH: Would you ever consider modeling in a different scale than HO?

Jim: Years ago, I started with a small HO layout and associated engines and rolling stock. I didn't want to get rid of those.



That's a keepsake for me, and I still have the engines and the cars. The engines are in my display cabinet, and the cars are on the layout. They still run.

I don't think I would ever change, especially to N scale, because it's just too hard on the eyes. It's hard on my operators too, because my operators are usually guys who are 60-80 years old, and some don't see very well. Sometimes I supply them with eyeglasses!

MRH: How do you control your turnouts?

Jim: I have a variety of turnouts on the layout. Most of them are PECO. I have some Shinohara, which is the old style with the points that short-out unless you rewire them.

I would say I have maybe 170 Tortoise machines that operate my turnouts. I place the hand-throw turnouts so you can avoid snagging a shirt sleeve, or in places where it's hard to reach.



14. In the far corner between Warren and Ashtabula the layout features a number of urban high-rise buildings and an extensive elevated steel viaduct.

Probably all of the mainline turnouts are Tortoise-operated.

MRH: How many feet of mainline do you have?

Jim: I've been asked that a lot of times, especially when I have to give my layout information to the conventions. I measured it one time, and it looks like I have about 500 feet of mainline, and that would include the B&O mainline and the Pennsy mainline.

MRH: What's your minimum radius?

Jim: I debated a lot when I designed the layout, what radius did I want? I run passenger trains, so I need at least 22-inch



You can't really just go by the seat of your pants. You're going to run into problems.

MRH: You're going to be open for the convention this summer. What would you like people to get as a take-away from their visit here?

Jim: When people come over, I hope that they learn something, that they get some ideas about what a finished layout looks like. I hope to talk to the folks who come visit, as long as time permits.

15. West Pittsburgh yard includes an elevated Union Station for passengers (visible in the right distance), complete with a fully detailed interior.

radius, so that's my minimum. I use a larger radius if I can, of course.

MRH: What advice would you give to a newcomer in the hobby?

Jim: I would stress to a beginner that they need to draw any track plan to scale, and put in the most railroad that you can within reason, which is what I did.

I would suggest reading books, and looking at layouts on the internet. But I'd say it's mostly having a good plan and drawing it up to scale.



I am particularly proud of my steel arch bridge, and the wood trestle bridge underneath it. I'm pleased with the urban corner of the layout, of Ashtabula yard, and how the elevations worked out.

16. A mixed freight slowly rolls past the Youngstown station (in the left distance) on the B&O high line. The other two lines are the PRR mid-level line and the PRR low-level line. Also see [17].



17. Here is a closeup view of the Youngstown station seen in [16]. Behind the station is the city of Youngstown.





I like the way my new Pennsylvania ore dock area with the Hulett's has turned out. It's prototypical, and I'm happy with the Pittsburgh peninsulas. I'm also proud of the plaster bridge curved that I constructed – it took a lot of time and work, and it turned out well. ☑

18. After passing through Youngstown and Campbell, the train in [16] rumbles across this truss bridge on the B&O high-line heading toward Point of Rocks. To the left is Newport and the limestone mining operation [12].



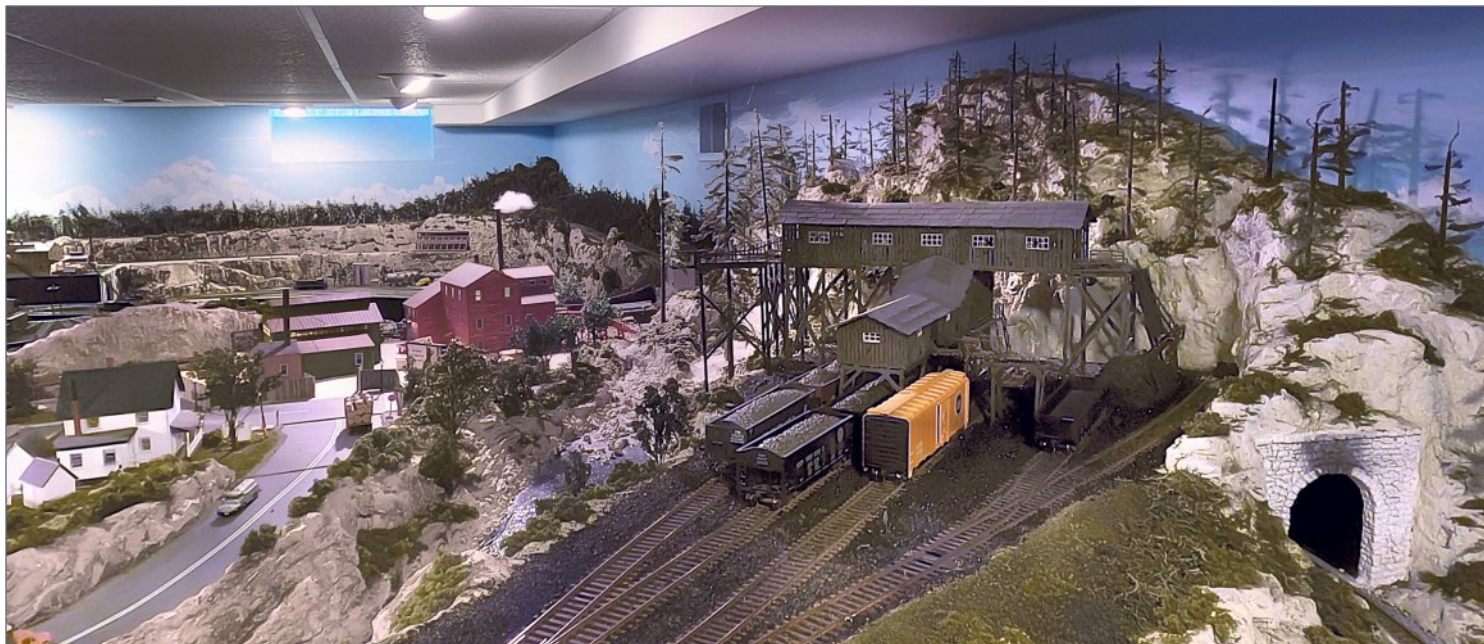
19. Here is a view of the new addition and the tracks going toward the port and ore loading/unloading facility in [1]. The ferry in middle-background is where the edge of the layout used to be. Everything in front of the ferry is new.





Check out [this month's bonus downloads](#) for a zoomable track plan and still more photos of Jim's layout ...

20. A long ore train fights the grade as it climbs toward the high arch bridge in the distance on the B&O high line.



21. At the far end of the B&O high line the layout features a branch to Rochester, which includes several industries such as this coal mine.



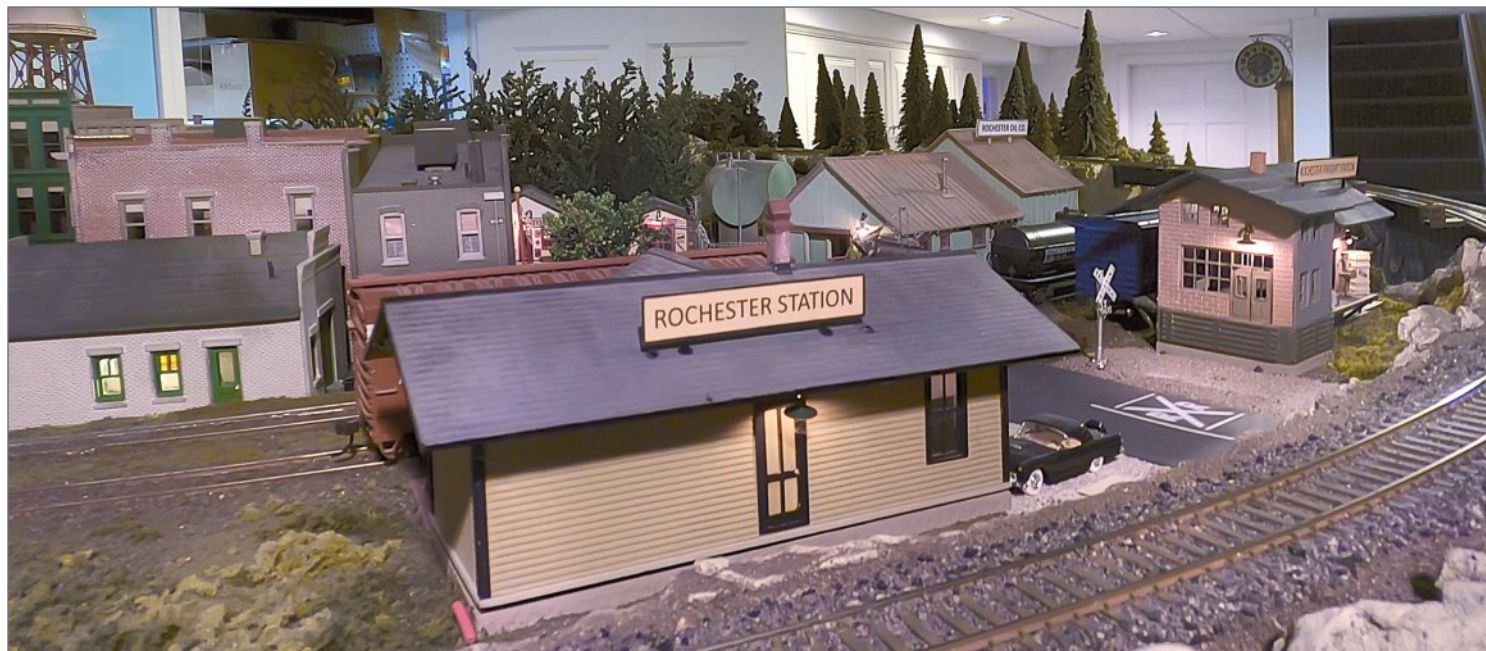


22. Here is another view of the Rochester branch in the back. This area of the layout also features an open helix that climbs from the lower level PRR track up to interchange with the B&O high line.



23. Here is another view of the Rochester branch. Behind the church, you can see the coal mine shown in [21].





24. Just to the right of [23] you find Rochester station. The track in the foreground curves around to reach the mine in [21].



25. Dropping down from the high-line view in [24], you can see this scene on the PRR low-level line at the north end of East Pittsburgh yard.





26. A northbound mixed freight rounds the curve at the roundhouse in Ashtabula.



27. Here's another view of the Ashtabula roundhouse and some open garden tracks. In the distance is the Ashtabula coaling tower and the main Ashtabula yard.

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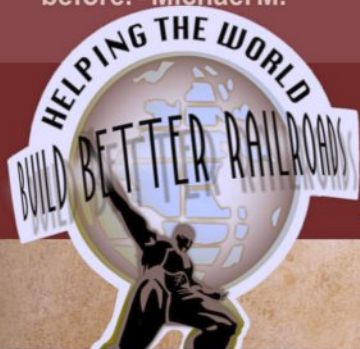
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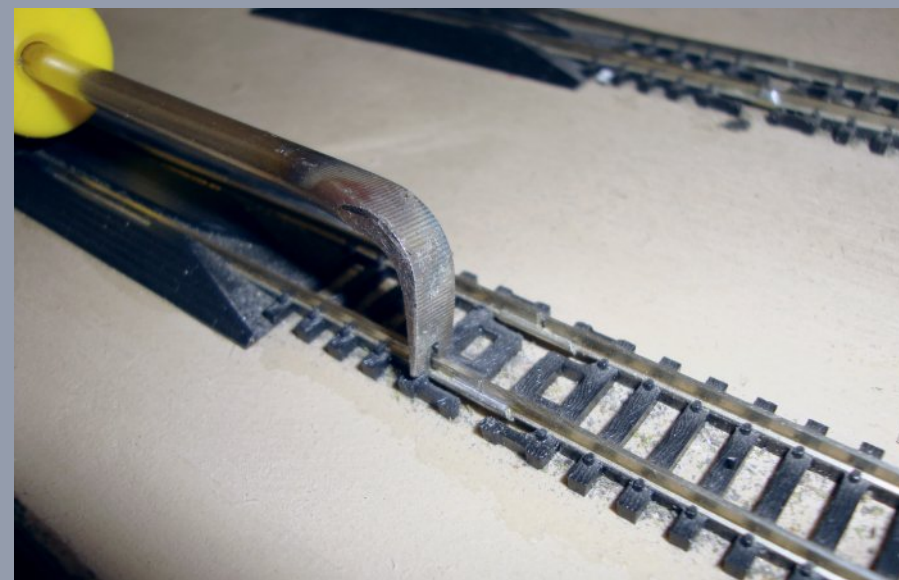
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Handy DIY trackwork tools



1. Steve describes several handy homemade tools he fashioned for working with track, including this rail joiner tool made from a screwdriver.

Model Railroad Hobbyist | May 2025



STEVE GILLETT SHARES HOW HE MADE SEVERAL TRACKWORK-ASSIST TOOLS ...

I'VE DEVELOPED SOME HOMEMADE TOOLS TO SIMPLIFY COMMON TRACKWORK TASKS and make them easier to accomplish. In this article, I share three kinds of tools: track-spacing tools, curve-drawing sticks, and rail-joiner tools. Let's get started!

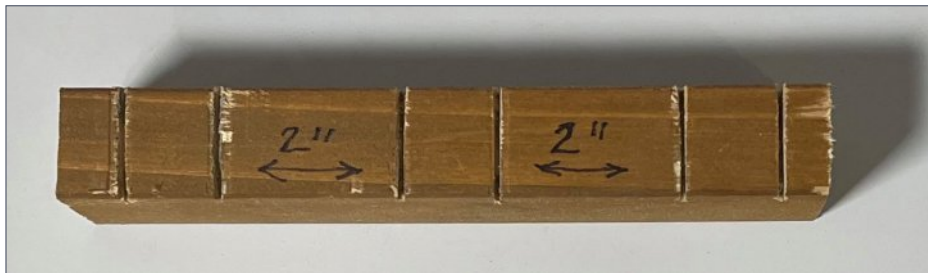
TRACK SPACING TOOLS

When laying parallel tracks, you generally want to maintain a constant space between them. I made two jigs: one for straight track and one for curved track.

For a straight track jig, take three pieces of straight track, each 3-1/2" long. Lay them parallel to each other across the top of a scrap of 1x4 lumber at the desired spacing – two-inch center is common for HO, 1-1/4-inch center is common for N. Glue the tracks firmly to the wood.

As the glue dries, cut scrap pieces of 1x4 lumber into blocks for the track jigs. For HO scale, cut a block 9" long [2]. For N scale, cut a block 4-1/2" long [3].

Once the glue has dried on your track board, use a Sharpie or other marker to color the rail heads. Before the it dries, place the straight track wood block jig across the tracks at a 90-degree angle, and tap



2. Straight track spacing jig for HO scale using 2" separation.



3. Straight track spacing jig for N scale using 1-1/4" separation.

the block firmly with a hammer. This will leave black indentations on the bottom of the blocks to mark the location of the six rails.

Now, deepen those indentations with a coping saw or hacksaw to about 1/32". This will be deep enough to let the rails fit in the grooves, but not so deep that the tool hangs up on rail joiners or the plastic molded spikes.

If you have different straight track rail spacing on your layout, you can put that option on the other side of the straight track tool. For example, on an HO layout, you may have a wider 2" spacing for yard tracks to allow you to get your fingers between the tracks, but a tighter 1-7/8" for passing sidings.

To use the straight track spacing gauge, lay the outermost track first, make sure the track is truly straight, and let the glue set. Then glue down the second and third track (if any), using the jig to align the rails of all parallel tracks. Slide the jig along the outer track while the glue on the other tracks is still wet, thereby automatically repositioning the other two tracks to their proper place and with the proper spacing.

As you proceed, use push pins to hold the tracks in place until the glue dries. If the outer rail is straight, the other two will also be straight.



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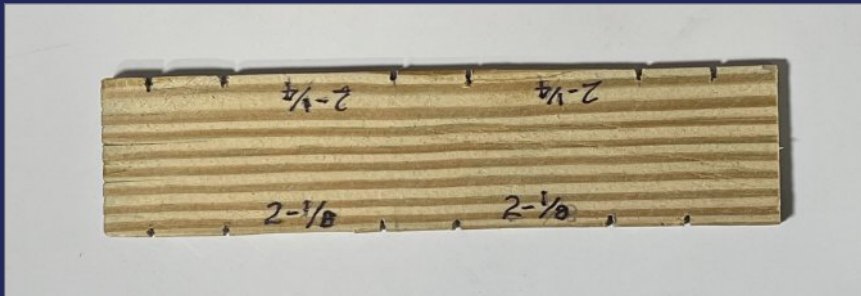
CURVED TRACK SPACING JIG

For curved tracks, a thinner jig is needed to avoid the rails binding on the curve. Rip a thin (1/8" to 3/16") strip from a 2x4.

With curves, you typically need extra separation between the tracks to prevent sideswiping between long locos and rail cars on the curves. In my *Run like a Dream: Trackwork* book, I recommend 2-1/8" for 36" radius curves and 2-1/4" for 24" radius curves in HO. I made a thin jig from a 1/8" thick strip of wood [4].

I mounted the three track sections as Steve suggested at the 2-1/8" and 2-1/4" separation on two different scraps of 1x4. Then I used the Sharpie trick to transfer the rail markings to the wood strips and deepened the grooves with a hacksaw. I widened the grooves a bit more in this jig than on a straight track jig to allow for the curved rails to fit into the slots without binding.

Now you can use these jigs to lay parallel curved tracks. You will need to eyeball a transition from straight track at 2" to this wider spacing on curves, however. I like to make the transition to wider spacing about 12" long. ■



4. Thin curved track spacing jig for HO scale using 2-1/8" and 2-1/4" separation.

When laying parallel tracks on curves, work from the largest radius to the smallest to minimize any variances in the outer track. Working the other direction – from a smaller to larger radius – will magnify any variances as the radius increases, so I recommend avoiding this approach.

CURVE DRAWING TOOL

A curve-drawing stick helps make sure your curves have a constant radius. From 2x4 lumber, rip a piece 50" long and between 1/8" and 3/16" thick. Sand it smooth.

Draw a line down the center of the strip from end-to-end. Make a mark along the center line one inch in from an end. Drill a 3/32" hole, and mark it "0."

Measure nine inches along the center line from "0." Make a mark, and continue making marks at one-inch intervals until you reach 48". Label each mark to denote its distance from "0."

Use a sharp center-punch on each mark along the center line to help keep the holes aligned, and drill 1/8" holes at the indentation for each 1" mark [5].

Finally, drill 3/32" holes 1/4" each way from the "zero hole", and drill one hole on the center-line that is 1/2" from the zero hole and closer to the end of the stick. Clearly mark the hole that is 1/4" closer to the end of the stick as +1/4" and the other one as -1/4", and finally, mark the hole that is 1/2" closer to the end of the stick as +1/2".

Now you have the equivalent of a long-radius compass. Simply find and mark the center point of your curve, place the origin hole over the center point and then tap a small nail through the tool and into the layout surface.

Place your pencil in the hole with the radius you want and draw the arc. If you want a 25-1/2" radius curve, for instance, put the nail in the +1/2 hole and your pencil in the 25" hole. If you want a hole that is 25-3/4" radius, put the nail in the -1/4 hole and the pencil in the 26" hole.



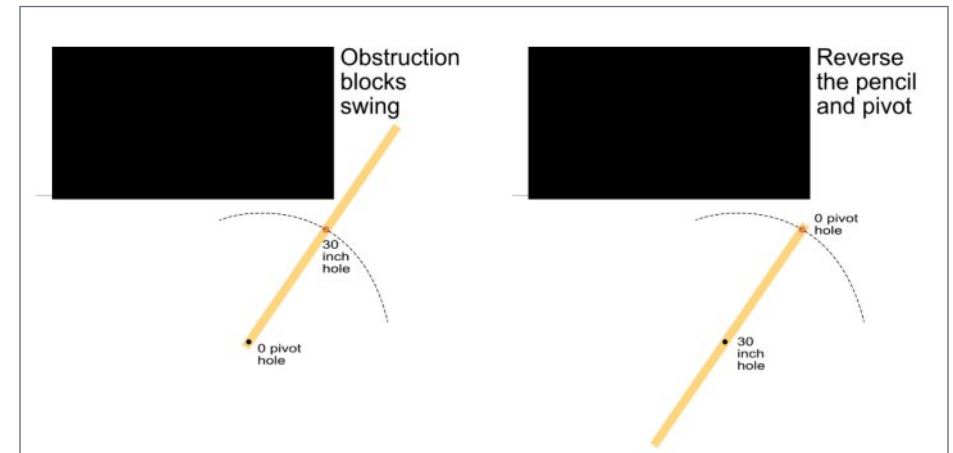
5. Two curve-drawing tools – one for 9"-24" curves, the other for 22"- 48" curves.



6. Closeup of the center-pin end of these curve-drawing sticks. Note the zero hole, as well as a -1/4" hole and +1/4" and +1/2" holes.

I made two of these sticks; one is 50 inches long, for radii from 22 to 48 inches, and the other is 26 inches long for tight radii of nine to 24 inches.

HINT: If you have clearance problems with the tool from sky boards or other obstacles, reverse the tool, putting the pencil where the nail should be and the nail where the pencil should be. That way the tool only extends just an inch past the arc you're trying to draw [7].



7. If the curve tool is blocked by an obstacle, simply reverse the pivot hole and the curve radius hole as shown here.

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8. Steve made this rail joiner tool from a screwdriver.

RAIL JOINER TOOL

Most modelers have a preferred way to install rail joiners. Some use hemostats, some a flat blade screwdriver, and others a small pair of needle-nose pliers. I use a customized flat-blade screwdriver with a notch in the tip, and bent about 75 degrees.

Find a small, flat-blade screwdriver with a comfortable grip. Use a rotary tool to cut a notch just wide enough to fit over the rail and about 3/16" deep for HO or 3/32" for N.

Heat the tip of the screwdriver with a propane torch until red hot. Place the tip in a vise, bend it 75 degrees about 1/2" from the end, and let it cool. Now you have a wrist-friendly tool that easily slides rail joiners into place [1].

If you don't want to mess with heating and bending a screwdriver, check out the shopping list for this article. ✓

[Click here for this article's shopping list](#)

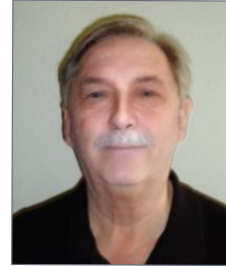


↑ 9. Closeup of the rail joiner tool tip – Steve ground a notch in the end with a motor tool.



10. Amazon has a pre-bent screwdriver tip and a clamping handle you can use to easily make Steve's rail joiner tool. Just grind a notch in the end and you're all set.

STEVE GILLET



After a career as an engineer in the petroleum industry, Steve retired and moved to Tulsa, OK where he was able to actively pursue his long-time interest in model railroading. He has been a member of the NEONS (North East Oklahoma N-Scalers) since 1999 and has either built or participated in the

building of many of the club's NTRAK modules, all of their power boxes, and all of their storage cabinets. His NEONS title is Minister of Modules.

Since 2011, Steve has been writing and publishing articles in N-Scale magazine, N-Scale Railroading magazine, N-Trak Newsletter and the NMRA Layout Design SIG Journal.

Tulsa has a roving band of model railroaders dubbed the Tuesday Night Gandy Dancers. Steve is active in this group that helps Tulsa area modelers build their home layouts.

In Tulsa, Steve is on the committee that has hosted the Annual Tulsa Layout Design & Operations Weekend for the past 12 years.

Steve, who is nicknamed "Razor," is the owner of the Spaendahl Yamánee & Densum (SY&D) railroad, an operations-oriented, 10½' x 13½', tri-level, N-scale, semi-prototypical home layout. ■





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Remove factory lettering easily

YouTuber **Bucyrus Model Railroad Association** shares his favorite method for removing lettering from rolling stock and locomotives using MicroSet and tape.

He admits he didn't come up with this technique, but he finds it to be effective across many brands of locos and rolling stock. **Bucyrus** demonstrates the process with some simple steps in this 6-minute video. He says he's tried other methods, but this one consistently gives him the best results. ✓

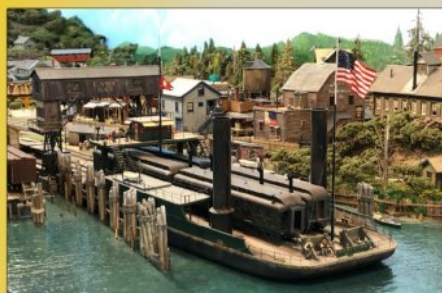


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RICHARD BALE AND JEFF SHULTZ
REPORT THE LATEST HOBBY
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INDUSTRY NEWS

As we prepare this report, tariffs are set at 145% for items created in China that are imported into the US and 125% for US produced items imported into China, with some exemptions in each direction. These exemptions do not currently include model railroad items, which are included in customs HS code 9503. US tariffs for goods from many countries other than China are currently set at 10% with higher tariff levels paused for 90 days beginning April 9th. The “de minimis” exemption for shipments valued at less than \$800 from China was scheduled to end on May 2nd, with a duty rate of 90% or \$75 per item, with a plan to increase it to \$150 per item after June 1st.

The continuation of steep tariffs will have a severe financial impact on model railroading: more than doubling the cost of imported models and potentially forcing some American suppliers, small family run businesses, and hobby retailers out of business. To learn how the tariffs will impact model railroading visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7pBStfSwHs

THE LATEST MODEL RAILROAD PRODUCTS, NEWS & EVENTS

To develop an organized fight against the tariffs, the **Hobby Industry Coalition** has been formed to coordinate a lobby urging the federal government to reduce or eliminate the crushing tariff applied to model railroad products imported to the US from China.

The Hobby Industry Coalition is a non-partisan alliance of manufacturers, distributors, retailers, educators and other stakeholders. Membership in the Coalition is open to companies, organizations, and institutions that share its foundational principles. If you would like to join the Hobby Industry Coalition, please enter your information into this spreadsheet. Please also complete the *Hobby Industry Coalition Application* and return via email to: hobbycoalitionapplication@walthers.com or fax to: 908-687-6282. *See Briefly Noted for more information ...*

CLUB CARS



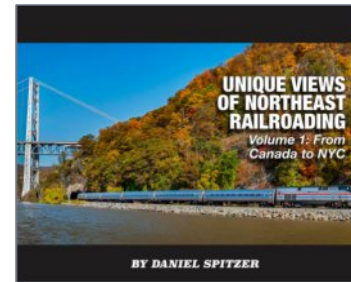
The **Union Pacific Historical Society** has contracted with North American Railcar Corporation to produce HO

and N scale commemorative editions of a Pullman Standard 5077 cu. ft. boxcar. Features of the 50' car include a 10' sliding door, 15-panel bowtie roof, P-S 5/5 ends, and 70-ton ASF Ride Control trucks with 33" wheels.

Info: www.pwrs.ca

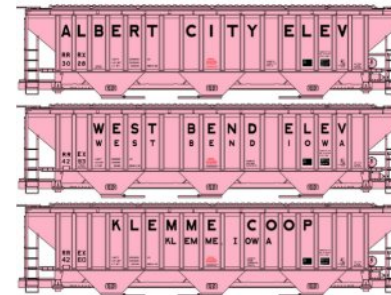
NEW PRODUCTS FOR ALL SCALES

Ron's Books is releasing *Unique Views of Northeast Railroading, Volume 1: From Canada to NYC* by Daniel Spitzer. The first of an expected 4-volume set of books, the 80-page softcover book features photos of railroad infrastructure such as bridges, tunnels, stations, signs, and signals; rolling stock such as



locomotives, passenger and freight trains, and cabooses, and surrounding features such as scenery and trackside industries. Photos were taken from airplanes, atop buildings and other elevations, and from boats. Info: www.ronsbooks.com

HO SCALE PRODUCT NEWS



New economy priced HO scale kits coming from **Accurail** include this 3-car set of pink Pullman-Standard triple bay covered hopper cars. They are decorated for three different Iowa coops: Klemme, West Bend Elevator, and Albert City Elevator.



This 36' New York Central & Hudson River double-sheathed wood boxcar has steel ends and a fishbelly underframe.



A 40' insulated plug door boxcar decorated for the international agribusiness company, Central Soya, is based on a prototype built in 1974. All Accurail freight car kits come with appropriate trucks with Delrin wheelsets and Accumate knuckle couplers. Info: accurailinc.com





R. Bale

FAIRBANKS MORSE TRAIN MASTER

The H-24-66, or Train Master, is a diesel electric road switcher produced by Fairbanks Mores and its licensee, Canadian Locomotive Company. A total of 227 were built between 1953 and 1956. Like other F-M locomotives, the Train Master used an opposed piston prime mover rated at 2,400hp, the most powerful single-engine diesel locomotive at the time of its introduction. While some railroads saw advantages in the Train Master's greater power, others considered the unit had too much horsepower. Other drawbacks were the difficulties inherent in maintaining the opposed-piston engine, inadequacies in the electrical system, and a higher-than-normal consumption of cooling water. All these contributed to poor market acceptance of the Train Masters—and ultimately the departure of F-M from the locomotive business.



Atlas has released an HO scale version of Fairbanks Morse's massive H-24-66 Train Master locomotive. The model is based on the 2,400hp prototype built by F-

M in the 1950s. The model has directional lights, crew figures, separately applied handrails, and etched metal radiator grilles.



Road names include Southern Pacific, Canadian Pacific, and Chihuahua Pacific. Both Gold series (Electronic Dual-Mode sound decoder) and Silver series (DC with NMRA compliant 24-pin socket to

accommodate an aftermarket DCC decoder) models have been released. Check with a dealer for availability.



Additional Atlas HO scale models recently released include this steel caboose with a centered cupola. Road names are Alaska Railway, Chesapeake & Ohio, Chicago Illinois & Midland, Detroit Toledo & Ironton, Richmond Frederiksberg & Potomac, Metro North, Black River Western, and Operation Lifesaver.



The Trainman series model features clear window inserts and separately applied side railings.



Also now on dealer shelves is this Master-series 50' GARX refrigerator car. The AAR class bunkerless prototype for this HO scale model was an early 1950s project by General American and Evans Products. A spotting feature is the horizontal rivet strip flanking the 7'-7" plug door. With fewer seams than a standard car, these cars were supposed to be less prone to rust and leakage.

Road names are Toledo Peoria & Western, Southern Pacific, Chicago & North Western, Chicago & Eastern Illinois, and Norfolk & Western.

Info: shop.atlasrr.com





R. Bale

GP40 DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE

In late 1965 EMD introduced a new line of locomotives powered by a 16-cylinder 645-series prime mover.

Riding comfortably on Blomberg four-wheel trucks, the 3000hp turbo-charged locomotive was christened GP40. Although similar in appearance to its GP35 predecessor, the new GP40 was distinguished by three large 48" radiator fans at the rear of the locomotive body. EMD produced 1,225 GP40s including 60 units built with high-short-hoods and dual control stands for the Norfolk & Western Railway. Concurrently with the introduction of the GP40, a non-turbocharged version, built on the same chassis and using the same body, was introduced as the 2000hp GP38. It carried a considerably lower price tag. On January 1, 1972, the GP40 was discontinued and replaced by the GP40-2, which has a modular electrical system and a few minor exterior changes.



New models from **Bachmann** include a DCC equipped GP40. The HO scale diesel locomotive consists of an injection molded body on a die cast metal frame. Features include directional

headlights, separately applied handrails, and Blomberg trucks.

Road names include BNSF (Heritage 1 scheme), Union Pacific, New York Central, Denver & Rio Grande Western, Louisville & Nashville, Canadian National, Southern Pacific, CSX, Burlington Northern, Chessie System, Norfolk Southern, Boston & Maine, Milwaukee Road, Western Pacific, Reading, and Baltimore & Ohio.



Modelers of passenger train equipment will be pleased to learn that Bachmann has released a new 50' General American express reefer. The

newly-tooled model features high-speed passenger-type trucks. Details separately applied to the injection molded car body include running boards, ice hatches, ladders, brake wheel, and buffer plates. Road names on this initial release are Canadian Pacific, Lehigh Valley, PFE, and Railway Express Agency.



Also new from Bachmann is an HO scale version of a 52' depressed center flatcar.

The model comes with 90-ton 6-wheel Buckeye trucks. Road names include Santa Fe, Union Pacific, Frisco, Pennsylvania Railroad, Conrail and New York Central. A military version in a camouflaged scheme is also available in this release.

Info: www.bachmanntrains.com



R. Bale

GMD SD40-2W

The SD40-2W is a Canadian version of EMD's popular SD40-2 road switcher. They were built with a wide safety/comfort cab in London, Ontario by General Motors Diesel (GMD) a division of General Motors. With the exception of the cab, the Canadian-built locomotives were fundamentally identical to the EMD 3,000hp SD40-2. The SD40-2W was part of EMD's Dash 2 series, competing directly against the GE's U30C and the Alco Century 630. 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. While the sixteen-cylinder 645E3 turbocharged prime mover remained the same as its predecessor SD40, the SD40-2 boasted a solid-state electrical system that featured replaceable modules rather than troublesome relays resulting in greatly simplified electrical troubleshooting and repairs. Canadian National was the principal buyer of the SD40-2W.





Bowser Trains is preparing new tooling for an HO scale model of a GMD SD40-2W. Both Canadian National class GF-30T and GF-30U versions of the diesel locomotive will be produced.

Details on GF-30T models (above) of the road switcher include dynamic brakes, T-shaped winterization hatch, ditch lights, standard cooling fans, chicken wire grilles, snow shields, classification lights, and non-silenced exhaust stacks. Models based on CN class GF-30U units (below) will have corrugated grilles, Q-fans, exhaust silencer, snow shields, standard winterization hatch, ditch lights, and classification lights.



Features on all versions of Bowser's new locomotive include air hoses, windshield wipers, grab irons, uncoupling bars, operating headlights, and window glass. Running gear

includes a can motor, flywheels, and knuckle couplers. Analog DC units will come with a 21-pin plug. DCC models will have a factory installed LokSound V5 decoder.

Info: bowser-trains.com



R. Bale

EMD GP35 DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE

The EMD GP35 is a 4-axle road switcher built by General Motors between July 1963 and January 1966. The GP35 was EMD's first direct challenge to GE's highly successful U25B. It was also one of EMD's first diesels to have a modern car body design with a beveled cab. Over 1,300 units were built for American, Canadian, and Mexican railroads. GP35s are powered by EMD's 16-cylinder 2,500hp 567D3A engine. Although low nose is standard, GP35s built for N&W, Southern and Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México had high-hoods. Many railroads traded in EMD F-units and Alco FA units for GP35s, reusing the trucks and traction motors.

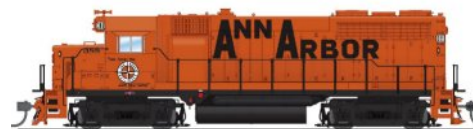
Broadway Limited's HO scale edition of an EMD GP35 has been released to dealers. The models are available with Paragon4 Sound/DC/DCC control system with Rolling Thunder and integral GoPack capacitor packs. BLI's GP35s are also available as DC no-sound Stealth series models.



including the Ohio Bicentennial and the Kodachrome scheme shown above.



Railroad, Reading, and Southern Pacific.



(smokeboxgraphics.com).

High hood versions of the GP35 are available decorated for Norfolk & Western and two Wheeling & Lake Erie liveries

Road names available on BLI's GP35s with standard low hoods include Canadian National, Erie Lackawanna, Pennsylvania

A GP35 wearing Ann Arbor's orange billboard scheme is available exclusively from Smoke Box Graphics

The models have a heavy metal diecast chassis with an ABS injection molded plastic body with numerous separately applied details including handrails, grab irons, windshield wipers, and etched metal grilles. Individually controlled lights on Paragon4 models include front and rear headlights, number board lights, classification lights, rotary beacon, cab light, and ditch lights. The SP unit also has a Mars light and an emergency light.



Broadway Limited has announced a new run of EMD SD45 locomotives in new paint schemes. The SD45, built by EMD between 1965 and 1971, incorporated a 20-cylinder 645E3 prime mover generating 3,600hp at the cost of higher fuel usage. 1,260 SD45s were built, but gained a reputation for breaking crankshafts due to engine flex until a more robust crankcase and other fixes were implemented.



This run of SD45s includes units decorated for Erie Lackawanna (Bicentennial), Great Northern, HLCX, MPI, Montana Rail Link, Wisconsin Central (regular and Operation Lifesaver), Louisville & Indiana, and Southern Pacific #7399 in a special Daylight commemorative scheme. Additionally, Chase's Train Garage (www.chastraingarage.com) will have an exclusive high-nose SD45 decorated for the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad.



The Paragon4 sound version features a GoPack capacitor pack and multiple separately controllable lights while the Stealth DC/DCC-ready version includes directional headlights and an included

8-ohm speaker. Road specific details include short hood options, dynamic brake hatch style, wind deflectors, cab armrest type, lighting arrangements and types, radiator fan types, front and rear pilot options, and prototypically accurate bell placement.

All of the models feature separately applied details such as handrails, grab irons, horn, wipers, and etched metal grilles. Metal



Kadee-compatible couplers are included, and the models will operate on Code 70, 83, and 100 track down to 18" radius.



A new Union Pacific Heritage Fleet car has been announced by Broadway Limited for

preorders until August 7, 2025, and an anticipated arrival of early 2026. The #101, known as Pocatello until 2001, then Lone Star, and finally as Lincoln after 2020, was originally built by Pullman Standard as coach #5447. As part of the UP excursion fleet it is frequently found as part of the consist of special trains.



BLI will be producing this car as both the Lone Star and the

Lincoln, with the UP shield drumhead available on both versions, "Big Boy Tour" and yellow "Building America" drumheads available on the Lincoln, and "150 Years," and black "Building America" drumheads available on the Lone Star. Available exclusively from Spring Creek Model Trains is the Lone Star with a "Nebraska 150 Express" drumhead. Additionally, a primer gray undecorated version of #101 will be available with black trucks.



Due to the popularity of BLI's issue of the Kenefick business car recently, a second run will be released at the same time as the #101, with preorders also due by August 7, 2025. All the previous versions of the Kenefick will be available except the primer gray. A new prototypical drumhead noting the Missouri 2021 bicentennial will also be made available.

Broadway Limited has also provided updated information on the production of the Class D Shay in HO scale. Production was delayed on this model in order to adjust the tooling to allow the Shay to negotiate 18" curves. Tooling on the new model is complete and a new order deadline of June 5th has been set. BLI intends to build these models to order, so no additional models beyond those

ordered will be built. The models are expected to arrive in the US this fall.

Info: www.broadway-limited.com



ClassOneModelWorks is booking pre-orders for a highly detailed HO scale model of Santa Fe steel way cars (Santa Fe called their cabooses way cars) with distinctive peaked roofs. Models will be available in Mineral Brown, used by ATSF from about 1910 to the mid-1970s, and Indian Red, which began to appear in the late 1960s.



Mineral Brown class 2200S way cars with radios will have an R after the road number, an antenna on the cupola, and four white crisscross reflectors on each side.



Class 500S and some 2200S way cars will have etched-metal wig wag signal plates mounted on the cupola. Both classes will be painted Mineral Brown.



Class 500S way cars with radios will display an R after the car number. A ground plane antenna will be mounted on the cupola roof.



CE3 class way cars, rebuilt from class 500 and 2200 cars, will be decorated in Indian Red with a black roof. The cupola, belt rail, and large Santa Fe logo will all be yellow.



Late Santa Fe class CE3 way cars with blanked windows will have a yellow cupola, belt rail, and large logo. The body including the roof will be Indian Red with square side reflectors, and COTS ACI identification plates.

Details on all editions of the ClassOneModels way cars include Kass or Morton etched metal running boards, accurate wire side and cupola railings, wire grab irons and uncoupling levers, cupola sunshades, double-hung windows with screens, etched wig-wag signals, appropriate antennas, and a Duryea underframe with a frame-mounted Dayco belt driven generator. Operating marker lights and end step lights will be controlled by a magnetic wand.

Caboose trucks with machined metal wheelsets will be either ASF Ride-Control or swing motion type. The models are currently in production with a delivery date TBA.

Info: www.classonemodelworks.com



Just announced for advanced reservation by **InterMountain Railway** is a new run of ACF 2-Bay covered hoppers. Production began in 1976 on these cars and continued up into the 2000s, even after ACF was purchased by American Railcar Industries, now known as American Industrial Transport. These models feature improved etched metal walkways, multiple road numbers, metal knuckle couplers and InterMountain metal wheelsets.



Road names in this release are BNSF, Chicago & North Western, Dupont, GATX Leasing, Montana Rail Link, Norfolk Southern, Union Pacific

(DRGW/SP), and Winchester & Western.



Eight paint schemes for 60' flat cars are

being offered for advanced reservations through June 30th 2025 with five of the paint schemes being produced for the first time. Each paint scheme will be available in six different road numbers. Three different Trailer Train/TTX schemes are being offered as well as Alaska, BNSF (ex-BN), Santa Fe, Southern Repaint, and Union Pacific



The cars feature metal knuckle couplers and InterMountain metal wheelsets.

Info: intermountain-railway.com



R. Bale

BUDD RAIL DIESEL CAR (RDC)

The RDC is a self-propelled diesel multiple unit railcar developed by the Budd Company of Philadelphia, PA. The cars can be used singly or coupled together in train sets and controlled from the cab of the front unit. Between 1949 and 1962, Budd built 398 RDCs. Budd had pioneered in developing light-weight passenger cars using stainless steel components joined by shot welding. This permitted the construction of cars which were both light and strong. Budd installed a pair of 275hp Detroit Diesel engines in what was basically a standard 85' coach. Each engine drove an axle through a hydraulic torque converter derived from the M-46 Patton tank. The result was the RDC-1, which was introduced in September 1949. RDCs were primarily assigned to passenger service in rural areas with low traffic density or short-haul commuter service. They were less expensive to operate than a traditional train drawn by a diesel locomotive. As passenger service declined the RDC was often the last surviving conveyor of passengers on a particular route. In Canada, RDCs remained in continuous use from their introduction in the 1950s through at least 2024. In addition to the RDC-1, which is a 90-passenger coach, variants include RDC-2 baggage/coach combine, RDC-3 RPO/baggage/coach, RDC-4 RPO/baggage, and RDC-9 motorized trailer with no controls.

Rapido continues to expand its accurately detailed selection of HO scale RDCs that feature Rapido's acclaimed "stainless steel" finish. The latest additions include VIA Rail RDC-1 and RDC-2 cars as rebuilt in 2010, three RDC-9s and several new paint schemes on RDC-1s.



Visible upgrades to the VIA Rail Canada rebuilds include an e-bell, blanked-out windows, modified ends, different steps, operating VIA-style xenon light, and ditch lights.



MBTA cars available in this new release include an RDC-1 and RDC-9 with blank ends. Similar RDC-1 and RDC-9 combinations will be available decorated for Boston & Maine (McGinnis) and CN wet noodle scheme.



An as-delivered Santa Fe RDC-1 / RDC-2 two-car set is included in this release.



Individual RDC-1s will be available for Metro North, MBTA, New Haven (McGinnis), New Jersey Transit, Susquehanna, SEPTA, Yreka Western, and a CN Track Evaluation Car.



Completing Rapido's latest run of RDCs is SP-10, a unique Southern Pacific car rebuilt with a blind end following a grade crossing accident in 1960. The damaged cab was replaced with a baggage section.

All versions of Rapido's HO scale RDCs feature retooled trucks, fuel tank, and cab interior. The LED operating light package includes headlights, ditch lights, rear lights, classification lights, step lights, and track inspection lights. Additional features



include separate underframe piping and conduit, individual grab irons and front door chains, etched-metal roof grilles, fan covers, a Mo-Power capacitor, and fabricated or cast truck sideframes as appropriate.

CN and BC models include optional split cooling radiator in a polybag kit. Additional road name-specific details include bell position, horns, single or double rear headlights, with or without battery boxes behind cab, and different types of ditch lights. Both DC/silent (DCC ready) and DC/DCC ESU LokSound with twin sugar cube speakers will be available. A minimum track radius of 22" is recommended. The final order deadline



R. Bale

N&W J CLASS 4-8-4 LOCOMOTIVE

The Norfolk & Western Railways class J was a group of fourteen 4-8-4 Northern steam locomotives built from 1941 to 1950 at the railway's shops in Roanoke, Virginia. In the late 1930s, the N&W's 4-8-2 Mountain locomotives could not handle the rising passenger traffic that developed as the Great Depression abated. The N&W traffic department sought a more powerful and fancy-looking steam locomotive to handle the important passenger service between Norfolk and Cincinnati, and between Monroe, Virginia and Bristol, Tennessee. In an effort to give the locomotive smoothness and beauty, along with speed and power, Franklin C. Noel submitted several 4-8-4 proposals before the N&W board settled on the class J bullet-nosed design which incorporated 70" roller bearing drivers and rods. The Js performed flawlessly and continued as the N&W's flagship passenger service until the summer of 1958 when they were replaced by diesels. The class J 4-8-4s were demoted to local freight service until late 1959 when they were all retired. The exception is No. 611, which now resides at the Virginia Museum of Transportation. Restored twice, it was featured in Norfolk Southern Railway's steam program from 1982 to 1994 and later in the 21st Century Steam Program. It now operates as a traveling exhibit, occasionally pulling excursions on host railroads.

and delivery date are TBA. All images in this announcement are courtesy of Rapido Trains.

Info: www.rapidotrains.com



An HO scale model of Norfolk & Western's famous Class J 4-8-4 steam locomotive,

developed by Fox Valley Models, is available now from **ScaleTrains***. Early as-built No. 600 and later as-built No. 611 are available, as well as No. 611 in its current upgraded Spirit of Roanoke excursion status. Road number details include spoke wheels on the pilot truck, a bell mounted on top of the boiler and a multi-bearing crosshead on No. 600 (above). *Fox Valley Models was acquired by ScaleTrains in 2022.



No. 611 and the Spirit of Roanoke version have an alligator crosshead, solid pilot wheels and the bell is mounted on

the pilot. The Spirit of Roanoke signature is painted below the cab windows.

All versions feature sprung drivers with one set of drivers having traction tires. The headlight, tender backup light, number boards, cab interior, and classification lights are all LEDs. The models come with a 5-pole skew wound motor and synchronized smoke puffing unit. DC/DCC ready models are available as well as DCC units with ESU LokSound 5 decoder with speakers in both the boiler and tender. Fox Valley's N&W 4-8-4 is designed to handle 18" track radius, however, a 22" radius is recommended.

HO scale models of a Gunderson 6269 cu. ft. high-cube boxcar are expected to be available from ScaleTrains later this month. Tooling developed by ExactRail* is used to produce this highly accurate model. The fully assembled cars are equipped with



narrow draft boxes with shank wedges and striker castings, wire grab irons, a nailable steel floor, and separately applied door tracks and door bars. The models come with Kadee couplers and ASF Ride Control 100-ton trucks with 36" machined metal wheels. *ScaleTrains acquired ExactRail in 2023.



Road names scheduled for this release include Crab Orchard & Egyptian, Tomahawk Railway, TOFX/ex-CSX patch, TOFX/ex-Illinois Central patch, and TOFX/ex Illinois Central patch/

Malarkey Roofing Products.

An undecorated model will also be available. A 22" minimum track radius is recommended. This model has not been available since January 2018.

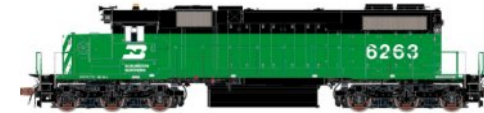


Preorders are being taken on several car and locomotive runs. Rivet Counter SD38-2 locomotives have been announced in several paint schemes, including McCloud River Railroad #39, two GATX/ex-Reserve Mining, three Duluth Missabe & Iron Range, Chicago & Northwestern, Chicago & Illinois Midland, four Burlington Northern, and two Bessemer & Lake Erie.



The SD38-2 is the non-turbocharged version of the SD40-2, a six-axle, 2,000hp locomotive with the Dash 2 series' modular electronics. It has proven reliable in hump yard and local service. The Rivet Counter model includes road number and era-specific details, including LED grounds lights, walkway lights, class lights, strobe lights, and illuminated

number boards as appropriate. A semi-scale coupler buffer includes metal semi-scale Type E knuckle couplers.



Equipped with all-wheel electrical pickup and drive and a minimum radius of 18" (recommended 22"), the

DCC & Sound equipped version comes with an ESU LokSound 5 decoder with "Full Throttle", two cube-type speakers, the correct non-turbocharged 645E3 prime mover sounds, and an ESU designed supercapacitor PowerPak. The DC/DCC Sound Ready locomotives feature a 21-pin connector. The models are estimated to arrive in November 2025.



A new run of the HO scale BSC F68BH Finger Rack

flatcar is open for preorders. The 100-ton 68' flatcars were designed to carry rebar loads, thus the distinctive finger racks near the ends for securing the load.



The Rivet Counter cars will be available in several

prototypical TTX paint schemes as well as HypoTypical "fantasy" schemes from TTX, Santa Fe, Conrail, Chessie System, and Burlington Northern. The cars include a complete underbody brake system including over 18 separate parts. They are expected to arrive in November 2025.



Finally in HO scale is a Fox Valley Models HO scale PSC 70-ton ore car. Based on a prototype built in 1948 for the Duluth Missabe & Iron Range, thousands of similar cars have been built by multiple manufacturers to a similar design for many railroads.



Road names in this run are Bessemer & Lake Erie, Canadian National, Duluth Missabe & Iron Range, Great Northern, and Milwaukee Road. The DM&IR models come as draw

barred sets of 4, the others are single cars only. The cars feature finely cast stirrup steps, end details, underbody, and brake system and wire grab irons. They are scheduled to arrive in March 2026.

Preorders on the SD38-2 locomotives, F68BH flatcars, and the ore cars are due by June 2nd, 2025.

Info: www.scaletrains.com



between 1958 and 1962, the PS-2 3215/3219 design was the second 3-bay covered hopper created by the company, with over 1,400 cars produced.



This run of 3215 cu. ft. covered hoppers includes models decorated for ATSF, Chicago Great Western, Great Northern, Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway, Norfolk & Western, Rock, Sacramento Northern, Southern Pacific, and three undecorated kits with 70-ton plain bearing, 70-ton roller bearing, or 100-ton roller bearing trucks.



The 70-ton ASF-3 roller bearing truck w/ rotating

Timken caps will be available with 33 inch wheels in either standard .110 or semi-scale .088 wheels. Both blackened and nickel plated wheels are available. The Early Style Pullman Standard roof

hatches are also available separately in packages of 12.

Info: www.tangentscalemodels.com



TCS Locomotive Works, part of Train Control Systems, has announced that two locomotives not

seen for a few years are now available. The first is the GE U25C, the locomotive that put General Electric on the map as a mainline locomotive manufacturer, forced EMD to up their game, and eventually forced Alco out of the locomotive business. These models are manufactured by Korea Brass and imported by TCS.



Available decorated for Pennsylvania RR, Northern Pacific, CB&Q, and Conrail, the models feature hand

applied brass and plastic details including a visible engineer in the cab, interior details visible through etched brass grating, and free-spinning fans viewable through the radiator grating. The locomotives are equipped with TCS WOWDiesel decoders.



The TCV Track Cleaning Vehicle is a self-propelled track cleaner equipped with a vacuum and abrasive

pads. Additional features include a DCC decoder with a Keep Alive capacitor to provide power over dirty track as you are cleaning it, a roof mounted LED light, and traction tires. Two



magnets are mounted to the bottom of the TCV to pick up stray ferrous items lying in the right-of-way. Filters for the vacuum can be replaced by cutting new ones out of coffee filters.

Info: www.tcsdcc.com



R. Bale

EMC/EMD SW1 DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE

The SW1 is a 600hp diesel electric switch engine EMC introduced in 1938. After building more than 600 units, production ended in 1953, with a pause in production between March 1943 and September 1945 due to World War II. The SW1 was the first of a long line of SW series switchers produced by EMC and later EMD. The model designation is based on the locomotives power (S for 600), frame construction (W for welded), and the number 1 to distinguish it from the earlier EMC SW. Spotting features include a single conical exhaust stack, a sand box below the front grille, and AAR 4-wheel type A trucks.



Walthers is booking reservations for an SW1 diesel switcher with delivery planned for winter of 2026. The Mainline series model is based on a 600hp diesel unit EMC/EMD catalogued from 1938 to 1953.

Walthers HO scale model will have warm white LED directional headlights, wire grab irons, and a heavy diecast underframe. The drive mechanism will include 14:1 helical gears driven by a 5-pole, skew-wound can motor. The model will be available for standard DC operation with a pre-installed



sugar-cube speaker and a 21-pin connector, and with factory installed ESU Sound and DCC.

Road names will be Amtrak, Boston & Maine, Chicago & North Western, and Chicago, Burlington & Quincy. Additional road names will include Milwaukee Road, Southern Railway, and New York Central. An undecorated model will also be available.



A 40' wood reefer with Dreadnaught steel ends and roof top ice hatches is coming from Walthers this summer. The HO scale model is typical of many ice bunker reefers that saw service from the 1930s to the 1950s. The plastic body features molded-on detail including 4' swing doors and full height ladders. Additional details include AB brake gear and Bettendorf-type plain-bearing trucks with 33" machined metal wheels.



Railroad road names in this release will be Pacific Fruit Express and Chicago, Burlington & Quincy. Leased names include Agar, Libby, Cudahy, and Hormel.

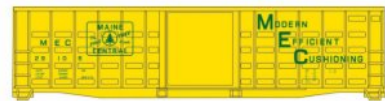


Walthers is also preparing a Trinity 25,400 gallon tank car for release this summer. In addition to Archer Daniels Midland, decorating schemes will include TILX-AGP, Procor, PRIX-Chicago Asphalt, DBUX-Soy Power, and XOMX.



Separately applied details on Walthers HO scale Mainline series model include manway hatch,

protective top filling housing, pressure relief valve, wire safety rails, skid protected bottom outlet valve, steam inlet and outlet, and full brake gear including cylinder and rods. The model will come with 100-ton roller-bearing trucks with 36" machined metal wheelsets.



A release date of fall 2025 is planned for another production run of Walthers 50' waffle-side boxcar with new road numbers. The Mainline series model is based on a prototype introduced by Pullman-Standard in the late 1960s.



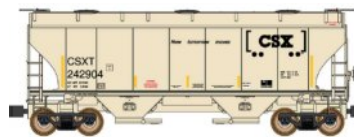
Cars decorated for Rock Island and Delaware & Hudson will have P-S doors. Youngstown doors will be on models decorated for Chattahoochee Industrial Railroad, Denver & Rio Grande Western, Seaboard Coast Line, and Southern Railway. Maine Central and Aberdeen & Rockfish cars will have Superior doors. All versions will have appropriate trucks with 33" machined metal wheelsets.



Also due from Walthers this fall is a 53' steel gondola with dent-proof corrugated sides, bulkheads, and optional coil steel cradle.

Road names on this release will be Burlington Northern, Norfolk Southern, Conrail, Pennsylvania Railroad, Great Northern, Penn Central, Missouri Pacific, and Union Pacific. All Walthers models mentioned in this report will come with Proto MAX knuckle couplers.
Info: www.walthers.com

N SCALE PRODUCT NEWS



InterMountain has released a new production run of Trinity 3281 cu. ft. twin bay covered hopper cars.

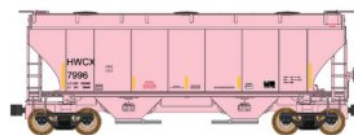


Introduced in the late 1990s, the prototype 3281 was designed for cement, sand, and other dense lading which required only two gravity outlet hoppers for efficient unloading.

Loading is through three round 30" roof hatches. The smaller size of the car compensates for the greater density of the lading compared to grain.



Road names available on InterMountain's current N scale release include CSX (Boxcar logo), Norfolk Southern, Winchester & Western, Cemex, Chicago Rail Leasing, General American, Iowa Chicago & Eastern, Trinity Leasing, and Ciment Quebec.



Additionally, InterMountain is taking reservations on the next run of Trinity 3281 cu. ft. covered hoppers until May 31, 2025. Road names in this run are Suntrust Leasing/SRFX, First Union Rail/WSOX, Excel Railcar/

ERCX, Arkansas Oklahoma/AOK, Blue Circle Cement/BCAX, Haliburton/HWCX, CGLX, LaFarge/LAFX, Holcim/GNAX, St. Lawrence Cement/SLCX, and Rio Grande Chemicals/RGCX.



Advanced reservations are being taken for a run of N scale SD40-2(W) locomotives in several

schemes. Originally only in Canadian National service (five schemes), secondary users of the safety cab equipped locomotives include the Battle Creek Railway, Ellis & Eastern, and Pennsylvania Northeastern (two schemes).



Standard cab GMD SD40-2 locomotives decorated for CP Rail, Pennsylvania Northeastern, Wisconsin

Central, and Algoma Central Railroads are also part of this release. Both models will be available in both DC and ESU DCC/Sound versions.



Just announced for advanced reservation is a new run of ACF 2-Bay covered hoppers. Production began in 1976 on these cars and continued up into the 2000s, even

after ACF was purchased by American Railcar Industries, now known as American Industrial Transport. These models feature improved etched metal walkways, multiple road numbers, metal knuckle couplers and InterMountain metal wheelsets.



Road names in this release are BNSF, Chicago & North Western, Dupont, GATX Leasing, Montana Rail Link, Norfolk Southern, Union Pacific (DRGW/SP), and

Winchester & Western.



Eight paint schemes for 60' flat cars are being offered for advanced reservations through

June 30th 2025 with five of the paint schemes being produced

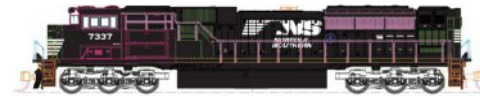
for the first time. Each paint scheme will be available in six different road numbers. Three different Trailer Train/TTX schemes are being offered as well as Alaska, BNSF (ex-BN), Santa Fe, Southern Repaint, and Union Pacific



The cars feature metal knuckle

couplers and InterMountain metal wheelsets.

Info: www.intermountain-railway.com



Kato is preparing new tooling for Norfolk Southern and Canadian Pacific

versions of rebuilt SD70ACu diesel locomotives. The 4,300/4,500hp prototypes were rebuilt in the 20-teens from SD90MACs. The rebuild included replacing the Siemens electrical components with Mitsubishi equipment and exchanging the production cab for EMD's new Phase II safety cab. In addition to unique decorating schemes, Kato's N scale SD70ACu will feature some road-specific details such as headlight placement – nose-mounted for Canadian Pacific and cab-mounted for Norfolk Southern units.



Decorating schemes will include Norfolk Southern and five Canadian Pacific heritage schemes. DC, DCC, and DCC sound models are

available now for preorder. Delivery is planned for next winter. Info: www.katousa.com



New N scale models recently released by **Micro-Trains** include this 40' woodside reefer with roof top ice hatches. The decorating scheme of J.E Decker is based on a prototype built in 1928 and repainted in 1931. Note the

steel fish belly underframe and the unusual billboard lettering on the roof.



Coming from M-T later this summer is a 4-pack of 50' steel gondolas decorated in CP Rail's Multimark paint scheme. The model follows a prototype built in 1952 with drop ends and a simulated wood floor.



Another interesting quartette of N scale cars coming from Micro-Trains in September is a 4-pack of Penn Central maintenance of way cars. The MOW set includes a 40' steel boxcar, a 50' gondola, a 50' flatcar, and a 33' twin bay open hopper.



Finally, Micro-Trains has announced a new N scale body style, the 170-series Greenville 52'-6" Railgon gondola. Built to specifications created by Trailer Train, it was designed to be durable in mill and scrap metal use. 4,000 of the Railgon GONX cars have been built, the majority by Greenville.



The models will feature metal wheels, a prototypical ride height, coupler release lever, body mounted Magne-Matic couplers, and a detailed subframe, interior, and underframe. Models are expected in Summer 2025. Info: Contact a dealer.

New products available for pre-order from **RailSmith** are TrainSetBoxes for the RailSmith N scale passenger trains. Assembled to the same number as are presold, the 11x17x3 inch boxes will be able to hold 16 cars and three locomotives in their jewel boxes. Each box will be printed for a specific train set and



RailSmith intends to create TrainSetBoxes for each RailSmith build-a-train series. Preorders are being taken for the SP Golden State and Santa Fe boxes. Northern Pacific North Coast Limited 1954, Rock Island, and Texas Special are shipping or shipping soon but the website may still be taking orders for them. Info: lowellsmith.net



New N scale releases expected from **ScaleTrains** this month include Thrall 48' coil steel cars with two hoods. The Rivet counter

models are based on a prototype designed to handle two hoods, although, depending on the type of steel, the car can be run without hoods.

Features include see-through photo-etched metal walkways, simulated wood interior floor, metal grab irons and uncoupling levers, and trainline hoses with silver glad hands. The underbody brake system is complete with over 15 separately applied parts including air reservoir, control valve, and retainer valve plus formed wire plumbing and trainline pipes. The model comes with Micro-Trains compatible couplers and ASF Ride Control trucks with 36" machined metal wheels.



Each hood is constructed with up to 16 individual parts including wire handrails and grab irons, hood stacking brackets, top braces, and a lifting

bail. Four diecast unwrapped coil steel loads are included.

Road names with two hoods include Elgin Joliet & Eastern (NS black and orange hoods), EJ&E (orange hoods), CHTT



(Distressed with ATSF and CSX hoods), CHTT (Distressed with UP hoods), Norfolk Southern (Mismatched Thoroughbred hoods),

NS (Large Thoroughbred logos on hoods), and BNSF (ATSF and Penn Central hoods).



Newly announced for preorder is a run of the N scale Rivet Counter Trinity 82' 7883 cu. ft.

mechanical reefer. Available in data only, data only with roofline icicles, BNSF, and Trinity Leasing/TILX, the reefers are equipped with Carrier, early Thermo King, or late Thermo King HVAC systems as appropriate.



Available in both sound and non-sound equipped versions, the sound versions are equipped

with a track powered capacitor circuit and are controlled through switches on the bottom of the car. All cars include underbody brake rigging and plumbing to include a separate air reservoir, control valve and retainer valve, factory applied ladders, metal grab irons, coupler cut levers, and trainline hoses with silver gladhands. ASF Ride Control trucks with 36" machined metal wheels and body mounted Micro-Trains compatible Type E knuckle couplers are standard. Designed for a minimum radius of 10" and a recommended radius of 11", the cars will operate on both code 55 and 80 rail.

Info: scaletrains.com

STRUCTURES & SCENIC SUPPLIES

Banta Model Works has a craftsman-style kit for the Lewis Mill near Telluride, Colorado. Banta's HO scale version replicates the original mill which was sheathed in wood with a



tar-paper roof -- Later in life the mill had corrugated metal applied to the roof and the sides above the timber base.

The kit is composed of a laser-cut MDF core overlaid with laser-cut siding and individual strip wood siding. The windows and doors are also laser-cut. The assembled model, not including the water tank, has a footprint of 9" x 11.5". Banta plans to release an F scale kit for the Lewis Mill this summer. Info: www.bantamodelworks.com



Berkshire Valley Models has released new HO and N scale kits for Hillview Fire House. This former American Model Builders laser-cut craftsman kit features Queen Anne style windows that assemble in layers with peel and stick backing. The doors can be modeled either open or closed. The HO version has a footprint of 3" x 4", the N scale 1" x

2". Painting and assembly are required.

Info: www.berkshirevalleymodels.com

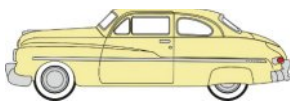


New from **Mine Mount Models** is RYBKA Hardware. A laser-cut structure kit, it features both rolled roofing and 3-tab shingles, resin and Tichy detail parts, and wood pallets. If finished per the original configuration it measures 5.5" Deep x 7.5" Wide x 3.5" High.

Info: minemountmodels.com



This HO scale 1965 Ford Mustang convertible is now available from **Oxford Diecast** dealers.



New models scheduled for release later this year include a 1960 Ford Falcon Ranchero in Monte Carlo Red with a white roof, and 1949 Mercury coupe in Calabash Yellow.

Info: www.walthers.com



Rapido Trains has announced plans to produce wrapped Centerbeam flatcar loads in both HO and N scale. Although universal, Rapido's all-

new wrapped lumber loads are sized for its NSC Centerbeam cars (See *MRH* News April 2025). Industry names on the initial release will be Canfor, Domtar, Georgia Pacific, Idaho Forest Group, Irving, Sierra Pacific, Tembec, and Tolko.

HO scale versions of the Centerbeam wrapped lumber load feature separate rows with small see-through gaps between each row. The loads are held together by mini magnets. The N Scale Centerbeam Wrapped Lumber Loads feature four pattern designs with two designs per package. The N scale loads are also held in place by mini magnets.

Info: www.rapidotrains.com



Walthers has scheduled a summer release date for Merchant's Row, a shallow backdrop structure of three brick storefronts. The classic

brick structure is typical of storefronts from the late 1800s to the present day. The assembled structure measures 10.57" wide x 3.94" deep x 4.125" tall. The kit includes printed interior detail sheets and signs for a variety of stores. The structure is molded in clear plastic and three colors making painting optional. Assembly is required.



Also coming from Walthers this summer is a kit that assembles into 12 solar panels. The can be used individually or applied to a roof in a variety of arrays. Each panel measures .75" x .75". They are

molded in silver-gray and come with a printed sheet that mimics photovoltaic panels.



New track supplies coming from Walthers this summer includes No. 5 single crossovers built with Code 83

nickel silver rail. Both right and lefthand versions will be available. Each crossover measures 18.75" long with the running tracks on 2" centers. Features include insulated tie bars, snap-action solid rail points, isolated frogs with built-in jumper for powering as desired. The plastic profile ties are dark brown with simulated wood grain detail including spike head and pie plate on each tie.

Info: www.walthers.com

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! BRIEFLY NOTED AT PRESS TIME ...

Tariff Update: In trade talks conducted on May 10 and 11, the US and China agreed to a significant roll back of tariffs on each others' goods for an initial 90 days. Effective May 14, the US will temporarily lower its overall tariffs on Chinese goods from 145% to 30%, while China will cut its levies on American imports from 125% to 10% ...

The order deadline for **Broadway Limited's** HO scale Class D four-truck Shay has been set for June 5, 2025 ...

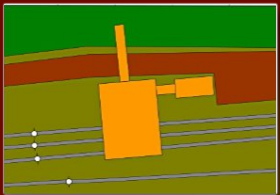
Morning Sun has released a digital reprint of Chicago & North Western photos by official company photographers ...

New HO scale Proto models released to dealers by **Walthers** include 30' GTW wood caboose and PRR X29B boxcars ... ■



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Model Railroad Hobbyist | May 2025

MAY

Please submit your event information, including website, to model-railroad-hobbyist.com/contact/News_event-product_announcement

Ongoing 2025

ONLINE, Zoom & YouTube, Wednesdays at 7pm Eastern. New Tracks Modeling Live Weekly

Info: newtracksmodeling.com

YouTube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCMAVhPb5pjdkAYTdXLceJA

ONLINE, Facebook & YouTube, dates vary, see Facebook page. "NMRax" organized by Gordy Robinson, Martyn Jenkins, Speed 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/NGG



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May – June 2025

AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND, TOOWOOMBA, June 9, 2025.

June 2025 Model Railway Open House, sponsored by the Toowoomba Model Railway Club, Inc. Toowoomba Showgrounds, Glenvale Road.

Info: www.facebook.com/toowoombamodelrailwayclub

CANADA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, BURNABY (Vancouver), May 23-25, 2025. Railway Modeller's Meet of British Columbia. Simon Fraser University.

Info: railwaymodellersmeetofbc.ca/wp

CALIFORNIA, SACRAMENTO, June 20-21, 2025. National Model Train Show, part of the 40th National Garden Railway Convention. SAFE Credit Union Convention Center, 1401 J Street.

Info: www.ngrc2025.org

CALIFORNIA, SANTA CLARA, May 23-25, 2025. O Scale West – 33rd Annual Model Train Show. Hyatt Regency Hotel, 5101 Great America Parkway.

Info: oscalewest.com

COLORADO, DURANGO, May 15-18, 2025. NMRA Rocky Mountain Regional Convention. Durango Doubletree, 501 Camino Del Rio.

Info: www.rmr-nmra.org/2025%20Convention/Home.html

INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS, June 14, 2025. Naptown & White River Model Railroad Club Summer Open House and Yard Sale 2025. 1115 McDougal St.

Info: www.facebook.com/NaptownRR

LOUISIANA, BATON ROUGE, June 26-29, 2025. Blues Express 2025, NMRA Lone Star Regional Convention. Holiday Inn Baton Rouge South, 9990 Airline Way.

Info: bluesexpress2025.com

MASSACHUSETTS, SPRINGFIELD, May 30-June 1, 2025. New England/Northeast RPM, in association with the Amherst Railway Society. Springfield Sheraton Monarch Place, One Monarch Place.

Info: nerpm.org

MINNESOTA, WILMAR, May 15-18, 2025. 2025 NMRA Thousand Lakes Region Convention. Location TBD.

Info: www.thousandlakesregion.org/blank

NORTH CAROLINA, SPENCER, May 17-18, 2025. Historic Spencer Shops Train Show. NC Transportation Museum, 1 Samuel Spencer Drive.

Info: www.nctransportationmuseum.org/train-show

OHIO, DUBLIN (Columbus), May 15-18, 2025. The Buckeye Express, NMRA Mid-Central Regional Convention. Dublin Embassy Suites, 5100 Upper Metro Pl.

Info: buckeyeexpress.div6-mcr-nmra.org/Main.html

OREGON, CHILOQUIN, June 14-29, 2025. Train Mountain Triennial 2025. Train Mountain Railroad Park, 36941 South Chiloquin Road.

Info: trainmountain.org

PENNSYLVANIA, HARRISBURG, May 14-18, 2025.

Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society 2025 Annual Meeting. Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel, 4650 Lindle Road.

Info: prrths.org

TENNESSEE, JOHNSON CITY, May 30-31, 2025. George L. Carter Railroad Museum Inc. Big Train Show. ETSU Mini-Dome on the East Tennessee State University Campus.

Info: johnsoncityrailroadexperience.org

Future 2025 by location

AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND, BRISBANE, August 22-24, 2025. Brisbane 2025, NMRA Australasian Regional Convention. Flight One, Qantas Drive, Archerfield.

Info: nmra.org.au/nmra-ar-convention-2025

AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND, TOOWOOMBA, September 13, 20, 27, 2025. 2025 Carnival of Trains Open House, sponsored by the Toowoomba Model Railway Club, Inc. Toowoomba Showgrounds, Glenvale Road.

Info: www.facebook.com/toowoombamodelrailwayclub

CANADA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, SIDNEY, September 21, 2025. 33rd Annual Victoria Model Train Show. Mary Winspear Centre, 2243 Beacon Avenue.

Info: victoriatrainshow@gmail.com

CANADA, ONTARIO, BURLINGTON, October 17-19, 2025. Real Rails 2025 Convention, sponsored by the Canadian Pacific Historical Association. Holiday Inn and Candle Wood Suites, 3060 South Service Road.

Info: www.cptracks.ca/realrails2025.html

ARIZONA, PRESCOTT, July 26, 2025. Beat the Heat Model Train Marketplace and Show. Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 3700 Willow Creek Road.

Info: camrrc.com/bth

COLORADO, ESTES PARK, September 20, 2025. Rails in the Rockies XXVIII, Estes Park Events Complex, 1125 Rooftop Way.

Info: railsintherockies.org

COLORADO, GREELEY, September 27-28, 2025. Colorado Rail Proto Meet, in association with the Colorado Model Railroad Museum, featuring the HomeShops Freelance Forum and the Narrow Gauge Gathering. Island Grove Event Center, 421 N 15th Ave.

Info: corpm.org

FLORIDA, TALLAHASSEE, June 28-29, 2025. Tallahassee Model Railroad Show and Sale. North Florida Fairgrounds, 441 Paul Russell Rd.

Info: www.facebook.com/events/631735199262142

ILLINOIS, COLLINSVILLE (St. Louis, MO). July 24-26, 2025. St. Louis Railroad Prototype Modeler Meet. 1 Gateway Center Drive.

Info: stlrpm.com

INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS, October 4, 2025. Indianapolis Train Show @ Garfield Park. Garfield Park Burello Family Center, 2345 Pagoda Dr.

Info: www.naptownrr.org/shows

MARYLAND, LINTHICUM (Baltimore), September 11-14, 2025. Mid-Atlantic Railroad Prototype Modelers Meet. DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Baltimore-BWI Airport.

Info: www.marpmm.org

MASSACHUSETTS, ORLEANS, Wednesday evenings, July & August 2025. Annual Summer Open House of the Nauset Model Railroad Club. 180 Rte 6A.

Info: www.facebook.com/p/Nauset-Model-Railroad-Club-100054369888560

MICHIGAN, NOVI, July 14-19, 2025. Station No. VI, 2025 NMRA National Convention. Sheraton Hotel, 21111 Haggerty Road.

Info: nmra2025.com

NEW HAMPSHIRE, CONCORD, September 11-14, 2025. Concord Flyer - North Eastern Region NMRA Annual Convention, hosted by the Seacoast Division NMRA. Grappone Conference Center, 70 Constitution Avenue.

Info: conventions.nernmra.org/home/home-2025

NEW YORK, SYRACUSE, November 1-2, 2025. 50th Great New York State Model Train Fair, sponsored by the CNY Chapter, National Railway Historical Society. NYS Fair Exposition Center, 581 State Fair Blvd.

Info: www.modeltrainfair.com

OHIO, MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS (Berea), October 4-5, 2025. 51st Annual Great Berea Train Show, hosted by the North Coast Division, Mid-Central Region, NMRA. Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds, 19201 Bagley Rd.

Info: thegreatbereatrainshow.org

OREGON, PORTLAND, October 25, 2025 (NEW DATE!). 6th Bridgetown Railroad Prototype Modelers Meet. Holiday Inn Airport - Portland (I-205), 8439 NE Columbia Blvd.

Info: www.facebook.com/groups/2001136043323501

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PENNSYLVANIA, EASTON, October 5, 2025. 47th Annual Lehigh Valley Regional Train Show & Expo. Charles Chrin Community Center 4100 Green Pond Road.

Info: www.lehighlines.org/chrin-flyer.html

PENNSYLVANIA, KING OF PRUSSIA, October 16-19, 2025. Philly Express, 2025 NMRA/MER Convention. Crowne Plaza Hotel, 260 Mall Blvd.

Info: phillyexpress.org

PENNSYLVANIA, MOUNT UNION, July 18-20, 2025. Central Pennsylvania Shortlines RPM. Bricktown Museum, 300 W. Small St.

Info: rpm.pennsyrr.com

TENNESSEE, GATLINBURG, September 17-20, 2025. Smoky Mountain Rails Convention, sponsored by the Southeastern Region of the NMRA. Glenstone Lodge, 504 Airport Rd.

Info: 2025serconvention.org

TEXAS, PEARLAND (HOUSTON), November 15-16, 2025. 2025 Houston Area Model Train Show. Knights of Columbus Hall, 2320 Hatfield Rd.

Info: houstontrak.org

WISCONSIN, LA CROSSE, July 19, 2025. Rail Fair, presented by the non-profit 4000 Foundation, Ltd. 1130 Copeland Park Dr.

Info: www.4000foundation.org ■

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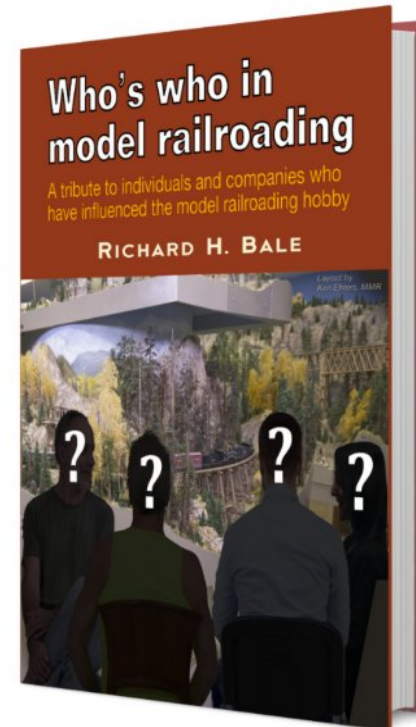
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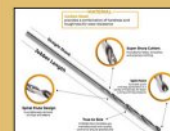
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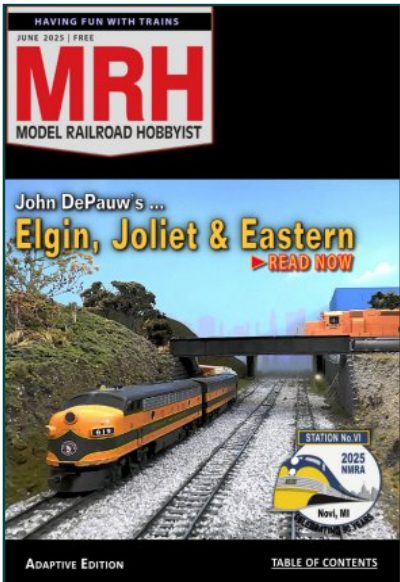
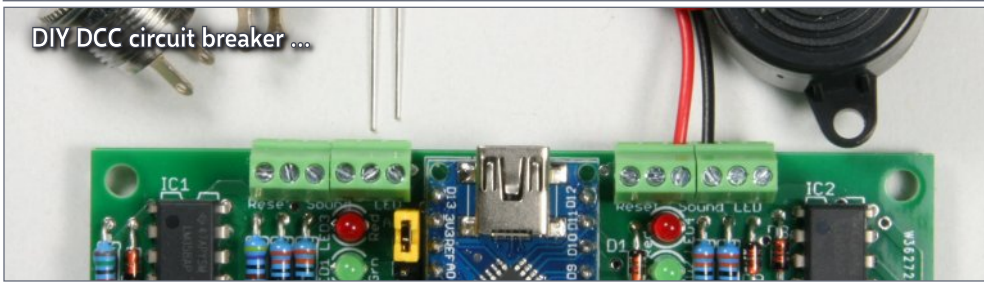
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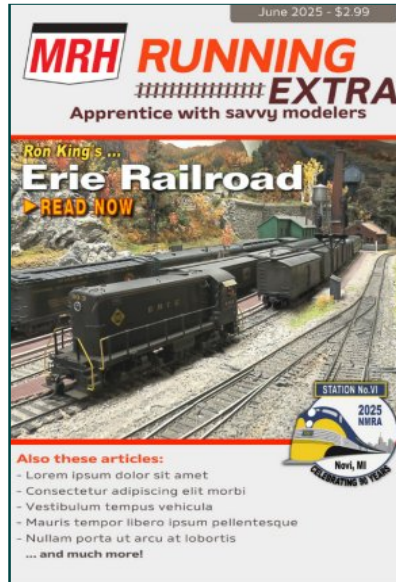
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