THE O SCALE RESOURCE

NEWS, REVIEWS, INFORMATION TO USE

We're putting the "modeling" back in Model Railroading! ®

Volume 12 No. 5
May/June 2025

Finishing a PRB Santa Fe Heavyweight Chair Car Part 2
A Car Blocking Strategy for the Mountain Electric
Building a Substation Car for the CG&W
A Fleet for Operations Part 3
March Meet Contest Models
Modeling Vehicles: Trucks
and so much more...

BILL OF LADING

THE O RESOURCE
NEWS, REVIEWS, INFORMATION TO USE
SCALE

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May/June 2025
Volume 12 No. 5

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Welcome to the online O Scale Resource magazine. The magazine is presented in an easy to use format. The blue bar above the magazine has commands for previewing all the pages, advancing the pages forward or back, searching to go to a specific page, enlarging pages, printing pages, enlarging the view to full screen, and downloading a copy to your computer.

Front Cover Photo

A spectacular pair of reworked models by Santiago Pineda.

ALLEGHENY SCALE MODELS

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Steam Locomotives

ATSF 1950 Class 2-8-0, SS, L/N, UP, Can Motor, Korea $650
ATSF 3160 Class 2-8-2 , WSM, L/N, UP, Canon Can Motor, LEDs, Samhongsa $895
ATSF 4-8-2, SS 3rd, New, Early version, FP, Can Motor, Road No. 3733, Korea $1095
B&O 0-8-0 Switcher, SS 3rd Rail, L/N, FP, Can Motor, Lights, Road No. 2375 ..... $650
B&O P7 4-6-2 Early, Custom/Ken Henry, L/N, Pro Paint, Green/Gold, "Pres. Tyler", No. 5308 ..... $2095
B&O P7E 4-6-2 Pacific Destreamlined, SS 3rd, Mint, FP Blue, Boxpox Drivers, No. 5314 ..... $1495
B&O Q4b 2-8-2, Custom/Ken Henry, EX+, CP, Vandy Tender, Road No. 4412 ..... $1675
B&O S1a 2-10-2, OMI, EX+, FP, Upgraded Details, Road Pilot, LEDs, Road No. 6217 ..... $1595
B&A Class K6a 4-6-2, Custom/SS, L/N, CP, Upgraded, KES Drive, Lights, Road No. 590 ..... $1795
B&M P4 4-6-2, Weaver, New, FP, 2-Rail, DC, Can Motor, Lights, Road No. 3713 ..... $1050
CB&Q 2-10-4, Proto48, Custom/Tom Mix, New, UP, No. 6322, One of a kind Model $9195
CB&Q O5a 4-8-4, Sofue, New, UP, Closed cab, Solid pilot, Ser. No. 153, Japan $7995
CB&Q S4a 4-6-4, PSC No. 17159-2, New, FP, Can Motor, LED HL, Road No. 4003, Korea $2895
Erie K5 4-6-2, USH, L/N, UP, Spoke Drivers, Pittman Can Motor, Tuned Drive, LED Lights $1595
GN S2 4-8-4, SS, L/N, Pro Paint, Glacier Park, KES Drive, Lights, Road No. 2575 ..... $1695
GN S2 4-8-4, MTH, Cat. No. 20-3499-2, 2 Rail, L/N, FP, Glacier Park, Proto 3.0, No. 2579 ..... $875
Hillcrest 3 Truck Climax, PFM, L/N, UP, Tuned Drive, Can Motor, Samhongsa, Korea $1395
MILW A5 Hiawatha 4-4-2, Weaver, New, FP, Upgraded, Can Motor, LEDs, Road No. 1 ..... $925
MILW F6a 4-6-4, Custom/Frank Miller, New, Pro Paint, Can Motor, No. 146, Exceptional $5595
NYC CCC&St.L 4-6-2, Custom, L/N, Pro Paint, Gray Boiler, Can Motor, No. 6467, Exquisite $3295
NYC CR&I USRA 0-6-0 Switcher, Custom/SS, New, Pro Paint/B. Beedy, No. 223, Unique $1495
NYC F12a 4-6-0, PSC, L/N, FP, Canted Cylinders, 5K Gal Tender, No. 820, D&D Models $1595
NYC J3a 4-6-4 Late Destreamlined, Kohs, New, FP, Mixed Drivers, No. 5451, SJ Models $6595
NYC J3a 4-6-4 Destreamlined, SS 3rd Rail, L/N, FP, Marcus Drive, Disks, PT-4, No. 5451 ..... $1495
NYC L4b Mohawk 4-8-2, USH, L/N, UP, Marcus Drive, Box Pox Drivers, KTM, Japan $1495
NYC S1b 4-8-4 Niagara, USH, L/N, CP, Late Run, Lights, Road No. 6018, KTM Japan $1125
NYC S1b 4-8-4 Niagara, PSC Crown, New, UP, Twin HL, Pittman R1 Motor, LEDs, KTM, Japan $3195
NKP L1b 4-6-4, Custom/WVR, L/N, CP, "Buy War Bonds" Scheme, Can Motor, No. 176 ..... $1195
NKP S2 2-8-4, Custom/USH, L/N, CP, Detailed, KES Drive, Can Motor, Lights, No. 763 ..... $1495
N&W K2A S/L 4-8-2, Custom/SS 3rd, New, FP, Correct PSC Drivers, Lights, No. 126 ..... $1295
NP A4 4-8-4, OMI Cat. No. 0141, L/N, FP, Gray Boiler, Lights, Road No. 2677, Ajin, Korea $1695
PRR B6sb 0-6-0, Custom/Gem, L/N, CP, KES Drive, Can Motor, Road No. 525 ..... $895
PRR E3 4-4-2, Custom/Ken Henry, EX, CP, PRR Low-Side Tender, Road No. 5227, Unique $1595
PRR E6 4-4-2, Custom/Ken Henry, EX, CP, PRR Low-Side Tender, Road No. 6085 ..... $1395
PRR E6s 4-4-2, MG, L/N, CP, Kleinschmidt Drive, Can Motor, Road No. 460 ..... $1295
PRR G5s 4-6-0, Custom/Ken Henry, EX, CP, Road No. 833 ..... $1225
PRR H8sc 2-8-0, Key, New/TR, UP, Standard Front End, Can Motor, Samhongsa, Korea $1595
PRR H9 2-8-0, Key/Custom, L/N, CP, Post-War Detail, I-1 Tender, Marcus Drive, No. 8014 ..... $1525
PRR K4 4-6-2, MG, Prewar, L/N, Pro Paint, 90p75 Tender, Road No. 5408, KTM Japan $795
PRR K4 4-6-2 Postwar, Kohs, New, FP, 130p75 Tender, Road No. 3863, SJ Models, Korea $5495
PRR K4 4-6-2 Prewar, Kohs, New, FP, 130p75 Tender, Road No. 5339, SJ Models, Korea $5395
PRR K4sa 4-6-2, Kohs, New, FP, 130p75 Tender, 1 of 10, Road No. 612, SJ Models, Korea $6495
PRR L1, USH, L/N, CP, Pre-war Version, Pittman Can Motor, Late Run, No. 4190, KTM Japan $1050
PRR M1a 4-8-2 Prewar, OMI, New, UP, 210p75 Tender, Can Motor, 1996 Run, Ajin, Korea $1895
PRR M1a 4-8-2, USH, L/N, CP, 210p75 Tender, Marcus Drive, Lights, Road No. 6782, KTM $1495
Reading Crusader 4-6-2, WVR, L/N, FP Stainless/Blue, DCC/Sound, Streamlined, No. 118 ..... $895
SRR PS-4 4-6-2, PSC #16467, EX+, CP Green Scheme, LEDs, Road No. 1401 ..... $1295
SP Lines C-10 2-8-0, PFM, New, FP, Prewar Lettering, Can Motor, Lights, No. 2852, Samhongsa $2195
SP F-3 2-10-2, SS 3rd, New, FP, Can Motor, Lights, Road No. 3661, Korea $1195
SP GS-4 4-8-4, PSC, New, FP, San Joaquin Partial Daylight, De-Skirted, Road No. 4439 ..... $3250
SP GS-4 4-8-4, SS 3rd, L/N, FP, Daylight, Postwar, Can Motor, Lights, Road No. 4450 ..... $1395
SP MT-4 4-8-2, SS 3rd, New, FP, Postwar, Can Motor, Lights, Road No. 4360, Korea $1250
SP T-31 4-6-0, PSC No. 15287, L/N, UP, 10K Gallon Vandy Tender, D&D Models $1195
SP 5000 Class 4-10-2, C&LS, Pilot Model, New, UP, G. Schrader Drive, No. 5021, Unique $5650
SP 5000 Class 4-10-2, C&LS, New, F/P, 2 Sand Domes, B/T Pilot, Disk Main Drv., No. 5024 ..... $5095
UP 5000 Class 4-12-2, SS 3rd, 1st Run, New, FP, Can Motor, Lights, Road No. 9000 ..... $895
UP FEF-2 4-8-4, Oil Version, Key, L/N, FP, TT Gray, Silver Stripes, Can Motor, Lts., No. 825 ..... $1695
USRA Light 2-8-2, SS, L/N, UP, Canon Can Motor, Cast Gearbox, Samhongsa $1095
Wabash Mogul 2-6-0, Kemtron, EX, CP, Road No. 573 ..... $595
WM 3 Truck Shay No. 6, WSM/M. Forsyth, L/N, CP Fireball Scheme, QSI DCC/Sound $2395
WM I2 2-10-0, OMI, L/N, FP, Lagged Smokebox, Can Motor, Lights, Road No. 1125, Ajin $1695
WM J1 4-8-4 Potomac, C&LS, New/TR, FP, Can Motor, Road No. 1412, Boo Rim, Korea $2295

Articulated and Duplex Steam Locomotives

B&O EM1 2-8-8-4, MG, L/N, CP, Early Version, Added Detail, Lights, Road No. 7600 ..... $2295
C&O H6 2-6-6-2, C&LS, L/N, FP, VC12 Tender, DCC/Sound, Kadees, Road No. 1492 ..... $3095
C&O H8 2-6-6-6, Key, L/N, FP, Late Version, DCC/Sound, Road No. 1645, Samhongsa $3595
C&O H8 2-6-6-6, Kohs, L/N, FP, Late, Version 2, Road No. 1657, SJ Models, Korea $7995
C&O H8 2-6-6-6 Allegheny, USH, EX, CP, Late Version, Can Motor, LEDs, No. 1658, KTM $1595
GN Z6 4-6-6-4, SS 3rd, L/N, FP, Pro Weathered, Lights, Road No. 4001, Korea $1595
NYC NU-1c 0-8-8-0, Scratch Built, EX, CP, Custom Drive, Lights, Road No. 7104 ..... $2750
N&W Y3a 2-8-8-2, OMI, L/N, Pro Paint, C&LS Dual Drive, LEDs, No. 2061, Ajin, Korea $2195
N&W Y6a 2-8-8-2, Kohs, Ver 2, New, FP, 1 of 17, Road No. 2164, SJ Models $7495
N&W Y6b 2-8-8-2, Kohs, Ver 4, New, FP, Ser No. 25 of 100, Road No. 2190, SJ Models $6595
N&W Auxiliary Water Tender, Kohs, Mint, FP, Lights, Road No. 160226, SJ Models $850
N&W Z1b 2-6-6-2, Custom/PSC, L/N, FP, Sofue Twin Motor Drive, Road No. 1363 ..... $2495
NP Z5 2-8-8-4, SS 3rd, New, FP, Black Boiler, Anniversary Series, Lights, Road No. 5003 ..... $1495
NP Z5 2-8-8-4, PSC, New, FP, Early Version, Upgraded Detail & Drive, Lts, No. 5001 ..... $3195
NP Z5 2-8-8-4, Early Version, PSC, L/N, FP, DCC, Upgraded Detail & Drive, Lts., No. 5001 ..... $2895
PRR Q2 4-4-6-4, SS 3rd, New, FP, Can Motor, Lights, Road No. 6131, Korea $1250
PRR Q2 4-4-6-4, WSM, L/N, CP, Pittman Can Motor, LEDs, Road No. 6131 ..... $1595
PRR T1 4-4-4-4, CB, New, UP, 2 of 10, Porthole Version, Can Motor, No. 5533 ..... $2395
PRR T1 4-4-4-4, Modified, CB, L/N, ProPaint, Detailed, DCC/Sound, Road No. 5544 ..... $2750
SP AC-5 2-8-8-2 Cab Forward, PSC, New, UP, Flat Face, Upgraded, D&D Models $3195
SP AC-9 2-8-8-4, PSC, Coal Ver, New, F/P, SP Lines, W/222-R-1 Tender, Road No. 3800 ..... $4095
SP AC-9 2-8-8-4, PSC, Oil Ver, New, F/P, Postwar Ltr, W/252-R-1 Tender, Road No. 3809 ..... $4095
UP 2-8-8-2, OMI, Cat. No. 0135, L/N, UP, Ex N&W Y3, Can Motor, Ajin Precision, Korea $2195
UP Big Boy 4-8-8-4 Early, USH, L/N, CP, C&LS Gearboxes, Twin Cans, LEDs, No. 4006, KTM $1995
UP Crown Challenger 4-6-6-4, PSC, L/N, Pro Paint, Coal Fired, DCC/Sound, No. 3916, KTM $3695
UP Challenger 4-6-6-4, Key, New, FP, TT Gray/Yellow, Oil Version, No. 3978, Samhongsa $2695
UP Challenger 4-6-6-4, USH, Mint, UP, Coal Ver, Assembled, Pittman Can Motor, KTM, Japan $2395
VGN AG 2-6-6-6, PSC No. 15809, EX+, UP, Can Motor, LEDs, D&D, Korea $2295
WM M2 4-6-6-4, C&LS, L/N, FP, DCC/Sound, Road No. 1203, Boo Rim, Korea $2895

Diesel, Gas Turbine, and Electric Locomotives

ALCO S-1 600 HP Diesel Switcher, CB, L/N, UP, Blunt Trucks, Open Frame Motor, KMT, Japan $725
ALCO S-4 Diesel Switcher, CB, L/N, UP, AAR Trucks, Can Motor, LEDs, KMT, Japan $795
ATSF EMD E8 A-B-A Set, Key, L/N+, FP Warbonnet, LEDs, All Powered, No. 80, Samhongsa $2995
ATSF EMD F-7 A-B Set, Phase II, Key, L/N+, FP Warbonnet, DCC/Sound, No. 311, Samhongsa $1950
ATSF RDC-1 Coach, DVP, New, FP Stainless, Interior, Can Motors, Road No. 191 ..... $1095
B&O EMD F-7 A&B Phase I, Key, L/N+, FP, Ser #78, DCC/Sound, Road 949, 949X $1925
B&O EMD SD9 Diesel, SS 3rd, Mint, FP, DC/DCC Sound, Can Motor, Lights $750
B&O FM H-10-44, OMI, L/N, CP, Blue Scheme, Cab Detail, Can Motor, Road No. 304, Ajin $795
B&O GE 44 Ton Diesel, RYM, L/N, CP, Phase IV Dual Drive, Cab Detail, Road No. 21, China $450
C&O EMD E8 A Unit, Weaver/CLW Drive, EX, CP Tri-Color, Twin Can Motors, LEDs, No. 4020 ..... $595
CB&Q 44 Ton Diesel Switcher, Phase IIa, W&R, L/N, CP, Weathered, No. 9107, Samhongsa $595
DM&IR EMD SD9, SS 3rd, New, FP, 1st Run, DC, Can Motor, Lights, Nos. 102-110, Each $795
GE 44 Ton Diesels, RYM, Phase I&IV, New, FP Black, Unlettered, Cab Int., Can Motor, Each $425
NH ALCO PA A Unit, SS 3rd, Mint, FP, Early Green Scheme, DC/DCC Sound, Can Motor, Lts $725
NH EP5 Electric, K-Line/Foehrkolb, L/N, FP McGinnis Scheme, 2-rail, Road No. 377 ..... $550
NYC EMD E7 A-B Units, OMI, EX, CP, Black Lightning Stripe, H. Cox Drives, Nos. 2875-4002 ..... $1195
NYC E8a, OMI, L/N, CP, Gray Lightning Stripe, Silver Trucks, Cockerham Drive, No. 4095 ..... $895
NP EMC FT A-B Units, OMI, L/N, CP, Black, Can Motors, Fly Wheels, Nos. 6002C-6002D, Ajin $1395
PRR BLW Centipedes Type 2 A-A, OMI, L/N, CP Brunswick 5 Stripe, DCC/Sound, No. 5823 ..... $2295
PRR Centipede A-A Set, MTH No. 20-2200-2, L/N, FP, Brunswick SS, 2 Rail, Road No. 5823 ..... $695
PRR RSD 7/15 Diesel, Atlas Trainman, Mint, FP, Road No. 8608, #20020004 ..... $295
SP EMD SW1 600 HP Phase II, Proto48, ORI, New, CP Black, Can Motor, No. 1004, Samhongsa $895
WM RS-3, CB, EX+, CP Black Fireball Scheme, AAR Trucks, Both powered, Road No. 180 ..... $450
UP Veranda Turbine, OMI, EX, CP, LED HL, Special Tender, Road No. 61 ..... $1950
GN Y-1/PRR FF2 Box Cab Electric, CB, L/N, UP, Stock Drive, Twin Can Motors, Kadees, Japan $795
PRR Class B1 "Rats", Twin Units, Custom Brass, L/N, CP, KES Drives, Road Nos. 5686/5692 ..... $995
PRR DD1 2 Unit Box Cab Electric, MG, EX+, CP DGLE, Dual Drive, NOB, Toby, Japan $895
PRR GG1, Kohs, New, FP, Brunswick Five Stripe/Clarendon, Drop Couplers, No. 6873 ..... $5395
PRR GG-1, Kohs, New, FP, Tuscan Red/Clarendon, Drop Couplers, Road No. 4910 ..... $5395
PRR P5a Box Cab Electric, OMI No. 0209, New, UP, Can Motor, Ajin, Korea $850
PRR P5a Box Cab Electric, Custom/MG, L/N, FP, KES Drive, Can Motor, Nos. 4715-4754, Each $1295

From the Publisher's Desk

Well, hello and welcome back to the Publisher's Desk, a/k/a rant, diatribe, harangue, tirade, and jeremiad page. I think I covered everything.

Spring is in the air and I hate it. A week before the March Meet we had 60 to 70 MPH winds come through here from the South. Dust and "stuff" from Texas blew through, and while there was no physical damage, our cars were covered in red-brown dust, and my allergies went nuts. I made it through our open house days and to the show Friday night, and then crashed right after dinner.

As far as our open house, we had a few less people than last year, but many new people who have never been here. It's always good to meet new people. Surprisingly, a few 3 Rail scale guys came through and were going to the show. Nothing wrong with that! And, since I work better under pressure, I was able to finish more of the new area I ripped out.

I need to apologize if anyone at the show thought I was being "curt", but after photographing the contest models, I was kind of floating. Thank you Benadryl. After dinner on Saturday, I went right to bed while Amy went down the after hours party. I did not get as many pictures of the general show this year, much less get around to see everyone. It was not until mid April that I really started to feel like my old self. Amy forgot to pack my cigars, and since I was not feeling well, I didn't even miss them. Lucky for her!

The contest this year was exceptional with many more models being entered. See the wrap up in this issue. Overall, the show was great. It felt like there were a few less people, probably because of some uncertainty, but the dealers I did talk with were happy with sales. Next year's show is set, and you may now registrar on-line at here.

Oh ya, for those keeping track, a sealed envelope was left on our table while I was photographing the contest models. Yep, the mysterious $2.00 bill. I have my suspicions… we'll see if another shows up at Strasburg in October.

As for my layout, there was one last area that was bugging me – the street front with buildings. So, as if I need another project, I started demolition after the show. With the old street removed, I'll use cork to build up a one inch, four scale feet, incline on the road from left to right. I think the elevation, while not a lot, will give some more visual interest to that area along with the buildings and lighting. Lastly, I will add in the background buildings, flats, and then proceed to find something else to screw up.

Anyway, enjoy this issue and we'll see you next time!

Happy Reading & Happy Modeling,

Amy & Dan Dawdy

Buy US A COFFee

Know the old joke "How do you make a million dollars in the model railroad business? Start with two million."? Well, same here. We are not going anywhere and will still continue to bring you the best in O scale information every other month but...

As with any ad supported endeavor, there are ups and downs. We have not raised our ad rates (and will not) since we started 11 years ago. We feel the rates are more than favorable for the thousands readers our magazine reaches. Of course, not everyone wants to advertise instead using Facebook and other social media. In a normal paper magazine you have the subscription fee that more than covers mailing and normal operations. Not having that is fine here, but our costs have also climbed.

Traveling to layouts, web services, storage, and hosting fees have all gone up. So we thought we would try "buy us a coffee" in hopes of helping with these extra expenses.

Therefore, if you are getting a good read and enjoying the information, please "buy us a coffee" and help us continue to bring you the best in O scale information. Hey, even a buck an issue every few issues will help.

So, if you like what you see and can go with out a Starbucks for a day, click here and give it try.

Thanks for your support!

SOUNDTRAXX Turns 35!

Join us all year long in celebrating our 35th anniversary with exciting monthly promotions, fun contests, and limited-edition products.
Stay up-to-date: soundtraxx.com/35

Indianapolis O Scale Show 2025

2 Rail O Scale Swap Meet

O Scale 2 Rail/P48, Narrow Gauge/On30, O Scale Traction and 3 Rail Scale

Friday September 19, 3:00 to 7:00 PM — **Saturday September 20, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM**
Dealer setup September 20, 12:00PM — **Limited trading tables still available.**
Cost of admission is $20.00 per person, spouse and children under 16 free.
La Quinta Inn & Suites Indianapolis South, 5120 Victory Dr, Indianapolis, IN 46203
For More Information: Call: 317 435-8378
Website: indyoscaleshow.com **Facebook: https://fb.com/indyoscaleshow**

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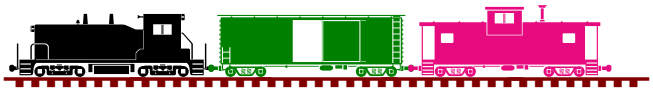


Flex Ties P48 On3 OW5
Order Now!

May-June 2025 Gift For You!
Order On-Line & Get a 5% Discount on All Buildings & Tools!

Click the BLUE to view!

NEWS YOU CAN USE

From Frenchman River Model Works: New Thomas Yorke designed kits.

O/On30 1:48 Scale Yard Office Trailer. Highly detailed resin parts build into a realistic model that add an important component to many on-site industrial applications.

O/On30 1:48 Scale Travel Trailer. Highly detailed resin parts build into a realistic model that adds a nostalgic detail to many scenes.

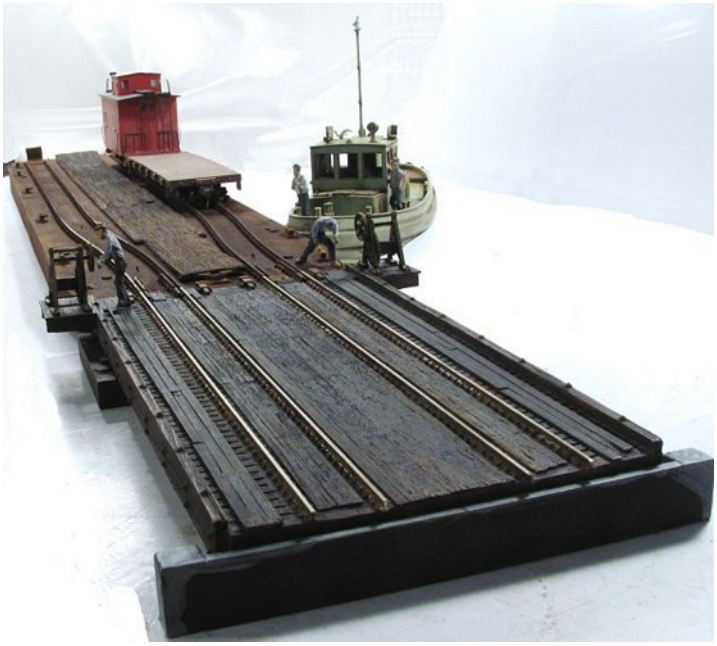
O/On30 1:48 Scale Grain Truck Body.

O/On30 1:48 Scale APEX Bulk Unloader and Storage Yard Set. This set is ideal for multiple industries loading bulk material such as feed, seed, concrete, sand etc.

We also have made available again the following products. They have been redesigned and updated. They have been out of production for a few years.

On30 1:48 Scale 2 Track Carfloat. It would look at home on any era On30 train layout where your On30 railcars need to be transported across a waterway or ferried out to ships to offload directly into boxcars to complete the journey to their destination.

On30 1:48 Scale Pontoon Float Bridge. This Pontoon Float Bridge would look at home on any era On30 train layout where your On30 railcars need to be transported across a waterway.



See these and all the items at Frenchman River Model Works.

New from Rusty Rail.

Here is the figure 'Slim' figure tells it all. A 3D printed figure comes unpainted.

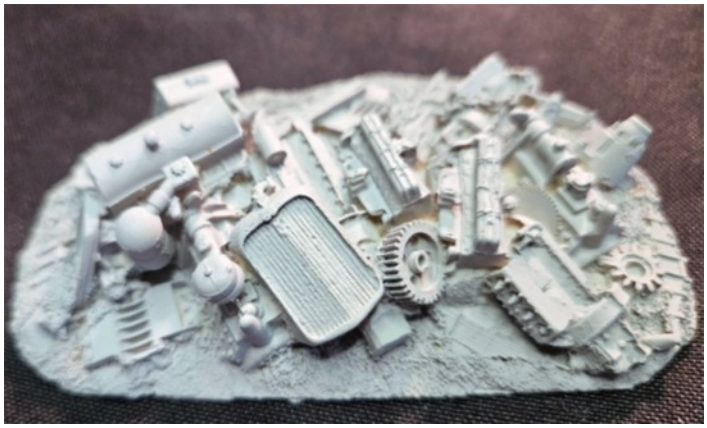
Below is painter Paul.

This guy has a brush in his hand and can go anywhere. A 3D printed figure comes unpainted.

Here is Fireman Fred. Good figure for around any engine house.

Below is a 3D printed figure called 'Miner Mike'. You can put him in any mine scene.

Here is a new junk pile that will fit out in a field or behind a shop. A bunch of old motors, drive train parts and radiators. The casting measures 4" long by 2 1/4" wide and 7/8" tall. All resin casting and comes unpainted.



See their Website for all their O scale offerings.

Lake States Railway Historical Association.

To honor the memory of Ray W. Buhrmaster, who recently passed away at the age of 92, we are presenting a selection of H.C. DuBal copy positives and negatives from the DuBal Collection, donated by Ray late last year. Ray Buhrmaster was one of the

LAKE STATES
RAILWAY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

original founders of Lake States in 2006 and a longtime supporter.

Ray related that DuBal was an excellent copywork artist. He would lay an unexposed film underneath an original negative on a print easel, and then expose it with a darkroom enlarger. This produced a high quality positive copy.

Most of the 116-size copies in the DuBal Collection were made from original negatives DuBal borrowed from C.T. Felstead. We have checked these against the Felstead originals previously donated by Mike Raia from his father Bill Raia's collection and have only scanned unique views not already in Bill's collection.

DuBal also did copywork of larger negatives such as 3x4 and postcard, up to 5x7's from other unidentified photographers. Most of these have been scanned for their historical value. Unfortunately, there is little or no metadata to identify locations or dates.

You can view the DuBal copywork (152 images) at this link: https://www.lakestatesarchive.org/HC-DuBal-5x7-Collection/Copy-Positives-and-Negatives More George Strombeck 35mm slides have been completed as follows. L&N and Georgia Railroad (134 images): https://www.lakestatesarchive.org/George-Strombeck-Collection/LN-Georgia

Penn Central and Conrail (249 images): https://www.lakestatesarchive.org/George-Strombeck-Collection/Penn-Central-Conrail

CSL/CTA scans have been added to the existing gallery in the Bill Robertson Collection, donated by Ralph Nelson. You can view the entire gallery at this link (220 images added): https://www.lakestatesarchive.org/Bill-Robertson-Collection/Traction-CTA.

Missouri-Kansas-Texas diesel and steam scans (246 images), including a few action scenes, have been added to the existing MKT gallery in the Bill Kuba Collection at this link: https://www.lakestatesarchive.org/William-S-Kuba-Collection/MKT.

We're are working toward finishing scanning of the Terry Norton B&W Collection and have completed the following new galleries: SP/UP (35 images): https://www.lakestatesarchive.org/Terry-Norton-Collection/UP-SP

John Zerbel shortlines (26 images): https://www.lakestatesarchive.org/Terry-Norton-Collection/Zerbel-Shortlines

TP&W (30 images): https://www.lakestatesarchive.org/Terry-Norton-Collection/TPW

WICT/WSOR (20 images): https://www.lakestatesarchive.org/Terry-Norton-Collection/WICT-WSOR

Wabash Valley shortline has been added to existing N-Z gallery which can be viewed at this link (18 images): https://www.lakestatesarchive.org/Terry-Norton-Collection/N-Z

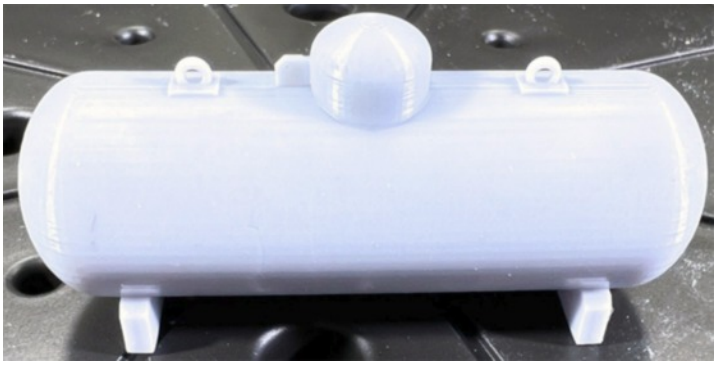
See their Website for more information.

Model Railroad Resource 3D Division has some new products.

Our new street light packages were a sell out hit at the March Meet.

Five Street lights/pk. Common North American-style street lights used in many communities. They fit popular modeling eras 1890s to present as they are now they are back in historic districts, but made from metal. The standard globe was found all over the country.

We offer two types of globes, as well as choice of LED color. Cold white for modern lighting and Warm white for pre-sodium-vapor lamp / LED lighting, 1970's and earlier. Package include 5 poles, 5 LEDs with color selection, 5 globes, standard or fancy, and five 9V to 14V resistors for $10.00 and ready to ship. Click here to see this item.



To go along with our 250 gallon propane tank we now also have a 500 gallon version. Click here to see this item.

Also new are Whistle Post Pennsylvania Style signs with and without post and Nathan M5R24 air horns. See their ad on page 33 of this issue.

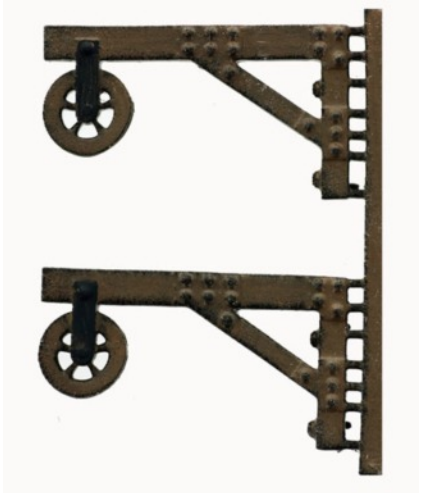
Check their Website for all their O scale products!

Announcements from Sunset/3rd Rail. The Encore run is here! Featuring the Union Pacific Heritage (Executive) #949, #951, & #963B!

The time is here! We are officially announcing O scale Union Pacific heritage fleet passenger cars and auxiliary tenders.

These cars will all be done in their prototypical dimensions and won't be ones to miss out on! See their Website for more information.

New from Model Tech Studios LLC.



2 Pack of Building Wall Hoists in O Scale. They come finished and ready to mount on your Structure walls. Very nicely detailed down to the bolts!

Classic Street Air Raid Sirens. An important Steam Era detail. Another detail often overlooked when detailing City and Town Streets. They come pre painted for your and include the pole as well. O Scale Detail Siren 2 Pack.

Bulk Pack of 12 detailed Hydrants. These are detailed metal castings, assembled and ready to add your color scheme to.

See their Website for more O scale parts and products.

ATLAS ANNOUNCES 'PRICE LOCK' THROUGH MAY AMID TARIFF UNCERTAINTY
Company holds firm on in-stock and new arrival pricing as industry reacts to recent tariff hikes.

Hillside, NJ – In response to the latest round of U.S. tariffs on imported goods from China, Atlas Model Railroad Co., Inc. has announced a Price Lock through May 31, 2025 on all in- stock inventory and newly arrived container product. Atlas is holding the line to provide price stability and ordering confidence for dealers, distributors, and consumers alike.

“All of our in-stock inventory—plus our most recent container arrivals subject to the new 20% tariff—will remain at current pricing through the end of May,” said Jarrett Haedrich, Executive Chairman of Atlas. “We know our partners are navigating a rapidly changing market. This decision is about providing them time, clarity, and trust.”

This move positions Atlas as a stabilizing force during an uncertain period, offering its network of dealers, distributors and hobbyists a level of assurance during trade disruptions. “Atlas is standing behind the hobby community,” Haedrich added. “Now more than ever, consistency matters.”

Atlas clarified that this action is not intended to establish a long-term precedent on tariff-related pricing adjustments. Rather, it is a strategic, time-bound pause designed to support it's customers through an unpredictable transition period.

The Price Lock applies to all in-stock N, HO, O and Z scale products, including track and accessories, locomotives, rolling stock, and all newly received container shipments affected by the April tariff increases. Prices will remain unchanged through May 31, 2025, after which Atlas will reassess based on updated costs and market conditions.

Dealers, distributors, and consumers can view the full range of available products at www.atlasrr.com

New from All-Nation Line.

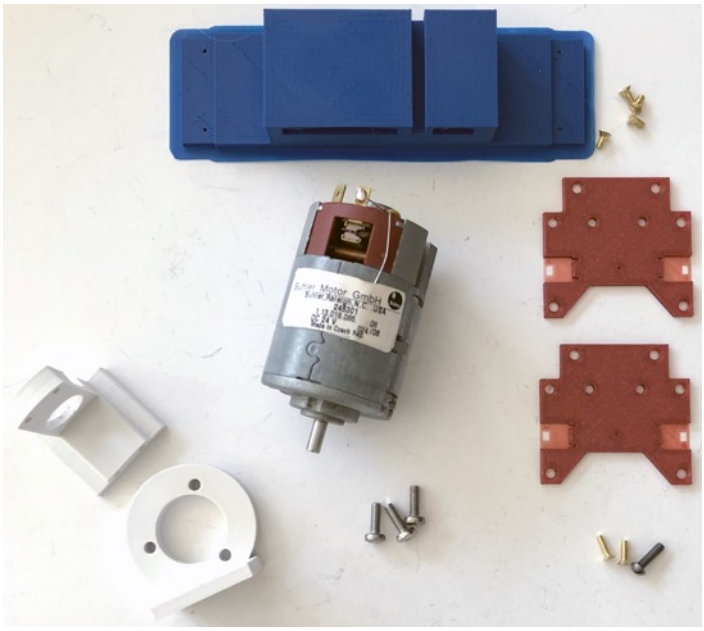
Raw Power - Heavy Duty Motor (24VdC Buehler Motor) Upgrade Kit F7/F3 A or B Units

Putting the 1500 horse power in your old All Nation F3 or F7 is easier than you think. The original motors used to power the Atwater O Scale engines, marketed by General Models Corporation, and later in 1950 acquired by All Nation, were developed by Basler Electric in the 1940s in Highland, Illinois. These were permanent magnet open frame motors of which 110 pages of detailed blue prints and test metrics remain in our All Nation Line document archive and digitized. There were two types, the 1” frame used in the F3 and F7 and a 5/8” magnet often seen in the switchers utilizing up to 18 vdc typically drawing close to 2 amps. But these of which we speak were not wound for AC current. However, we do have Basler blue prints for the AC motors one might still run across in older model engines. The original tooling remains in our tool room inventory to this day. A short history of Basler Electric can be found at the following link:

https://www.basler.com/Company-History/

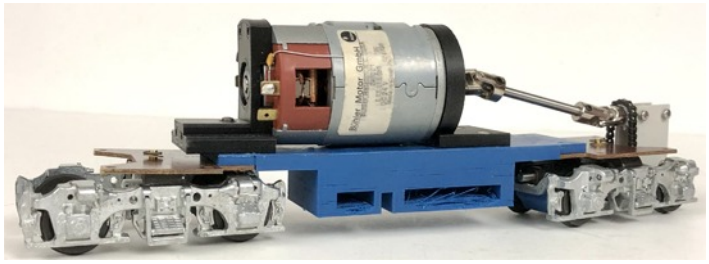
We have a limited quantity of the highly refined 24 vdc Buehler motors, the largest motor that can fit inside the F3 or F7 engine bodies with only a minor modification. There is a trick though regarding the installation of such a large motor that weighs slightly over 15 ounces. The motor, with our custom face plates, mounts to our custom floor that accommodates the All Nation power transmission trucks as a drop-in ready kit. However ready, the back end of the body with the rear door must be removed to easily slide the mechanism into position from the rear of the engine body and that is the trick. Once the mechanism is mounted to the body, the rear end panel is simply installed and the motor floor mounted to the body, the model is ready to run.

Offered as a means to upgrade or a replace older motors, this All Nation product is available as a kit with the following parts included, the Buehler motor, motor mount face plates, one piece floor with fuel tank and appropriate mounting screws.



With this motor, your prime mover will not break a sweat over the road hauling your freight across the country. Please visit our website to view more photos and video.

Click here view on-line: All Nation Line Heavy Duty Motor (24VdC Buehler Motor) Upgrade Kit F7/F3 A or B Units PN#611AN



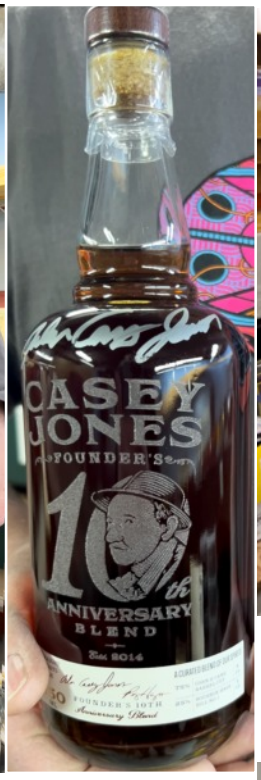
Individual Ties With Spike Holes

As a follow-up to the newly introduced 3D printed Flex Ties in the various types of scale track (P48, On3, OW5), we are now offering just the individual ties with spike holes. The first available individual tie is for On3 Code 100 rail; however, we will soon develop all the sizes for the unique needs of all O Scale modelers.

At just pennies a tie, they come in a bag of 100 which should provide you over 3 feet of track. These ties can be printed in almost any color that suits your layout. Check out these individual ties at the following link: On3 Code 100 Individual Ties With Spike Holes (100/bag) 3D Printed PN#615AN

March Meet

As I said in From the Publisher's Desk, I was not a happy camper because of allergies. So, I did not get out and about like I normally do. Below are a few pictures that I did get. For much more, please see Chicago Show 2025 – Wrap-up and scroll down to see a lot of great pictures of the show.



Always nice to see the East coast guys here. Attalee Taylor seated and Ken Kime standing in black.

Top: It's always nice when friends come to our open house bearing gifts! Thank you Bill Baur.

Left: Two of the nicest people you could ever meet. Merlyn and Carol from Caboose Stop Hobbies.

Below: Pile of goodies.

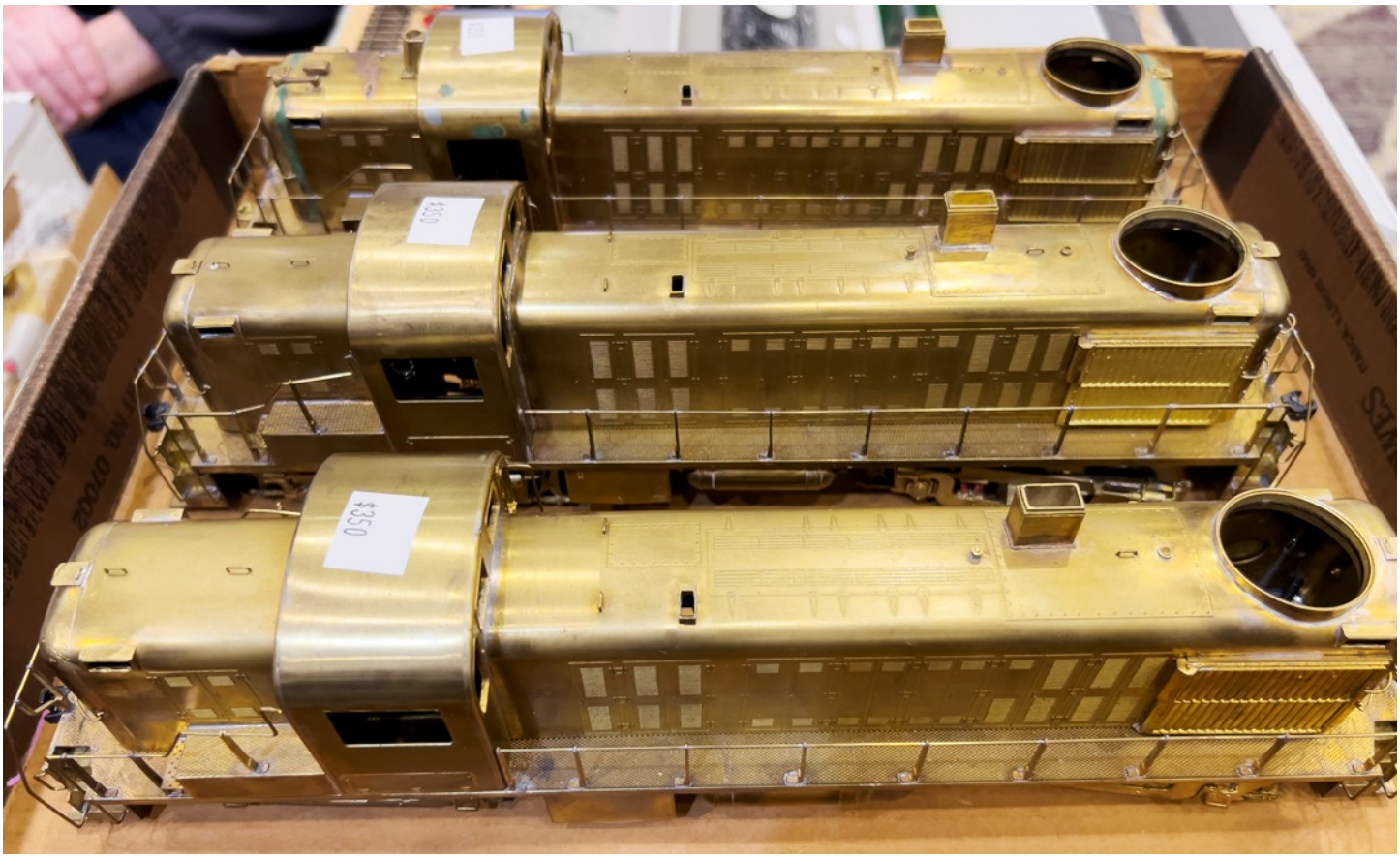
More assorted goodies.

Above: Frank Ceeko screwing around.

Ken Burney giving advice to George Bogatiuk on O scale two rail… Well, maybe it's the other way around. Great to see SoundTraxx at the show demonstrating their Blunami Digital Sound Decoders.

And of course our friends at All Nation Line were there.


Tutwiler Fine Art
www.tutwilerfineart.com
SUN
3RD RAIL DIVISION
Overland Models, Inc.
ALCO FB-1


$350
$350

All in all a great show. Don't forget to sign up for next year's March Meet at:

https://marchmeet.net/WP/

MARCH O SCALE MEET
CONTEST & DISPLAY

BEST IN SHOW BY POUPLAR VOTE

Ralph Nelson - The "Namekagon": First Place Gas Powered

The "Namekagon" was a Chicago & Northwestern (CNW) passenger train that ran between Minneapolis and Ashland, Wisconsin, with a stop in Hudson, starting in 1938, and named after the Namekagon River.

Ralph Nelson - Gas Powered Burlington: Second Place Gas Powered

Attalee Taylor - ACL Ventilated Boxcar: First Place Boxcar

Rusty Dramm - Great Northern Log Bunk Flat Car: Tie in Second Place Boxcar

Ken Kime - Illinois Central Mini Hy-Cube: Tie in Second Place Boxcar

Marc Knoll - PRR XA Boxcar: Third Place Boxcar

Bruce Aikman - C&O Greenbriar No. 611 : First Place Steam

Thomas Smith - CB&Q F-2: Second Place Steam

David Schultz - DP&W RE-11 No. 3607: First Place Diesel

Shaydin Anthony - FRV SD24 No. 2401: Second Place Diesel

Tom Dooling - Frisco Pullman "Robert F. Hoke": First Place Passenger Car

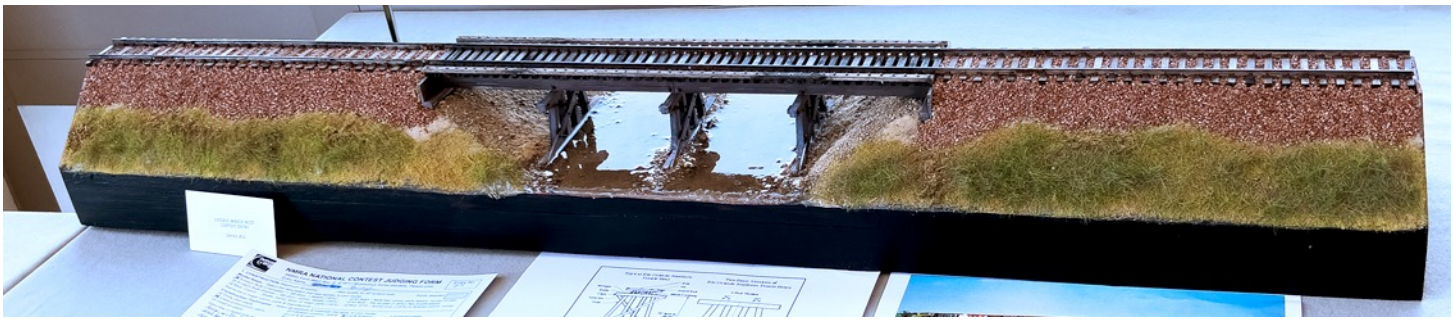
Ed Wichman - CNW TwinCities "400" Parlor Observation No. 7201: Second Place Passenger Car

Patrick Cudzilo - 1908 South Shore Coach: First Place Traction

Thomas Smith - Great Northern Caboose X228: Only Entry

Marc Knoll - Greenline Street Car (Series 500): Not Judged this year, no power.

James Schultz - Milwaukee Road Little Joe: Not Judged this year, no power.



Sean Kelly - Bridge, Timber Trestle: First Place Structure

Darren Meyers - Jackson Freight: Second Place Structure

We would like to thank all of you who brought contest and display models to the show. We are on again for next year so start or finish your projects. Display models are a great way to share your projects and get ideas for new projects.

David Field - Line Side Warehouse: Third Place Structure

Marc Knoll - C&O Bellview Station: First Place Display/Diorama

Gregory Cygnar - American Equipment Company: Second Place Display/Diorama

Attalee Taylor - Blackwood Pickle Works: Third Place Display/Diorama

One of the last pieces on the late Gary Ingles' layout to be removed was on display. Below was I remember this on his layout back in 2013.

RD&S No. 401 being delivered at the March Meet built by David Schultz.

New products from Model Railroad Resource 3D Division

https://modelrailroadresource.com/wp

Click on products below to view in our store

Street Light Kits

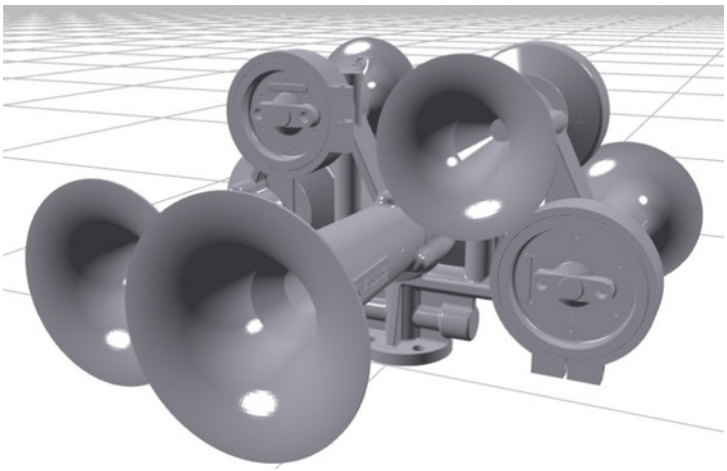
Common North American-style street lights used in many communities. Fits popular modeling eras 1890s to present as they are now they are back in historic districts, but made from metal. The standard globe was found all over the country. The fancy globe was measured from an actual top in Elmhurst, IL.

Choice of globes, standard or fancy and choice of LED color. Cold white for modern lighting and Warm white for pre-sodium-vapor lamp / LED lighting, 1970's and earlier.

Package includes:
Five poles
Five globes (Standard or Fancy)
Five LEDs (Warm or Cold White)
Five 9V to 14V resistors

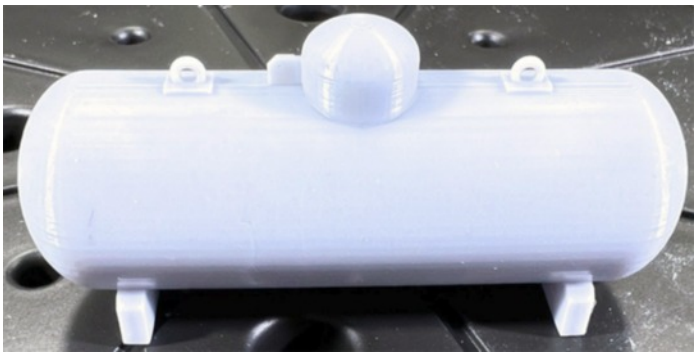
$10.00
for a set of five!

Air Horn Nathan M5R24



The M5R24 is the same grouping of five Airchimes as in Model M5, except that bells 2 and 4 have been reversed on the base for greater warning coverage to the rear. The tone combinations used achieve a pleasing and highly effective signal of great penetration in both directions. All dimensions taken from company artwork. Two horns per bag. $5.00

Propane Tank 500 Gallon



Not only for modern day homes and business, this will also go nicely with track heaters that are used outside of yards and on the main. Scaled from manufacturer's drawings $7.00. 250 gallon tank also available $6.00.

Whistle Post Pennsylvania Style

Whistle sign with and without post. Based on Pennsylvania railroad signs but used on many other eastern roads. Your choice of sign only or sign attached to pole. The sign only will accept a 3/64" wire. 12 to a package for $5.00.

(Note images are highly magnified)

A Fleet for Operations 3:
Lowering Domestic Weaver

By Brian Scace

Let's start, mostly for you younger folk joining us from the smaller scales, with a look at Weaver's offerings over the years. If there is an equivalent to Athearn "Blue-box" in O, it is the range tooled and produced in Northumberland by Bob Weaver, starting in the early 1980s with his Pullman Standard two-bay hopper. Incrementally expanded to include a 50' IPD box, a PS1 box, a couple modern-ish tanks, center-flows, a PS covered hopper, a decent flat, a mechanical reefer, several significant hoppers, an NE caboose, all before heading to China with their war-emergency gondola (I've probably missed a couple). These cars are plentiful, cheap, and good fodder for the detailer and the basher. I'll leave the detailing potential up to others, but the basic "fleet" requirements remain the same (as mentioned in earlier installments) regarding our standard couplers and trucks.

Bob was among the first to adapt his range to both scale and hi-rail markets in order to more quickly recover his tooling investment, so these cars vary in the need to adjust height-off-trucks from not at all with his early hoppers to the egregiously high with the afore-mentioned war-emergency gondola. There have been several articles written on lowering the gon, and we will look at it again in a future installment rather than send you off to find out-of-print magazines.

But First! Disassembling and Modifying Kadee's Truck:

NMRA Recommended Practice RP23 "Bolsters" [https://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/standards/sandrp/General/RP/rp-23_2011.12.06.pdf] calls for a chafing block called a "bolster side bearing" with a dimension ("Bs") of 5/8" off the railhead to the top bearing surface of the block. That feature is, oddly enough, is only required for O Scale if I'm reading this rather curious document correctly, a document made all the more curious as O commercial rolling stock almost universally doesn't even remotely follow the corresponding RPs and Standards that would make such a feature useable. To be honest, that is a big reason why we are here.

To Kadee's credit, they include the required pair of chafing blocks atop the bolster (**Photo 1**) as part of the company's emphasis on making product that meets the standards and RPs of the NMRA as the applicable standards organization for the model railroad industry in the US. For the same reasons we shouldn't be here setting car-heights on RTR stock, we shouldn't have to modify these NMRA-compliant blocks. Unfortunately, in many cases we do; in fact some cars require we do so when others from the same range and brand don't! I must admit being a bit incredulous, but that is our lot because we tolerate it, thereby removing from the box exactly what we deserve and support with our wallets. One day I would hope we can do better.

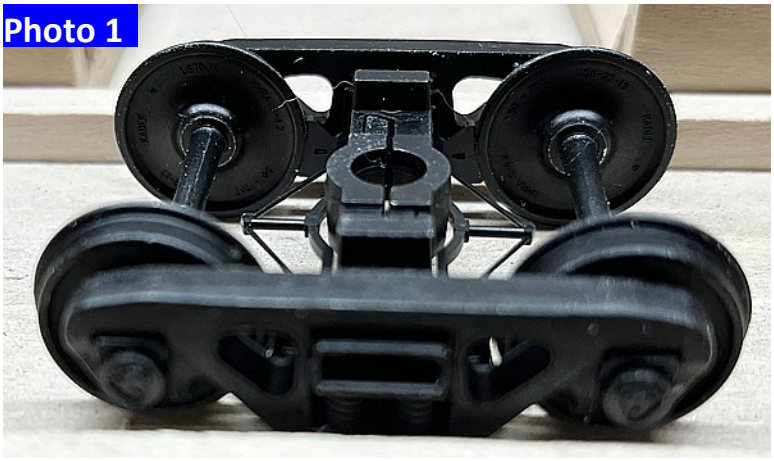


Photo 1

Ah, well, let's quickly look at the disassembly of Kadee's truck, a requirement if one needs to reduce the height of the chafing blocks in order to fit these trucks to a number of different freightcars we want to lower, both now and in installments to come. The key is the rather delicate looking "spider" that comprises the brake shoes and rigging. Flip the truck over on its back, gently squeeze the shoes together (**Photo 2**) first one side

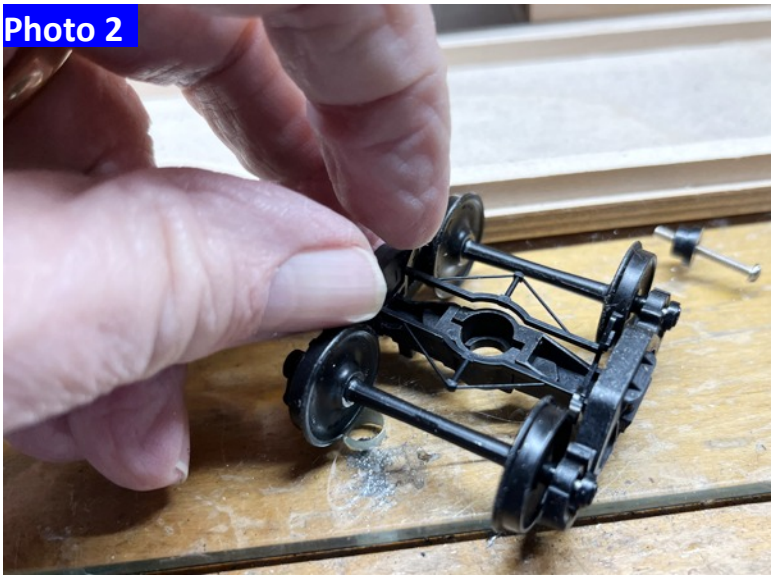


Photo 2


Photo 3

then the other, and tease the assembly off from around the bolster. Treat it with some respect; it's pretty robust, really, but ham-handedness will not be rewarded by any gain regarding ease of removal and can possibly break the dingus. It will not glue back together.

For the Bettendorf and Ride-control truck (and I assume for the archbar, with which I have no hands-on experience) you can then slide the two halves apart off the axles. For the two roller-bearing trucks, you have the bearing "caps" to remove. Gently pry each off the axle ends; gently so they don't go flying off into another dimension (**Photo 3**). Set them in something so you don't lose them, then slide the two halves apart off the axles. The disassembled truck is shown in **Photo 4**.

Now, you can address the chafing blocks safely without damaging, say, the wheels. At this point, I will say disassembly before such devilish play is a requirement. Attempts at modifying those blocks whilst assembled will inevitably come to tears as wheels get gouged and the like. The material these are made of is a hard white metal, very hard.

That said, I use a Dremel with a cut-off wheel. The usual precautions apply such as eye protection and patience. Once any warranty (expressed or implied) is invalidated by your actions, re-assemble as you disassembled. The wheels are double-insulated so orientation isn't an issue. The same craftsman's respect should be afforded the various parts on re-assembly as during disassembly.

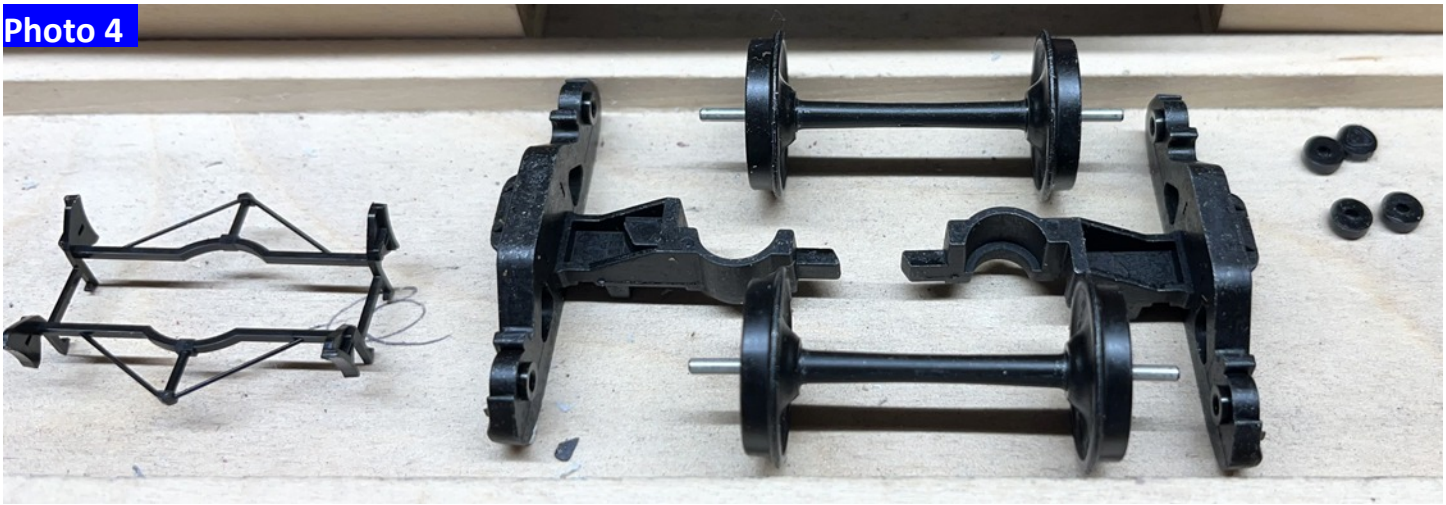


Photo 4

On the roller-bearing trucks, the caps are press-fit and calibrated fingers will do the job nicely. Make sure each is fully seated; you'll feel it with a little experience. The brake-gear "spider" clips over the bolster into the notches atop.

Photo 5

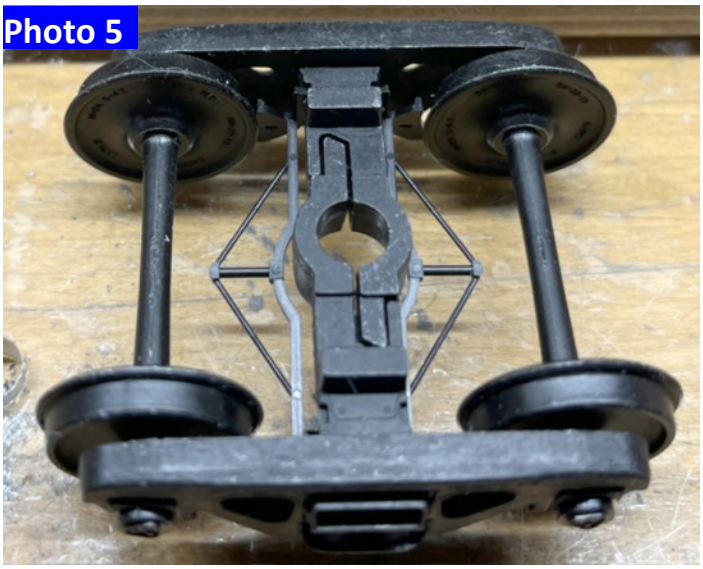
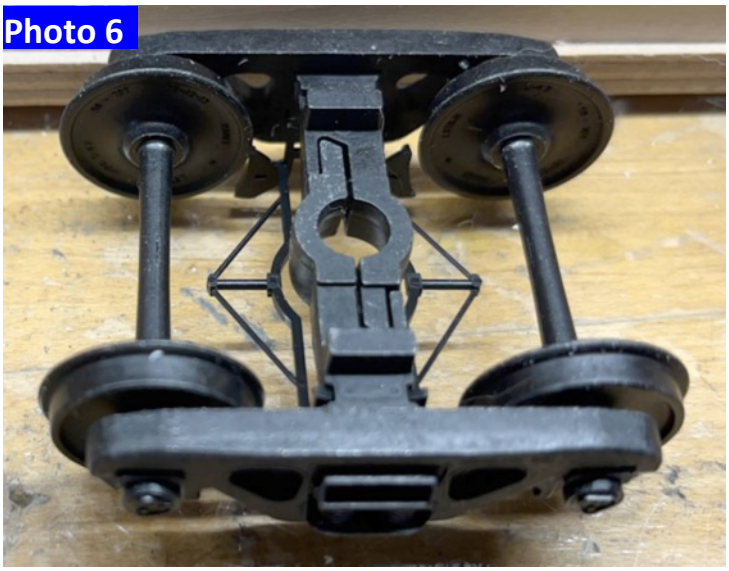


Photo 6



Gently squeeze the shoes together again to slip the clips over the bolster from underneath and check to ensure the lugs have fully engaged the notches by flipping the truck over and actually looking. In **Photo 5**, you can see the notches in the bolster between the chafing block and the sideframe closest to you; **Photo 6** shows the lugs properly seated. A craftsman will have taken a nice brush to each part during reassembly and dusted off all the debris, of course. **Photo 7** shows the modified truck on the left, the stock truck on the right.

Photo 7

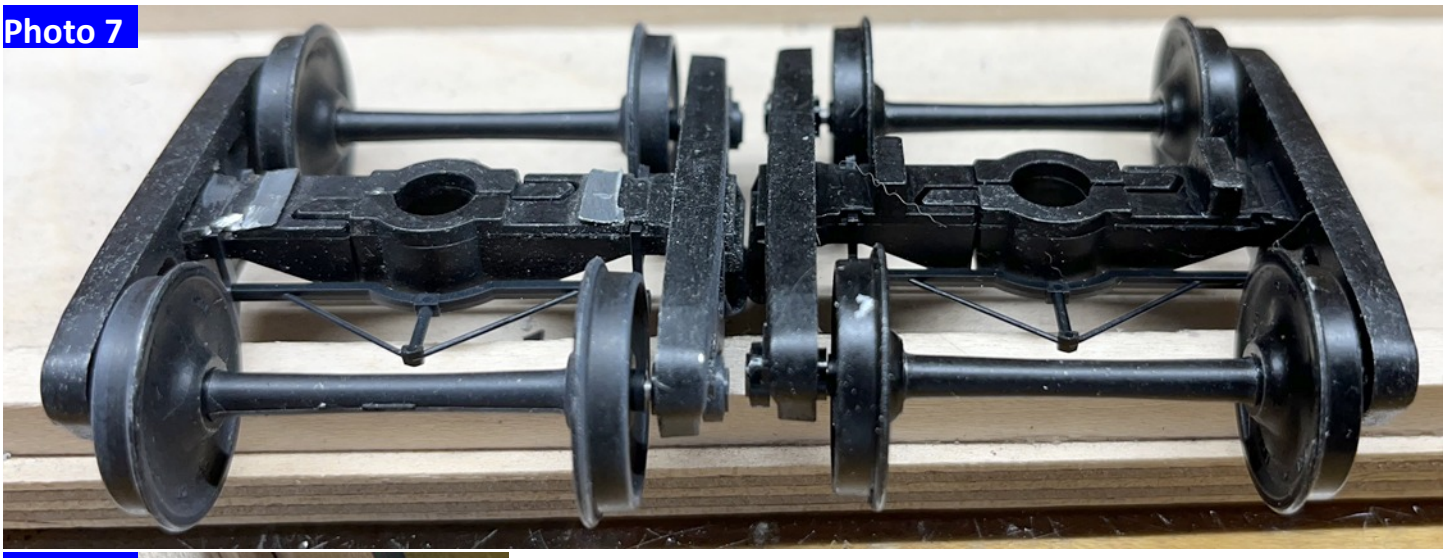


Photo 8

Back on Track

Now, let's actually look at Weaver. Time to be reminded of our metric; when the coupler box is against the bottom of the car-end, the truck height is what we set so that the coupler hits the gage properly. That said, a number of Weaver's cars only need the body bolster pad filed smooth (in the case of using Kadee or Intermountain trucks, anyway) and the coupler hits as it should. I've found the twin and three-pocket hoppers, tanks, mechanical reefers, and Center-flo fall into spec easily with a little judicious cleaning up of various body and truck bolsters (such as smoothing the little lug on Intermountain Bettendorfs as shown in **Photo 8**) using a single-edge razor and a nice flat-file.

Things start going a bit sideways with the 50' FMC Railbox (IPD) design and the 40' PS-1 box, into the nether regions in the proverbial

handbasket with the flat, then descend to the depths of despair with the gondola as production moved overseas, so we'll look at the two boxes and the flat this time around. The gondola is the first of Weaver's freight car imports from China (if memory serves) and clearly designed with high-rail the primary target, so we'll deal with that one later in the series.

My guess is, because there is floor around the body bolsters rather than the space available on hoppers and tanks, the only direction available to clear those massive flanges on the boxcars was "up". To their credit, Weaver were subtle about it, but the gage doesn't lie. Once the couplers are in proper position, it's clear the car needs to come down a bit. **Photo 9** shows the stock body bolster arrangement, and **Photo 10** the flip side.

Photo 9

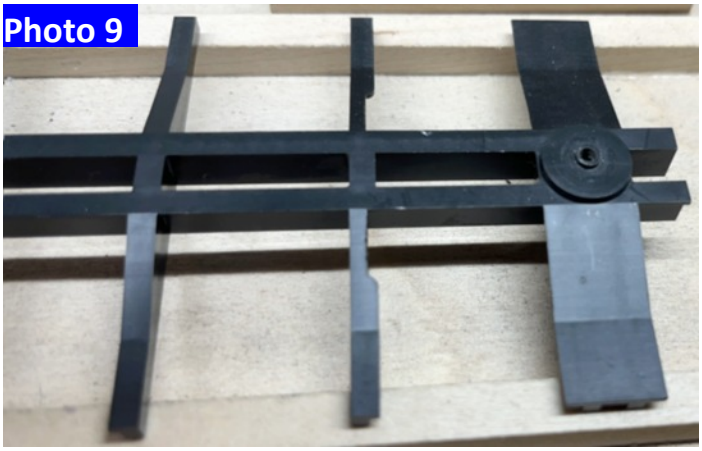
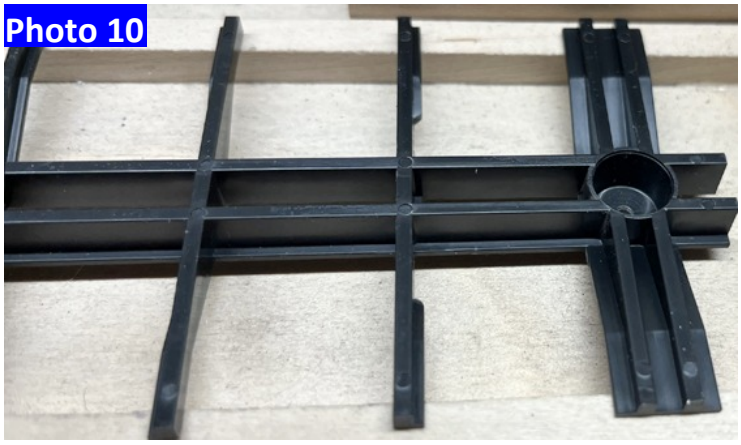


Photo 10



Carefully filing the pad down flush and square to the bolster results in the rather inconvenient disappearance of the pad (**Photo 11**), so we need to make a new one. I used some 7/16" hardwood dowel from a craftstore assortment, diced up with a Dremel saw (or by hand with a razor-saw in an X-acto mitre-box) then carefully fit into the hole in the bolster using a rat-tail file (**Photo 12**).

Photo 11

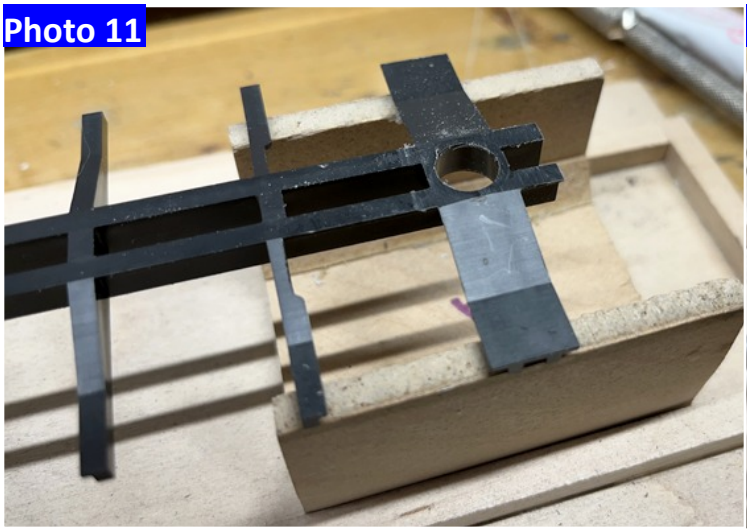


Photo 12

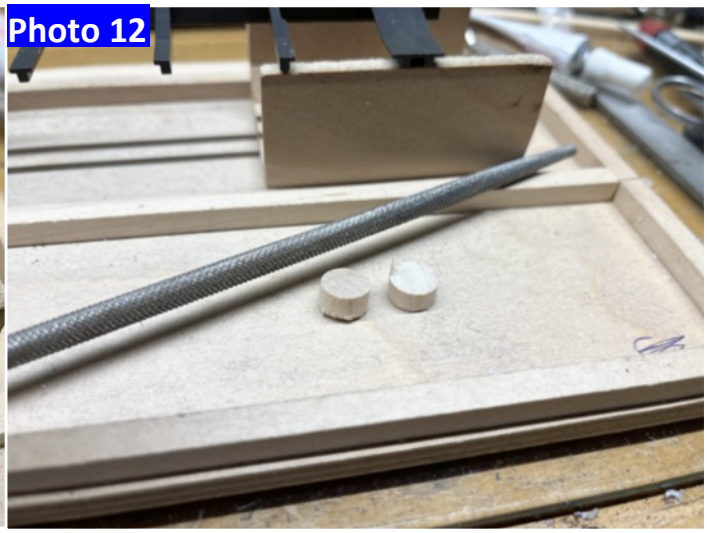


Photo 13

Once you get a nice pressfit, a liquid solvent like Plastruct Plastic Weld (**Photo 13**) will set the plug nicely. Make sure the surfaces are flush with the bolster; clean them up nicely with a flat file, and drill for your choice of bolster screw, either a small woodscrew or drill & tap 2-56 (**Photo 14**). Now you will understand why we spent the time talking about those NMRA chafing blocks on Kadee's trucks, for both boxcars will need that modification to the trucks.

Photo 14

Here are both a PS-1 and an IPD car, after re-assembly and a check for coupler height, so you can judge the result for yourself (Photos **15 & 16**).

Photo 15

Photo 16

The flat is another matter, though the approach turns out to be pretty similar. In this case we are whacking the center of the body bolster off completely, flush with the surface of the main frame adjacent, using the frame as our reference. **Photo 17** shows enough of a lug to screw the truck to, but a more robust solution is to glue in a nice styrene block drilled and tapped for a 2-56 bolster screw (**Photo 18**).

Photo 17

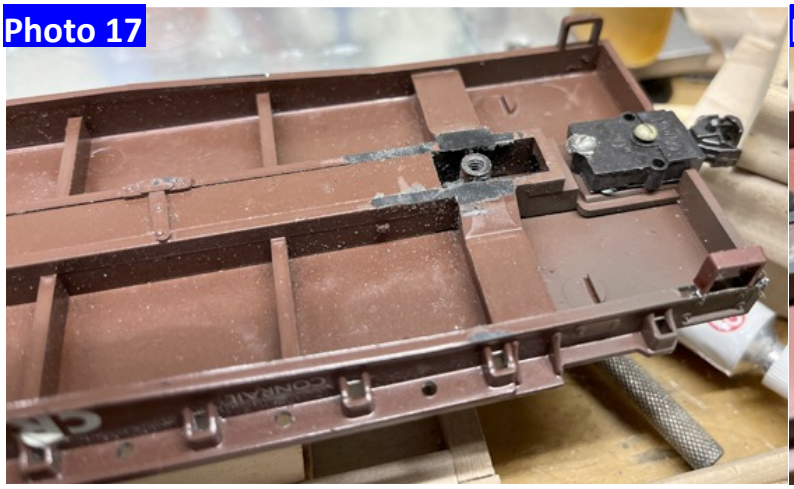


Photo 18

The improvement is far more obvious than in the boxcars, not that they were particularly subtle. The Conrail flat rides on Kadee trucks and the Western Maryland car on Intermountain, both nestled down nicely to the proper height to the top of the trucks (**Photos 19 & 20**).

Photo 19

Photo 20

With that, we're pretty well caught up on Weaver's domestic production. Once you have a few of these under your belt, you'll be able to tackle almost anything out of Weaver/Northumberland and the idea that coupler height determines truck height should be starting to make sense. I'll keep banging away at this last one throughout this series. It's a hard habit to break, but stop thinking in traditional terms and accept that shimming couplers is unacceptable.

If you have to shim a coupler, the car is too high. Period. There is nothing you cannot do with a modest skillset to lower a car properly so a coupler whose box is positioned against the bottom of the end hits the gage.

Get the fool thing down where it belongs, then figure out how to attach trucks to what is left, even if it takes new body bolsters. The result is an automatically corrected height since, well, a real car is built precisely the same way. The visual result is worth the figuring out how to go the full distance, even if it means filling a few big holes. Don't quit halfway, because it will still bug you because you'll "know".

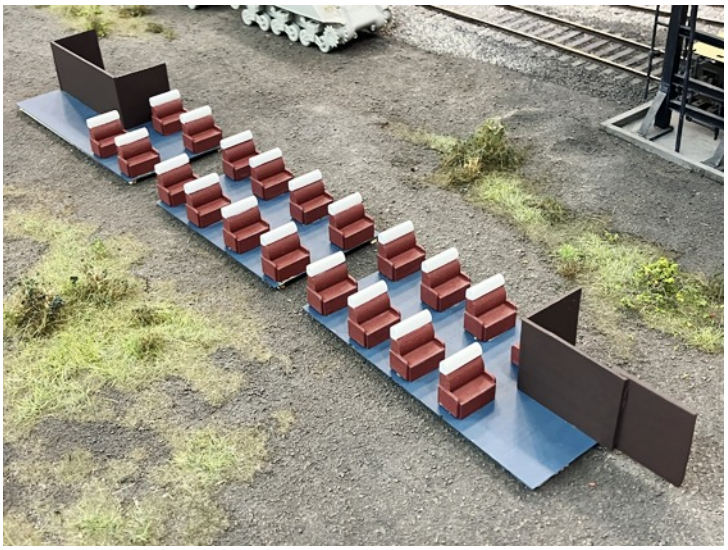
Next time, things get a little more complicated as we spend a couple installments on the various offerings from Atlas.

Finishing a PRB Santa Fe Heavyweight Chair Car Part 2

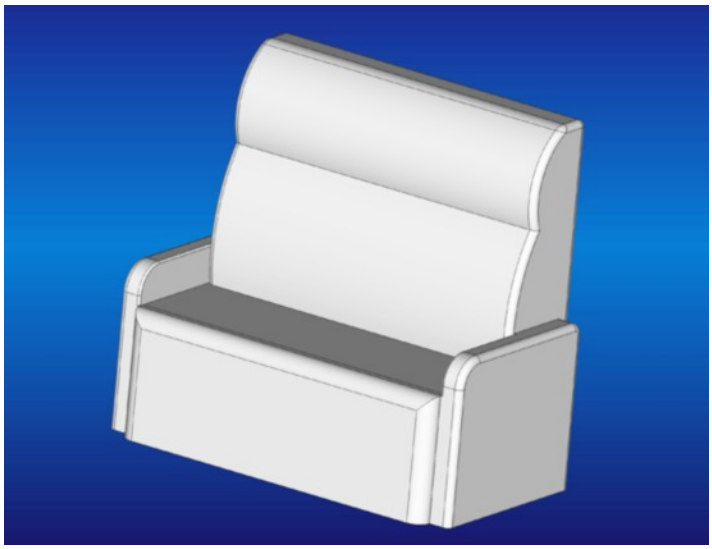
By: Santiago Pineda

A completed AT&SF chair car 3067 sits still for studio shots.

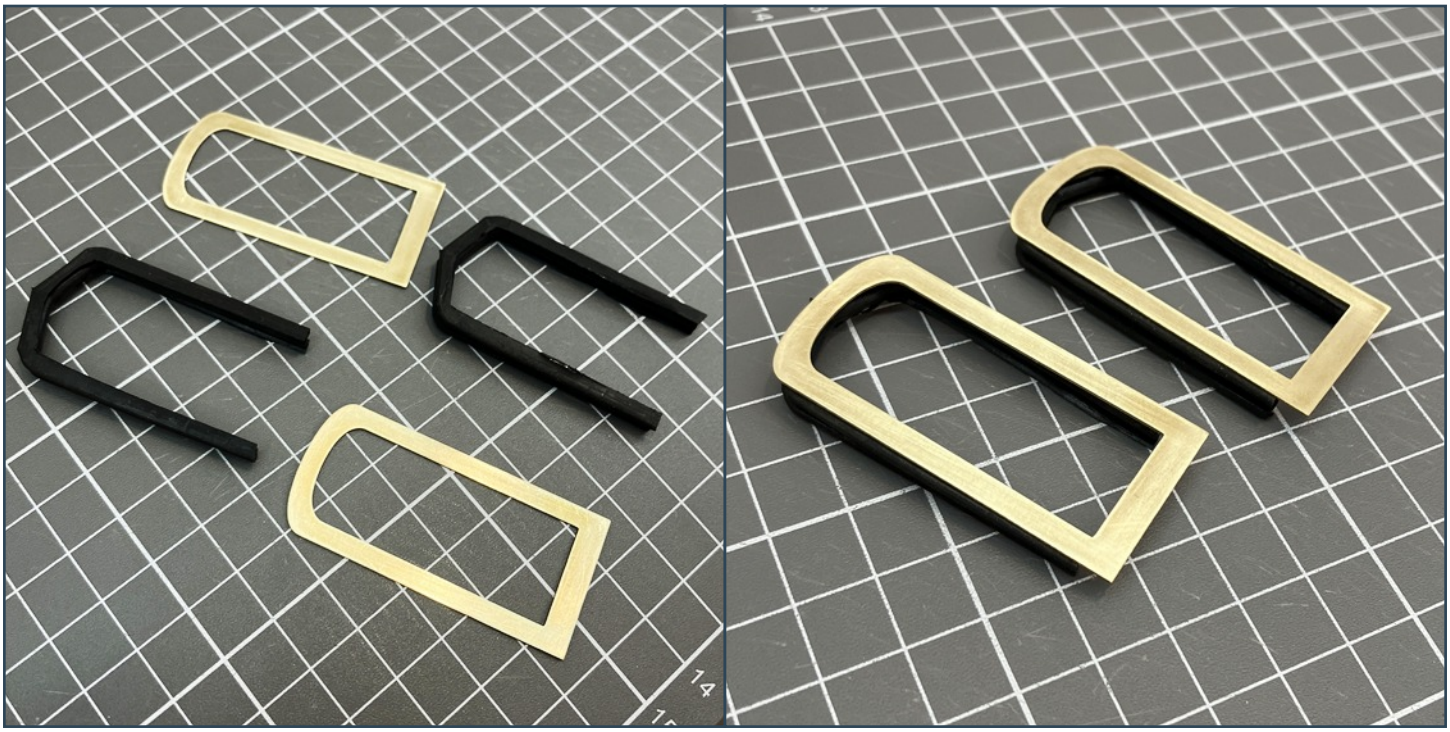
With the car's performance issues taken care of, it was time to work on the car's looks. The first order of business was to create an interior. I 3D printed 25 seats from the same file I used for the CB&Q prewar Budd car (**See issue Vol. 11 #6**). However, this time the seats were painted with the characteristic AT&SF dark red and off-white head rests. Later, styrene sheets were cut and used as interior floors and walls. To finish off the embarrassingly simple interior, the seats were glued to the floor following the car plan generally. Please note that due to the cross plates which secure the frame of the car to the car body, the floor had to be divided in three parts.



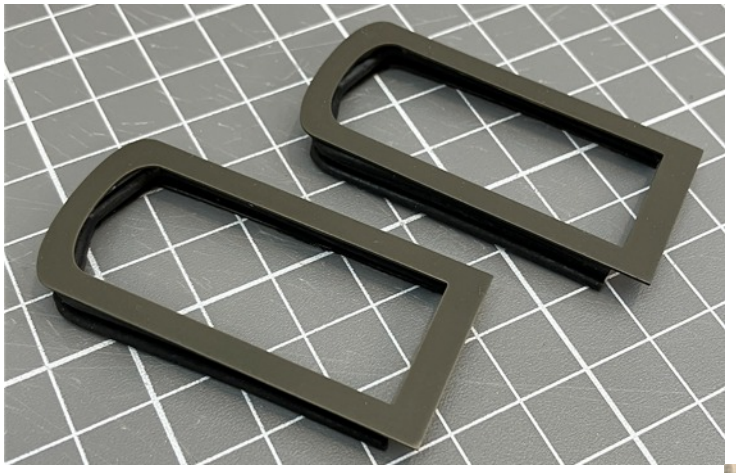
A simple interior helped bring the car to a new standard. Due to the constrained geometry of the car build, the walls had to be lowered and the floor divided.



3D Drawing of the employed seats.



The brass plates used for the new diaphragms. Notice how the rubber part was modified for the application.



The finished diaphragms ready for installation.

To better depict the AT&SF prototype, I discarded the pointed-style diaphragms that came with the car and went with a rounded-style pair that I had laying around from a different project. These came from a laser-cut, 0.7 mm brass sheet.

The rubber diaphragms did come from the original PRB car, but were modified with a cut in the middle since they extended too far off the car. Once the diaphragms plates were primed, painted and coated, they were secured to the car with an all-purpose adhesive.

Next it was time to prime the parts. In recent projects I've used Tamiya's Fine Surface Primer with great success. It really makes things easier and its self-leveling quality ensures super smooth, scratch resistant surfaces. I can't recommend it enough.

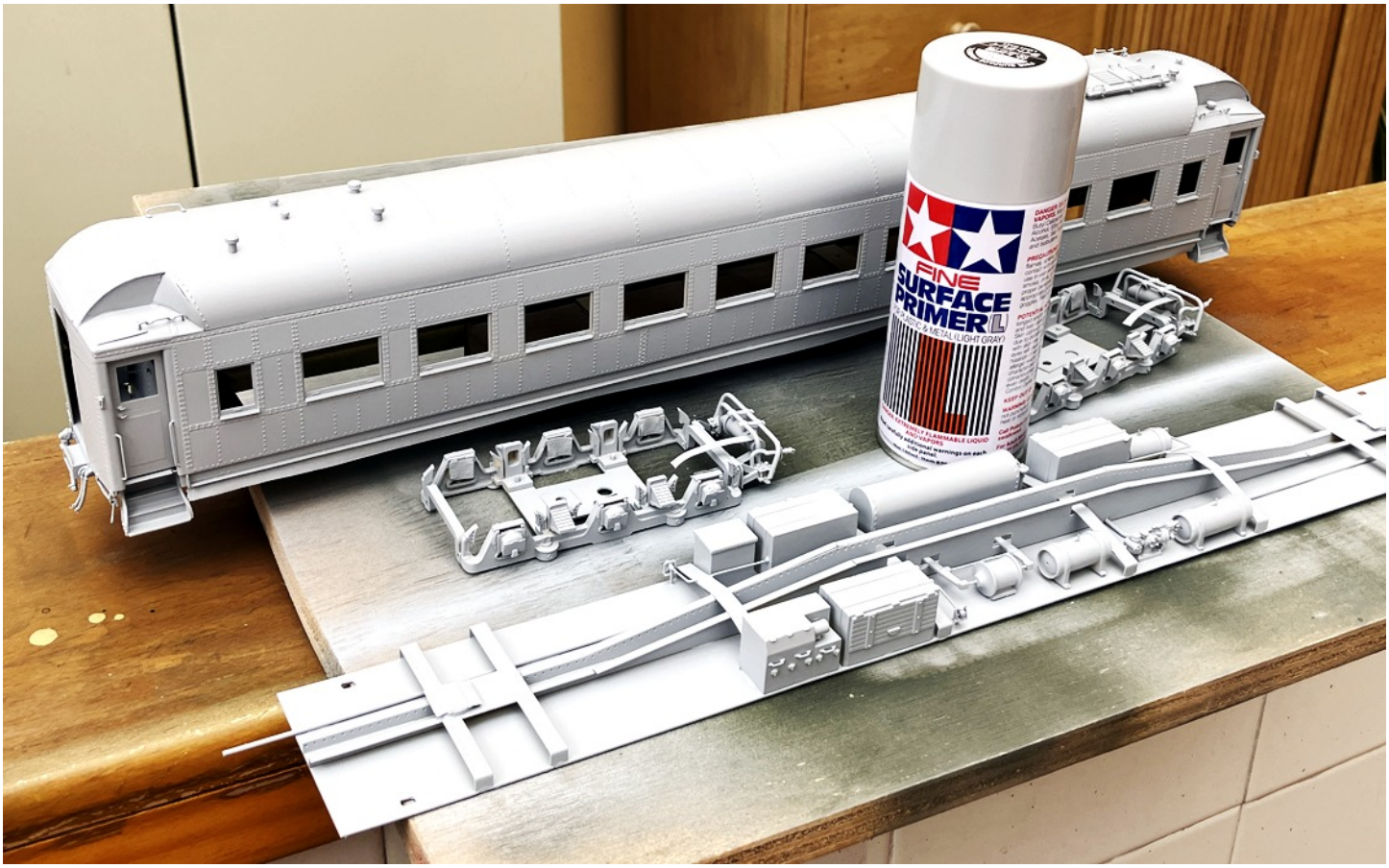
The car's frame was painted in two tones: black and AT&SF heavyweight green. For both colors I used Tru-Color Paint products.

Both the water tank and the boxes faces were painted SF heavyweight green as per AT&SF practices. The trucks were also painted green, with the generator belt later painted flat black to simulate rubber.

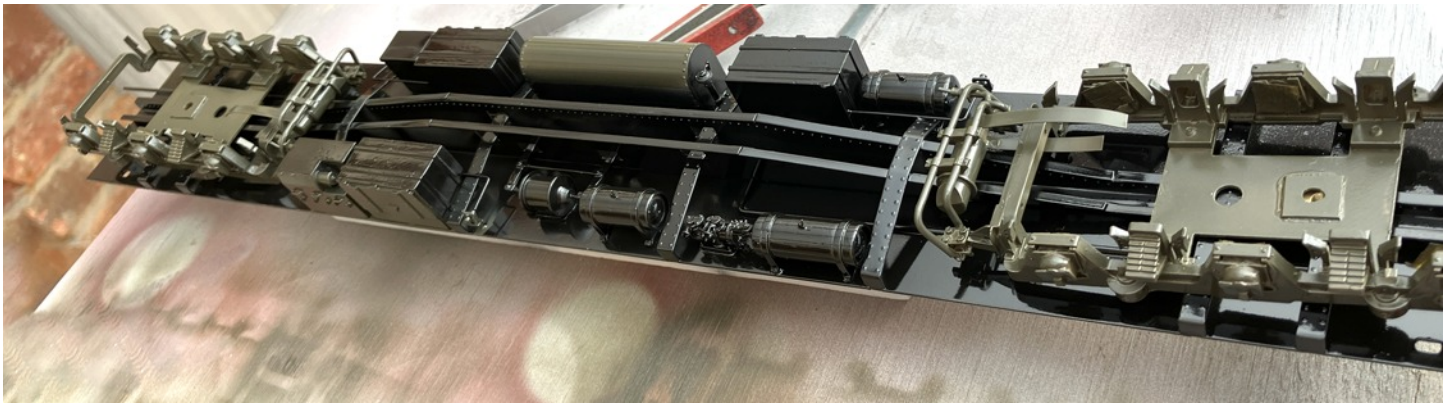
TCP-255 and TCP-010 were used for the car's exterior.

I really enjoy using Tru-Color Paint products. They dry fast to a gloss finish, so you can easily achieve a satin finish that doesn't dull down the color's appearance after clear coat application. Plus, the high-gloss finish makes decal application much easier.

Once the frame and trucks dried, I clear-coated them with Micro Scale Satin Clear, and finally reassembled. A drop of light oil was applied to the new truck bearings and the car was tested to make sure it was sitting and running properly.



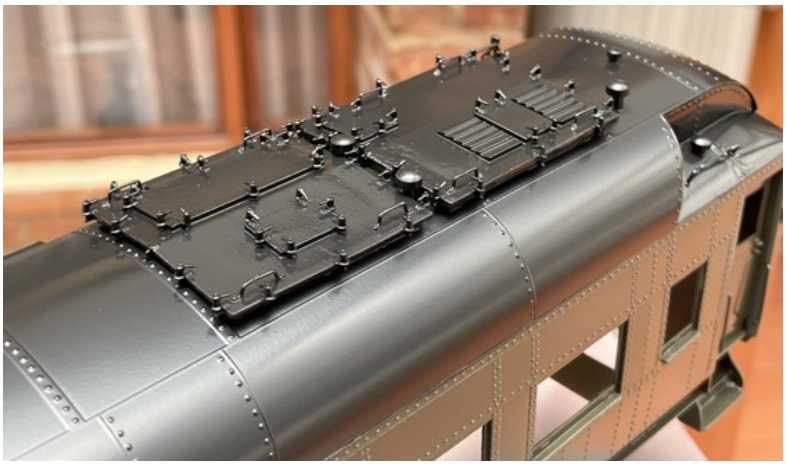
Fully primed body, frame and trucks. To do this, Tamiya's Fine Surface Primer from a spray can was used.

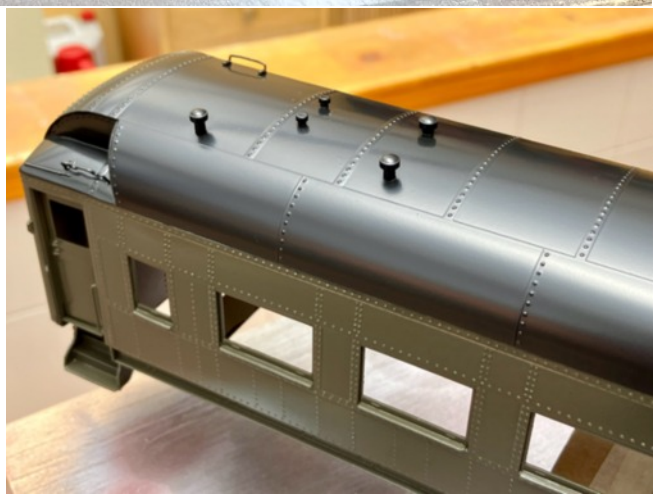


The painted frame and trucks. Once dry, they were coated satin clear.

Painting the car body was also a two-step process. First the AT&SF green for the sides and then black to finish the roof. Decal application was a breeze. I used Protocraft's gold AT&SF passenger car decals part# ATSF Passenger (a). The Micro-Scale, silkscreen-printed decals behaved as expected and looked beautiful. A couple of passes of Micro Sol ensured a snug fit against the car rivets. Lastly, the car was clear coated with Micro Scale Micro Satin clear finish.

If you look closely, you'll notice that I did not use Kadee couplers for this project. If you don't recognize the couplers on the car, these are San Juan Car Company O Scale Operating Couplers (SKU: 5117). I decided to use these because they didn't stick as far out from the Kadee box as regular Kadees. And, sadly, there was no room to create new threaded holes on the car without some major modifications. Nonetheless, these San Juan couplers are closer to scale than Kadees, and I've used them on other projects with great results both aesthetically and operationally.





The car body fresh from paint application. Notice the outstanding high-gloss finish from Tru-Color Paint products.

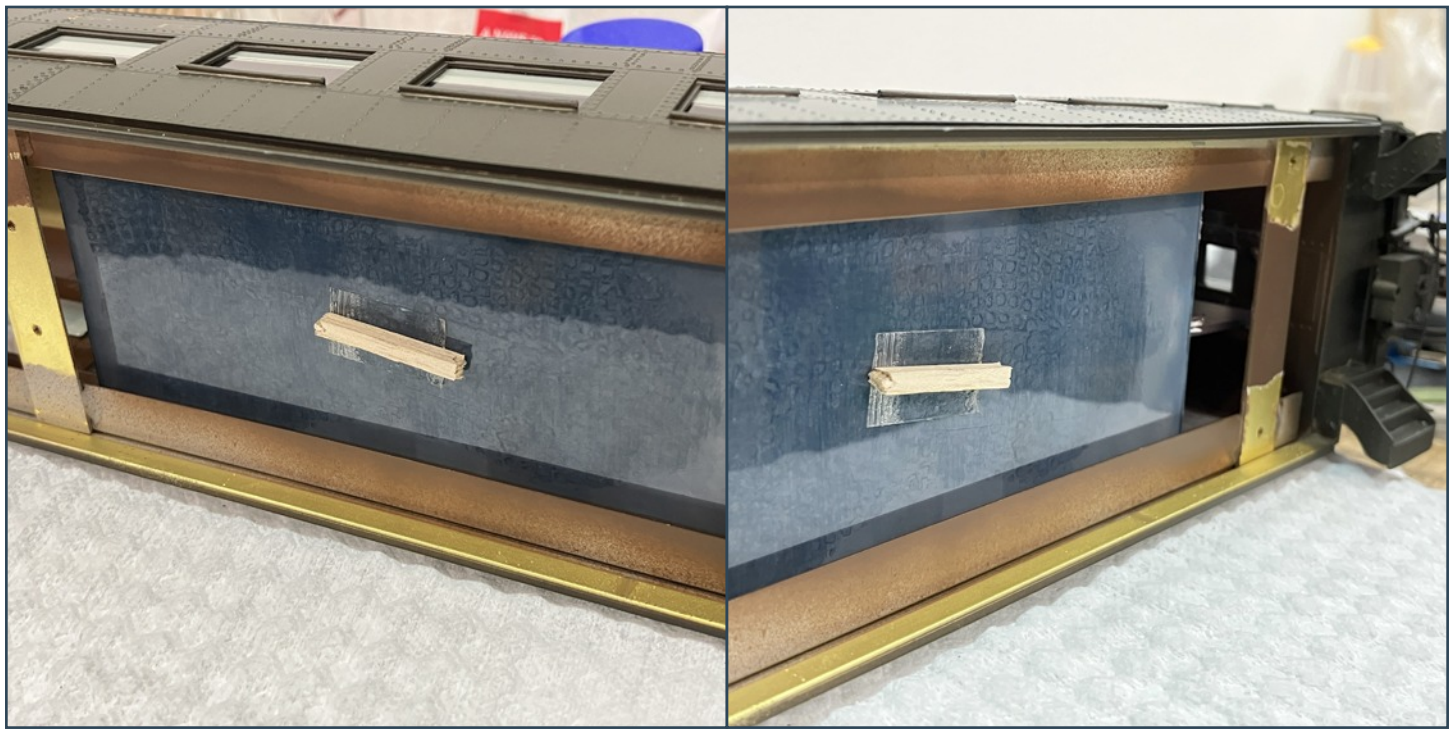
Left: The Protocraft decals provide letterings options for multiple AT&SF passenger car applications.

Right: Decals after Micro Sol application. The gloss finish from TCP renders gloss coat application prior to decals unnecessary.

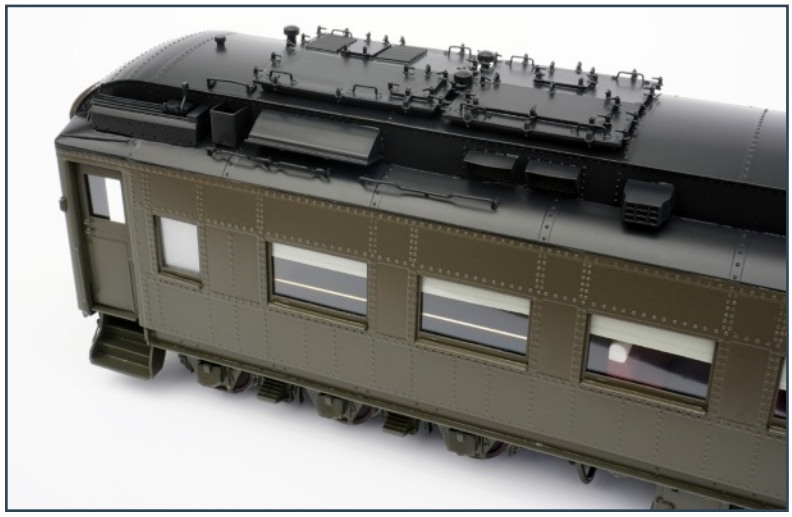
Sunshades made from water color paper and painted with acrylic paint before installation. Notice the simulated fold at the bottom.

With decal and clear coat application completed, it was time for finishing touches. AT&SF heavyweight cars didn't feature the traditional green sunshades seen on Pullman heavyweight cars. Instead, the Santa Fe used a gray hue on canvas sunshades. To make these, I used high quality watercolor paper with thin trims to simulate the canvas fold at the bottom. Then, I hand painted the paper with acrylic paint. Once the glazing was applied, the canvas shades were installed using permanent double-sided clear tape.

Here's a tip you can use. More often than not, fitting and installing a custom passenger car interior is frustrating. In this case, the interior had to be divided intro three in order to fit the car. As you can see from the images, the custom made interior is designed to rest on the car's interior angles. Manipulating the interiors during installation can be a challenge since these need to be rotated inside the car before being secured, thus I temporarily tape a piece wood tie that works as a handle for the piece.



Wood ties were temporarily taped to the interior floors for better manipulation during installation.



These "handles" ease the installation process and can be removed before final assembly easily. With the interior glued in place, the final step was reassembly.

Pecos River brass surely imported the finest AT&SF equipment. I'm happy to have given this car a second life. With its upgraded running capabilities, it will see lots of action on secondary trains behind prime AT&SF steam and diesel equipment. I hope you enjoy the studio shots.


SANTA FE
CHAIR
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F E

A Car Blocking Strategy for the Mountain Electric

By George Paxon

Editors note: All figures referenced are in the article, however, because of the many figures and the fact that the author refers to them through out the article, you may download a small PDF of just the figures to make it easier to follow along. Click here to view/download.

Things on the Mountain Electric are starting to look up now. The portion of the old layout we moved from its old home is slowly getting rehabilitated. New benchwork has been built, other new track is getting laid, and overhead wire is getting strung. The extension to Belle Vernon is up and running. The DCC system is re-commissioned. Tasks to finish off some of the above are still very much in work. But, at this point, our forward thinking is turning from just mundane construction tasks more and more to operations. Soon the Mountain Electric can get seriously rolling.

One issue recalled from many years of operating sessions on our last narrow-gauge layout was the problem encountered with car blocking. As most of you know, car blocking is the process employed by prototype railroads to shuffle cars into a logical order when making up trains. This is done so that when a train leaves a station or terminal it will be in such an order to make dropping cars along its journey faster and easier. Model railroads have the same problem. And our problem can even be worse due to our shorter distances, shorter running times, and the dreaded fast clock that makes time literally fly. We actually have less time for online switching than our prototype friends, I believe.

On our last layout, some of the more seasoned regular operators were quite good at making up trains in the proper order. This was mostly because, like prototype railroaders, they knew the railroad and knew how it needed to be switched. But, since we had our operating sessions every other week and sometimes only monthly, there was much forgetting. And a new fellow had no idea at all. The result was generally poor switching efficiency, delayed trains, and operational snarls sometimes beyond imagination. With little to no help, the blocking process had a very long, flat learning curve. And, it had a much steeper forgetting curve! Real railroads have train procedure manuals of a zillion pages which document, among many other things, exactly how each train should be blocked for efficient operation.

On prototype railroads, such blocking is mostly done in yards by switching crews who are usually told by the yardmaster exactly how to order the cars. A paper form, called the switch list, was often used to convey this information in the good ol' days. Computer printouts these days would eliminate the need for a yardmaster to work out the details and handwrite the form as was once done.

On smaller roads, backwoods type railroads that we particularly like, where track is little more than two streaks of rust in the dirt, the business is rarely sufficient to justify dedicated yard switching crews. Yardmaster, trainmaster, or maybe the General Manager might make up a switch list. Train crews report early and spend an hour switching cars to get their train in order. The crew can then depart for an efficient trip over the road. Arriving train crews may also do some switching to get cars in order for a following train. Sometimes train crews received no advanced help and were just handed a fist full of waybills and left to work out the switching needs, fill in their own switch list, and block their train.

Train crews also do some blocking on the road. This occurs because dropping off and picking up cars as they go along can somewhat scramble a previously well blocked train. This is particularly a problem when the train must deal with facing point, as well as, trailing point turnouts. When a reasonable town or siding is reached, and the schedule of other trains would permit, the train crew may take the time to re-block their train to save even more time later as they continue on their way.

A prototype yardmaster would not need to refer to the train procedures manual for info on blocking trains. He has been doing this task 8 or more hours a day, 5 or 6 days a week for usually many years. He knows his stuff. Train crews along the line are equally skilled. Train procedure manuals are really training manuals and could be studied by eager new operating personnel. But most new operating personnel just worked with experienced conductors, brakemen and yardmasters and learned their trade on-the-job by doing the work over and over. We suspect the biggest use of the blocking instructions in the manual is by some new management sort, with little practical experience, for criticizing someone suspected of doing it wrong or taking too much time.

We could write train procedure manuals for our model railroads, too. Some articles in model literature suggest doing that. But we don't think they would be of much use. Model railroad crews would not have time nor desire to refer to such procedures. And crews certainly would not take them home to study them. And even if they did, the material would be forgotten by the next operating session.

We certainly do not need more things to remember or things to look up when operating. Eliminating any sets of codes, look-up tables, lists, instructions, manuals or unnecessary paper is a desirable objective when setting up our operations. As it is, we have car cards, waybills and train orders that keep us busy; but these are essential for realistic operations. Although we are trying to emulate real railroad operations, we still are, after all, doing this to have fun: it should be less like work. A simple, understandable and minimal paper approach would be most helpful for our layouts to assist with blocking.

Looking For What Others Have Done

As usual, rather than plowing ground that already has been well worked, it is good to first search to see what others have done before us. Often their handiwork is sufficient to provide much information and help needed. Our model fraternity is good at sharing, helping each other, and building on what has gone on before. And since I'm lazy, I prefer to pinch someone else's idea rather than think up one on my own anyhow.

A serious search through the bowels of our filing system found quite a few articles published in the model press over the years explaining how the big boys do blocking. Some articles dealt with adapting the prototype procedures to layouts. Most of these would result in mountains of unwanted paper.

An interesting approach was put forward by Dan Holbrook in the July 1987 edition of *Model Railroader*. The article is titled "TIBS, The Train and Industry Blocking System" and starts on page 91. We have studied, pondered and tinkered with this article for some time to work out how applicable and practical it might be for our Mountain Electric layout. The approach assumes a waybill freight forwarding system is already employed on the layout. This is a valid assumption and applies to us. Finally, we concluded the basic ideas behind Dan's system could be made to work well for us. But we did have several issues with the approach as presented and made some adjustments.

Dan's blocking approach assigned each car to a particular train, specified the blocking order, as well as identified delivery customer, consignee, and location. And the approach resulted in several new sets of codes that needed to be used with paper look-up tables to operate the system as intended.

Assigning a car to a particular train is probably more suited to larger layouts and more modern railroading than is ours. Large prototype yards often had and have classification tracks designated for specific trains or traffic. Several tracks might be devoted to cars going to the same destination. Specific tracks might be the switching location for particular types of shipments. A track may be allotted to cars going to a particularly large customer. Drag freight traffic, such as coal, scrap iron, crude oil, empty cars, etc, might go in one track while priority freight, such as livestock, automobile parts, piggy-back or container cars, loaded reefers, etc, might go into another. Trains then would be made up from cuts of cars based on train capacity, scheduling needs and by class of traffic. When a train was being made up, cuts of cars could be moved from classification tracks to the departure tracks and further blocked into trains. This type car blocking favors, or even requires, large yards and longer trains.

Smaller railroads or smaller yards rarely had the luxury of designated tracks. Each track could be used for several destinations or for several classes of traffic at different times. And departure and classification tracks were often one in the same. This is more like most of our layouts. We run fewer trains, shorter trains, and often there is more mixing of classes of traffic as well as fewer destinations to be serviced on our smaller lines. So we get by with smaller yards.

In the olden days, that we certainly model, there would have been less need to move cars in specific trains. Of course, even then, there could be coal drags, livestock and reefer blocks. But with smaller trains, more single car customers, smaller customers, we suspect the mixing of classes of traffic was greater than it is today, particularly for way freights. This is certainly the case with our Mountain Electric. We have decided that designating a train for cars is not required for our version of the system.

Having a coding system that indicates the consignee for a car seemed to us redundant to data already contained on the waybill. Why does the blocking system need to tell you the car needs to go to some ambiguous and impersonal code that stands for the Smiths Potato Chip Factory at Crap Flats? The destination lines on the waybill tells you the same thing in plain English. It seems to me that our blocking system just needs to arrange the cars in order, taking into account the destination, the direction (facing or trailing point turnout), and the order in which some cars are best switched. This should be sufficient to get the job done. Car switching order is particularly important when there are several customers on a siding, which is common on our layouts. For an arriving train, a group of cars can be cut off and shoved back into trailing point sidings at a destination. Then the loco can run around the train and shove cars into the facing point sidings. Any outbound cars can be pulled while doing the set outs. The loco can then return to the running track with the pulled cars, collect its remaining cars and caboose, and continue on its way to the next destination. As above, we see no need for the consignee as a part of our blocking system.

We are not meaning to belittle the work Dan has done previously in thinking up the system for his use. His approach was novel and very well presented. He was probably trying to do some different things, and probably do more than what we have in mind when overlying his system on the Mountain Electric. Therefore, our changes make the system better suit us.

Square Peg-Round Hole or Making the System Fit

With these simplifications, we will use an alphabetical code to ensure cars are blocked in proper sequence for our destinations – towns and yards along our route. For us, blocking code **C** will place all cars for Belle Yard together. Code **D** will block cars together for Belle Industrial Park. And the blocking sequence is direction dependent. On the Mountain Electric the ascending sequence **A, B, C, D, E,** etc, is for an eastbound train. And… **E, D, C, B, A**, descending**,** would block for a westbound train.

Using the alphabetic code provides for just 26 destinations with one character. In the event you need more, just go around again starting with **AA** after **Z**.

Determining exactly what is a destination is somewhat arbitrary. You can label certain parts of a general locale with its own code as well. This can help divide a complex destination into smaller destinations. At our Celestown, there is a small industrial area known as East Commerce that has two sidings each with two industries. We assigned it an alpha code, **M**, of its own since because of its location it needs to be switched separately from Celestown proper.

On the Mountain Electric we already have call signs for each town, yard and stop. This is our primary coding system and useful in communications as well as on paperwork such as, train orders, timetables, etc. In studying the problem of developing a blocking system, we can see where we could have improved and streamlined our system further. Had we named our towns, yards and stops with alphabetic discipline, we could have made the task of overlaying the blocking strategy much simpler. We use the alpha codes, in alphabetic order, to block cars by towns, yards and stops. Had our towns, yards and stops been assigned names in

alphabetic order to start with, we could have one code for all uses. Our towns, yards and stops on the completed main line of the Mountain Electric, in linear order, are PRCo XCHG, Belle Terminal, Belle Yard, Belle Industrial Park, Monessen Road Stop, East Monessen, CT Junction, and Jacobs Creek Yard. The call signs for these are **PX, BV, BF, BI, MR, EM, CJ,** and **JC**. The names could just as easily have been Adams XCHG, Belle Terminal, Corinth Yard, Dunkirk Industrial Park, Easton Road, Forde, Goode Junction, and Hillman Yard. This would allow call signs **of AX, BV, CY, DI, ER, FO, GJ, HY**, or even simpler: **A, B, C,** etc. The **A, B, C,** ,etc., when used also for blocking would coincide perfectly with both the call signs and the place names. It is a bit late for the Mountain Electric to change names and call sign to achieve this, but the idea is worth keeping in mind when designing a layout as it has merits for simplifying the system for you.

And, we have one other practical problem in fully using alphabetical discipline for our application that may affect you as well. We are overlaying our layout on real geography. Our layout is freelance; but we are using some actual place names to give our layout a sense of belonging and tie it to the southwest Pennsylvania coke and coal fields that we are trying to model. If you are free of such a restriction, using the alphabetic approach may suit you, simplify your coding, and save you some later complications.

But for us, we must assign a separate sequential alphabetic code, **A, B, C, D, E,** etc. to our towns, yards and stops to make the system work on the Mountain Electric. Our code assignments are shown in **Figure 1**. You might think this leaves us with the problem of needing a paper cross reference, such as a look-up table, which shows the relationship between towns, yards and stops; and the code; so operators would know what the codes mean. But rather than relying on a cross reference, we can use the information already on the waybill for all our needs. The code, included at the top of each waybill, is used only by the switching crew when blocking cars for a train. For example, the code **F,** for East Monessen, tells the blocking crew to put that car ahead of cars for **E, D** and **C** and behind cars for **G** in westbound trains. The code sequence is just the reverse in eastbound trains.

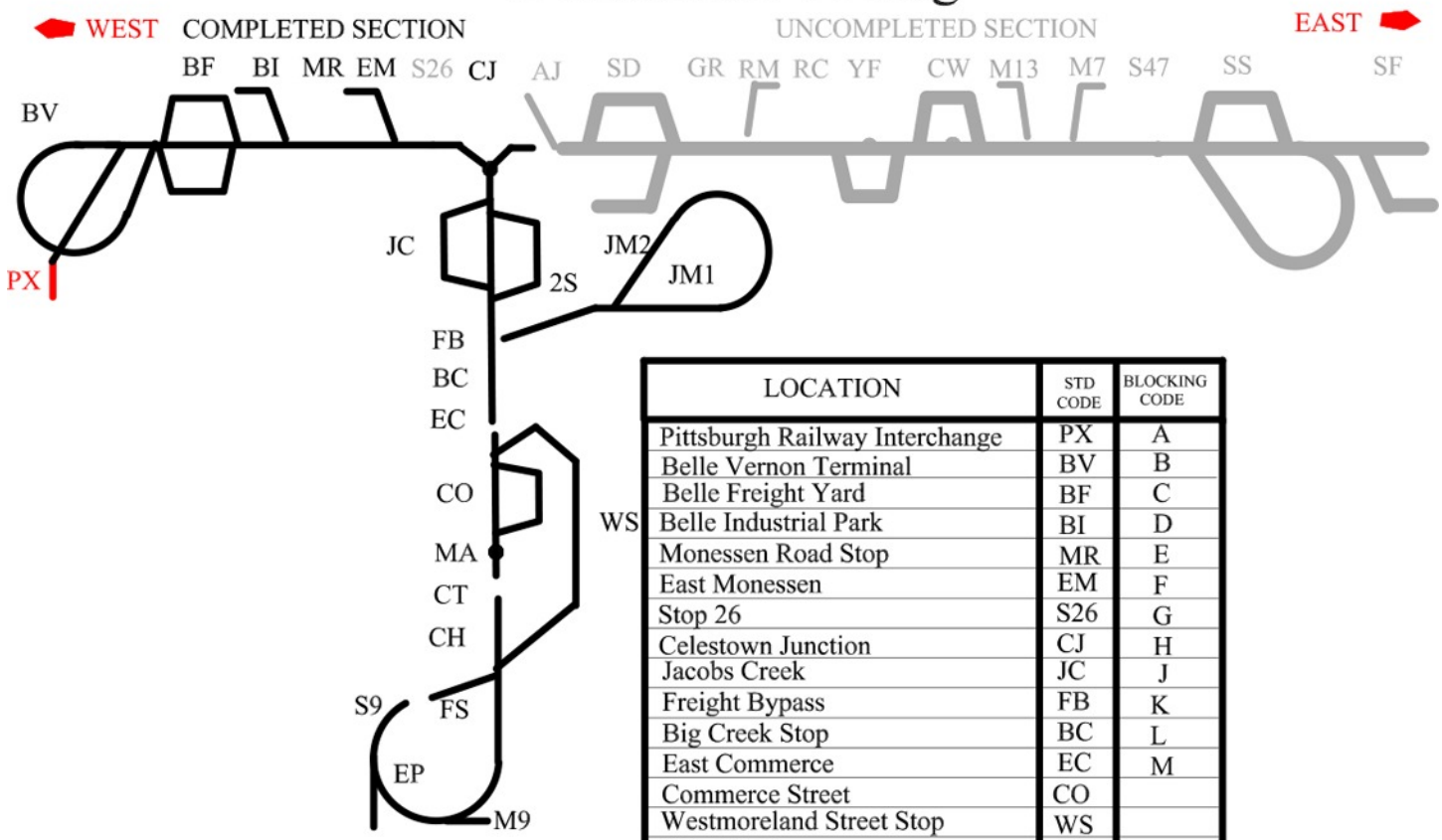
When the road crew is working the train, the waybill states in plain English the car is to be dropped at East Monessen. When the train arrives at that destination, the cars to be dropped should be just behind the locomotive, and next in line to be switched, if the system is operating correctly. Knowledge of the correlation between the code and place name is not required. The two data elements, in this case, **F** and East Monessen, may mean the same thing; but they are used for different purposes, at different times, and maybe by different people.

Keep in mind that the blocking code is really on the waybill only because our model crews have not blocked cars 8 hours a day/5 days per week for years. If they had extensive experience and could shuffle the cars in order by just reading the name of the destination and consignee there would be no need for the code. The alpha code just makes it easy for any crew member, no matter how experienced, to effectively block a train.

Once the train has arrived at a destination with several cars to be spotted there, it would be nice if the blocking system could help us deal with those cars systematically and efficiently as well. Doing so is the job of the second part of the blocking code, the numerical component.

At this point, we again needed to diverge from Dan's original approach. We had an objective of blocking cars in the order needed when several industries were located on the same siding. We suspect Dan avoided this issue by having only one industry on his sidings. We did not have this luxury in O scale. Our first trial approach was to use a single numeric code to designate both the siding number and the needed position on that siding. For example, if Siding 1 had two industries the numeric part of the blocking code would be *11* and *12.* Testing showed this to work just fine when the train was eastbound. But when the train was westbound, and the cars blocked in descending numeric order, the two cars for Siding 1 would be in the reverse order of what was needed for efficient switching. To rectify this, we split the numeric part of the blocking code into two parts. The first part was the siding number. This was followed by a dash (-). Then the second part of the numeric component, after the dash, was the position on that siding. Using the above example for Siding 1, the revised numeric codes became *1-1* and *1-2.*

Figure 1
Destination Coding



LOCATION	STD CODE	BLOCKING CODE
Pittsburgh Railway Interchange	PX	A
Belle Vernon Terminal	BV	B
Belle Freight Yard	BF	C
Belle Industrial Park	BI	D
Monessen Road Stop	MR	E
East Monessen	EM	F
Stop 26	S26	G
Celestown Junction	CJ	H
Jacobs Creek	JC	J
Freight Bypass	FB	K
Big Creek Stop	BC	L
East Commerce	EC	M
Commerce Street	CO	
Westmoreland Street Stop	WS	
Main Steet	MS	
Celestown	CT	Q
Car House Stop	CH	
Factory Alley Stop	FS	P
Elm Park	EP	N
Stop 9	S9	R
Ajax	AJ	S
Scottdale	SD	T
River Mine		U
Pinetown		V
Yough Ferry		W
Old Coke Wks		X
Mine 31		Y
Mine 7		Z
Somerset		AA
Somerset Frt Yd		BB
B&O Xchg		CC

This then actually results in a 3-part code. First is the alpha component as discussed above. Then the numeric component has two parts separated by the dash with the first part the siding number and the second part the position of the car on that siding.

The reason for splitting the numeric code and separately addressing the siding number and the position on that siding will become clearer shortly. We initially saw doing this as some complexity that we could live without, but after trials and testing, we could not find a better or simpler alternative. We are certainly open to ideas if anyone can come up with a better way to achieve our objective.

Using the ascending and descending order for the alpha part of the code provided an easy and convenient method to accommodate the two directions of travel. We wanted to use this same simple idea for the numeric part of the code as well. And it works well for the siding numbers. But it did not work for the car position on the siding because no matter which direction the train is traveling, the car order on the siding remains the same. Getting back to our example, with the two industries on Siding 1, the one furthest from the turnout always needs to be switched first and the industry nearest the turnout switched second. By splitting the numeric part of the code with the dash we can use the ascending versus descending order for the siding number, before the dash, but the position number, behind the dash, will not change with the change in direction.

Look at **Figure 2A**. For an eastbound train, cars for destination **N** will be blocked in ascending order and the train would *be Loco***,** *N1, N2, N3, N4* and *Caboose*.

Figure 2

TRACK NUMBERING

Figure 2A

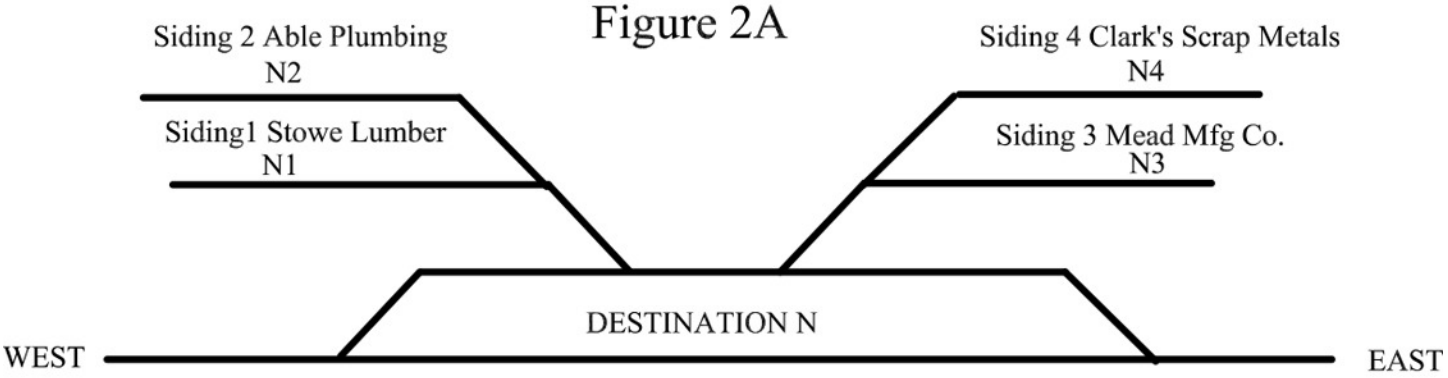
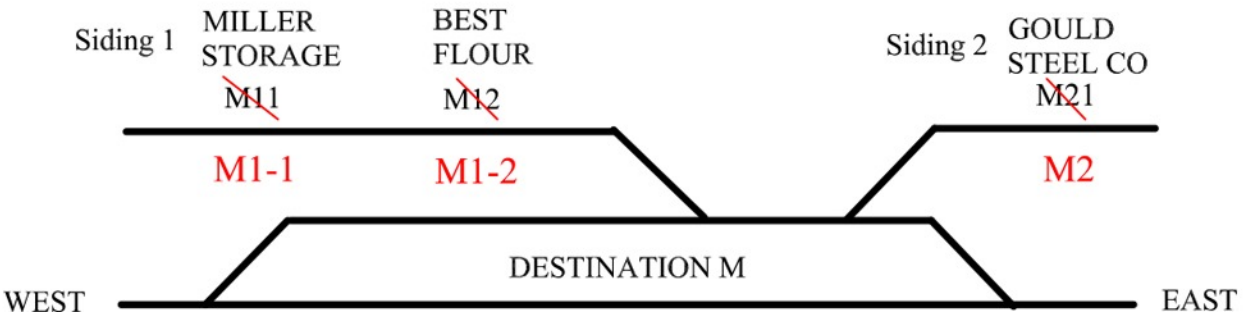


Figure 2B



The switching crew will have the cars for Stowe Lumber and Able Plumbing, code N1 and N2, just behind the loco and in that order. They can easily shove the cars for those industries onto each siding. After a run around, the next cars can then be shoved into Mead Manufacturing Co and Clark's Scrap Metal, block codes N3 and N4.

Now look at **Figure 2,** for destination **M,** where two industries are located on one track, here Siding 1. An arriving eastbound train blocked in ascending order would have *Loco, M11, M12 ,M21* and *Caboose* in that order. The cars would be set out first at Miller Storage and then at Best Flour. After a run around the remaining car could be shoved to Gould Steel Co on Siding 2.

But a westbound train would arrive at destination **M** blocked in descending order as *Loco, M21, M12, M11* and *Caboose*. First the car for Gould Steel would be shoved back onto Siding 2. But after a run around the cars for Siding 1 are in reverse order of what is needed.

Hopefully this explains why the initial idea of using a single numeric value for both the siding and car position of that siding would not work. By changing the makeup of the blocking code to the 3-part alternative an eastbound train for destination M would be blocked *Loco, M1-1, M1-2, M2* and *Caboose*. An arriving westbound train would be Loco, *M2, M1-1, M1-2* and *Caboose*.

And for **Figure 2A** an eastbound train would be blocked as *Loco, N1, N2, N3, N4* and *Caboose* with a westbound blocked as *Loco, N4, N3, N2, N1* and *Caboose*. Since only one industry is located on each siding in **Figure 2A,** there is no need for the position code so the dash and second part of the numeric component is not required. By having just the siding code in ascending or descending order but always keeping the position part of the code the same, the cars will be blocked in the correct order.

Note that in the initial number scheme for **Figure 2B** although there is only one industry on Siding 2, the code needed a 2-digit number, M21. This was to ensure that a car for Gould Steel would be blocked behind/before M11 and M12 cars to keep the number ascending/descending as required by train direction. Splitting the numeric component in 2 parts, adding the dash, and not applying the ascending and descending rule to the position part of the code, certainly increased the complexity of the scheme. But, by not changing the car position number after the dash,we don't need the 2-digit number when blocking a car for Siding 2 so we get some relief from complexity there.

When blocking an eastbound train for a destination, we start with the waybill with the lowest siding code and work up until all cars to that destination have been switched into order. For westbound trains, we start with the waybill with the largest siding code and work our way down. Cars for the same siding are blocked in position order as well, always an unchanging 1, 2, 3. In this approach cars are always arranged in numerical order, ascending for eastbound and descending for westbound, within each alphabetical group. And the cars are in the correct order for each siding with multiple industries. So, when actually switching the cars, you just deal with them in the order they are in the train by reading the industry name on the waybill and placing them at that industry, interchange, team track or wherever. The cars should be in the correct order to do that efficiently. Again, the correlation between the industry name and the code is unimportant to the train crew.

Adjusting the Layout to Accommodate the Scheme

To ensure the cars will be in an efficient order after blocking, you may need to adjust and coordinate your track numbering and coding scheme while setting your system up.

Single digits can be used for blocking codes where appropriate. And if sidings in a large town are greater than 9, you can use 2-digit numbers. In our Jacobs Creek Yard, we have a blocking code of **J11** for a coal mine. It is the only industry on Siding 11. Adjust your siding number scheme to ensure your cars will be

blocked in the order needed for efficient switching by your road crews. The value of the number in unimportant; they just need to be in order of ascending or descending magnitude to enable correct blocking.

And not all letters or numbers are needed or used. Both letters and numbers will be skipped when there are no cars for those destinations or sidings. We avoid the use of "I" and "O" for destinations as they can easily be confused with "one" and "zero" in the numeric component. You merely work your way sequentially through what letters and numbers there are for the cars that need to be blocked in either ascending or descending order based on the direction of travel.

It certainly does not matter whether you switch the facing point or trailing point turnouts first. Usually, railroads do what is needed to minimize switching time. Run arounds can consume quite a bit of time. The switching order would usually be selected to limit the switching to one run-around where practical. On the Mountain Electric our convention is generally to switch the trailing point turnouts first then run around and switch the facing point turnouts.

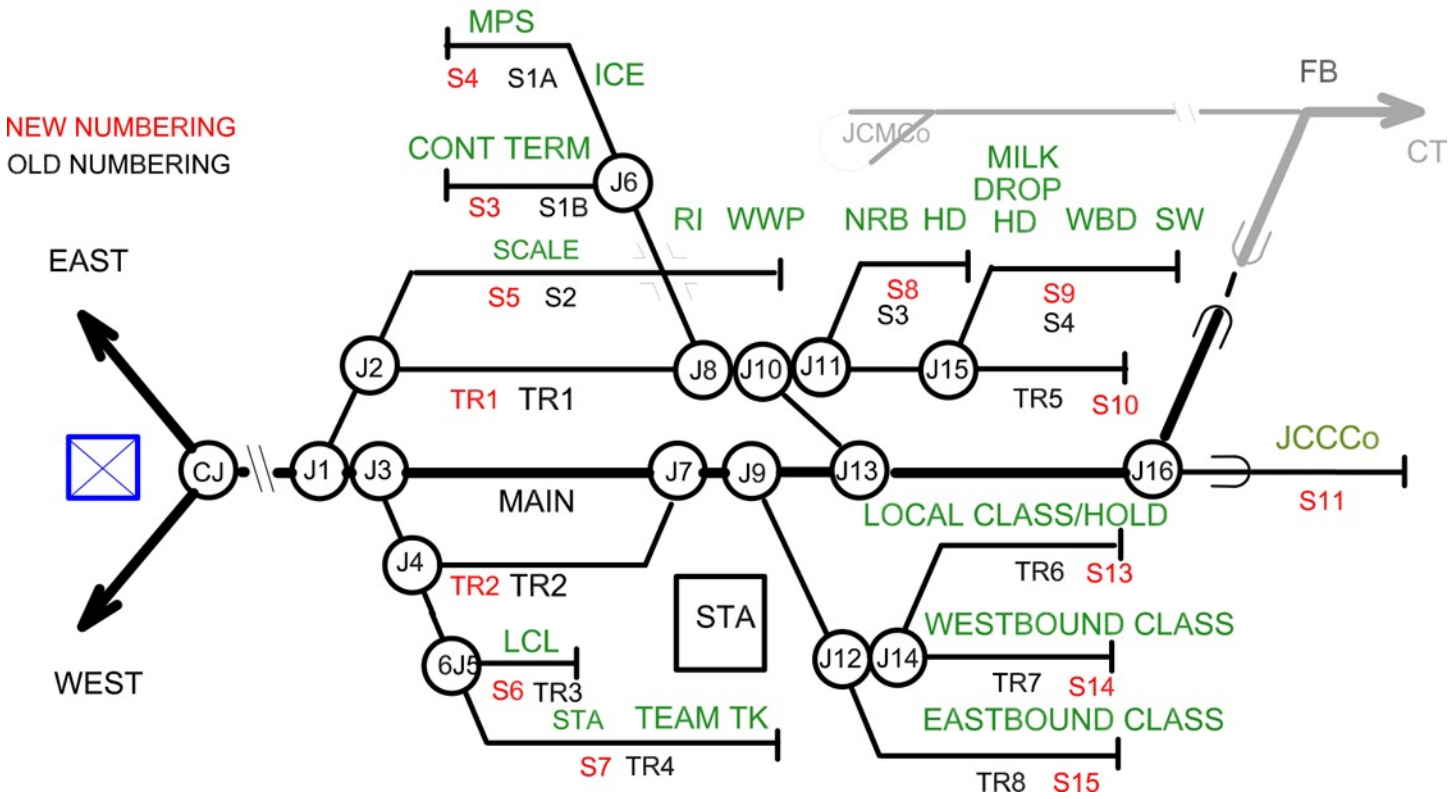
Note that in **Figure 2A** it does not really matter if either Able Plumbing or Stowe Lumber is switched first. But some systematic convention is required, so **1** and **2** are arbitrary assignments here. When nothing else is in the way, we tend to number tracks in sequence away from the main. As a result, cars for Stowe Lumber will get blocked first.

Prototype yards often numbered tracks in order away from the main track. At one time, the main was commonly in the yard center. Modern yards often have main tracks skirting yards so tracks can be numbered sequentially from one side of yard to the other. There were other number and naming schemes employed as well. Yards evolved over time. Some got bigger and some got smaller. Sometimes the track numbers were all over the place. Some tracks had names instead of numbers. Since we are using numeric order to establish blocking order for a given destination, we will depart from logical and more common prototype traditions and scramble our track numbers as needed to show the preferred switching order. We had already numbered tracks in Jacobs Creek and Belle Yard before starting work on the blocking strategy. So, we are now changing some of the track numbers we had already assigned to accommodate the blocking system. We also had made signs for the layout facia that identified sidings, and these require some changes. Doing this does not complicate the job of the switching crew. We are not moving industries, just fiddling with the track numbers to allow a sequential order for switching. Crews still read the industry name on the waybill and shove the car to them without reference to the blocking code, the track number, or any other data element. Other than for blocking order, our track numbers are more useful for maintenance and electrical schematics than for operations.

Each destination needs to be reviewed and track and siding numbers adjusted to suit the switching sequence. This will prepare your towns and yards for assigning blocking codes later. During this task, you can determine if 1, 2 or even 3-digit numbers are required at each destination. They can be different at each.

For example, our Jacobs Creek Yard is the midpoint for operations on the Mountain Electric. Even though the ME Ry is a shortline, Jacobs Creek Yard serves as a quasi-division point. Freight trains come from the east, west and south and terminate here. Cars are switched into trains to move further. Cars can continue either west or east or be taken south to Celestown or Elm Park. Some cars are for delivery to customers within Jacobs Creek. We renumbered the sidings to ensure a reasonable order in switching arriving trains. **Figure 3** shows the yard before and after the renumbering. The changes did not scramble the numbering terribly from what we previously had. The original numbering is shown in black, and the new numbers are in red. The new scheme does not really deviate all that much from our convention of numbering track out from the main any more than we deviated before. Previously, we had a mix of "tracks" and "sidings"; and with the redo, we tried to simplify that difference. Many of the changes result from that rather than a reordering for the blocking strategy. Old track number 5 has been renumbered to Siding 10, but does not have a blocking location assigned. Siding 10 is not a planned switching destination, but an overflow for any cars that should go to the local classification track, Siding 13. Siding 10 also is the caboose track or a place to park a work car. We did not number the Jacobs

Figure 3
Jacobs Creek Yard Track
Renumbering



Creek Coal Company siding originally, but now have, Siding 11, as it certainly is a switching location. You might notice on the left the sidings are numbered 5, 3 and 4 going away from the main. As our convention is to switch the trailing point sidings first, Siding 3 and 4 will be switched before 5, 6 and 7. Therefore, it was not practical to number old Siding 2 as new Siding 3 to keep the siding numbers in order. Such adjustments will allow you to have a well-functioning blocking strategy and a systematic and efficient approach to your switching. And we think getting the yard in order for the blocking strategy has made the numbering more logical than was the case with our first effort.

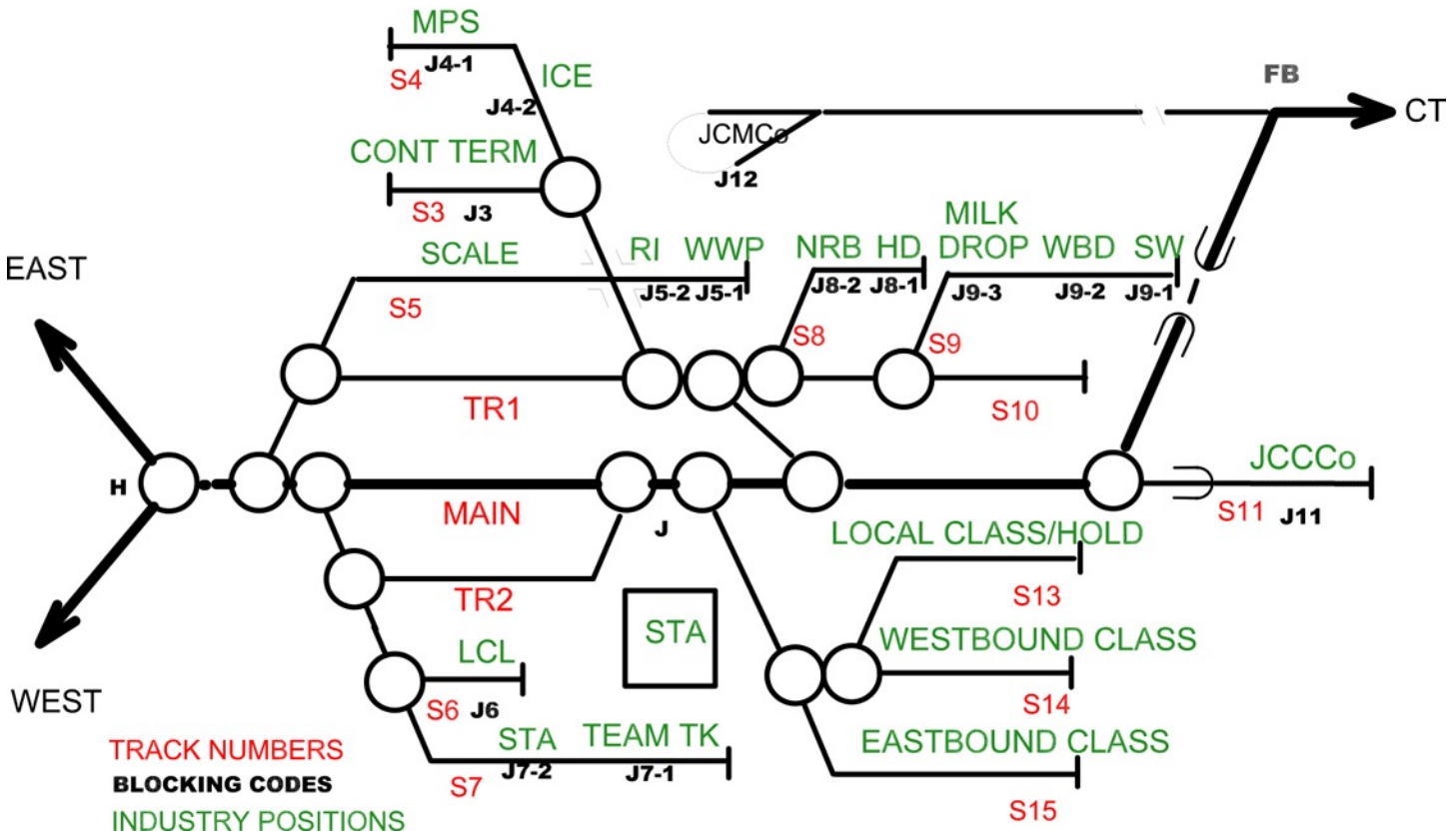
Figure 4 shows the schematic of Jacobs Creek after blocking codes have been assigned. You will note that the scale on Siding 5 does not have a blocking code. It is not a switching destination as cars are taken to and from it as needed for weighing only. In this vein, you might wonder why the icehouse on Siding 4 has a blocking code. As well as being a place where cars come and go as required to take on ice, it, unlike the scale, is a switching destination. Cars of ice and sawdust are shipped there during the winter to fill the building with ice for year-round use.

And the classification tracks, Sidings 13, 14 and 15 do not have blocking codes. Cars are placed there only because they have blocking codes indicating they are for local consignees, Siding 13, or are for movement west or east, Sidings 14 and 15. Although these three sidings have assigned use, they are loose assignments. These tracks also can be used as temporary parking spots when switching cars during blocking. In short, these are working tracks and not car destinations.

Our yards need to operate in several modes. When a “normal” operating crew is available (and probably none of us in the model rail fraternity should really be considered “normal”), the idea is for trains arriving at Jacobs Creek Yard to shove their cars into the classification tracks with local switching to occur later by an assigned switching crew. But when operators are few and far between, trains may need to do their own local switching. Therefore, even as a *terminal* yard, the blocking codes need to support efficient switching.

Figure 4

Jacobs Creek Area Blocking Codes

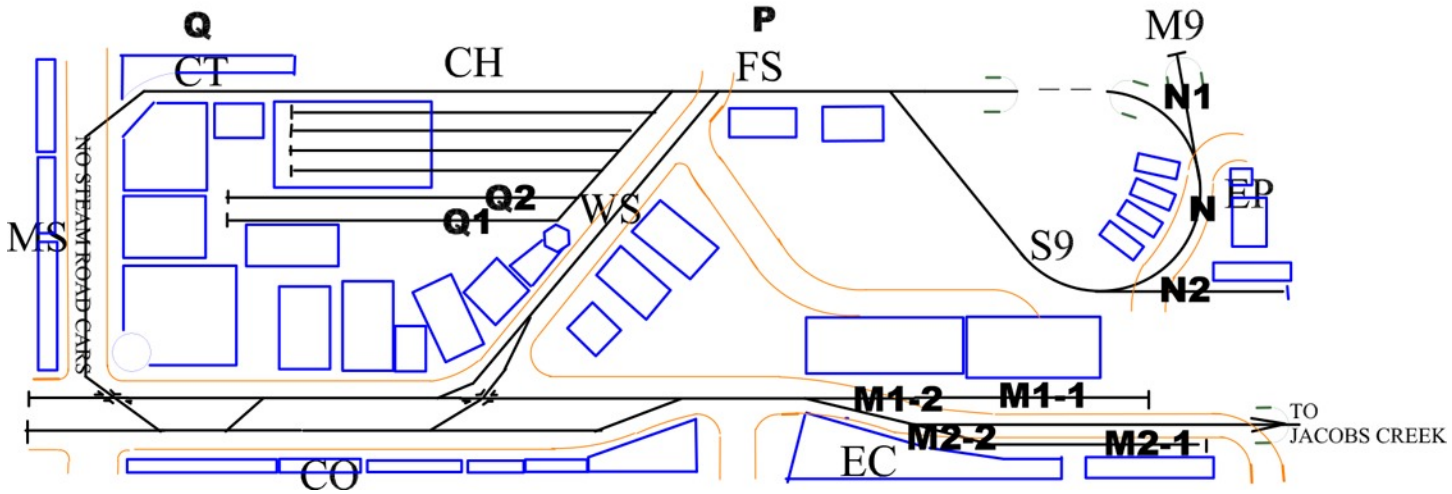


Sometimes you just want to operate your layout by yourself as well. The system needs to accommodate all such modes. We made up hypothetical train consists and tested by shuffling the cars on paper to ensure the blocking strategy could accommodate all the modes for trains arriving at Jacobs Creek from the west, east or south.

To further test the strategy, we analyzed the freight switching at the now finished Celestown and Elm Park area to work out the needed track numbering, and blocking codes, at those points. See **Figure 5**. With the sidings coded as shown, the system will work there. And we did the same with the Belle Vernon area to verify

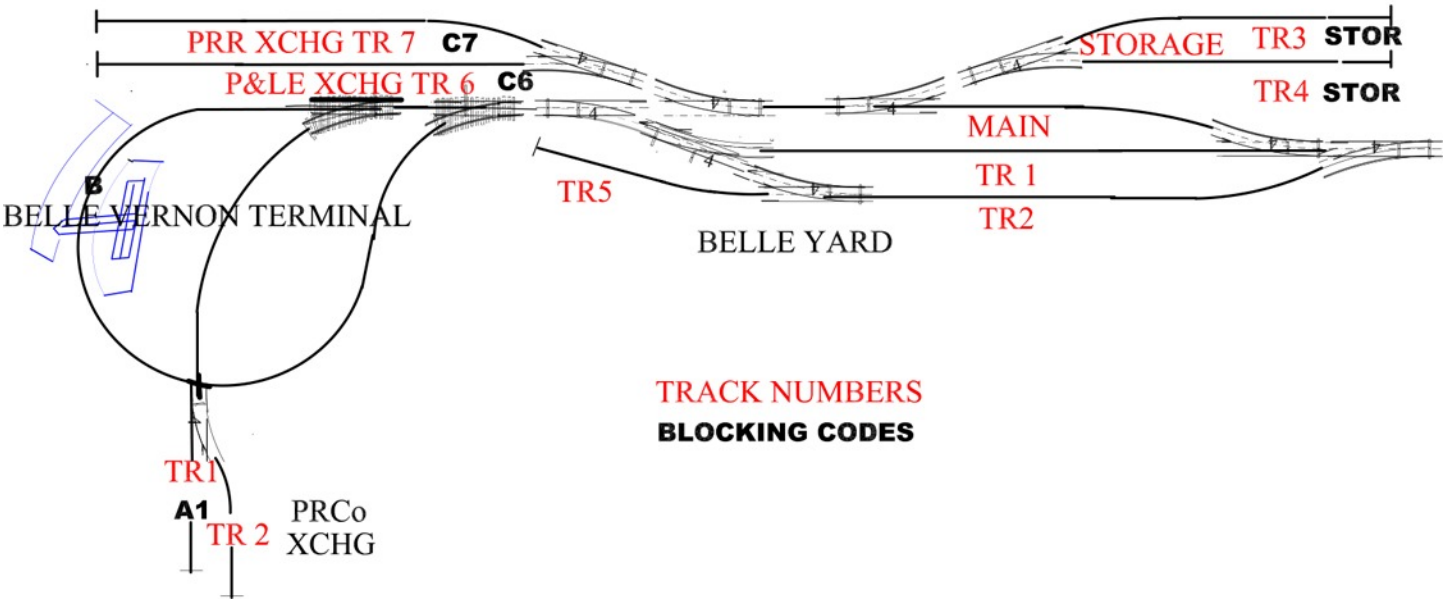
Figure 5

Celestown Area Switching Locations and Blocking Codes



it works there (see **Figure 6)**. As we continue to build new destinations and the layout creeps eastward, we will do the same track numbering, block coding and testing as we go.

Figure 6
Belle Vernon Area



At Belle Vernon you will notice that the storage tracks, Sidings 3 and 4, do not have blocking codes assigned, but the P&LE and PRR interchange tracks do. Home road cars arriving with a "**STOR**" blocking code (this will be addressed shortly) go into the storage sidings, 3 and 4, as space is available, but exactly where, is unimportant. If these sidings are full, the cars can be forwarded to other storage elsewhere on the layout. Waybills for off-line destinations via the P&LE and PRR interchange tracks will have the blocking codes for one of these interchange sidings as this is the final destination on the layout for these cars. From there, such cars physically, via the 0-5-0 switcher, go into off layout staging while they supposedly are routed to their consignees, or returned empty to their home road, somewhere off the layout.

Both Celestown and Belle Vernon are terminal locations to some degree and, like Jacobs Creek, somewhat unique in their switching needs. To ensure the car blocking strategy will work for a more typical *through* destination, we took a good look at Scottdale. Now Scottdale is not built yet. It will be the next major town modeled. But as the town had been designed, we did a fast-forward, assigned the blocking codes, then again tested with hypothetical train consists arriving from the east and west to verify the strategy would work as planned. The plan for Scottdale, with blocking codes, is shown in **Figure 7**.

Getting Waybills Ready for Blocking Codes

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, a working freight forwarding system is a prerequisite to overlaying this blocking system on your layout operations. Your freight forwarding system needs to employ waybills where the blocking data can be included. Such waybills need to include both the **to** and **from**, shipper and consignee information. Having both these data bits permits us to establish the route to be traveled and the direction of travel. Some simple freight forwarding systems indicated only the consignee which means the route and direction of travel could be more difficult to determine. We have not given this case much thought, but I suspect owning railroads. And, of course, there are all the forms that deal with delivery notification and verification, revenue collection, damages and shortages, etc. Modelers tend to lump everything into a single form called a waybill which is usually sufficient for us. The prototype also often had special forms of waybills for moving it could be made to work as well.

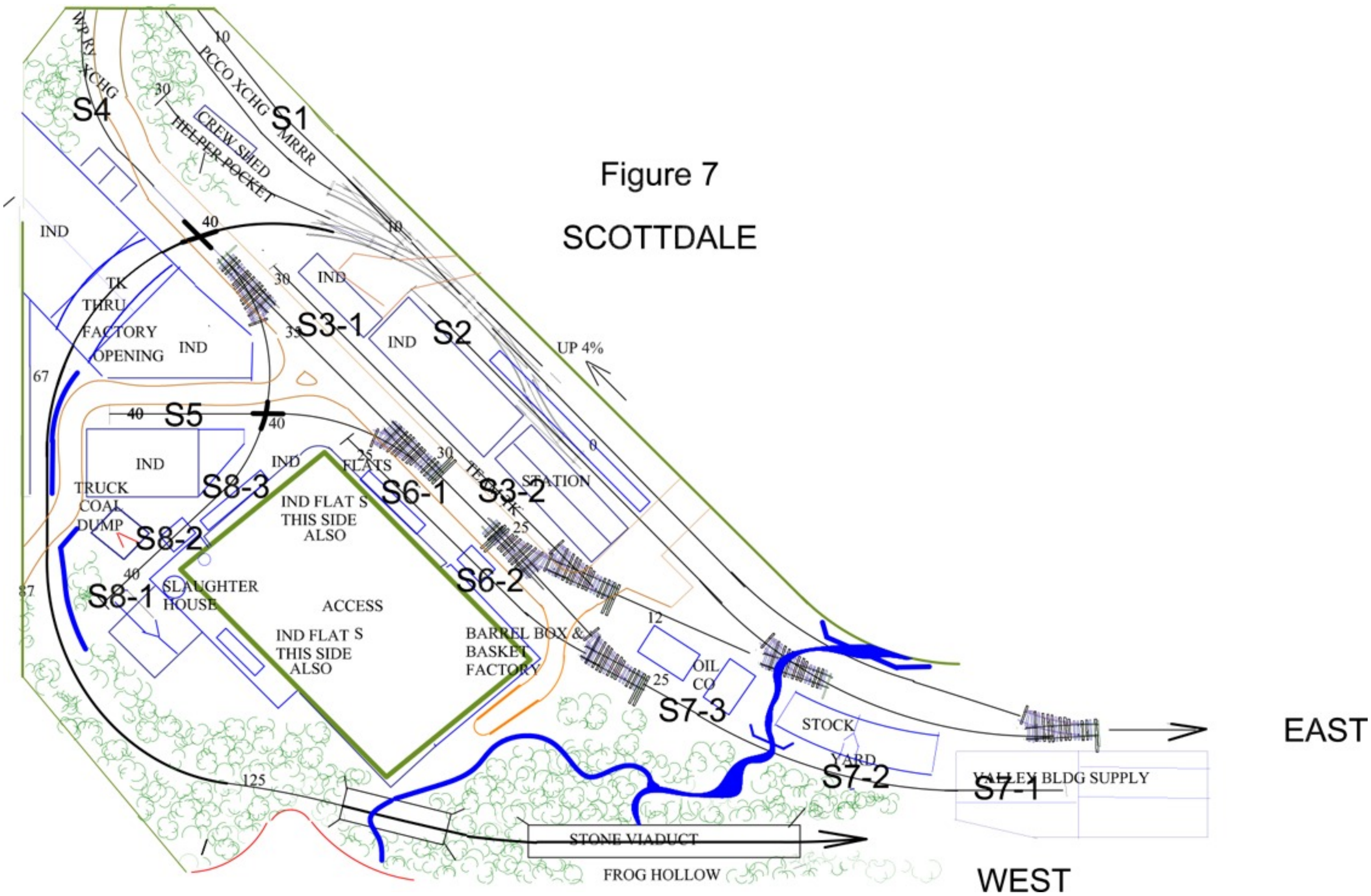
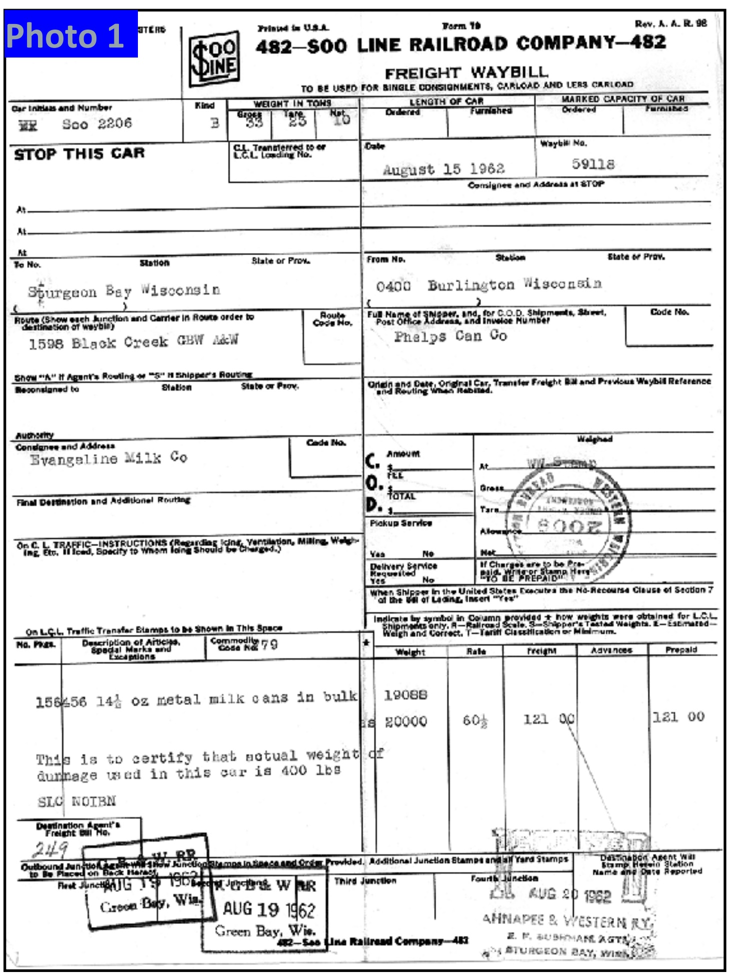


Figure 7
SCOTTDALE

Photo 1



Printed in U.S.A. Form 19 Rev. A. A. R. 98

482—SOO LINE RAILROAD COMPANY—482

FREIGHT WAYBILL

TO BE USED FOR SINGLE CONSIGNMENTS, CARLOAD AND LESS CARLOAD

Car Initials and Number: Soo 2206 — Kind: B — Weight in Tons: Gross 33, Tare 23, Net 10

STOP THIS CAR

Date: August 15 1962 — Waybill No.: 59118

To: Sturgeon Bay Wisconsin

From: 0400 Burlington Wisconsin

Route: 1598 Black Creek GBW A&W

Full Name of Shipper: Phelps Can Co

Consignee and Address: Evangeline Milk Co

No. Pkgs. / Description of Articles: 156456 14½ oz metal milk cans in bulk — Weight 19088 / 20000 — Rate 60½ — Freight 121 00 — Prepaid 121 00

This is to certify that actual weight of dunnage used in this car is 400 lbs

SLC NOIBN

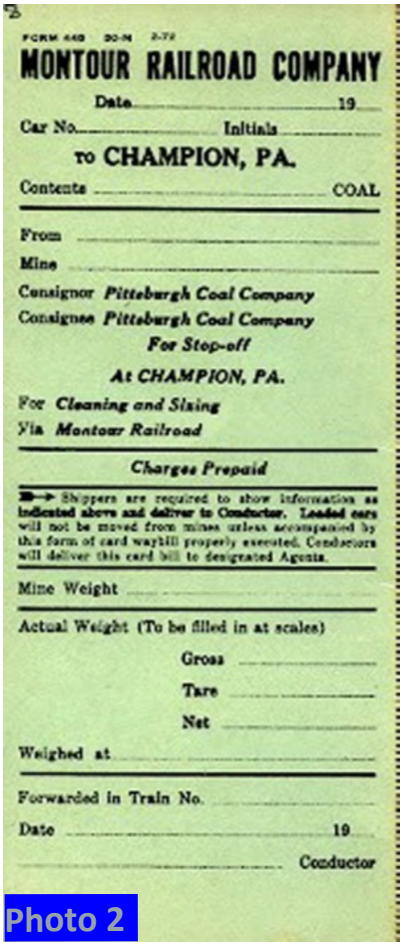
Destination Agent's Freight Bill No. 249

AUG 19 1962 Green Bay, Wis.

AUG 20 1962 AHNAPEE & WESTERN RY. STURGEON BAY, WIS.

482—Soo Line Railroad Company—482

Actual prototype waybills were large, complicated documents. As well as shipper and consignee details, they needed to deal with weights, charges, rules, routes, legal and contractual issues, and other matters that really are mostly not of concern to modelers. When designing our waybills, we tried to inject just enough railroad flavor to make them realistic but still keep them simple enough to not overburden ourselves with extraneous details and work. An example prototype waybill is provided at **Photo 1**. Here the Soo Line, ARA code 482, in 1962, moved 10 tons of empty milk cans from shipper, Phelp Can Co, in Burlington, WI, to Evangeline Milk Co, at Sturgeon Bay, WI, for a charge of $121. There are many other associated forms used by actual railways. Their lot is a sea of paper. Some include Empty Car Orders, which move cars from storage, or wherever, to a shipper for loading; Empty Car Waybills, also called home route cards, that return empty cars to livestock, blocks of cars such as coal drags, dangerous cargos, etc. **Photo 2** shows a special form used as a waybill by the Montour Railroad to route a major customer's coal from mine to cleaning plant. The Montour was a coal mine switching short line in the Pittsburgh area. We tend to deal with these issues by color coding our waybills which works for us modelers and simplifies things.



FORM 448 30-M 2-72

MONTOUR RAILROAD COMPANY

Date ____ 19__

Car No. ____ Initials ____

TO **CHAMPION, PA.**

Contents ____ COAL

From ____

Mine ____

Consignor *Pittsburgh Coal Company*

Consignee *Pittsburgh Coal Company*

For Stop-off

At CHAMPION, PA.

For *Cleaning and Sizing*

Via *Montour Railroad*

Charges Prepaid

Shippers are required to show information as indicated above and deliver to Conductor. Loaded cars will not be moved from mines unless accompanied by this form of card waybill properly executed. Conductors will deliver this card bill to designated Agents.

Mine Weight ____

Actual Weight (To be filled in at scales)

Gross ____

Tare ____

Net ____

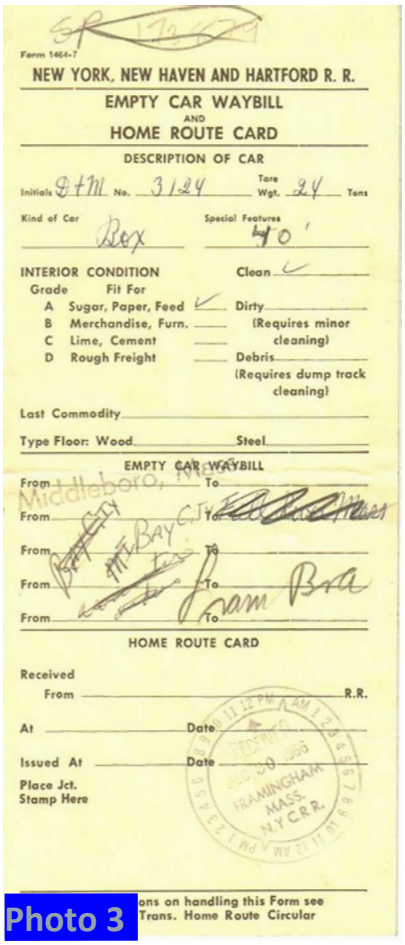
Weighed at ____

Forwarded in Train No. ____

Date ____ 19__

____ Conductor

Photo 2



Form 1464-T

NEW YORK, NEW HAVEN AND HARTFORD R. R.

EMPTY CAR WAYBILL

AND

HOME ROUTE CARD

DESCRIPTION OF CAR

Initials D&M No. 3124 Tare Wgt. 24 Tons

Kind of Car Box Special Features 40'

INTERIOR CONDITION

Grade Fit For

A Sugar, Paper, Feed

B Merchandise, Furn.

C Lime, Cement

D Rough Freight

Clean

Dirty

(Requires minor cleaning)

Debris

(Requires dump truck cleaning)

Last Commodity ____

Type Floor: Wood ____ Steel ____

EMPTY CAR WAYBILL

From ____ To ____

From ____ To ____

From ____ To ____

From ____ To ____

From ____ To ____

HOME ROUTE CARD

Received

From ____ R.R.

At ____ Date ____

Issued At ____ Date ____

Place Jct. Stamp Here

FRAMINGHAM MASS. N.Y.C.R.R.

ons on handling this Form see Trans. Home Route Circular

Photo 3

Modelers, and some prototype railroads, use a tan or yellow color for empty car waybills. **Photo 3** shows a New Haven Empty Car Waybill to authorize moving the empty and tracking its journey back to its owner. Some modelers use pink for perishable shipments. Other modelers put color bands on waybills to denote certain categories of traffic or routes. These all work well.

Waybills for model use have had many variations over the years since the *operating* idea was first introduced by Ellison, Smith and others who were all pioneers in prototype-like freight movements as opposed to just running trains. The standard 3x5 card was used for early car cards and waybills, and still is by many modelers. Over time the waybill has evolved to a reasonably standard format, but in a few different sizes. Several firms provide blank waybills, and some other forms, which make implementing the freight forwarding system on a layout easier. Rail Graphics and Micro Mark both offer them. You can roll your own as well, particularly if you want them to look more like actual waybills or would like to personalize them for your railroad. Commercially available model waybills usually accommodate 4 movements. Prototype waybills only address 1 movement. A good compromise is to have an Empty Car Order on one side of the waybill to move a empty car to a customer for loading and a Freight Waybill to ship the load to a consignee on the other side for 2 movements. Also a Freight Waybill can move a loaded car coming to a consignee on one side and then an Empty Car Waybill on the other side to move the car to storage or back toward its owning road, again 2 movements.

An important objective of an Empty Car Order is to specify what sort of car a customer requires. Cars are ordered by customers in need of an empty by their *Mechanical Designation* to ensure they receive the correct type car for their shipment. We have simplified the codes for the type of car. The AAR has codes, called Mechanical Designations, for many varieties of cars. Some are 3 letters long to differentiate, by various equipment the car contains, or for particular loads the cars are designed for. An example would be a box car with the "XAP" designation that means it is equipped with special racking for certain automotive parts. Some of the more religious model operating types do use the 2 and 3 letter codes to be precise. We don't have enough cars to worry about the problem to that extent. On the ME Ry, our customers seem to be content if a box arrives with a roof. For our use, we are happy to go with a single alpha code for each steam road car type. Further complicating our car type designations is that we have both steam road cars and traction cars. Now traction cars usually cannot be interchanged with steam roads as they do not always comply with the AAR requirements for safety appliances, brakes, trucks, and they might have radial couplers, etc. Therefore, we also have a list of codes for traction cars as well. We simply add a "T" to the one letter AAR code to denote the car as traction only.

The Mechanical Designations we use on the ME Ry are as follows:

Car Type	Steam Road	Traction
Box	X	XT
Hopper	H	HT
Gon	G	GT
Tank	T	TT
Covered Hop	L	--
Flat	F	FT
Reefer	R	RT

Photo 4

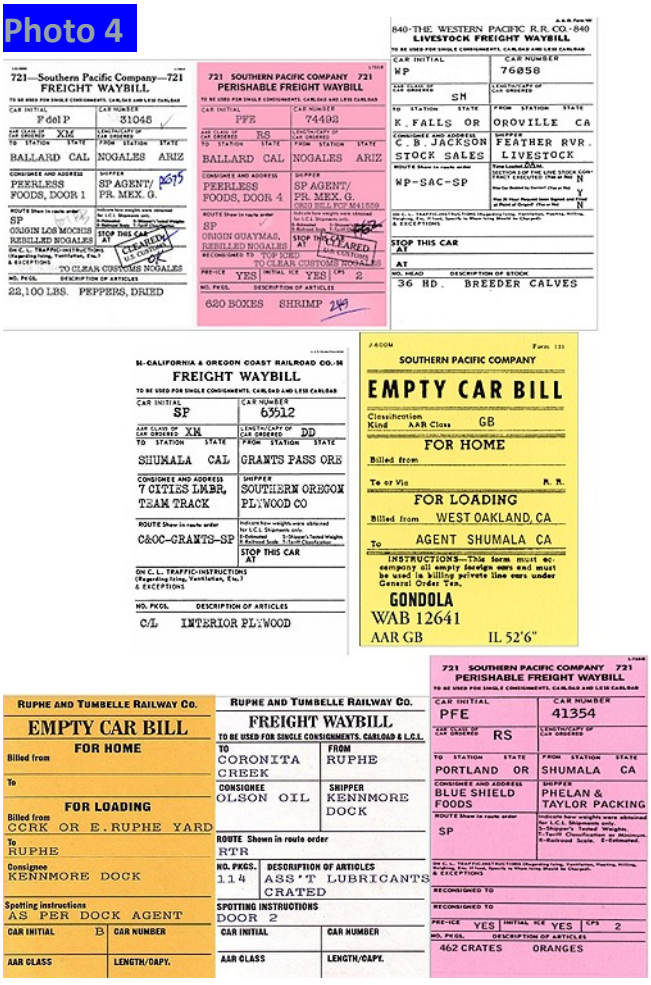
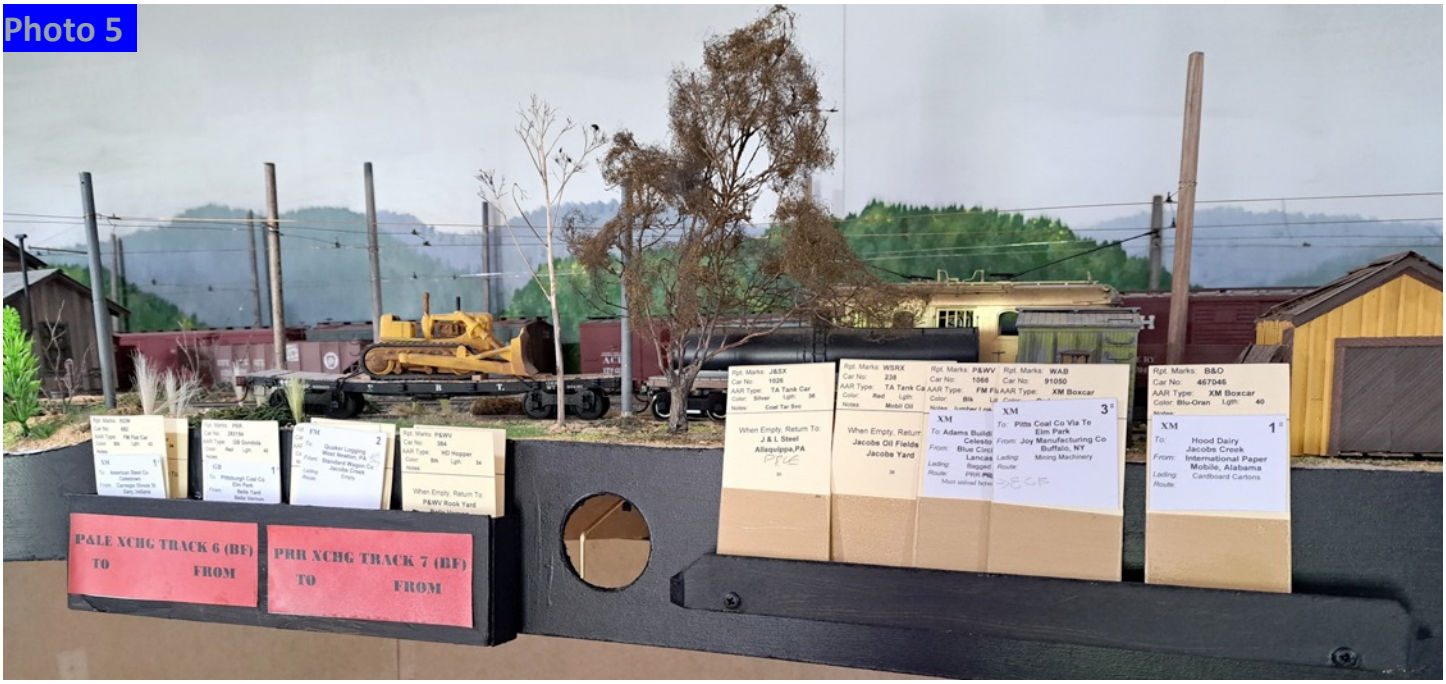


Photo 4 shows examples of several model waybill formats. By copying these from a Google search, we have "borrowed" from a few unknown sources, so we hope we do not offend any modelers responsible for their creation. They are well done and worthy of consideration. They are realistic, contain required information, but are not overburdened with unnecessary detail, and will be quite functional and effective.

We have been using Rail Graphics and Micro Mark car cards and waybills for some years on the old narrow-gauge layout. Many of our waybills were also generated by the *Ship It* software. This is a proprietary model rail car routing system. **Photo 5** shows our old waybills that slip into the car cards, also by Rail Graphics and Micro Mark. These car cards fold over and can be taped to form a pocket where the waybill is inserted. Once together they reflect all the pertinent data to include the car the shipment is moving in. They have worked well over the years. In setting up for the new layout, we decided to splash out and personalize our new waybills with some other details.

Another approach used by some is clear baseball card envelopes for the car card component. Clear printed labels are stuck to the front of the clear envelopes with the car information. But these envelopes are wider at 2-5/8 and do fit into our waybill slots easily. They need to fit easily to avoid over eager operators destroying them in use. If you have yet to make your waybill holders, you might consider the baseball card envelop option. You can just make your waybill holder slots a little wider, say 3-1/4 inch. We sourced a few of the baseball card holders for



examination. The plastic is quite thin, so I am not sure how durable they will be without testing them for some time. We have dismissed them from further consideration as they are too large for our waybill boxes.

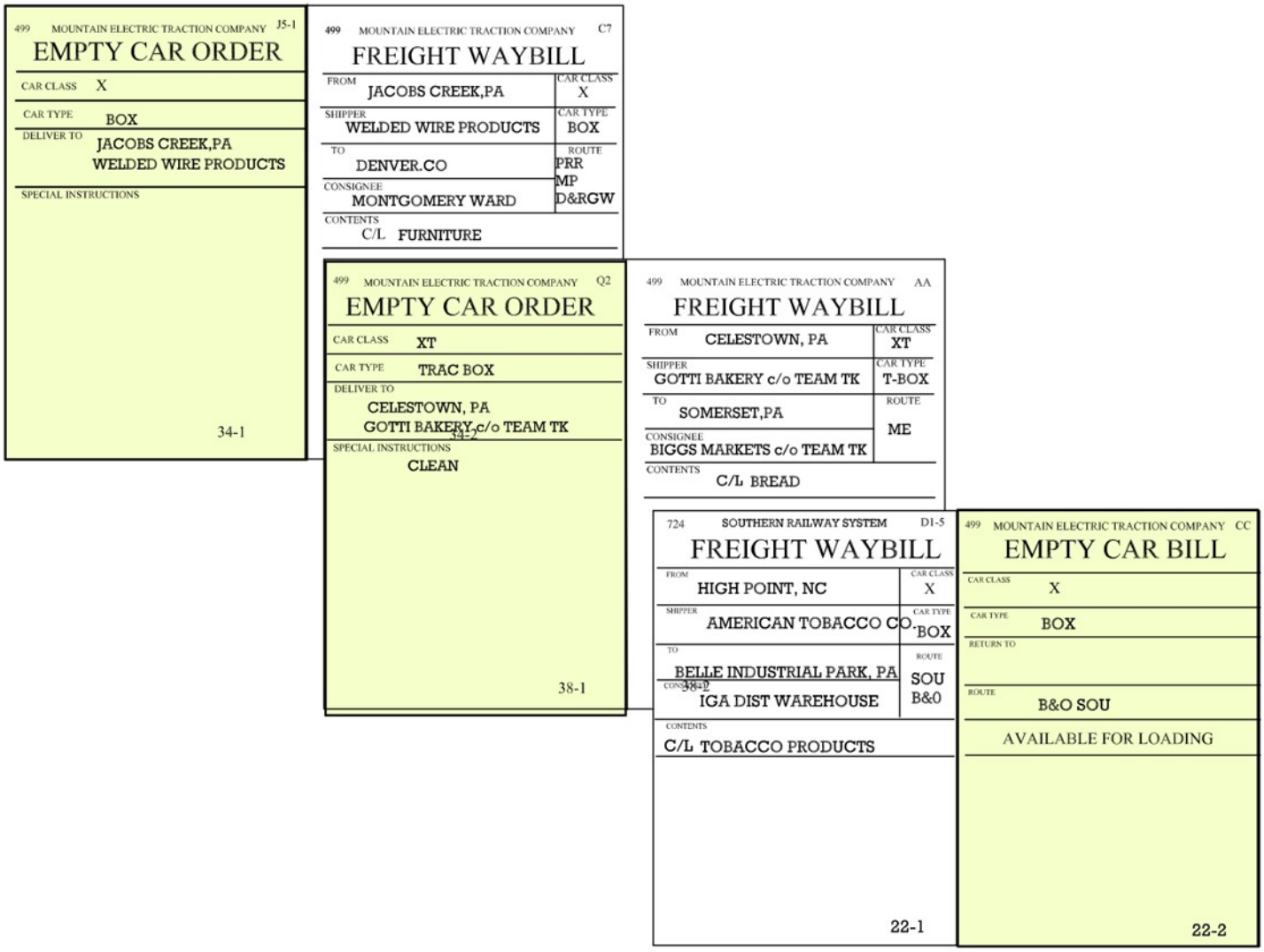
This then will mean our waybills will remain printed only on the top half of the card as they now are. In the examples provided of well-designed waybills, **Photo 4**, they are printed on the full card. Since these examples have the car number included, they may be for one-time use. Or the same car will be used for the same traffic over and over, I guess.

We wanted the name of the originating railroad and the AAR accounting code on our new waybills as are on prototype waybills. This code is a number assigned by the AAR that must be used on certain interline documents that designate the originating rail company. Finding a list of these codes was a project in its own right. We put out feelers on several Facebook groups to include the model railroad operators with no luck. Finally, after some Internet surfing, we found a list on a website devoted to modeling the Southern Pacific and copied this to our Model Railroad Planning file and used it as a source for the codes. Of course, some of my codes for traction lines had to be invented since they were not parties to railcar interchange in the prototype world. This is certainly true of my fictitious Mountain Electric where the AAR code "499" has been assigned. We invented similar codes for other traction lines such as Pittsburgh Railways and West Penn Railways with which we interchange. Our new waybills are much like our old, but have the added details as shown in **Figure 8.**

Most operating layouts include off-line shippers and consignees. They are very important, and such interchanges with connecting railroads are usually the greatest traffic source and destination on any layout as is the case with most prototype roads. Some layouts have several to many such interchanges. Matter of fact, if you do not have at least one such interchange, there would be no logical reason for your layout to have cars lettered for any railroad but your own. Staging yards often provide such interchanges, as well as, serving as connections to other divisions of your own line. The actual interchange with another railroad may well be at the other end of the staging yard. Such interchanges and connecting divisions have towns, yards, shippers and consignees that are not physically modeled. But they certainly exist in the freight forwarding system as we send shipments to them and receive shipments from them! For the sake of realism, we think it is better to send a car of furniture to Mongomery Ward in Denver rather than just to the PRR interchange track. The car may actually only go to the PRR interchange track at Belle Vernon, but for us, the car is on its way to Denver!

Figure 8

EXAMPLE NEW WAYBILLS



Waybills, to be ready for blocking system use, need to identify such interchanges as the **to** or **from** data. If you only have a single interchange with an off-line division or foreign line, just the division name or foreign railroad initials are sufficient on the waybill to establish the **to** or **from** point. The interchange is often shown in the "route" information on the waybill. If more than one interchange with an off-line entity exists, the waybill needs to note which one. For example, if our Mountain Electric had more than one interchange with the P&LE, a waybill note, "via P&LE XCHG Belle Vernon", would provide the necessary information. Of course, if you have two interchanges with the same railroad, each will have its own and different blocking code.

All your waybills should be reviewed to ensure the information thereon provides:

1. the shipper and his location when loads are originated on your layout,
2. the point where travel on your layout begins for incoming loads,
3. the consignee and his location when the car is for delivery to a point on your layout, and/or
4. the point where travel over your layout ends for either loads going to an offline consignee or empties returning to their home road.

From this data, you can work out the destination and direction of travel so you can assign the correct blocking code.

Sometimes multiple cars move from a shipper to a consignee as a group, a block of cars. Today, unit trains are a good example of such a shipment. And sometimes a block of cars goes to a shipper for loading, but can then go to multiple consignees from that shipper as individual cars. On the last layout we did this poorly, and the train crews ended up with a handful of car cards and waybills that were awkward and really unnecessary to deal with. This time around, we have decided to use block waybills for such shipments that will account for all cars on a single waybill. This will reduce the paper to one piece rather than the fistful previously.

In the real world, a similar thing occurred for coal traffic where I came from. Empty coal cars were returned to a yard after unloading by a consignee. The empties were just shoved into tracks reserved for such empties. When a mine notified the railroad they needed, say 25 empties to load on Tuesday, the Yardmaster made up an Empty Car Order without car numbers, only specifying the count of cars required and the class of cars required. The switching crew used the waybill to just grab 25 suitable cars from the empty tracks and move them to a classification or departure track so they could be sent to the shipper. The switching crew added the car numbers to the waybill. These cars were taken to the mine for loading as a single block of cars. The same thing would be true for most commodities such as pulpwood, sugar beets, grain, lumber, crude oil, fruit, produce, livestock, etc.

And we may be using confusing terminology here: ” block of cars” in the above context is different from “blocking cars”.” Block of cars” is a group of cars going to one place together. “Blocking cars” is the action of sorting cars into necessary order for trains.

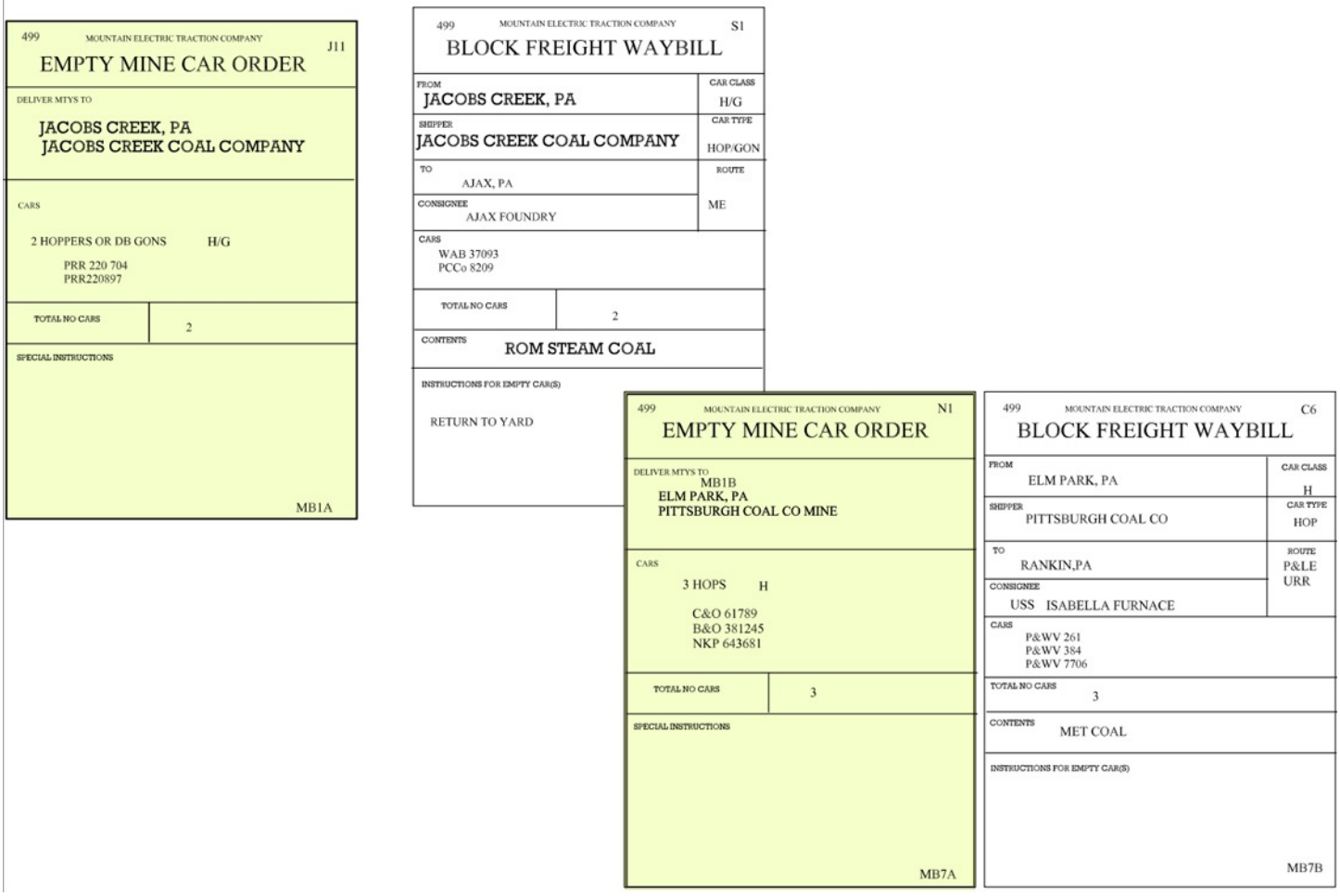
On our layout, we have many hoppers and drop bottom gons for coal service. Some of our cars are permanently loaded and others empty. This did not happen by design, but by accident: that’s just how we built them over the years. We have divided these and put them into permanent sets of cars, for use in our mine traffic. Waybills have been prepared with the car count, and with the car initials and car numbers included thereon. Because of our short trains, and even shorter sidings, we move only two or three such cars as a block to and from the coal mines on the completed layout section. Later mines will be able to accommodate larger blocks. These waybills can be selected at random, as are regular waybills, and used to direct a movement. The Empty Car Order sends the empties to the mine, and then then, on the other side of the card, a *Block Freight Waybill* sends loads from the mine to a consignee. On operating night, a block of empties will be delivered to a mine. Between operating sessions, the empty cars are swapped, via the 0-5-0 switcher, for the loaded cars prescribed on that waybill by car number. In the next operating session, the reverse side of the waybill will direct these loads to be picked-up at the mine and delivered or forwarded to the consignee. Car number changes are an obvious departure from prototype practice, but means we can have the car numbers pre-printed on the waybills so train crews do not have the additional paperwork associated with recording the numbers. It also provides a way to deal with cars that are either unloaded or permanently loaded. Crews won’t remember what car numbers they set out as empties in the previous operating session, so the trickery is not noticeable. The waybill system remains in control of cars by car number, and paperwork is eliminated.

What we have set up for car blocks will work for now. At this point, all cars in the block will go the same consignee from the mine. We are still mulling over this issue. We will try to develop a system improvement that can deal with a block of empties delivered to a mine, and then from one to several cars going from the mine loaded to several different consignees as happens in the prototype world.

We will have such car blocks for coal and crude oil shipments and will treat both about the same way. Coal also moves in single car shipments in other circumstances. When it does, single car waybills are used just as for all non-block shipments. **Figure 9** shows two movement coal block waybills. We are still working on our crude oil block waybills, as some of the tank cars have yet to come out of the paint shop. Crude oil moves from our crude loading facility (this was a subject of an earlier article in **OSR**.), to one of several offline refineries. Blocks of crude tankers will, unlike coal, always go to a single off-line refinery consignee. When the tank cars are ready, they too will be arranged in 3 car blocks. The nice thing about closed cars like tanks, boxes and reefers is you cannot see if they are loaded or empty as is the case with hoppers and gons. We will not need to fiddle the cars and do the between-session shuffle to have car number control with these tank cars.

Figure 9

COAL MINE BLOCK WAYBILLS



Adding Blocking Codes to Waybills

With the above tasks sorted, you can now add the blocking code to each waybill. We make our waybill up using templates. Each waybill is processed in the same manner and the appropriate code added.

Since we have only worked out the blocking codes as far as Scottdale, any cars headed for points beyond Scottdale just have the tentative alpha part of the blocking code. The full and correct blocking code will be added later.

One issue we pondered was a potential problem with blocking cars for Empty Car Orders. These cars could arrive at a destination from any direction since they could come from storage or interchange tracks at either end of our railroad as well as one storage location near the middle of our road, or they could be "captured" empties from most anywhere on the layout. After some thought and testing, we concluded the system would work for them as well.

Empty Car Waybills were another issue to consider. These apply after a load has been delivered to an on-line industry and the car emptied. The Empty Car Waybill is used to move the car from that industry, where it was unloaded, and may need to be treated differently depending on what sort of car it is.

If a foreign road car, it should be routed to the appropriate interchange to send it back towards its home road in the reverse of the route it took to get to the Mountain Electric loaded. For us, the blocking code is assigned for the applicable interchange. We do not store foreign cars on the Mountain Electric preferring to move them promptly after loading or unloading to a foreign road interchange as quickly as possible to avoid paying the per diem charges that will apply at midnight.

But, if the car is a Mountain Electric car, it could need to go to any of three different locations for storage, wherever space is available. For this reason, these Mountain Electric Empty Car Waybills will have a blocking code of **STOR**. A car with such a waybill will be moved first to the terminal at one end of the Mountain Electric in the direction the train is going. If there is no room for empty cars at the terminal, a consultation with the dispatcher can determine where space is available, and a second move can take it there. Moving the car to one of the terminals is a good first choice as most of our storage occurs at one of these two points on the Mountain Electric.

The car could also be a capture located anywhere on the railroad and confiscated for loading and forwarding toward its home road. When a car is confiscated, the Empty Car Waybill is temporarily superseded by placing an Empty Car Order over it in the pocket of the car card. The car can be delivered to an online customer for loading and then sent off to its consignee. When the car is unloaded again, the Empty Car Order is removed and the earlier Empty Car Waybill becomes effective again. Generally, the car is well off the ME Ry by then and not a problem for us any longer.

There is a school of thought among some operations gurus that empty cars should not be routed via waybills. In their way of thinking, when the shipment portion of the waybill is removed from the car card, the car should be able to find its own way back to its home road. We wanted to make sure the home route (the reverse of the route the car had taken when loaded) is obvious so we can send the car back to the correct interchange. And, on the prototype, Empty Car Waybills are used to return cars to their owner. Therefore, we have chosen to use them.

Of course, there are exceptions to most rules just to make life more interesting. Sometimes home road empty cars need to always go to a particular storage location. This occurs because the car is always sent offline via a specific interchange for specific loading, or it is associated with an industry at a particular on-line location. In this case, a blocking code could replace the generic **STOR.** We have a slide on-slide off milk container on a flat car, and a milk reefer, that routinely travel only between the dairy at Jacobs Creek and off-line consignees in the urban Pittsburgh area via the Pittsburgh Railways interchange at Belle Vernon. It would not make sense to send these cars to storage at Somerset at the other end of the railway.

Our new waybills are computer printed on light card. They are sized to fit into the car card pockets and our current waybill box slots. They can be cutout, folded and/or glued to provide the two-sided details. When a different color is required on one side such as for empties or an incoming perishable load, each side is printed separately on sheets of different color. A page numbering system is used with numbers at the bottom to keep all the waybill sides organized.

Our new waybills, shown in **Figure 8**, are two-movement waybills with one on each side of the form. The first on the left delivers an empty box car and then ships it loaded offline. Technically, the left half of this first example is the Empty Car Order that was generated by the railroad when the shipper notified the Mountain Electric an empty car was needed for loading. The important information is the car type required, X, box car, and the location where the car should be spotted, Jacobs Creek–Welded Wire Products. Jacobs Creek destination is code **J** and Welded Wire Products is the second and last industry on Siding 5 (furthest from the turnout); therefore, the numerical component of the blocking code is **5-1**. You can see the complete blocking code, **J5-1**, at the right top of the Empty Car Order. The right half, on the back of this example, is the waybill documenting and authorizing the movement of the car, once loaded, from the shipper to his customer. In this case the car is going off-line to a Mongomery Ward warehouse in Denver, Colorado, via the PRR, MP and

D&RGW and contains a carload of furniture. What is important to the blocking system is the car will leave Jacobs Creek and travel westbound to the PRR interchange track, which for us is at Belle Yard. We need alphabetic code **C** to denote the Belle Yard destination. And at Belle Yard the car needs to be switched into Track 7, numeric code **7,** which is the PRR interchange track**.** And since tracks in Belle Vernon Yard only service one customer, the code needs only a single numeric digit. The blocking code **C7** has been placed at the top right of that waybill. This is basically the way Dan did this in his approach, and it seemed good enough for us. Originally, we had the AAR code **499** both at the left and right top corner of our waybill. We just deleted the **499** at the top right and added the blocking code, **C7**, there in its place.

On the second waybill example one of our offline shippers, Gotti Bakery in Celestown, has ordered a clean car to ship a load of bread to a customer in Somerset, Pa. As the haul will be all the way via the Mountain Electric, the railway will use a traction box trailer. Since Gotti is not located on a rail siding, he will load the box trailer, Mechanical Designation XT, at the Celestown team track from road trucks. The blocking code on the Empty Car Order for delivering the empty box trailer is **Q2** for the Celestown team track. After loading, the waybill to ship the load has the blocking code **AA** as the track and position numbers at the yet-to-be-built Somerset are not yet known. The loaded car will actually go to Jacobs Creek Yard for classification and then get shoved out onto the stub of the east bound main track as that now serves as "every place east of Jacobs Creek".

The third example is for an incoming load, in a steam road box car, from American Tobacco down in North Carolina for delivery to the IGA Warehouse at the Belle Industrial Park. The blocking code for sending the load to the IGA warehouse is **D1-3**. There are 3 industries on the 1 siding at Belle Industrial Park and the IGA Warehouse is the industry closest to the siding turnout. On the other side of the load waybill is the Empty Car Waybill that returns the empty via the B&O and Southern as that is the route the load traveled. Our blocking code is therefore **CC** for the B&O interchange planned for Somerset.

In the prototype world, the car of tobacco products from North Carolina could arrive via the Southern and B&O in a Pennsy or NYC box car that had earlier been sent south loaded, was an empty returning north toward its owner, and had been confiscated and loaded when passing through North Carolina. This would mean that after unloading at Belle Industrial Park, the car would not need to go first east to Somerset then back south via the B&O and Southern. It could just be forwarded west to the Pennsy or P&LE(NYC) interchange at Belle Yard on the layout. When we select cars to pair with a waybill, we pick cars that come from the same area as does the load to avoid this issue. Some simplification of prototype happenings is necessary, and this is a good example of where it is needed. We have tried to build up our car fleet to suit our shipments and vice versus. For example, we have a brewery that always seems to need glass bottles to package their brew. So, we have a box car from the Muncie & Western Railroad. The M&W is a shortline in Muncie, Indiana that is owned by and services the Ball Manufacturing Company there that makes glass containers. The waybill ships loads of bottles from Ball at Muncie and the M&W box car is used for the loads. When empty, the car is routed back west to Muncie. Similarly, one of our customers, Wurst Bros Drilling, receives carloads of drilling mud from Utah. These shipments arrive in D&RGW and C&S box cars. Citrus fruit comes from California in Pacific Fruit Express reefers. Shipments and the car fleet just need to be coordinated to make the empty car routing work well.

And your layout can have bridge traffic: cars coming from one interchange and going to another interchange rather than to and from on-line customers. As a result, you should have both bridge loads and bridge empties to deal with. Empty cars are routed back to the owning road by the reverse of the route taken to move them when loaded. This way, those railroads that shared in the revenue from moving the loaded car have the burden to return it empty to its owner. To accommodate this, you may get empties from Railroad A and need to deliver them to Railroad B. An Empty Car Waybill should be on the reverse side of the waybill that authorized the loaded bridge traffic movement. In theory, half the car movements on any railroad are loads and half are empties. Modeling this often-overlooked feature of prototype railroading can really increase the number of cars movements on your layout without the need to increase the number of cars. As a side, most prototype railroads went to much trouble to reduce the number of empties from the theoretical half to a more profitable number by

developing back loading traffic. To make this bridge empty traffic work on the layout, the waybills for loaded bridge traffic, after the loads from Railroad B are delivered to Railroad A for example, could be turned over and placed in a designated waybill slot at the Railroad A location and held there for several operating sessions. Then the waybills for these empties can be pulled to route the empties back to Railroad B. Of course, these empty cars can be confiscated and loaded by any of your suitable on-line industries that have products that need to be moved in the *general direction* of the railroad owning the car. This is another interesting bit of prototype railroading to add operational interest and variety to any layout.

But sometimes all the best efforts of mice and men are insufficient to bring order to chaos. We have a 6 dome Roma Wine tank car bought on a whim for some unknown reason. We had no idea how we could make that car work in the scheme of things on the Mountain Electric. Finally, we decided we could shuffle it back and forth as bridge traffic between the PRR, P&LE, B&O and P&WV interchanges (more below), and in so doing we do not need to pair it with a shipment to/from one of our online industries.

The car blocking order is not intended to dictate exactly how all switching must be done. Flexibility is required and provided. Sometimes crews will see a need to switch in another order. This can occur particularly when the cut of cars to be switched is unusually long. A road crew may elect to grab some of the cars and spot them first rather than pushing and pulling the whole cut of cars through many turnouts and several sidings. They can then return to the running track for the remainder of the cars and spot them. This will result in a change in the order that some cars are spotted, but the blocking strategy will support this.

Another point to note is that the strategy does not dictate precise sequential switching order all the time. The strategy allows common sense to prevail. At our Scottdale, when eastbound a cut of cars for Sidings 1, 2 and 3, can be grabbed from the train, and shoved first into Siding 3, then 2, then 1. This will be faster than grabbing only the car(s) for Siding 1 and switching then onto Siding 1, returning for the car(s) for Siding 2, and switching it/them, then going back for cars for Siding 3……The strategy is intended to make things efficient for you – not perfectly easy for you. Some thinking is left to be done!

If you have quite a few cars on a large layout with many industries, adding all the blocking codes can be seen as a formidable task. But it does not need to be done at one time. Probably the first task would be to work out your alpha codes for destinations. The numeric portion of the code can be done track by track, destination by destination, and over any length of time. As soon as codes for destinations are sorted, the waybills can be updated with the alpha portion of the blocking codes. Once started you will begin to see some benefits as cars will appear at destinations in an efficient order for switching. Eventually, all trains will benefit from the strategy.

Other Outliers and Oddballs

All systems struggle and sometimes stumble with exceptions. There are always weird and wonderful issues that crop up and don't seem to fit the mold. This makes system design more difficult and frustrating. Often to resolve the issues just some creative thinking is required. We have a few of these and deal with them as follows:

1. Our blocking strategy deals mainly with *towns* and *yards* where cars are placed and pulled. *Stops,* on the other hand, have no sidings and are mostly associated with passenger operation. But raw milk collection, empty milk can return, and LCL drop-off and pick-up are freight tasks that can occur at *stops* as well. Way toward the back end of our priorities list is a potential project to work out a system for controlling LCL freight using the waybill system. For this reason, we see a need to treat *stops* as we do *towns* and *yards*. Destination codes are provided for *stops* that could have this traffic.

2. Some destinations have just one industry on one siding. We deal with them by using a blocking code of **X1** where **X** is the alphabetical code for that destination. Similarly, where there is no siding to be switched,

but a blocking code is required possibly for LCL freight; just the destination code, such as Monessen Road, code **E**, is used.

3. How do we deal with a set-out at a facing point siding where there is no local run around facility? There are two alternatives for this:

The car can be kept in the train and set out at the next destination that has a double ended siding and an appropriate place to park the car. The waybill for the car would be put into the "Pick-up" pocket of the waybill box at the set-out destination. A train with spare capacity moving in the opposite direction can then pick up the car and take it back to the correct destination and switch it to the consignee. This may result in the car sitting idle for a day or even more and was a typical event in older prototype rail operations.

Secondly, the crew will hopefully notice that the car will be impossible to switch at the intended destination when reviewing the cars in their train before leaving the starting terminal or yard. The crew can then plan to switch that car in front of the locomotive at the last double ended siding before reaching the intended destination so it can be shoved into the correct siding when the destination is reached.

Railroads use both these alternatives. Shoving cars ahead of a locomotive for some distance at road speed is frowned on by some railroads. Some roads probably have required practices addressed in their procedures manuals we discussed earlier that tell crews how to deal with this issue. Other roads leave the choice to the discretion of the road crew. On the Mountain Electric our procedure is to use the second alternative when the car is perishable or of a priority nature and use the first alternative when there is no urgency to the delivery.

As we use a pink waybill for perishable and priority shipments, the color should attract the attention of the crew and allow them to plan the move well in advance to ensure the perishable or priority shipment arrives at the consignee as soon as practical.

4. Jacobs Creek Yard presents a unique problem. The rule that eastbound trains are switched in ascending numeric order and westbound trains are switched in descending order does not exactly work here. Trains from both the east and west enter Jacobs Creek Yard from the same end and probably pull into the same track. The approach to the yard forms a "Y" (see **Figure 3)**. On those occasions where arriving trains need to switch the cars, as opposed to just shoving them into the classification yard tracks, the westbound train is probably best switched by breaking the train behind the last car for facing point sidings, setting those cars onto a parallel track, grabbing the cars for the trailing point sidings, and spotting them first. The loco can then return and run around the remaining cars and shove them into their facing point spots. The eastbound trains would be switched as normal.

5. Looking at the track diagram in **Figure 4**, you will notice a switching location with the blocking code of **J12**. The reader may wonder why this trailing point destination is not grouped with the other trailing point destinations. This is the loop at Jacobs Manufacturing Company, and it is switched in a unique way. A freight needing to go to Jacobs Manufacturing must do so with the permission of the dispatcher and at times to avoid interfering with substantial local passenger traffic. And there is actually no siding at Jacobs Manufacturing and cars are loaded or unloaded there while sitting on the main.

6. The Mountain Electric is basically an east-west oriented line. But the portion from Jacobs Creek to Celestown and Elm Park is north-south. We had to play around with different switching ideas to work out the optimum way to switch Celestown and Elm Park. Again, we did this by making up hypothetical trains of cars for destinations and switching the cars on paper. Cars headed south from Jacobs Creek are best blocked in descending order as are westbound trains. You might notice in the letter code assignment there appears to be an

anomaly with CT coded as **Q** and Elm Park coded as **N**. These two codes were changed to allow the cars to be switched more easily.

Note at Celestown that steam road cars are not allowed to operate on Main Street (MS) due to town ordinance (**See Figure 5**). A train arriving would be blocked in descending order as *Loco, Q1, N1* and *M2-2*. (Cabooses are not used between Jacobs Creek and Celestown/Elm Park.) On the way into town the car blocked M2-2 can be set out on Siding 2 at East commerce (EC) with train then continuing on to Commerce Street (CO). The loco will run around the train and via Westmoreland Ave (WS) come to Celestown proper and drop the car blocked Q2 at the station siding. It can then proceed up to Elm Park and set out the car blocked N1 at Mine 9 there. It would then return to Commerce Street via Westmoreland Avenue with any cars it had pulled, run around its train, and would be ready to depart back to Jacobs Creek.

7. At Belle Yard it is only necessary to block cars for destinations from Belle Yard to Jacobs Creek. Any cars going further would be re-blocked at Jacobs Creek when making up trains there.

8. Trains going north from Celestown, CT, do not require blocking there. At Jacobs Creek the cars will be shoved into local, west or eastbound classification tracks which will roughly block them. They will be thoroughly blocked while being made up into trains to go further.

A freight forwarding system allows us to transition from just running trains to operating a model railroad. Having a strategy for blocking cars will make operations easier and more effective. And it will make running your railroad more realistic and less stressful. Using the alpha-numeric coding will mean all your operators can block cars effectively for your road crews. Switching along the way will be much more efficient and there will be less turmoil and late running trains.

And don't take all this as gospel or the last word. We are certainly not experts. We have modified this for our use and are happy with it so far. We suspect that further tweaking will occur. Certainly, we plan to try and develop an add-on for dealing with LCL freight like our milk and empty cans, etc. You may see the need to customize it further for your use as we have seen fit to do. Any ideas you have to improve or add features to Dan's approach would be of interest to many of us. We encourage you to provide your thoughts and ideas, as when working together we are bound to do a better job at most any task. But we do believe the basic approach developed by Dan is as good a system as exists out there, and it makes a great starting point for a personalized car blocking strategy. See if this will work for your layout. And share your thoughts with us in future issues of **OSR.**

Building a Substation Car for the CG&W

By Martin Brechbiel

I saw a reprint of an article by William Shopp on building a substation car for your electric railway. I have no idea from what publication it had been pilfered, probably an older *Railroad Model Craftsman*. But it was pretty basic in direction and generic, and then left a lot up to the modeler's discretion. Having some small component of my modeling interest resident in traction, I thought that this would make a nice simple project to pursue and get a unique piece of rolling stock at the interface of traction and steam modeling.

First, this car needed a good solid base and that starts with the usual flat car blank. But then that blank gets modified to add a round end for interfacing as a traction car with a radial coupler at one end. So once the basic flat car frame was assembled, I pulled out a resin casting left over from many years ago when I was scratchbuilding CERA traction freight trailers (**Photo 1**). While this is a resin component from my parts bin, one could easily make and shape this from a bit of basswood. The same decking on the flat car was applied to the resin part (**Photo 2**). In this case that's not quite the usual flat car blank to build.

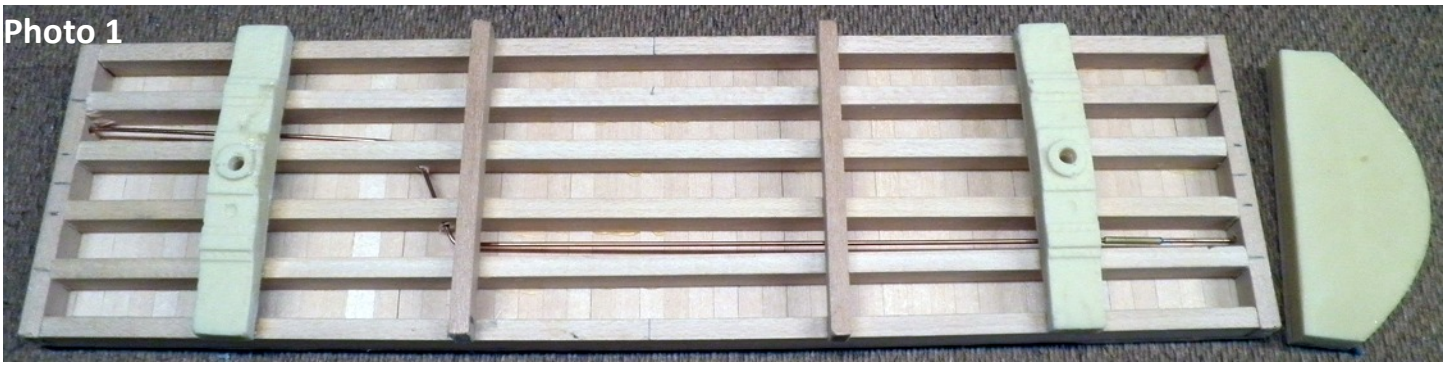


Photo 1

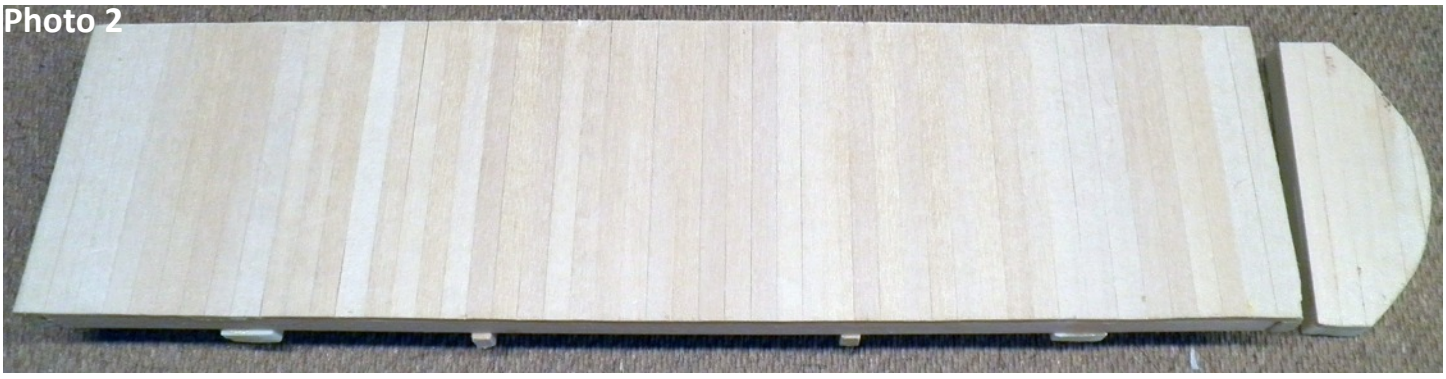


Photo 2

Adding the truss rod system to the underbody took a little modification to accommodate that round end addition. If you look at some of my other articles, I generally run the truss rods through the car using surgical silk anchoring it at each passage through the end with a larger nbw casting. After I had installed the full underbody, I had to hollow out the resin end and also trim off the bolt heads of the nbw castings to get the end joinery to line up tightly (**Photo 3 next page**). Once set into place and secure with Goo and CA, I closed over that hollowed out area and then rest of the exposed resin with more decking (**Photo 4 next page**).

Photo 3

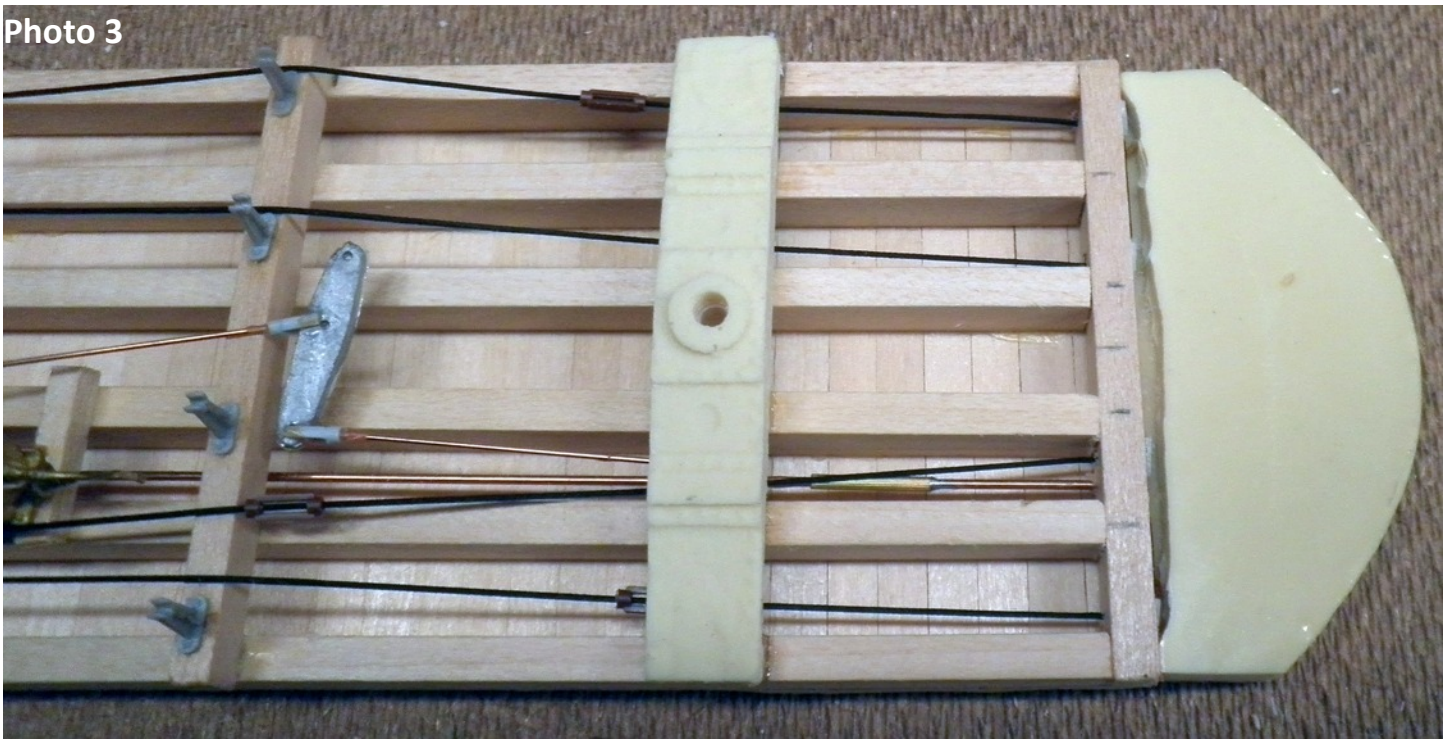
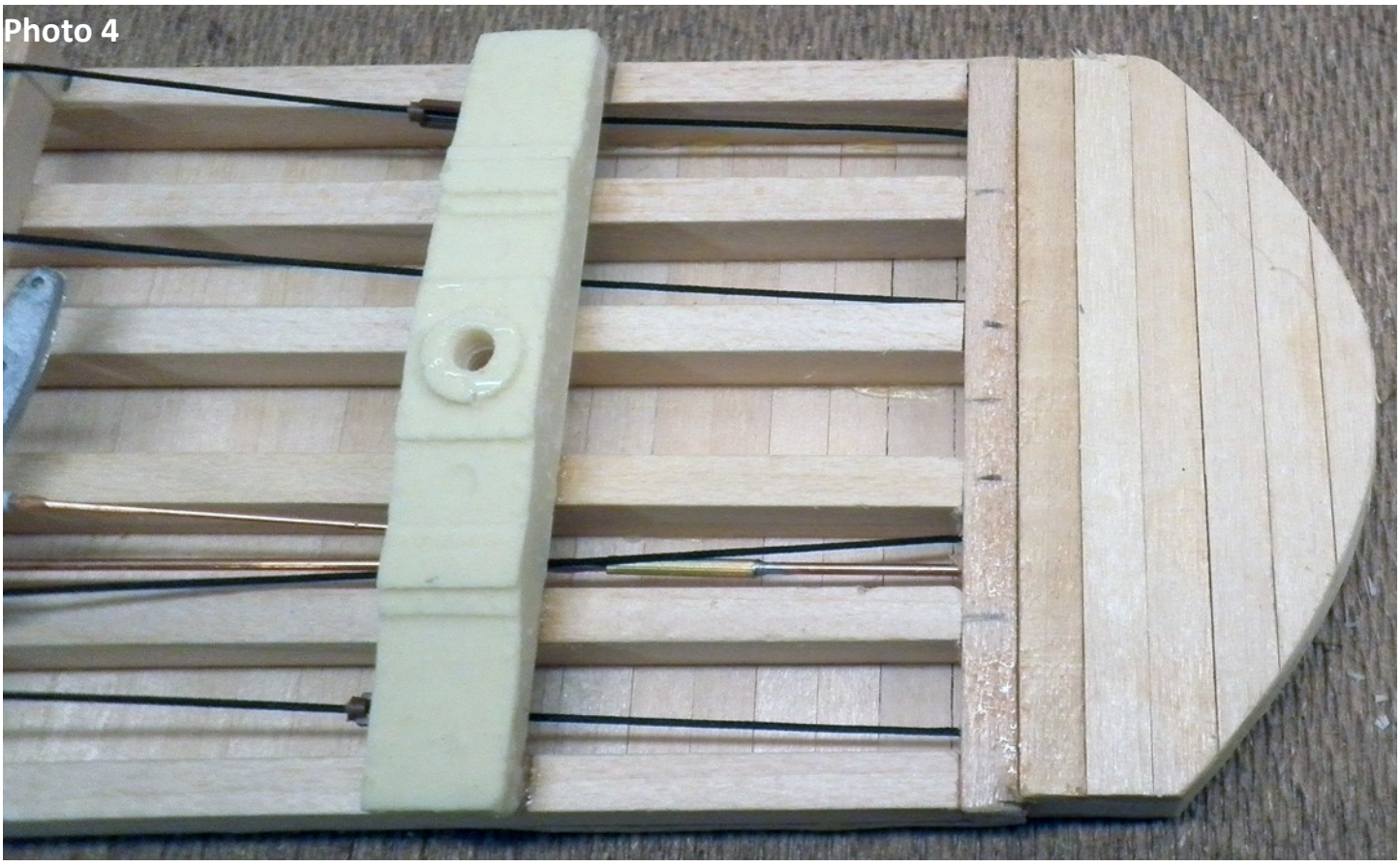


Photo 4



I cut out two sides and two ends to set the dimensions of the house part of this car, and then also to get the roof stock roughed into size (**Photo 5 next page**). The roof started out with a regular length of milled freight car roof stock. The overhang on the sides was extended slightly. Then the end was capped over to match the sides of house length. After that was set, the roof was extended to add an amount of overhang similar to the sides such the cut out ends would rest under the roof (**Photos 6-8 next page**).

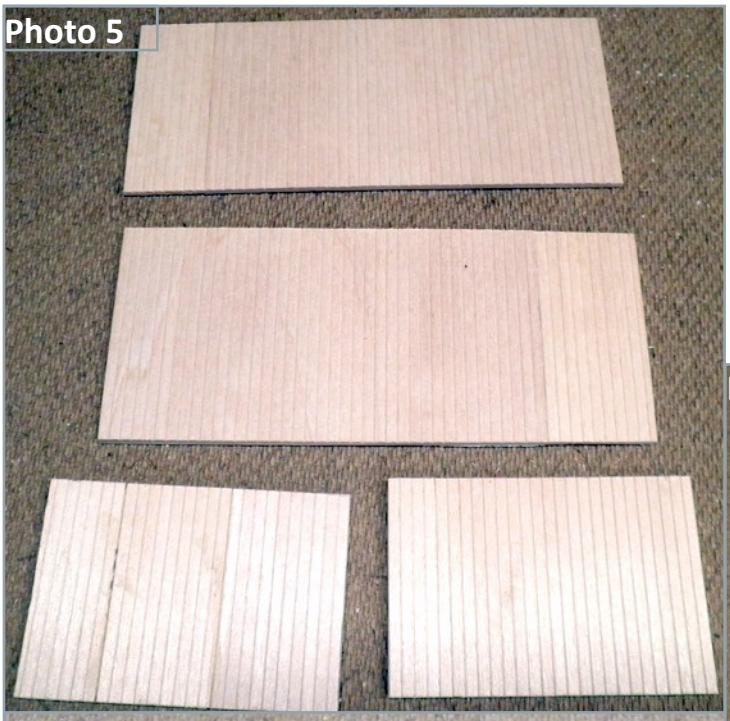


Photo 5


Photo 6


Photo 7


Photo 8

Going back the sides, one side was fitted for a door with some milled "z" stock. Ladders from BTS were assembled from laser-cut parts (**Photo 9**). The door was built up from 1/32" scribed siding and some HO 1" x stripwood such that it fits up under the "z" stock. Two white metal vent castings (Scale City Designs) were added and then the door was put in place along with a few brass details (**Photos 10-12**). The other side did get a ladder and a single metal vent casting.


Photo 9

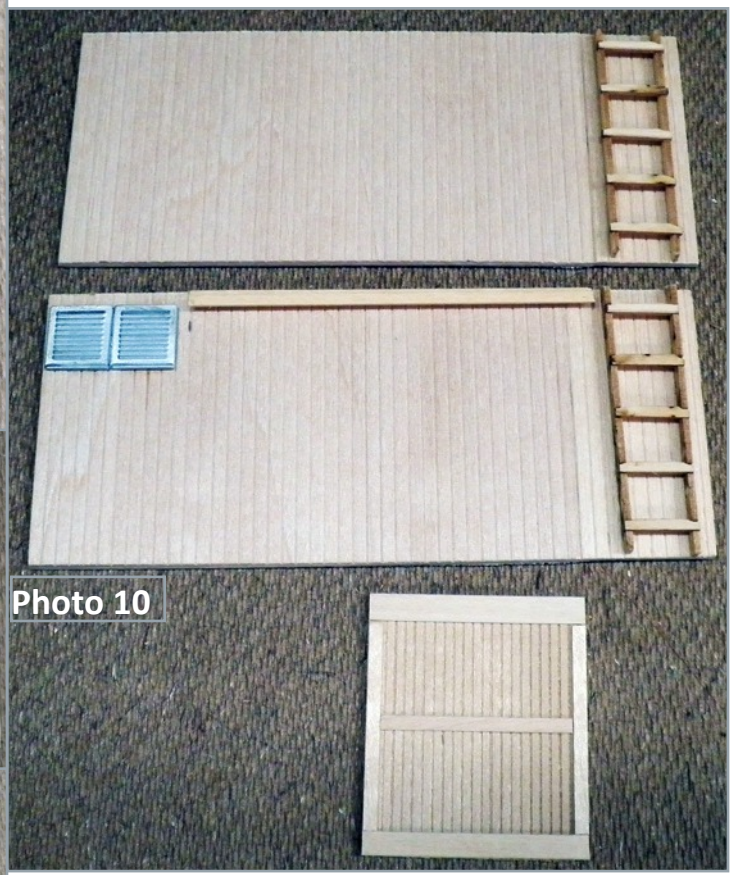


Photo 10

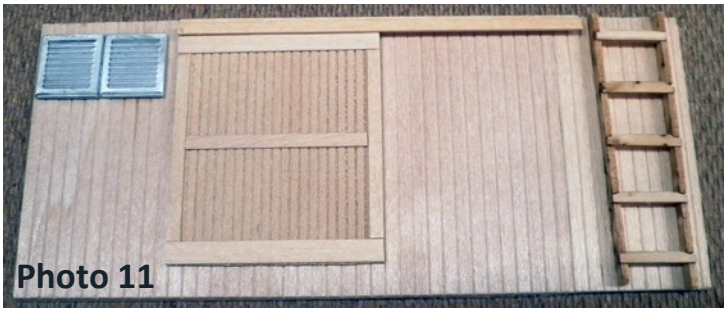


Photo 11

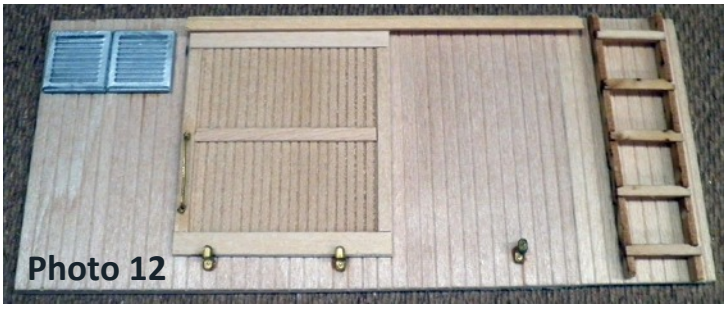


Photo 12

The sides were mounted to the car base, assembled together with the roof, and the and back end was added. These also had been modified with three white metal vent castings and another ladder (**Photos 13-15**).

Photo 13

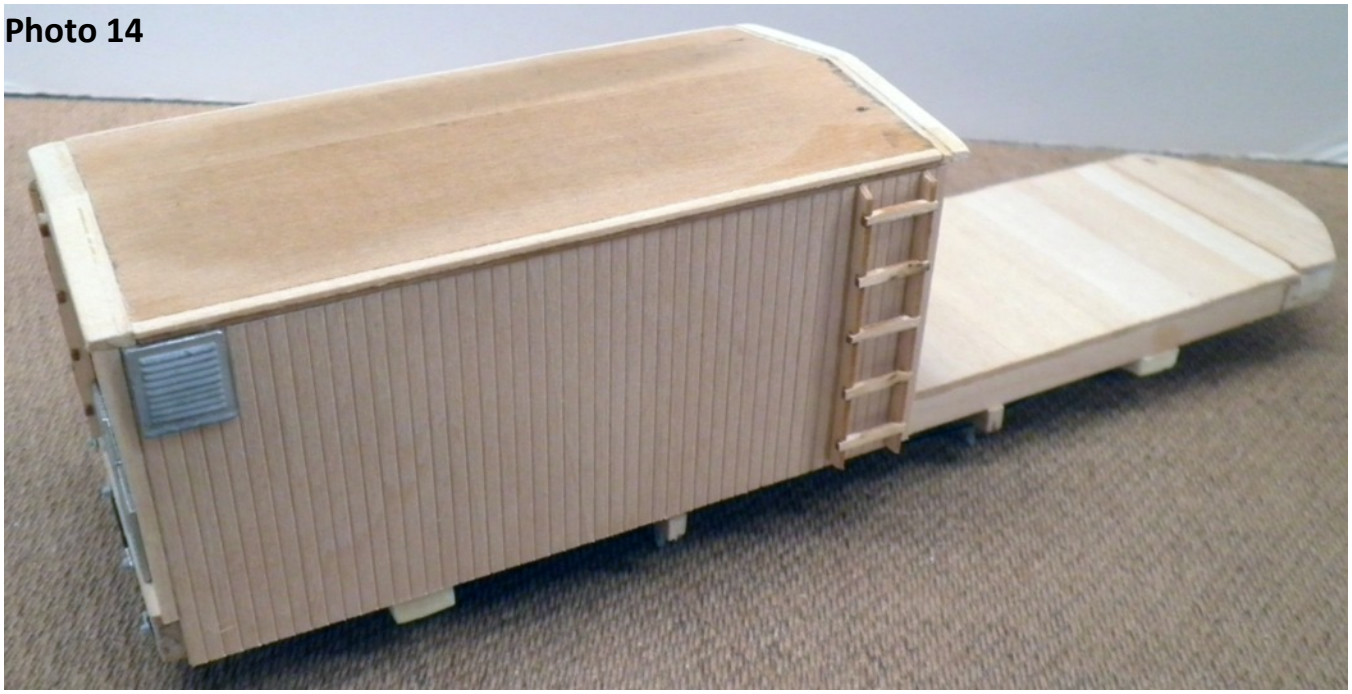
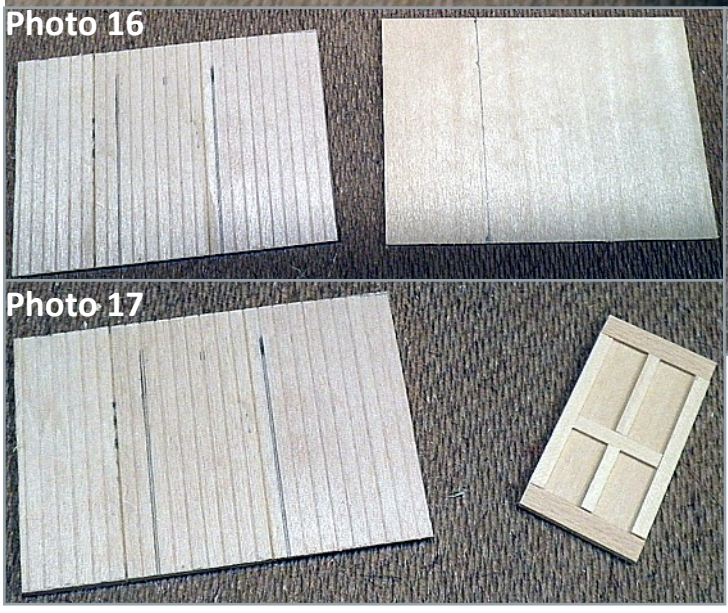
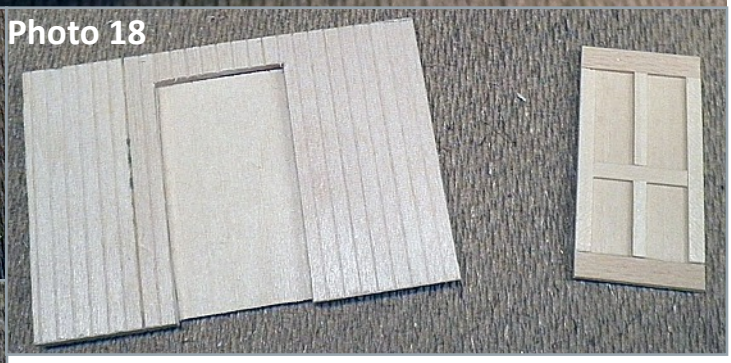


Photo 14

Photo 15





The remaining end was built up from scrap scribed siding. A door was built up on top of some 1/32" basswood and framed out with some various HO 1" x stock stripwood (**Photos 16, 17**). The location for the door was sketched out on the scribed siding. This was opened up and some more 1/32" basswood was glued to the back of this end for both reinforcement and as a surface for the door to rest against and be glued into place (**Photo 18**).

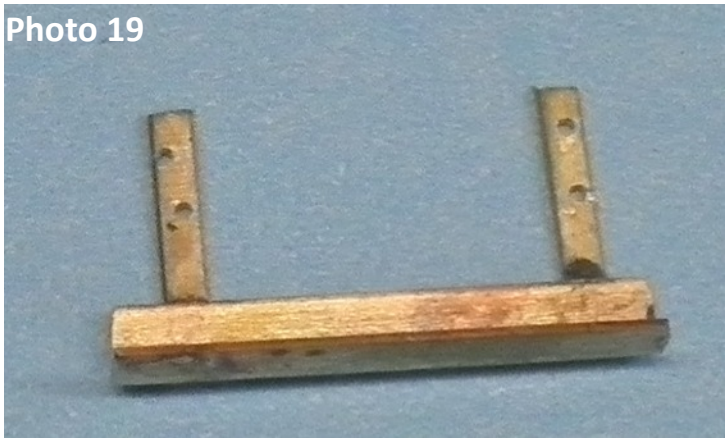


Photo 19

The side door needed a step. This step was fabricated by soldering some 1/8” angle and some 0.015” x 0.060” brass. Holes were drilled in the flat stock to accept pins for mounting to the car side (**Photo 19**). Some assorted stirrup steps and one fabricated step (0.015” x 0.060” brass) and a grab iron were added to the side without the door. A grab from an older Stewart-Lundahl kit was added next to the ladder. Grandt Line stake pockets were added to the side sill (**Photo 20**). The car side with the door also received stirrup steps and the larger fabricated step was glued and pinned into place (**Photo 21**). This photo also provides a good side view of the K brake cylinder and truss rod system.

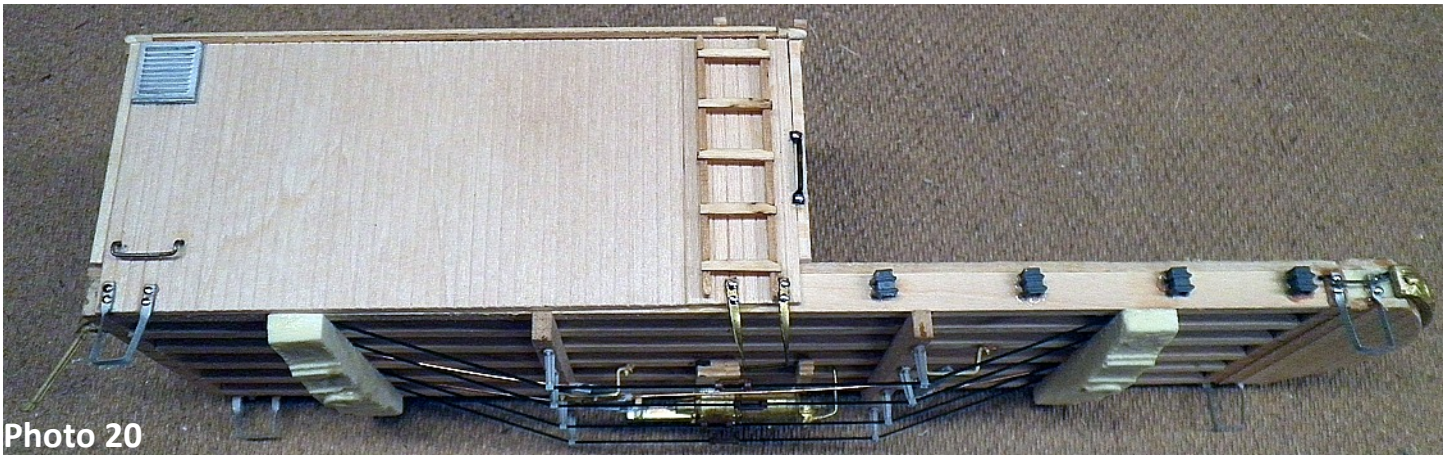


Photo 20

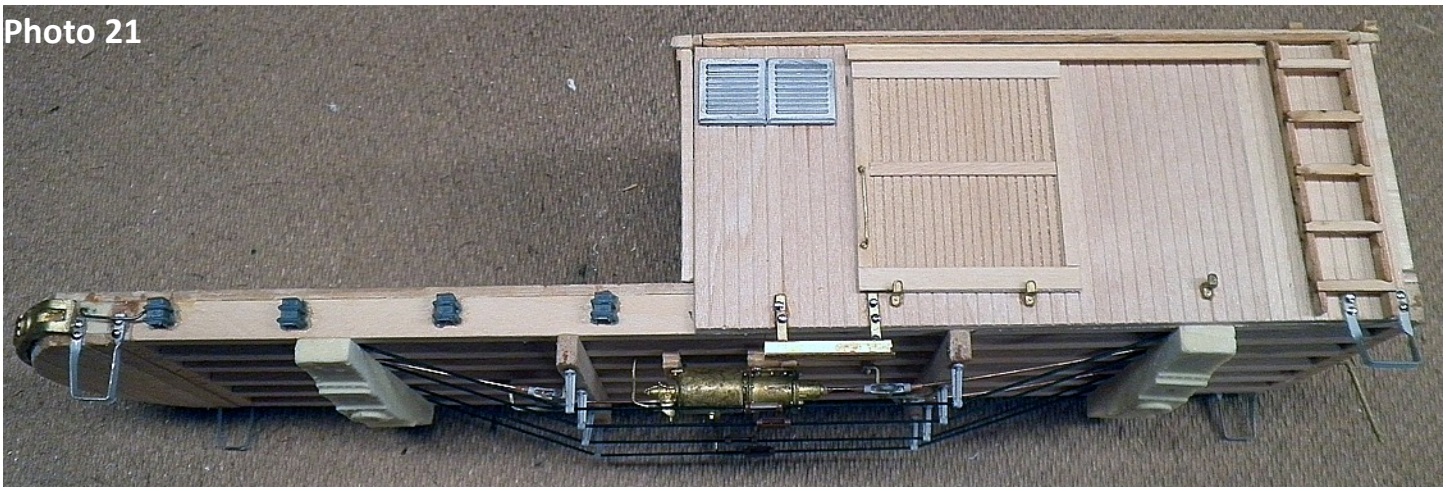


Photo 21

Around the curved trolley end, a cast brass anti-climber (Kemtron) was added using Goo and CA (**Photo 22 next page**). This casting had to be trimmed a bit to match the radius distance and then “adjusted” a bit to the actual radius prior to mounting. On the other end one can that the truss rod ends are present but also now grab irons had been added along with an air hose (PSC) (**Photo 23 next page**).


Photo 22

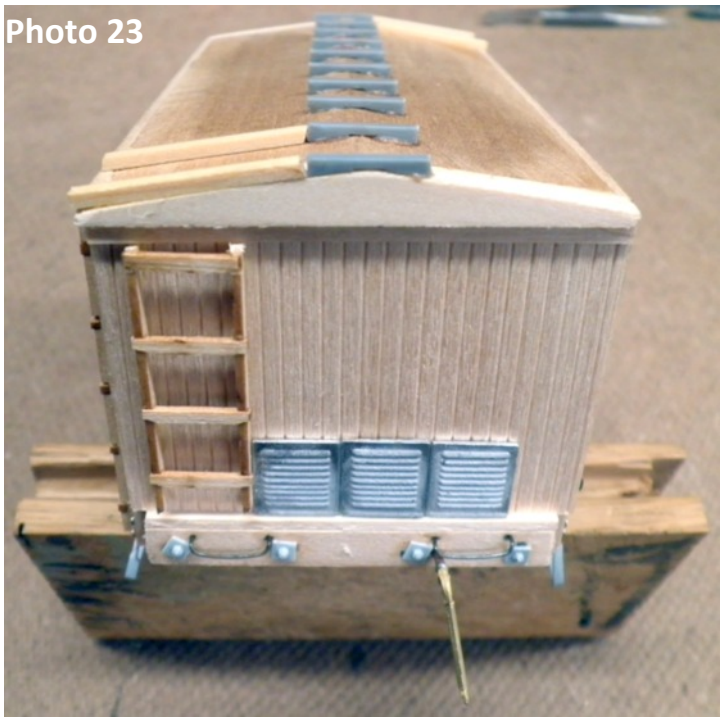


Photo 23

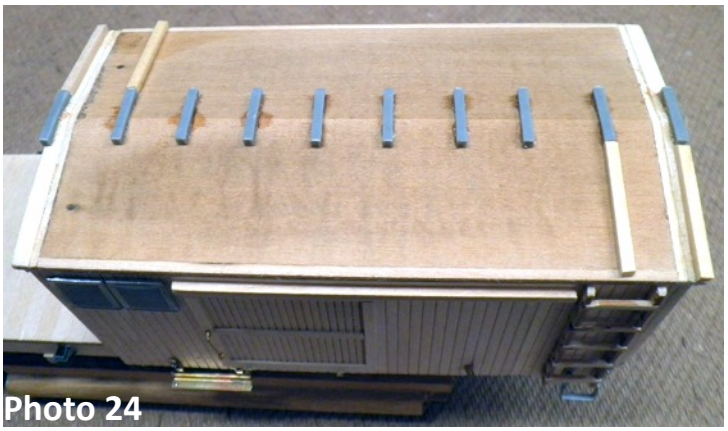


Photo 24

Finishing the roof was attended to next. Grandt Line roof walk supports were added along with supports for the end roof walk platforms (Kappler 3” x 4”) (**Photo 24**). I had some metal fencing material that was in a mislabeled plastic parts bag so real origins are unknown. This was sandwiched between 3” x 4” stakes and 2” x 4” with the stakes set into the pockets on the sides of the car to set spacing and for gluing these all together. I used Goo and CA since the fencing was metal and had some depth that the mix of adhesive would account for doubly (**Photos 25, 26**). The roof was then covered in “canvas” using single ply napkin glued down to the wood in an overlapping pattern using dilute Carpenter’s glue (**Photo 27**).

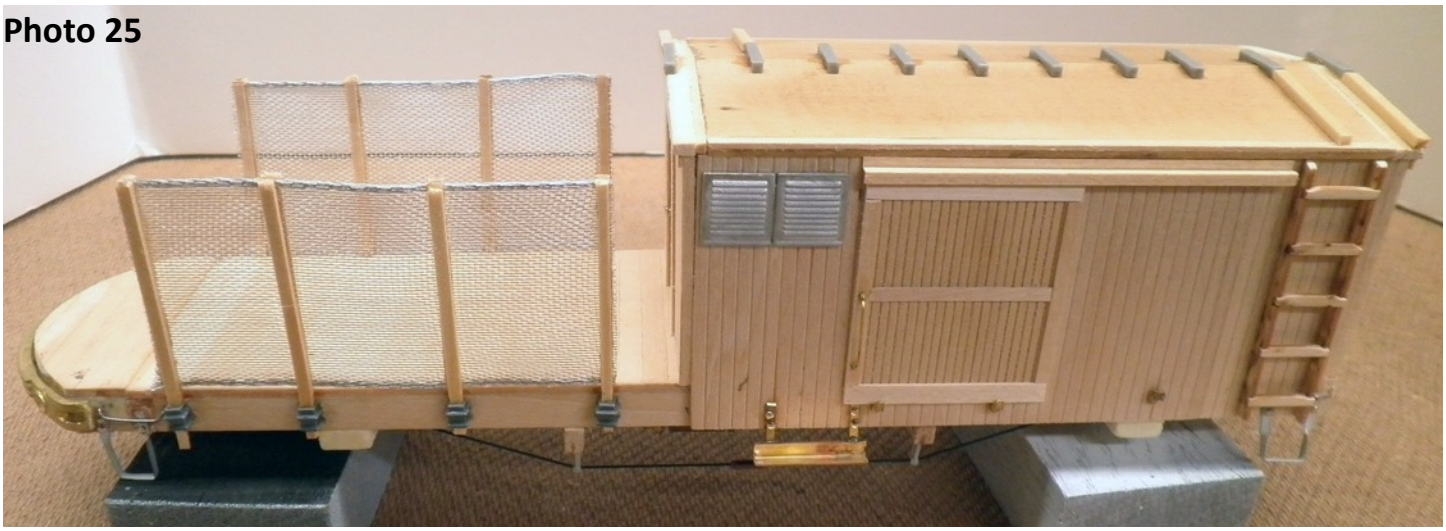


Photo 25

Photo 26

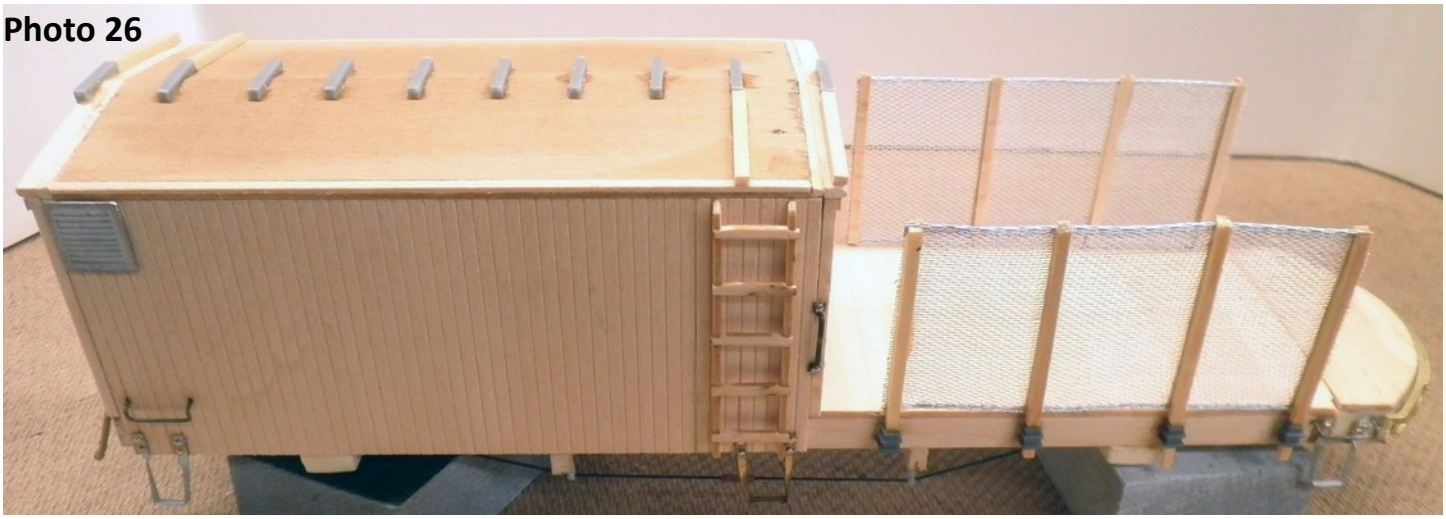


Photo 27

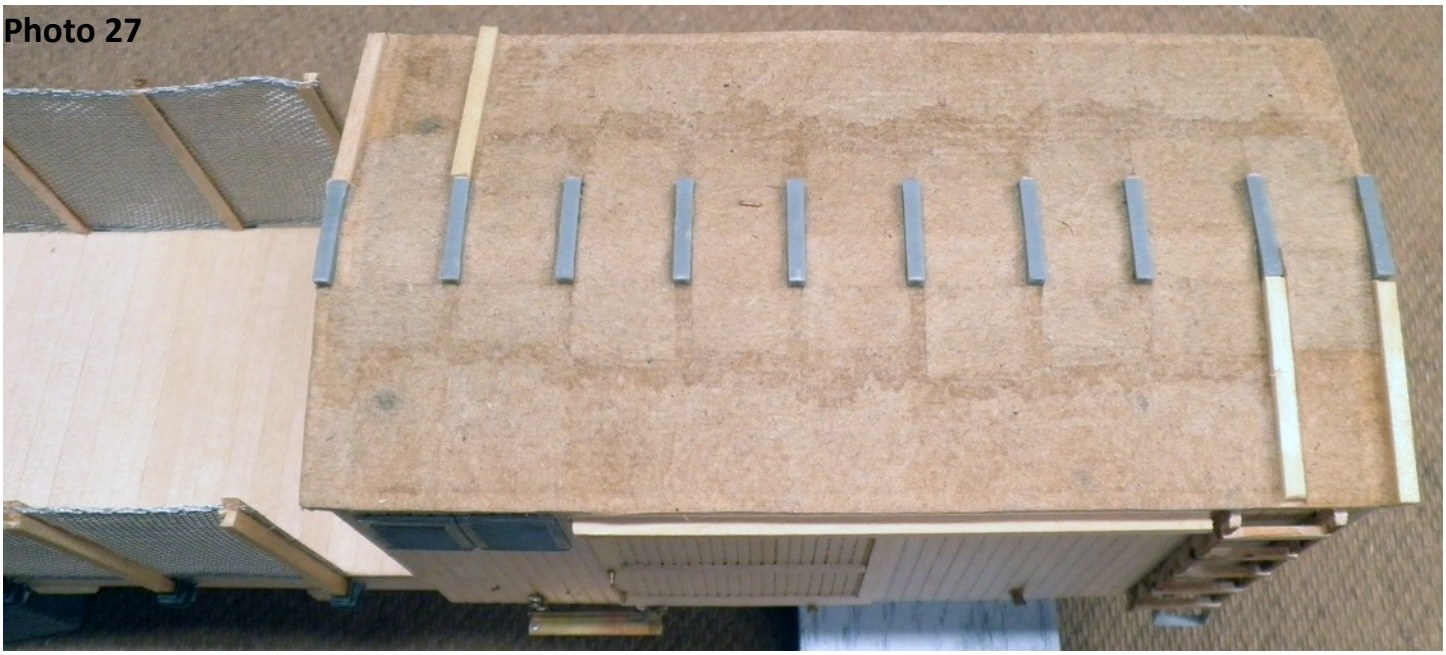


Photo 28

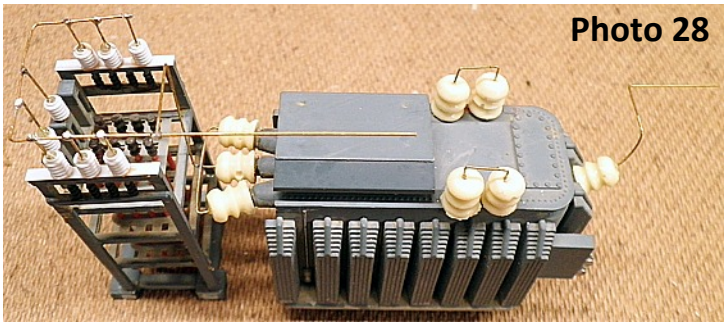
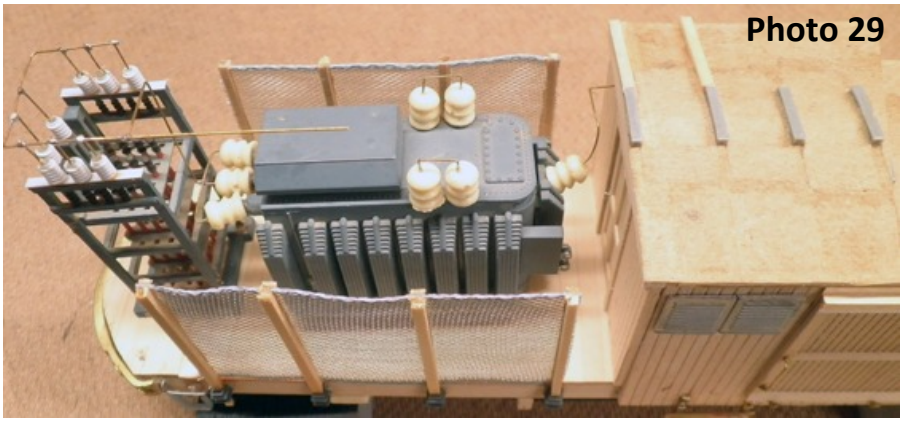


Photo 29



A transformer unit was assembled from parts that I had accrued over the years. Resin cast and ceramic insulators were appended to the two parts. These parts were then tied together using brass wire that was soldered together with a lead that was set to run back into the structure on the car (**Photo 28**). A hole was added to the end wall and prior to painting the car, the transformer assembly was test fitted into place on the deck after threading that lead wire back inside through the wall (**Photo 29**).

Photo 30

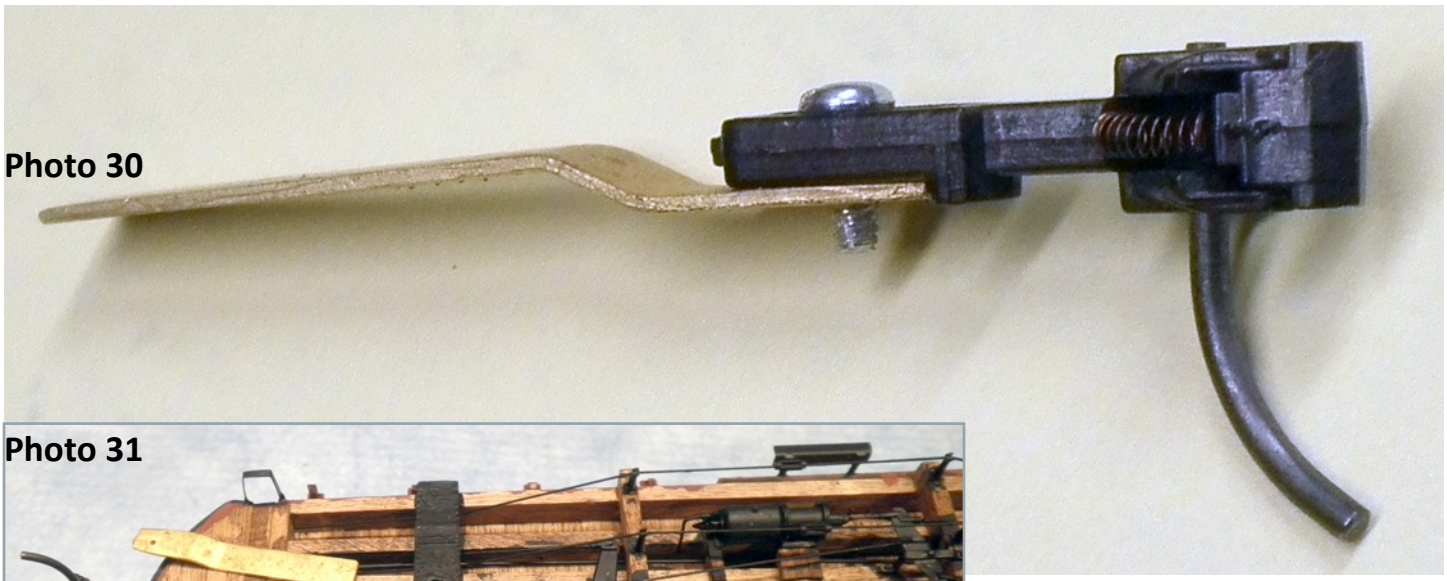


Photo 31

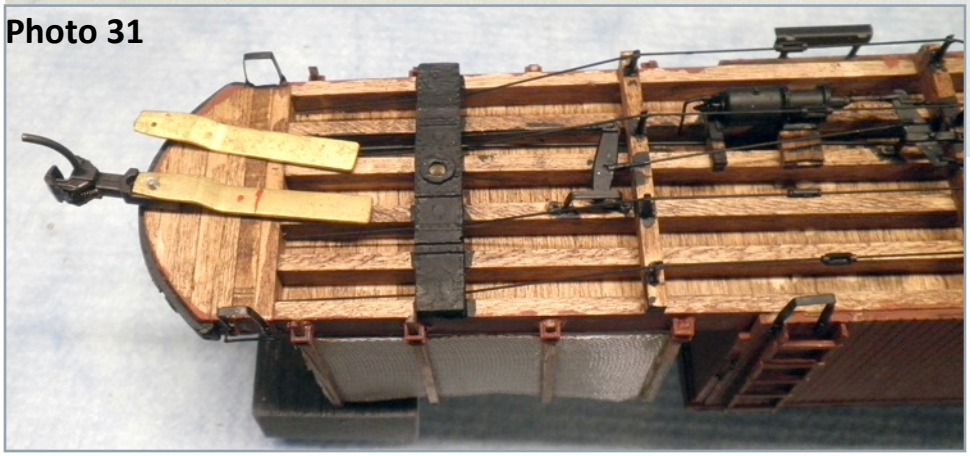


Photo 32

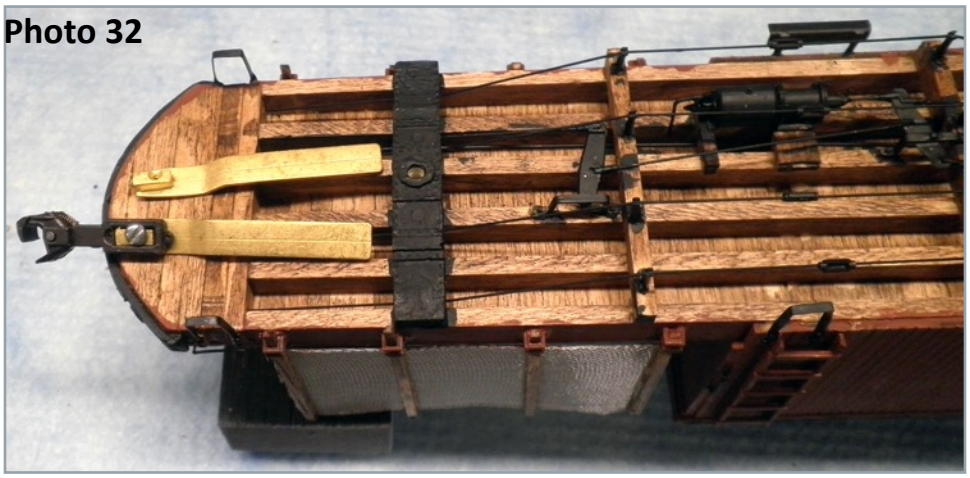


Photo 33

A single radial coupler was fabricated using a brass casting that had to be drilled and tapped to accept a 2-56 screw with a washer to hold a Kadee coupler in place (**Photos 30-32**). This was mounted to the underbody using a self-tapping screw through the underside decking and into the resin casting end (**Photo 33**).


Photo 34


Photo 35


Photo 36


Photo 37

The car body was painted Southern Freight Car Brown (Floquil), the roof was painted Dark Lark Gray (Floquil), the decking was painted CN Gray (Floquil), and the roof walk wood was painted Roof Brown (Floquil). All of the ironwork, underbody details, and trim (grab irons, steps, vents, etc.) was painted Steam Black (Polly Scale) (**Photos 34-37**).

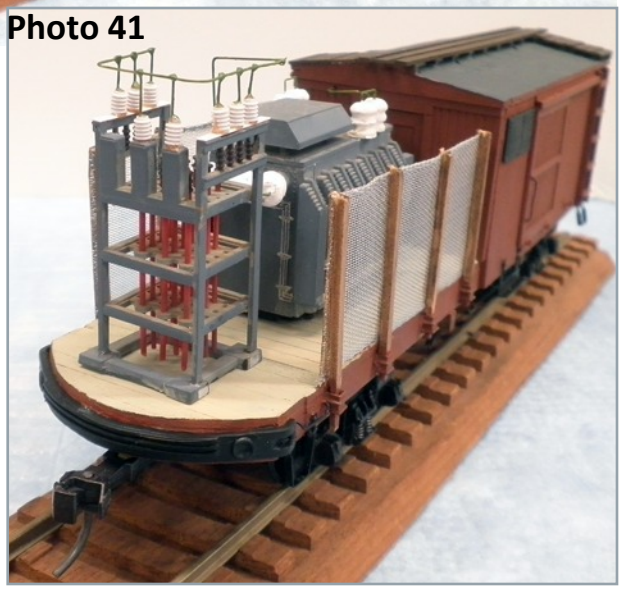
The transformer assembly was returned to its place on the deck and glued in place after clipping the excess wire. A regular Kadee coupler in a coupler box completed the other end of the car and adding archbar trucks completed the car (**Photos 38-42**).


Photo 38

Photo 39

Photo 40

Photo 41



This provided my traction modeling for the CG&W an interface with my CVRR steam line. Having an interest in both aspects of modeling gives one an interesting perspective and opportunity to build unique rolling stock.

Backwoods Coal Dealer

By Phil Camp

Let me give credit and inspiration to the source of this article. The article appeared in the November 1999 issue of *Railroad Model Craftsman*. The article is entitled "Hans Ebbe's Coal Shed" by David J. Leider. His article and pictures cover the construction of the building with an overview of the history of the business. My purpose in telling this story is not how to build the structure, but to explain and expand on the details of how the dealership operates.

I visit a local hobby train store from time to time and peruse a large collection of old magazines. I'm interested in articles of older structures and use those for inspiration for building structures and dioramas.

At first, my intent was to just build the building as a stand-alone structure. When I finished, I knew the building needed some scenery, so I had to build a diorama to make the scene complete (reminds me about a children's book entitled *If You Give A Mouse A Cookie*).

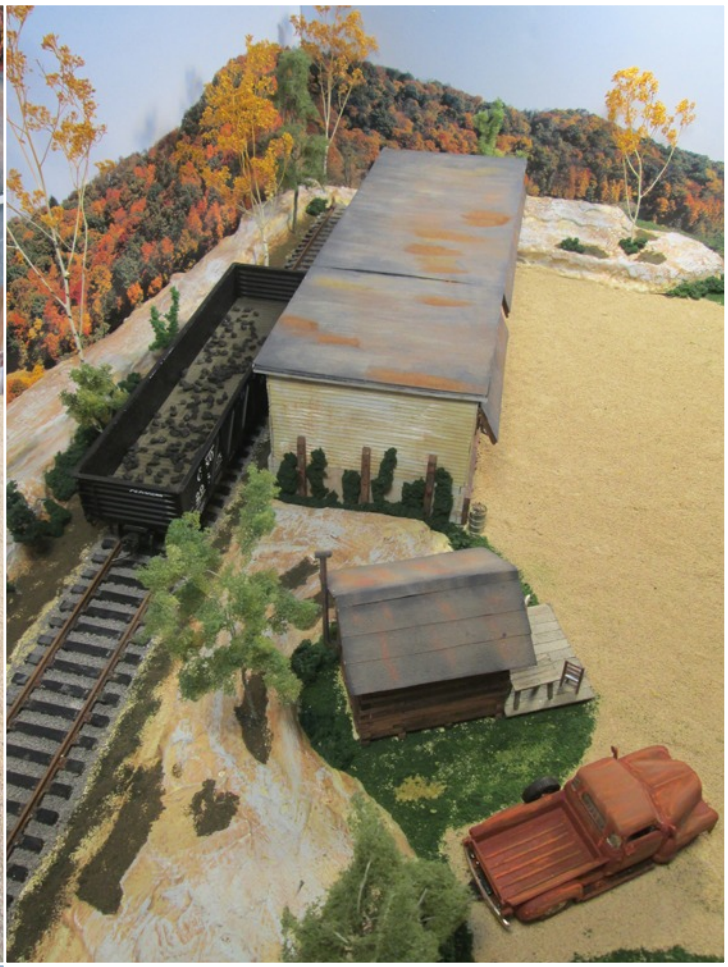
It all starts at the rear of the building where there is located a dead-end siding which accommodates a single gondola. On the rear of the building are doorways with wood covers (just like the ones seen on the front of the building). Interior walls between doors divide the area into storage bins for coal – thus allowing coal of various grades/sizes to be stored for customer pick up.

In those days, there were no conveyor belts or any automated equipment, so coal was moved from the gondola into the building by hand – one shovel at a time. Same goes for loading coal into a customer's truck on the front side of the building – one shovel at a time.

On the front side of the building, you can see small square shaped covers with a long handle. These are manually operated vent covers that can be opened or closed as needed to provide ventilation of the inside of the storage areas. On the back side of the building is an opening to allow air in or out.

As this structure is in an isolated wooded area, there are limited "creature comforts" for the workers. The owner of the dealership provided a railroad tie cabin for the workers as a place to keep warm during cold weather and/or to keep dry during rain. The cabin is equipped with a pot belly stove for heat and to cook food as needed.

The scene depicts two workers sitting around talking since they are waiting for the next customer to arrive. The dog (Perro) keeps an eye on the activities of the day as customers arrive and depart with loads of coal and occasionally chases away unwanted critters.



This story is a view of how things were done in the past – makes me appreciate the fact that I did not have to make my living shoveling coal one scoop at a time in all kinds of weather!!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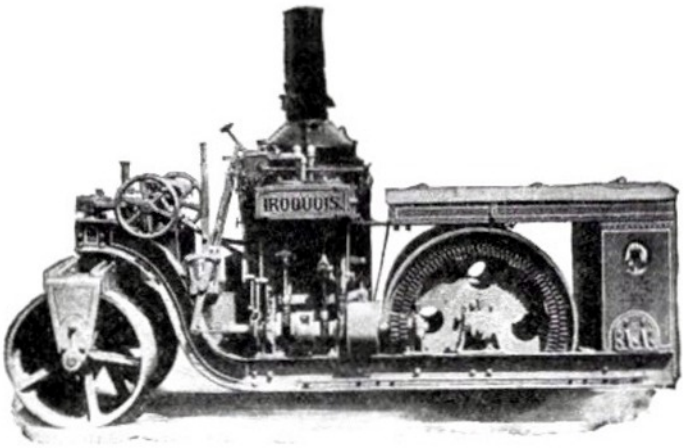
MODELING VEHICLES: Trucks

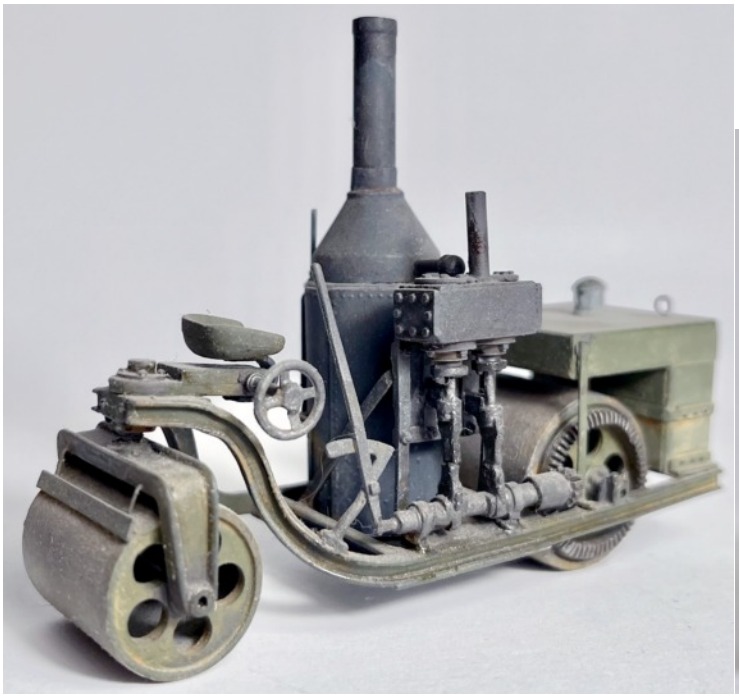
By William W. Davis

There is more to model railroading than just trains. It is one of the few hobbies that involve a wealth of different things besides the main subject - in our case trains. In order to build a layout you need more than just engines rolling stock and track. You need scenery, buildings and vehicles. Most all, our railroad layout has one or more roads, and these roads need vehicles. Over the years I have built a variety of vehicles both for myself and others. With this article, I am going to shares some of the vehicles I have in my personal collection. All of these have been either modified, kit bashed or scratch built. Some are built from kits no longer available but can be found at the many train shows around the country like O Scale West or the Chicago O Scale Meet, or at any of the national conventions or local shows.



Now I like a variety of types of vehicle. This first set is vehicles used for road building, construction or logging. In the early days of steam rollers, there was a design similar to a shay in that it has a shay type drive system.

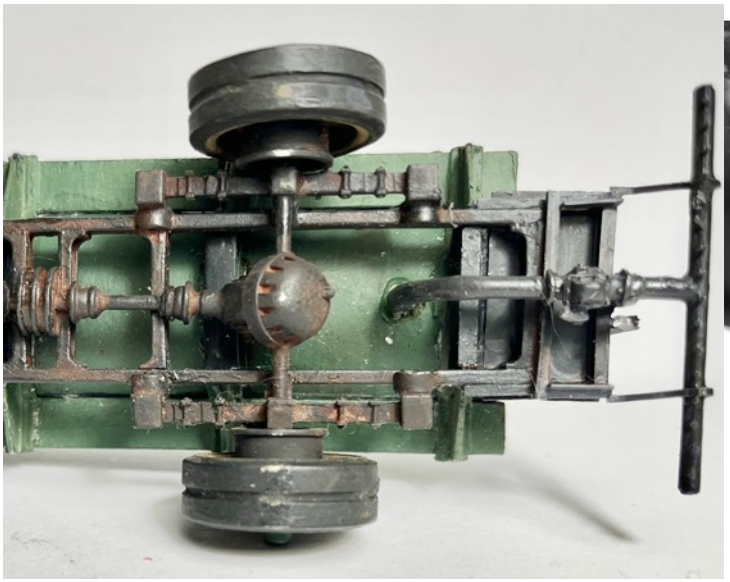
Don Winters brought out a kit for this type of steam roller. At the same time, Tom Yorke came out with a small better detailed and smaller size boiler for the steam roller. I added try cocks, a gauge and water glass to Tom's boiler. To the fuel tank I added braces and a dip stick. Finally, I added a scraper to the front wheel that keeps the wheel clean.

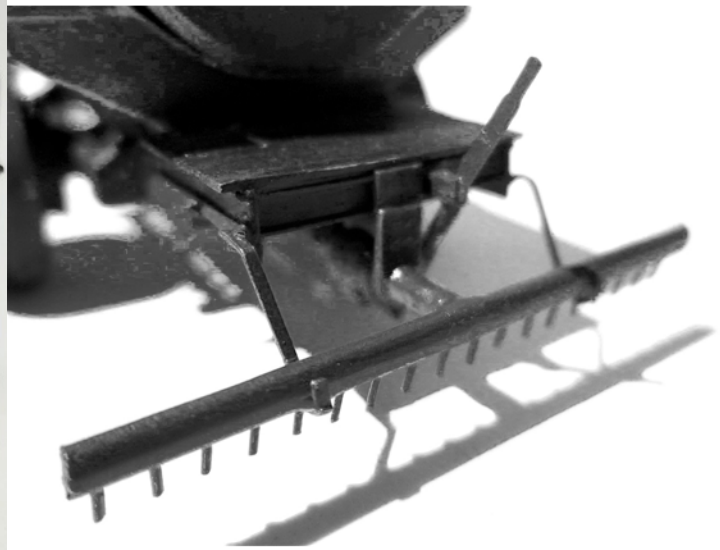


Next I built an oil spreader truck. These trucks were used to spread oil on dirt and gravel roads to control the dust. Some of the early spreader trucks had a platform on the back where the operator sat to control the valve that released the oil. In time, this was eliminated and all the controls were moved to the cab; however, for our

project, we want the rear deck and rear controls. The picture here shows a truck with the platform and the controller sitting on the deck controlling the spreaders. In the case of this truck, the spreaders are only as wide as the truck, but some had a wider spreader that folded out from the truck sides when in use.

I began by building a Mack Model B kit from CHB. To hold the oil I added a tank from Rusty Rails. Then I designed and added the platform. To represent the spreaders I took a Grandt Line NBW sprue and cut off the NBWs leaving the stubs. I next made a pipe coming from the bottom of the tank out of tubing and added a valve. I then mounted the sprue to the pipe facing down. Lastly,



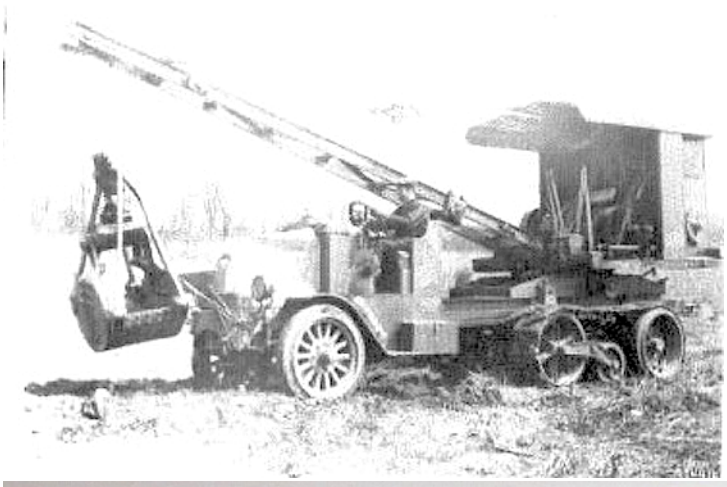


I added a lever that the operator would use to open or close the oil valve as needed.

The Mack kit came with typical Mack metal type wheels which were really nice, but I wanted to use wheels with wooden spokes. Bill Roy produced such a wheel so I used them on this truck.

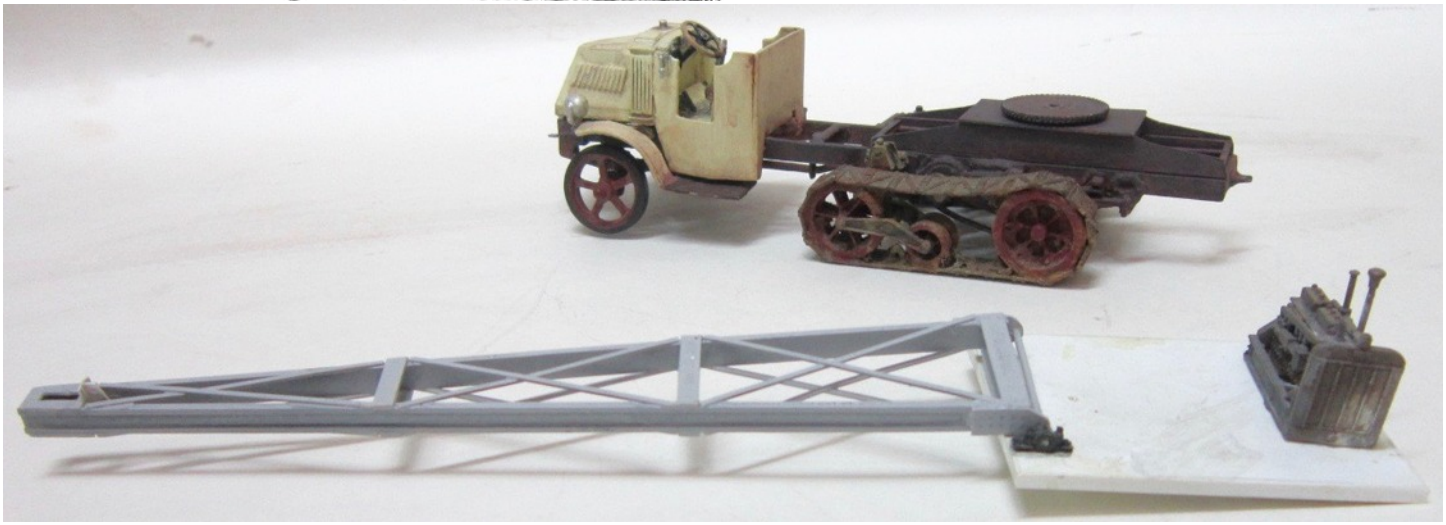
This next truck is one of my favorite unique trucks and there is a prototype for it. Trucks like this were used on various construction sites, road work or in a quarry operation. I did not build this model, my friend, Garn Smith, did many years ago and gifted it to me. He started with a Renwal 1929 Ford Model A kit.

He cut off the rear fenders at the end of the running board and cut the body just in front ahead of the doors saving the hood and cowling. He then built a firewall. Also from the kit he used the frame and wheels and mounted the headlight facing the rear since the rear is the front in operation. For the dump body he used a Grandt Line Gilpin Tram small dump car body that he cut down. He add dump control handles and driver controls. These driver controls were located over the driver side fender because, during operation, the driver sat on a seat on that fender that faced toward the rear of truck. I can picture this type of truck racing around the work site delivering materials.



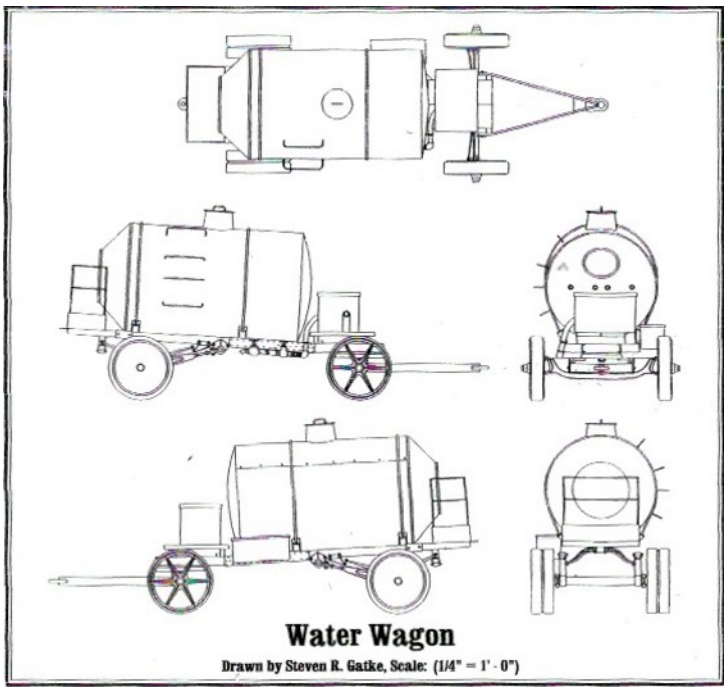
A few years ago I was talking on the phone to my friend Dave Reed. He told me about a gentleman in Europe named Dennis Loap who was producing half track kits for the Mack AC trucks. I ordered two sets of them. I wish I had ordered more. Here is a picture of a Mack Universal shovel truck with this type of half tracks.

I decided that I was going to build my Mack AC into a Universal shovel truck with half tracks like the picture shows, so I used one set on my CHB Mack AC kit.



I have to admit that I have built the truck, but the Universal shovel attachment isn't finished yet. I need more information as to how the mechanism worked so I can build it.

So what to do with the second half track set? I decided to build a freelance dump truck with that half tracks. The kind of truck that would work in a quarry or on a heavy construction site. I also wanted something that was old, very well used and very dirty, especially the running gear. I started with a Renwal 1930's Cadillac kit. I used the front half of the frame and axle, the hood and fenders. The rest of the frame was scratch built using parts from my parts bin. To complete the running gear, I added the half track set. For the cab, I wanted an open cab design, so I used a set of white metal casting from Bill Roy's McKenzie Iron and Steel that I had in my parts bin. The front wheels were also from McKenzie Iron and Steel. For these wheels I chose solid dish type wheels with rubber tires. The dump body was designed for the Nash Quad kit that Bill Roy put out, and was an add on to the stock Nash Quad kit. It was designed with a manual system to raise and lower the dump body. I used that system on this truck. Though this truck is freelance, it is a logical design. To weather it, I used real dirt to represent the caked on mud etc on the wheels and frame and other parts of the body. Note the oil leaks and general grunge look to this truck.



The next isn't a truck, but a logging water wagon. There was an article in the now defunct *Timber Times* about water wagons. I used the plan for basics to build my wagon.

I wanted a wagon built at the company shops using various materials laying around, and I used an assortment of parts from my parts bin to build it. The rear wheels are from a Revel semi truck kit. The front wheels are from a tractor. The frame was scratch built as was the water tank. I really liked the shape of the end of the water tank. The tank was challenging to build, but worth the effort. The rest of the details – tool box, hose box, etc. were also scratch built.

So that completes my industrial vehicles.

Let me now share some other types of trucks based on Model T's.

This first one is a simple conversion of a Renwal Model T car kit converted to delivery van. This picture of one delivery truck is as close to what I wanted to build as I could find.

To begin with, I started with a Renwal Model T kit using all the running gear from the kit. I then modified the body by cutting off everything beyond the hood and front cowling. Then, after studying pictures of mid 1920's Model T delivery vans, I designed the delivery body.

While we are on the subject of Model T's, I also wanted to build a pickup. Here is a picture of a 1927 Model T pickup.

I rebuilt a Renwal model T coupe kit into a pick up. Again, I began with a Renwal Model T kit using the running gear fenders and hood from the kit, and I cut the body behind the cab area and filled the opening with styrene. I then scratch built the pickup bed and added a convertible top. I want this pickup to show it has had some rough usage. So, using my soldering iron, I heated the driver side fender and damaged it to reflect that he had been in an accident. I also broke the windshield to show additional damage.

I am going to finish this article by showing models I kit bashed using RPM's Ford Model WWI ambulance kit.

These kits are extremely detailed. So much so, that not all the details will be visible when finished. I like early vehicles even though my modeling era of chose is later than some of the vehicles I model. Because of the kit bashing options, I took a real liking to this kit and have built 4 vehicles using it. However, I have yet to build one as an ambulance. One of the first ones I built was close to the ambulance design but I turned it into a delivery van. I didn't model rear doors, but instead made a roll up canvas using used tea bag for the canvas. I lettered it for my friend and weathered it.

The next one I title the “Hillbillies Jalopy”. This one was fun to build, and I based it on pictures of such a conversion. I wanted it to look like he had taken a junked WWI era Model T, and turned it into a vehicle he could use on the farm or for getting supplies for his “shine” business. Using the RPM kit parts, I built the running gear but I left the hood sides off so you could see the the motor. I scratch built the seat and pickup type bed, the tool box on the driver’s side and the step on the passenger side. I loaded it with tools and supplies. I still need to find a shotgun and a “shine” bottle to put on the seat.

The next one is a simple small flat bed type truck. I figured the guy bought an WWI ambulance and removed the body. This was so he could it used it as flat bed truck, I built the running gears and added the hood without the side panels again so the motor could be seen. I also modified the kit seat and added a steel sheet to the rear deck made out of sheet styrene. I then painted and weathered it.

With all the trucks I built from, this one is my favorite. I found this picture on the Internet.

When I saw it I knew I had to build a model of it. I started with the RPM ambulance kit running gear and motor. Once built using styrene, I scratch built the windshield area which was made of wood with metal to hold the windshield glass. The seat in the picture was very similar to a Stutz Bearcat seat so I used the seat from the Renwal Stutz Bearcat kit since I just so happened to have one in my parts bin. The rear deck was made of wood. I used styrene for the wood pieces then painted them using Tamiya wood deck tan. I then painted and weathered the truck.

I hope you found my truck collection interesting. Hopefully, it will encourage you to seek out vehicles to kit bash or just build. There are many vehicles available but a lot are 1:43 scale. All of mine are true 1:48 scale. Good news — there are 3D printed true 1:48 scale cars and trucks that can be built or kit bashed. Whatever you do, building vehicles is a fun side line to our hobby. After all, we have roads on our layouts or dioramas, and they need something to travel them. Till next time happy modeling!

New Tracks

Mentor Definition: A Trusted Counselor or Guide

By Contributing Editor Jim Kellow MMR

I am extremely proud of all the New Tracks programs and activities. Our scholarship program is especially close to my heart because it is focused on our next generation of modelers who will carry our great hobby forward into the unknown future. I know, however, there are other areas New Tracks should investigate. My local newspaper articles are having people, many non-model railroaders, approach me with ideas from other hobbies or activities, I have never even thought about that I believe deserve our investigation.

Currently, I have four new programs I am working on. The first one is working with the local robotic clubs to include model railroading, which I believe is a natural fit, in their programs. A mentor to the kids in the robotic club who read one of my newspaper articles is responsible for my interest in this project. I am writing an article about my local club which I will include in a future discussion. Meanwhile, I encourage you to visit your local robotic club and get our model railroad hobby involved.

My second new project is designed to have our railroad modeling recognized, and sought out, by the fine art community as an art form and to encourage young artists to become involved in our hobby and pursue their artistic abilities. I am working with an art gallery to have an exhibit of railroad modeling and photography. More on this as soon as the details are finalized. Hopefully this can spread across the country.

To show you why I strongly feel our modeling will be accepted by the fine art community if we only get out and show our modeling, look at this email I just got from Kevin Macumber NTM. “Dear Jim, I submitted my company house to the State Museum Art Contest a couple months ago. Here is the reply I got”

“Dear Kevin: Congratulations! Your work has been chosen to be exhibited in Art of the State 2025 at The State Museum of Pennsylvania. We were honored to have had Brenton Good; Shin-hee Chin and Lauren Whearty judge the large quantity of entries with 2,344 works for consideration. Following a very challenging jury process, 97 were chosen.

Entry Accepted: Company House

Art of the State will be featured in the gallery from June 8 – September 14, 2025. We are currently finalizing plans for the opening of the exhibit on Sunday, June 8th and welcome you to join us. Please refer to our website or follow us on Facebook and X for further developments concerning the exhibition and programming.

Denise Ryner will serve as this year’s awards juror. Her award selections, which will be made in each of the five categories, will be announced at the opening reception on June 8th. Thank you for entering

Art of the State and congratulations on being accepted into this prestigious exhibition. Sincerely, Amy S. Hammond Senior Curator of Cultural History"

I will let you know if Kevin gets a prize or maybe even First Place. But in my mind, he has already won by having his model be selected as one of the judged shows 97 entries out of the 2,344 entries submitted. This is a very special honor for a model railroader to receive in a judged art contest. Congratulations Kevin. Anyone else out there have an art story to tell?

But wait, Kevin is not only an artist, he just got his book published. Kevin Macumber NTM is the owner of Narrow Gauge Modeling Company, who produces O Scale models. Kevin is a friend and was very helpful to me in getting my New Tracks Modeling Zoom shows started. He is also a very talented modeler who I have written about in my articles in *The O Scale Resource* magazine.

But what I think is really something special about Kevin is he has Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from his military service, and recently was interview by a local Pennsylvania Fox TV station about his illness and the book he has written about it. Click Here for the Fox TV station interview.

Here is a link to his book: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0DWXCPDLX. Congratulations Kevin for your recognition and achievements. You may contact Kevin at :Kevin.Macomber@newtracksmodeling.com. If you do contact him, ask him to tell you how model railroading helped him through his illness. Kevin's remarkable story is what led me to start talking to Veteran organizations about our hobby. More on this later.

My third effort is getting our New Tracks Mentors (NTM) given recognition by establishing an award program for modelers who have appeared in New Tracks activities. I discussed the launch of this new program later in this article. I am pleased to have Kurt Thompson MMR, NTM, volunteer to be the Chairman of the NTM Program. But we can always use some more help with this new program. Pease contact Kurt Thompson for more information at: Kurt.Thompson@newtracksmodeling.com.

Fourth, all right I can hear some of you saying: "Good grief slow down Jim!", but we are developing a new magazine. Please make sure you sign up for our "New Tracks Modeler" magazine edited by Martin Brechbiel MMR, NTM, which will debut on June 1, 2025. You will see more about this project later in this article. I am really excited about this project, as a companion media for our other digital activities. I believe you will like and benefit from it. Naturally, we need volunteer help, so if you are interested please contact me.

Guess what? As always, I have too much time on my hands and keep thinking up new ways for New Tracks to make positive contributions to our railroad modeling hobby. For example, I just started looking into AI, AR, and VR based on an article I read in the NRHSA magazine talking about how Total Toy sales in 2030 will reach $1 Trillion and these technologies will be leading forces in that achievement. If you have an idea for New Tracks or want to discuss any of our projects, please let me know. I am also always looking for volunteers to help develop our New Tracks projects, so be prepared for me to ask for your help when we talk. Pick how you want to help and get in touch. My email is jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com.

Now please meet a very talented diorama modeler

Mark Andrews NTM

I'm building a city based diorama called "Union Avenue" (that'll be part of my future layout), and I have a whole series of structures that I was building (seven of them in all). I wanted to finish ALL of them before I began submitting photos to you – and thankfully I was able to do so before I had to move!! BTW, everything is temporarily in storage right now.

Anyway, I remember you had requested pix of the structures individually, and then altogether, which I have done along with a brief summary about the build. Before it's all over, you should have about 10 letters in all including this one. Feel free to ask if you want any additional pix or information on anything you see in any of the letters.

The first of which is the Village Market, which you may recognize. It comes from the Walthers Cornerstone kit "Vic's Barber Shop" (kit #933-3787). This one is kind of special to me because it was my first attempt at building any structure in about 25 years or so, plus it was the first time I've ever built a Walthers kit of any sort. The air conditioner, tv aerial, the utility conduits and awning were all scratchbuilt; in fact the awning was made out of a piece of Kleenex. The phone booth is a Bachmann item that I had in my scrap box, and the dirt in the driveway is actually REAL dirt from Tulare County,

You may also recognize this one also as I've posted it on Facebook before. It's the Walthers Cornerstone Rivoli Theatre kit with a twist. I wanted the building to sit on the corner (of Union Avenue and Front St.).

I also wanted to add an upstairs restaurant on top without drastically altering the structure, so I added 6 windows into the large blank area over the marquee sign, a scratchbuilt stairway on the side with a doorway cut at the top landing. The rooftop billboard and sign are also scratchbuilt. This is the second and largest structure kit I've built to date.

The Village Repair is the third one I completed and it's proprietor, Franklin Lattimore (RIP), was an actual mechanic. It's the only Union Avenue structure dedicated to a real person. This model began as the tire shop from Outland Models, which is the first 3D printed model I ever got. I originally built it as it's pictured on the Outland site, but somehow the roof and front fascia got warped after completion, leaving me with just the 4 walls that made up the garage itself and the interior details.

So I began again with those remaining items and everything else – the roof, fascia, the entire gas pump island assembly, the signs, hedges, fences, and the entire driveway – including the drainage and manhole style fuel tank covers were all scratchbuilt. In fact, the blacktop was made from tile grout, the concrete areas were made from styrene, and the dirt area under the scrapped vehicles is authentic soil from Tulare County, California. I don't really know if it can be deemed as a TRUE scratchbuild or not.

Here's the fourth one I completed and the only fully scratchbuilt structure on Union Avenue. It's a "filler" building, meant to sit in between two structures. I intentionally left the back unpainted so you can see a bit of what was used for the walls. All the brick, rock face, terracotta and paver designs are plastic pattern sheets from JTT Architectural Model Parts. The air conditioner kit and mailboxes are from Walthers, and the flag is made from Kleenex (like the awning on the Village Market) while the flagpole is styrene tubing with a BB glued on top for the ball. The mail sacks on the loading dock as well as the coke machine up on the balcony lounge area are from Classic Mini Metals.

Incidentally, the mail semi is a Ford C-Cab from Athearn with a Con-Cor trailer made by my brother, who is also a modeler that does 1:87 vehicles. If you're interested in seeing more his work (as he does have several completed models himself), let me know. Anyway,

This is the fifth one I completed. It comes from the Walthers Cornerstone Two-Bay Fire Station. This is the closest thing to a "stock" model on Union Avenue. The only significant difference(s) is that I moved the hose tower from the front of the roof to the back and added a small apron with a flagpole and hedges in front of the structure, along with the sign that reads, "Fire Battalion No 1, Union Avenue Headquarters". The flag on this one, as well as on all the other structures, were made out of Kleenex much like the awning was on the grocery store. The rest of the details will be added on once the street itself is completed. At the time this was shot, the Brekina Dodge fire van was the only emergency vehicle I had, but I've since acquired a pair of fire trucks to be painted and detailed to help complete the scene.

Here's the sixth of the Union Avenue structures, which is the Life-Like "Woodlawn Police Station" (kit #1382). There were three main changes done to this structure, one being the left and right hand walls were switched around; as I wanted the built-in Bail Bonds office to favor the right hand side of the building as it sits across the street (Front St) from the theatre. The second is the hedges and flagpole added to the front of the building, along with the Police sign over the door. Those lights will eventually be replaced with real

lights. Third is the awning over the Bail Bonds office. As with the Fire Station, I didn't have a police car at the time when these pix were shot, but I've since acquired one. Switching the walls took a bit of doing as they had to be altered in order to fit the base. Much like all the other structures, I weathered the ground around them to give them that "worn" look, LOL!! Lastly, once I get them set up "permanently", all the other additional details for the structure will finally be added.

This is the final Union Avenue structure built for the cityscape diorama, and the last of the "individual" series of pix. This is a modified Walthers Cornerstone Kit "Flowers By Terry" (kit #933-3473) modified into a Barber Shop/Apartment building.

The structure itself is mostly stock, with a stairway inside the left hand door in front and tinted windows on the Barber Shop itself with the words "Barber Shop" in one window and "Tonsorial Parlour" in the other. The awning was made from construction paper and the Barber pole was from the Vic's Barber kit (which I made into the Village Market). The side carport was scratchbuilt along with the hedges, utility conduits and roof billboard scaffolding.

On the next page is the first block of the Union Avenue cityscape. It's set up on a pair of 24"×24" temporary foamular boards on a 24"×48" table. I placed a few sheets of black construction paper for the street with a few vehicles on top to give me an idea of composition once it's on an actual foam board.

Here's the other half Union Avenue with a couple of close ups.

Here's Union Avenue in it's entire composition. And here's a little secret - "Union Avenue" takes it's creation by 2 inspirations. The first bring the City of Los Angeles. The second is from the "Fisher Price Family Village" which my brother got for Christmas in 1973. That village served as one centerpieces of our youth. Union Avenue's structures are the same as those on the FP Village, and sit in the same places. This is also why

the repair shop and grocery store are also affectionately named "Village". Anyway, after four years, two bouts with Covid and one with the flu, they structures are finally completed.

Thanks, Mark, for sharing your impressive, very creative modeling. Mark can be reached at Mark.Andrews@newtracksmodeling.com.

Revolutionizing Railroad Modeling: Introducing "New Tracks Modeler" Magazine!

Get ready to embark on a new chapter in your railroad modeling journey!

I am experimenting with Artificial Intelligence. This article is based on a Gemini AI rewrite of my initial draft, followed by my final review and edit to make sure it reflects reflects my language and views. Let me know what you think.

We are happy to launch the transformation of our "New Tracks Modeling Observation" newsletter into a vibrant, monthly digital magazine: "New Tracks Modeler." It's first issue date is June 1, 2025. It will build upon the success of our other digital projects including the popular weekly Zoom live shows and YouTube videos, "New Tracks Modeling". It is designed to be a companion media, which, with our live Zoom shows and YouTube videos, will be your ultimate resource for creative model building and mentoring. Its articles will cater to model enthusiasts in all aspects of modeling in all scales and gauges. Whether you're a seasoned master or a budding beginner, this magazine is your gateway to unlocking new levels of modeling creativity and skill. Subscribe to our website, newtracksmodeling.com to get your free copy of our new magazine, as well as Zoom and YouTube login information for our shows and videos, find out about our New Tracks Mentoring Scholarship for STEAM students, and other New Tracks activities.

What awaits you inside our magazine:

Meet Model Builders: Dive into inspiring profiles of accomplished modelers, gaining invaluable insights into their techniques and philosophies. Connect with them directly through our interactive Zoom shows or via email through their articles.

Discover Hidden Gems: We are passionate about supporting the lifeblood of our hobby – small manufacturers. Enjoy meeting many small manufacturers you may have never heard of through the free advertising space we provide, which showcases their innovative products, and brings them directly to your attention.

Elevate Your Craft: Determine how you can become a New Tracks Mentor (NTM) and join a network of over 500 dedicated modelers. Share your skills and help others become better modelers.

Fuel the Future: Learn how you can play a pivotal role in nurturing the next generation of model railroaders through participation in their creative technological activities and by promoting our New Tracks Modeling Mentoring Annual Scholarships.

Master New Techniques: Enhance your modeling repertoire with expert tips, tutorials, and inspiration to create breathtaking layouts and scenes. Learn to include new skills and creative ideas provided by such technologies by AI, AR and maybe even VR.

We greatly appreciate and acknowledge our four magazine sponsors who make this exciting venture financially possible. Thank you for you for your support and belief in our new magazine.

Sponsors:

1. The Great Scale Model Train Show in Timonium, MD

2. LocoFi™

3. Brennans Model Railroading

4. O Scale Central

We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to Amy and Dan Dawdy, NTM of "The Model Railroad Resource LLC", our invaluable business mentor and distributor, for their steadfast belief in our model building and mentoring mission, and their commitment to fostering the growth of model building in the Model Railroad community.

Mark your calendar for the magazine's June 1. 2025 launch date.

Don't miss out! Secure your free subscription today. Visit: newtracksmodeling.com to subscribe and receive your free digital copy. Remember to confirm your website email address to finalize your subscription. You may download and print a copy if you prefer to read a paper version.

Calling all small manufacturers to get your free advertisement:

Your opportunity to shine! We invite small manufacturers to take advantage of our free advertising offer in our magazine. Visit our website for detailed guidelines and submit your ad to our Editor, Martin Brechbiel MMR NTM, by May 1, 2025 if you want to be in the first issue. Martin.Brechbiel@newtracksmodeling.com.

Our readers voices matter!

We are eager to hear your thoughts and suggestions for the magazine! Please share your feedback on "New Tracks Modeler" as we embark on this exciting journey together. Again special thanks to Dan Dawdy NTM and Martin Brechbiel MMR NTM, whose vision and dedication have made this valuable resource a reality for the railroad modeling community. By the way, if you want to be a member of our magazines's team, please email Martin Brechbiel MMR, NTM at Martin.Brechbiel@newtracksmodeling.com.

New Tracks Activities

New Tracks Modeling live weekly Zoom Show: Host Tom Farrell, NTM

As of January 1, 2025, I've had the honor of taking over the program as Director from its founder, Jim Kellow, who created New Tracks Modeling with a clear mission: to build a community where mentorship plays a central role in helping modelers learn, grow, and share their talents. Jim's vision has touched countless lives in the hobby, and I'm deeply committed to carrying that torch forward.

My mission is to preserve the values Jim instilled in New Tracks Modeling and elevate the program meaningfully – expanding our content offerings, raising the bar on production quality, and growing our audience. We're dedicated to making each episode more engaging and informative, focusing strongly on mentorship, innovation, and accessibility. By enhancing the overall experience, we can continue to inspire modelers while attracting a new generation of enthusiasts to the hobby.

Our presence extends beyond the weekly live show through several key platforms, including our Facebook page, the New Tracks website, and our Observations newsletter, which proudly reaches over 800 subscribers and will soon transform into a digital online magazine. Everything we offer – from the show to our online resources – is free for participants. Behind the scenes, our dedicated team of volunteers keeps the entire operation running with the generosity of their time and a shared passion for model railroading. Whether you're just laying your first piece of track or have a lifetime of experience behind you, New Tracks Modeling is here to help you connect, learn, and thrive.

The New Tracks Modeling Live Zoom and YouTube show airs every Wednesday at 7:00 PM Eastern. For additional information, visit our website: www.newtracksmodeling.com Best, Tom

New Tracks Modeling Observations Newsletter: Martin Brechbiel, MMR, NTM, Executive Editor

The last Issue of the *New Tracks Modeling Observations Newsletter* will be May 1, 2025. The first issue of *New Tracks Modeler magazine* will be June 1, 2025.

New Tracks Modeling's monthly free newsletter, edited by Martin Brechbiel, MMR, is designed to provide ideas and commentary about all scales and gauges in our great model railroad hobby and modeler's featured articles. We also provide advance notices about upcoming New Tracks Modeling features, opinions, and projects including our Scholarship program.

All subscribers to our website and donors to New Tracks Modeling's Patreon account, or to our Scholarship program, automatically get a link to our newsletter by email each month. Also, all subscribers to Amy and Dan Dawdy's free *O Scale Resource* digital magazine receive a copy. Anyone can see and download our free monthly newsletter on our website: http://newtracksmodeling.com

Please contact our Executive Editor, Martin Brechbiel, MMR, NTM with your articles (send us articles!!!), comments, suggestions, details, new product information in any scale, upcoming events and shows, and more! We are also actively looking for someone to manage all our advertising aspects of New Tracks Modeling. If you have some interest in volunteering for that position, please contact our editor Martin Brechbiel MMR, NTM.

For those interested, note that publishing in New Tracks Modeler will count toward NMRA AP Authors points. Contact Martin for more information if needed.

Jim Allen: New Tracks Webmaster

In the coming few months, the New Tracks Modeling group will be making some significant changes and additions which will require a lot of work and organization. NTM will be introducing a "New Tracks Mentor Award" that will recognize those individuals that have constructed items in various venues that the NTM group oversees and give them the recognition that they deserve. We are also introducing a new "magazine" that will replace our newsletter. It will be edited by our own Martin Brechbiel MMR, NTM. And lastly, we are going to expand the website to help promote those accomplished mentors and the new magazine.

We are in need of individuals that would be willing to do research, own a part of the website and assist me with all the changes coming our way. If you feel you can contribute some time and energy by sharing your talents with us, you will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions about being a volunteer for the NTM website, please contact me at: Jim.Allen@newtracksmodeling.com.

Phil Edholm NTM Manager: New Tracks Modeling Zoom Show Production Team

Producing the New Tracks weekly Zoom show and other specials like the Modeling Lifestyle is a great way to participate in New Tracks and gain skills that are great in the modern model railroading world. The

production team sets up the weekly Zoom meetings and YouTube live stream each week. The team coordinates with Tom to set up the agenda with videos and other graphical details. Once the show is ready to run, a producer runs all of the videos, slides and makes sure the presenters are featured, and the show runs smoothly. Being part of the team puts the producer in the middle of the information being presented.

The skills required are basic computer skills and some level of Zoom understanding. We will train any volunteers in specific technologies and how to manage the show operations. While not required, having two computer monitors is valuable as it enables seeing both slides and Zoom at the same time.

New Tracks production volunteers will learn skills that are great in hosting local and regional events. As part of being a producer you will learn how to improve the experience of attendees to a virtual event and how to manage the technology to present that event on YouTube.

If you are interested in becoming a New Tracks producer, please contact Phil Edholm at pedholm@pkeconsutling.com.

Thanks to all the above New Tracks leaders for all their hard work and support of New Tracks. Also, thanks to all the New Tracks participants, viewers, and financial donors for all your efforts. Please note all the volunteers we need for our current and in development projects, and help if you can. Thanks to all the New Tracks team.

New Tracks Scholarship: Bob Davidson NTM, Chairman

Before I start these comments, I want to welcome a new member to our Scholarship committee, Henry (Hank) Primas. Hank has been a supporter of our program since it started, and we are pleased he volunteered to serve on our committee. Welcome and thank you Hank Primas.

Why support the New Tracks Modeling Mentoring Scholarship?

Most of us have been involved with model railroading for what seems like our entire lives. The memories of our first layout, the excitement of operations, the pride that came along with finishing a craftsman kit… these are the things that drew us to, and keep us involved in, model railroading.

But we're facing a real challenge today. Fewer young people are getting involved in model railroading. There are many reasons – cost, time constraints, social pressures. All of these reasons (and more) can have serious negative impacts on the hobby we love so much. It is imperative that we do all that can to encourage young people to stay involved in model railroading through their college years and beyond. That's where the New Tracks Modeling Mentoring Scholarship comes in to play.

Our program provides academic scholarships to young modelers who are entering, or in, a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) related undergraduate college or technical-school program. We are a group of railroad modelers passionate about ensuring that our craft continues to the next generation.

As you know, the cost of college or technical-school programs can be very high. These high costs can really deter students from pursuing a STEAM related degree, and may cause some to forego continuing their rail or other modeling activities in order to continue their education.

We see the scholarship as a bridge between today's modelers and the next generation. These are the young men and women who will be responsible for continuing our craft, and who will be developing the new technologies that will heighten the modeling experience for all of us. Before our hobby "ages out" we need to take whatever steps we can to ensure that model making remains a vibrant, rewarding pastime for years to come.

Individuals can donate, either by check or by using a debit or credit card through our website: newtracksmodeling.com/scholarship. All the money received from donations goes directly to supporting the

recipients of the scholarship. Please note that if you use the Zeffy portal to make your donation, no fees or charges of any kind will be borne by the scholarship – 100% will go directly to the program. Every donation, in any amount, helps our students realize their potential. It also helps inspire other students that their hobby is a worthwhile endeavor which will help them in their STEAM pursuits.

Businesses can provide support to the scholarship in several ways: First, by making a cash contribution as noted above. Sponsorship categories are also available at the $250.00, $500.00, $1,000.00 and $2,000.00 levels. We also encourage manufacturers and distributors to include information about the scholarship in their product packaging. We currently have eight companies doing that, and it makes a big impact by reaching out to the modeling community.

Clubs and organizations can help us get the word out about the scholarship by distributing flyers or displaying a banner at train shows, conferences, meetings or at your local school or college. Contact us for more information on helping out in this way.

The following individuals and companies have made donations to the future of model railroading by donating to our 2025 scholarship program.

Corporate Sponsors 2025 scholarships:

Platinum Sponsor: Amherst Railway Society

Silver Sponsor: Great Scale Model Train Show (Scott Geare)

Brass Sponsors: American Models (Karen Bashista NTM); Brennan's Model Railroading (Dennis Brennan NTM); Kershaw Craftsman Kits (Paul Reeves NTM); LocoFi (Peeyush Garg NTM); The Model Railroad Resource LLC (Dan & Amy Dawdy NTM)

Corporate Sponsors 2026 scholarships:

Brass Sponsors:

Brennan's Model Railroading; National Capital Trains; The Model Railroad Resource LLC

Individual Donors for 2025 Scholarships:

Jamie Bothwell NTM; Martin Brechbiel MMR NTM;Kirk & Barbara Bucher; Bill Bunce; Greg Cassidy NTM; Bob Davidson NTM; Amy & Daniel Dawdy NTM; Phil Edholm NTM; Gerald and Linda Feeney; Michael Gorczynski; Jeff Jordan NTM; Jim Kellow MMR NTM; James Koryta; Dylan Lambert NTM; Frank Markovich MMR NTM; David Menard; Hank Primas NTM; Steven Provencher; RichRandall; Pat Rivard NTM; Steve Sherrill NTM; David Vaughn NTM; Ronald Walters NTM; Jeff Zibley, Dave Sweeney and Lyndon Foster.

Individual Donors for 2026 Scholarships:

Jim Kellow MMR, NTM, David Vaughn NTM

We will be very grateful if you can also support our scholarships. Feel free to email us at NTMMS@newtracksmodeling.com if you have any questions.

New Tracks Mentoring, Inc. is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services. *A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free Toll Free: (Florida Only) 1-800-435-7352; or All Others: (850) 922-2966. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the State of Florida.*

Ignite someone's modeling Spark!

Shape the Future of Model Railroading! Become a New Tracks Mentor (NTM)

I am still experimenting with AI. This article is based on a Gemini AI rewrite of my initial draft, followed by my final review and edit to reflect my language and views. Let me know what you think.

Are you a model railroader with a passion for creative craftsmanship and a desire to share your hard-earned knowledge? Do you see the artistry in meticulously detailed locomotives and the magic in a perfectly weathered freight car? The thrill of seeing a railroad scene come alive. If you are, then I am so very proud to announce our new Award designed specifically for you. It's time for you to step into the spotlight and become a recognized New Tracks Mentor (NTM)!

For too long, the incredible talent within our model railroading community has often gone quietly celebrated and unrecognized by others. That's why I'm overjoyed to announce the creation of the prestigious "New Tracks Mentor" (NTM) Award – a significant recognition for modelers like you who not only build stunning layouts, scenes and rolling stock, but also generously invest in the future of our beloved hobby by guiding others.

Imagine this: Your exceptional modeling skills acknowledged, your insights valued, and your passion inspiring the next generation of model railroaders. The NTM Award isn't just another accolade; it's a testament to your commitment to your modeling art and our modeling community.

How can you become a New Tracks Mentor (NTM)?

It's simpler than you might think:

1. Share your modeling: Have you ever had that "aha!" moment in your modeling journey when you put your tools away and sat back to enjoy your handiwork? Now's your chance to share it! Now's your chance to help others achieve their modeling moment. You can qualify as a New Tracks Mentor (NTM) by:

A. Captivating our modeling community with a model-building presentation on our engaging Live New Tracks Zoom shows. Imagine sharing your unique techniques and inspiring others in real-time!

B. Being celebrated in a dedicated profile within my New Tracks articles in O Scale Resource magazine or other publications. Let your story and your models shine in print!

C. Become a featured modeler in our informative New Tracks Observation newsletter or our exciting new publication, the "New Tracks Modeler" magazine. Your expertise will reach a dedicated audience eager to learn.

2. Become a Guiding Hand as an NTM: Do you find satisfaction in helping others overcome modeling challenges? Do you enjoy seeing the spark of understanding ignite in a fellow modeler's eyes when he/she solves a modeling problem? That friend is the real reward of being a NTM. A NTM, simply needs to be willing to:

A. Offer your guidance and support to less experienced modelers in our community. Share your tips, tricks, and encouragement to help them elevate their modeling craft and confidence.

B. Forget stuffy formalities! The NTM Award is open, and welcoming to every modeler who meets these criteria. In my experience, everyone who is reading this article already knows if you are a NTM. This recognition award tells others what your capabilities are and your willingness to help them. Think about your own mentors – the ones who truly made a difference for you. Perhaps they weren't draped in awards, but their knowledge and willingness to teach were invaluable. Think about how you found them and how lucky you were to have their help. We want to honor you for having that passion and spirit! This isn't just about recognizing past achievements; it's about fueling the future. We want to celebrate the model builders who:

* Possess modeling abilities and skills.

* Are ready and willing to share their talent and knowledge.

* Are enthusiastic about mentoring others and fostering growth within our railroad modeling community.

* Believe in New Tracks' core mission: “keeping the skill and art of model building vibrant and alive”.

Your Recognition Awaits: As a New Tracks Mentor, your name and accomplishments will be proudly displayed on a dedicated NTM page on our website. Imagine the satisfaction of knowing your contributions are visible to the entire model railroading world!

Furthermore, we'll make it easy for others to find and learn from you:

* We will post direct links to your Zoom show recordings, Observation Newsletter features, my *O and S Scale Resource* magazine articles, your featured articles in our New Tracks Modeler magazine, all will be readily available for modelers to view. See the full spectrum of NTM talent and knowledge of the origional list of NTMs here.

* Each month, we'll spotlight our newest NTM inductees in our New Tracks Modeler magazine, complete with information on how to access their shared knowledge. Our website will be constantly updated to reflect our growing community of mentors.

Are you ready to leave a lasting legacy on the model railroading hobby? Do you want to be recognized for your skills and your commitment to helping others? I sincerely hope you share my excitement for this important initiative and will want to become a New Tracks Mentor (NTM).

Don't wait! Take the next step and reach out to me with your interest or any questions at jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com.

Together, let's cultivate a stronger, more connected teaching/learning railroad modeling community where creativity flourishes, skills are developed and shared, and the art of building beautifully created detailed railroad models continues to thrive for generations to come. After all, model railroading isn't just a hobby – it's an art form, and you can be one of its leading practitioners and teachers!

Join us. Become a New Tracks Mentor (NTM). I am proud to be one! Jim Kellow, MMR, NTM

OK, now we are back to my normal writing without AI help. Please don’t stop, keep reading anyway. Check below to see who is on our initial NTM list? I went back to the start of New Tracks in 2017 and spent a lot of time, plus recalling a lot of memories about modelers I haven’t talked to for awhile, to put this list together.

New Tracks Mentors

The following 512 modelers have the award of being a New Tracks Mentor (NTM) and are encouraged to use the initials NTM, after their name in order to help promote the award and its meaning to other modelers. Congratulations to everyone. Jim Kellow MMR, NTM

Please note the following list is in alphabetical order based on the modelers last name. This is the best listing of eligible modelers I could develop going back to the start of the birth of New Tracks in early 2017, with my first article published in the November/December 2017 issue of *The O Scale Resource* magazine. The list also contains all the New Tracks Modeling and Lifestyle Zoom shows and articles in *The S Scale Resource* magazine from January/February 2018 through the last issue, and our newsletter starting in January 2024. If you see an error or omission of a person, I apologize for my mistakes in advance, please let me know so it can be corrected. Jim Kellow MMR, NTM jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com

Listing of New Tracks Mentors (NTM) as of January 1, 2025

John Ackerman
Jeff Adam
Dave Allen
Frank Amatangelo
Chris Anderson
Jim Anderson
Will Annand
Andria Antonakos
Scott Ask
Mike Astley
Mike Baker
Marco Balk
Bill Banta
David Barnes
Graham Barnewall
David Barnkow.
Karen Bashista
John Bates
Ted Becker
Dave Bell
Daniel Bella
Dan Beresford
Roger Bernier
Ethan Bernstein
Dan Bigda
Ross Biggs
Daniel Biggs
Joel Bingham
Alex Binkley
Steve Bittinger
Allan Black
Kris Blackmarr
Anthony Boccaccio
Brian Bollenger
Jamie Bothwell
Bill Boucher
Richard Bourgerie
Bill Bozeman
Craig Brandt
Ca4l Brannin
Martin Brechbiel MMR
Dennis Brennan
Paul Brennecke
Rich Breton
Bob Bridges
Alan Briggs
Neil Brooks
Craig Brotan
Bob Brown
Kirk Bucher
Peter Bulkai
Vick Bunkens
Jeremiah Bunyan
John Burchnall
Larry Burk
David Burn
Phillip Burnside
Rick Burton
Ed Cady
Tom Cain
Dwayne Calloway
Randy Cambell
Art Carlton
Tom Carson
John Cary
Mark Cason
Matt Cassety
Greg Cassidy
Stan Cedarleaf
Bill Chaplin
Paul Chapman
Kaustav Chatterjee
Alan Chesnut
Andrew Chier
Rod Clark
James Cleveland
Anna Cleveland
Leslie Cliff
Andrew Cliff
Chris Coarse
Al Colins
Nell Colley
Neil Colley
Al Collins
Ademir Conicelli
Jack Conn
Ryer Corbet
Fred Cosgrove
Doug Coster
Connie Coy
John Coy
Philip Crews
Jay Criswell
Michael Culham
Shared Dabake
Sharad Dahake
Tom Daily
Ross Dando
Robert Darby
Bob Davidson
Lee Davies
Bill Davis
Dan Dawdy
Ralph DeBlasi
Jim DeBoer
Randy Lee Decker
Ger Deguelle
Nathan Delay
Frank Deuterium
Nancy Diaz
Eric Diehl
Tony Dixon
Grant Dodd
Erik Doedijns
Richard Dolezalek
Paul Dolkos.
George Downer
Les Downey
Jess Dozier
Rajeev Dubey
Brad Duenow
Adrian Dunning
Jeremy Dunnler
Jack Dziadul MMR
Jacob Dziubek
Marion Ebenserger
Anke Echardt
Phil Edholm
Geoffrey Edward
Lawrence Eggering
Paul Egri
William Eldredge
Steven Elliott
Victor Encalada
Jurgen Engel
Philip Entingh
Guy Estes
Paul Estudios
Art Fahie
Henry Fahrenheit
ian Fainges
Bernd Fanghanel
Bob Farquhar
Tom Farrell
Robert Farscella
Curtis Fay-Wolf
Col. T F Feely
John Feraca
Antonio Ferreira
E.C. Stan Field
Stan Field
Zeke Fields
Pat Finelli
Steve Fisher
Stephen Fisher
Cliff Flatten
Bill Flint
John Frankforther
Jerry Freestone
Joe Fugate
Todd Gamble
Chad Garber
Joseph Garcia
Camila Garcia
Peeyush Garg
Bill Gaver
Mike Gegner
Bob Geldy
Charlie Getz MMR
John Gibbons
Arron Gibbons
Gaylord Gill
Tim Gillman
Tim Gilman
Clint Glichrist
Glen Gollrad
Charles Goodrich MMR
Patrick Goodwin
Jim Gore MMR
Patrick Grace
Tom Greco MMR
Laurie Green
Howard Greenfield
Alex Gregg
Sarah Griessenbock
Renee Grosser
Tom Grossman
Ray Grossman
Jeff Grove
Michael Groves,
Bradley Guhle
Joseph Guinto
Joachim Gundlach
Earl Hackett
Nicholas Ham
John Ham
Ken Hamilton
Nicholas Hamm
Charles Hamper
Clem Harris
Forrest Harris
Steve Harvath
Neil Harwicke
Frascella Has
Eric Haselhorst
Kieren Haskell
Keith Haynes
Robert Helm
Wayne Hills
Jeff Hintz
Timothy Holker
Guilherme Holtz
Harold Hopkinson
Walter Horlach
Ady Horner
Bruce Horst
John Howe
Virgil Howell
Timothy Huebner
Heath Human
Frederick Humphries.
Rick Hunter
Maureen Hunter
Kevin Hunter
John Hunter
Paul Hurly
Mark Huskins
Bjorn Jackobsen
Mather Jackson.
Darryl Jacobs
Russell Jacobs
Paprika Jairuba
David Jamison
John Jensen
Lenny Joerg
Darren Johns
Sherri Johnson
Tom Johnson
Brent Jones
Jeff Jordan
Jeff Jorner
Warren Judge
Al July
Nicholas Kalis
Dennis Kamper
Alan Kap
Dick Karnes
Justin Keeler
Andrew Keeney
Jim Kellow MMR
Bernie Kempinski
Jill Kenik
Pete Kershaw
Ralph Kimball.
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Graeme King
Bob Kjelland
Ronald Klass
Alan Kleipass
James Knabb
Larry Knapp
James Knapp
David Knecik
Karen Knecik
Clark Kooning MMR
Charles Kraft
Henry Kranz
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Bernard Kritzer
Rick LaBelle
Marc LaChey
Dylan Lambert
Don Lambert
Chris Lane
John Langridge
Joe Lavender
Shaun Leonard.
Mark Lewis
Warren Lewis.
Jason Lien
Julie Lightburn
Julie Lighturn
Jim Lincoln
Greg lints
Allen Littlefield
David Livengstone
Mitch. Doc, Lovelace
John Lowrance MMR
Aaron Loyet
William Lubert
Steve Lucas
Dave Lull
Daniel Lutz
Mike Lytle
Peter Mack
Kevin Macumber
John Mann MMR
Myles Marcovitch
Frank Markovic, MMR
Frank Markovich MMR
Craig Marshall
Nick Massey
Roger Massu
Michael Maurer
Ron Maxfield
Scott Maze
John McCartan
Stuart McCartan
Michael McCasland
Lynn McCurty
John McEwan
Mike McNamara
Mark Mead
Henk Meerhof
Bill Meredith
Brian Michael
Dave Miecznikowsk
Stephen Milley
Jas Millham
Ed Minas
Ron Mitchell
Nob Mitchell
Ordra Mokry
Steve Montgomery
Sean Moore
Frederick Morin
Robert Mountenay
Gert (Speed) Muller
Jim Murphy
Justin Murphy
Kenneth Myers
Jordan Neidort
Bill Neile
Ken Nesper
Seth Neumann
Seth Newman
Scott Newton
Bruce Nicholsen
Bruce Nicholson
Jor Norman
Dan Notley.
Tony Nygren
Chris O'Donoghue
Terrance O'Kell
Richard Olieux
Chris Oliver
Ed O'Rourke MMR
Al Oslapas
Michael Osterta
Eduardo Ovalles
Paul Pallansch
Robbie Paramor
Lex Parker MMR
Larry Patch
Roger Pattensen
Roger Patterson
David Paulson
George Paxon

Frederick Perez
Tim Peters
Christopher Petersen
D Scott Peterson
Eric Peterson
Justin Peterson
Benjamin Piffero
Santiago Pineda
Arron Piotraschke
George Podus
Mark Poggendorf
Bill Pontin
Bob Poole
Dick Poole
Chris Poppe
John Poray
John Pratt
Mark Pretties
Hank Primas
Al Pugliese.
Ken Quast
Don Railton
Richard Rands
David Rarig
Roger Rasmussen
Charles Rausch, MMR
Martin Ray
David Rea
Paul Reeves.
Paul Reinhart
Ralph Renetti
John Reynolds
Gary Rhnbergen
Duane Richardson
CJ Riley
Ken Rimmel
Ronnie Rise MMR
Glenn Ritter
Pat Rivard
Mike Robert
Scott Robertson
John Robertson
Gordon Robinson MMR
Carl Roee
Alan Rogers
Gavin Rose
Bruce Rosenburg
Diger Rossel
Roger Rossellini
Dan Rousseau
Gary Rushton
Dana Russell
Harry Sage
Frank Saladino
Nataly Saladino
Frank Saladino
Paul Sanchez
Jason Sandberg
Nick Santos
George Sarra
Lou Sassi
Cheryl Sassi
Paul Schenk
Chuck Schipper
Bob Schneider
James Schultz
Jeff Schumaker
Tom Screnson
Mark Sebesta
Mike Seuderi
Stan Shields
Skyler Shippy
Rick Shoup MMR
Gary Shudgold MMR
Dave Silvernail
Robert Simmons
Jimmy Simmons
Doug Simon
Ed Skuchuas
Chris Smith
William Smith
Neil Smith
Paul Smith
Neil Smith
Wilber Snyder
Hans Sodenkamp
Fred Sotcher
Kevin Spacy
Kevin Spady
Dale Spaulding
Jim Spice
Chris Stafford
Keith Stamper
Dennis Stanezak
Juan Stasa
Christopher Steeb
Pete Steinmetz
Jon Stetz
Colin Stewart
Burr Stewart.
Kevin Strong
John Sullivan
Eric Sutton
John Tabler
Darrell Tarwick
Brian Taylor
Leo Terrion
Randi Terrion
JB Thistlewait
Peter Thomas
Kurt Thompson MMR
Paul Thomson
Scott Thornton
Todd Threeaster
Michael Tong
Edward Traxler
Caesar Triantino
Kevin Tully
Kevin Tully.
Pat Turner
Mike Tylick
Mike Tylick, MMR
James van Bokkelen
Jorge Van Ebnbergen
Jozef Van Eenbergen
Josef Van Eenbergen
Wendy Van Schaijk
Joel Vander Waal
Bruce VanHuis
Pete Vassler
Barbara Vassler
Barbara Vassler
David Vaughn
Andy Vaughn
Axel Vega
Damitrh Voronov
John Wabbel
Steve Walcott
Stuart Walker
Ft. Ron Walters
Garland Ward
Mike Warman
David Watson
Joel Weber
Job Weessles.
Matt Wellhouser
Wayne Wesser
Rich Westerman
John Wiffen
John Wiffen.
Don Wilde
Jan Willard
Cary Williams
Greg Williams
Greg Williams.
Shane Wilson
Lance Windhelm
David Wingrove
Boyd Wirkkala
Keith Wiseman
Keith Wiseman.
Rick Wolfanger
Brian Wolfe
Dan Wolschon
Dan Wolshon
David Wood
David Woodhead
Paul Woods
Matt Woods
Paul Wusson
Donald Yingling
Tom Yorke
Alan Zamorski
Howard Zane
Lynn Zelmer
Sven Zethof
Goffy Zhen
Goffy Zheng
Ken Zieska
Scott Zieske
Andy Zimmerman
Mike Zucker

Congratulations to everyone. Want to join our NTM award program? Send me an email. Jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com

How an NTM can help you

I am pleased to announce that Kurt Thompson MMR, NTM, volunteered to be the Chairman of the NTM Program. Kurt is the definite leader we need to develop and promote this award program and make it available to all interested modelers. But he can always use some more help with this new program. We want to make this a widely accepted and helpful program for all modelers to easily connect with mentors in our railroad modeling community. Pease contact Kurt Thompson at: Kurt.Thompson@newtracksmodeling.com. Thank you, Kurt, for your help.

When I first started the New Tracks articles and Zoom shows, I wanted to introduce talented modelers who could provide help to other modelers improve their skills. Secondly, I wanted to give the modelers reading the articles or watching the shows the opportunity to talk with the talented modelers to get the help they needed. Unfortunately, this second goal proved difficult to accomplish because of time constraints on the live show's various presentations, and my inability to know how successful my articles were in getting email conversations going with the modelers I profiled.

To try and correct this failure now that we have over 500 modelers who have earned the New Tracks Mentors (NTM) award, we want to give each NTM the opportunity to specify the mentoring areas of our hobby they want to provide you with mentoring help. Also, we want to give you, the readers, the opportunity to ask a question to any of the NTM modelers. So, if you are an NTM, please write up areas you want to mentor and if you are a reader, please ask your questions direct to the specific NTM. We look forward to hearing from you. Email Kurt at Kurt.Thompson@newtracksmodeling.com.

This is the start of the new segment to encourage more direct contact between NTM and readers. New Tracks Mentors (NTM) can provide information on specific areas they can Mentor, and readers can ask them questions.

Please meet Earl Hackett NTM, the first NTM to discuss how he can help you.

Earl Hackett NTM

Earl has been a volunteer on New Tracks for a long-time helping break up our total Zoom show into specific segments on our YouTube channel to make it easier for modelers to find subjects of particular interest to them. In addition, he has made numerous presentations on his modeling.

Earl writes "New Tracks was created by Jim Kellow to promote model building in the model railroading hobby. While there are several world class modelers who present their techniques on our weekly show, there is little opportunity for modelers to get help on specific problems. So Jim asked for volunteers who would be willing to help individuals.

I've always loved teaching and helping others. I have found that it is a good way to meet people and make new friends. So I immediately wrote to Jim and signed on. I've been an active model railroader for over 60 years so I've tried just about every technique you can think of. While I can aid in just about any capacity, there are a few areas where I have built up robust skill sets:

Hand laid track. Even if you use flex track, it is worth the effort to build your own switches. You can then build custom switches and diamonds for a specific location and not be limited to the standard turnouts and crossings provided by most manufacturers. With practice you can build a switch in 2 or 3 hours depending on the complexity. Double slips and curved track structures may take a bit longer. Additionally, if built correctly, you will have no problems with derailments.

3D Printing: I have found 3D printing to be the most useful technique ever developed for modelers. I now even print my own figures, positioned as needed in the scene. Rough stone walls and no problem. The accuracy of today's resin printers is amazing. Buildings larger than the print volume can be printed in multiple pieces and assembled.

Laser cutting: I've gone back to using Strathmore board, a modeling favorite back in the 60's and 70's. With the laser I can cut much finer structures than was ever possible with a modelers knife and straight edge.

Signaling: Much has been written about block signaling, but I've only seen a few layouts big enough to employ it. Most layouts could make use of interlocking signaling. Wherever there is (was) a signal tower, there is an interlocking system to control the movement of switches and the aspects of the signals. CTC consolidated many of these individual interlocking into a single system, and today whole class 1 railroads are controlled from a single location. The interlocking on my previous layout had locks on the control (Armstrong) levers to prevent their movement when an unsafe condition would occur. Writing code to emulate the prototype is a daunting task, but it can be done in a reasonable time if organized correctly.

Resin casting: Even with 3D printing there are times when the only way to get the desired result is to use epoxy resin and silicone molds. Years ago I used brass masters pressed into clay to make the molds. Now I 3D print the mold boxes for a far better result.

Digital circuit design: Occasionally you have an operating problem with no commercial solution – like crossing signal activation for a multi-track grade crossing. You can use an Arduino or you may prefer to build a circuit with small logic ICs."

Thank you, Earl, for all your help and interest.

You can reach Earl at: Earl.Hackett@newtracksmodeling.com

"O Scale Central"

I encourage you to visit the O Scale Central (OSC) website, https://oscalecentral.com/ to see some very beneficial information about the organization and how you can improve your O scale experience. I hope to see you at the OSC's monthly online live Zoom program, hosted by David Vaughn NTM. The shows are free and open to anyone interested in O scale. OSC membership is not required. To get the monthly Zoom login link and a great O Scale free monthly online magazine subscribe to *The O Scale Resource* magazine published by Amy and Dan Dawdy. Subscribe here: https://oscaleresource.com/WP/

The monthly live Zoom shows include interviews with O Scale news makers, layout tours, clinics, and current O Scale news you can use. Naturally I always try to plug the New Tracks Scholarship, and solicit donations. Plus now I can announce the new O Scale NTM award holders.

All O Scale modelers need to share your views of the OSC and it's programs with one of the officers and directors of the OSC. After all, the present and future of OSC is up to you, the modelers in the O Scale Community. Therefore, your membership in OSC, and your active sharing of your opinions about its direction and programs, are vital for its success. Now let's hear the latest activities from the OSC President, Skyler Shippy.

David Schultz on left talking with Skyler Shippy.

Latest OSC Activities Report: by: President Skyler Shippy

O Scale Central is a very active organization. We just participated in the "March O Scale Meet", also known as the "Chicago O Scale Show". O Scale Central assisted in the modeling contest with the help of active member, Eric Peterson, NMRA O Scale SIG Representative; sponsored the Detroit Model Railroad Club's modular layout; and sponsored a social evening within the hotel.

(JK. I can't wait to see some photos of the contest entries. The Chicago show holds a very special place in my heart. Back in the 1980s it is where I entered my first contest, and won first place in Traction, which got me started working toward my NMRA MMR.)

Skyler Shippy photo

Our publications that include the "OSC Drawbar" and "OSC Coupler" are both on schedule and are being very well received. We also have expanded our website and will soon be adding a membership directory. This will allow OSC members to contact and interact with other members and arrange layout visits if the layout owner so wishes.

Additionally, there are two more programs we are launching, and we are hoping they will continue to grow in the coming years. The first program is to create a process to document O scale layouts on our website. This project is as historical as it is social. A draft is currently in process to be added to our members section and will serve as a template for any and all layout owners to document their layout in their own pictures and words.

The second program we are launching is a team effort between OSC and the NMRA to develop OS2R Modular Standards. We have enough agreement to publish our current standards/recommendations. In the coming months we will release the rest of the standards/recommendations as well as construction guidelines.

I plan to have a modular meet on November 2, 2025 right after the Cleveland O Scale Show. This will likely serve as the first meet following the new published standards. It will be our first major attempt to roll out our modular program. Our goal is to increase the visibility of OS2R at all-scale train shows, as well as promote O Scale modelers the ability to get together and host regional modular meets.

Thank you, Skyler. If you are reading this and are not a OSC member please consider joining and helping promote O scale modeling. Your O Scale knowledge and voice is needed.

I look forward to seeing the new module standards and seeing them in operation at the November show. Make sure you contact Skyler if you plan to bring a module to the show. It would be great to see an outpouring of modules so Skyler can provide an outstanding beautifully created gigantic layout with modules individually built by O Scale modelers. Naturally you all know I have to ask. Skyler is a trolley module welcome? You can reach Skyler at: Skyler.Shippy@newtracksmodeling.com.

Bob Kjelland photo

Volunteers and Financial Supporters

Thank you all so very much for all the time our volunteers provide New Tracks. "YOU" the volunteers who produce the shows, make all our activities possible, including our presentations, provide material for our newsletter, our articles, promote our scholarships, and do all the many other jobs necessary for our success. You all are doing an outstanding job. I know this because of the favorable emails from viewers, the growth in the number of subscribers, readers, viewers, and the interest shown in our programs by the model railroading community. It is all of you who make New Tracks the success it is today and the even greater success it will be in the future.

Donate to our New Tracks Modeling Patreon Account

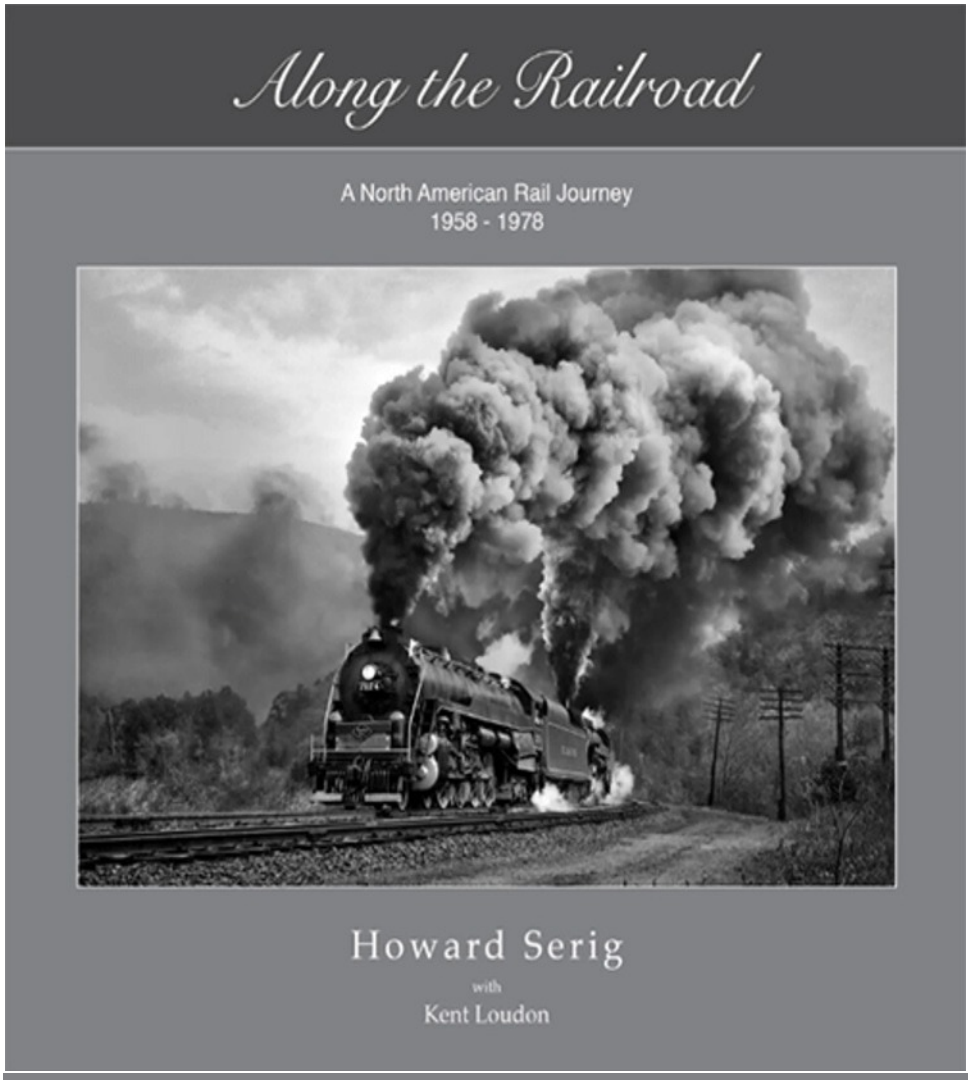
Donations to Patreon are not associated with our Scholarship program, but rather cover the out-of-pocket costs of just getting our Zoom, and YouTube shows produced, our website developed, maintained, etc. To make a financial contribution, please press this link: https://newtracksmodeling.com/support-our-website-through-patreon/

I truly hope each of you are as proud as I am of your contributions and active participation of our team. You have helped create New Tracks Modeling as the modelers and mentoring place to be for current and future railroad modelers.

This is what sets us apart: "Mentors Helping Modelers Build". The great part is we are only getting started in helping younger modelers develop into the modelers and mentors of tomorrow using our scholarship and other activities.

Well, It's that time again, I must return to my workbench and start working on something that I fell in love with and just have to model. Happens all the time.

Thank You again for all your interest and for reading this far. Until next time with more New Tracks, I wish you happy successful modeling in 2025 with whatever you are building! Please don't forget to be a mentor!



Along the Railroad features the exciting and unique railroad images of photographer Howard Serig who has captured the special time "when trains were really trains!" Many have claimed it to be "The best railroad book out there!" **To see a video preview of the contents of the book please click on the image above**. This is a limited edition hard cover book containing 222 pages of content. Copies are available for $49.95 plus actual shipping. Orders may be placed by contacting the seller below:

kjkriigel@aol.com (mention book title) or by phone: 434-589-2660.

Check out our Website. All back issues are available for download. Submit your events and classifieds ads online, or request advertising information. Need information like drill sizes or prototype pipe dimensions, nut bolt dimensions or even Westinghouse brake diagrams? It's all here. Check out our videos also! Everything you need on one place!

https://oscaleresource.com/

Model Railroad Resource 3D Division - Resin Parts

Announcing our new BUDA No. 30 Clamp Type Steel Bumping Post. These can still be found all over, on customer sidings, yards and more. Kit includes the clamping parts to attach to the rail. Only $8.95

NEW TRACKS MODELING

New Tracks MY BUILD

Host: Chris Course NTM, and Greg Cassidy NTM

Sponsored by Dan Dawdy NTM, Model Railroad Resource, LLC

(JK. The MY BUILD is one of my favorite monthly New Tracks zoom show segments. The main purpose of our MY BUILD is to provide a platform for every modeler to showcase their modeling projects, highlight their achievements, seek advice or assistance, if needed, and help others learn new, or improve their skills.)

Welcome to our MY BUILD where any modeler, regardless of their present skill level, can share their modeling and help us appreciate the talent available in our railroad modeling community. To make things more exciting, some months Chris and Greg have MY BUILD segments that include challenges. These challenges typically aim to encourage a diverse range of projects within the modeling community. Additionally, these challenge shows are open-ended in order to include any other models a viewer wants to share.

The shows are designed to be supportive and non-judgmental so modelers can help each other learn and develop their modeling skills, and confidence.. Join our Facebook Group, New Tracks Modeling, and continue the discussions about the models shown after the show.

Every viewer of New Tracks Modeling is encouraged to send in one or more photos including a caption talking about what the photos show of their modeling to the show's host, Chris Coarse at railrunner130@hotmail.com. Chris and Greg will organize these photos into a PowerPoint slide show. During the show, each participant is given the opportunity to discuss their models. You can share valuable tips, discuss techniques, answer questions from the audience, or pose your own questions about something you want to learn. This activity always proves to be a lot of fun for everyone.

MY BUILD is designed to serve railroad modelers of all scales, gauges, and age groups. Everyone is encouraged to participate. Chris Coarse is the owner of Conowingo Models conowingomodels.com He and Co-host Greg Cassidy welcome any of your comments or suggestions for improving our MY BUILD. Their email are Chris Coarse: railrunner130@hotmail.com or Greg Cassidy: gcassidy2@verizon.net

The schedule and topics for the remainder of 2025 **MY BUILD** segments are:

May: Free for all!! Anything goes!

June: Water – waterfront buildings, wharves, boats, covered bridges, water tanks, anything water related.

July: Free for all!! Anything goes!

August: Harvest – farm equipment, grain elevators, hopper cars, mills, tractors, agriculture, barns, chicken coops, livestock, cattle pens/ranching, cattle cars, reefer cars.

September: Free for all! Anything goes!

October: Layouts – finished,in-progress, switching layouts, modules, dioramas.

November: Free for all! Anything goes!

December: Interiors – insides of buildings, engine houses, cabooses.

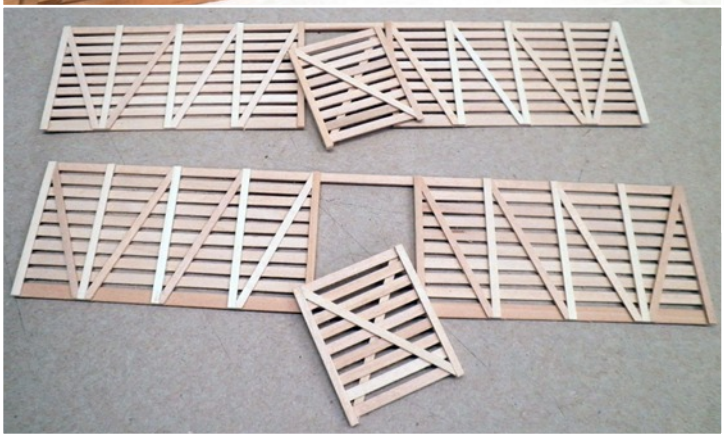
NEW TRACKS MODELING

"My Build" Featuring Models From Our Viewers (02-26-25)

You can see a video of the entire MY BUILD segment here.

Each of the participants has an email address included, and welcomes your contact.

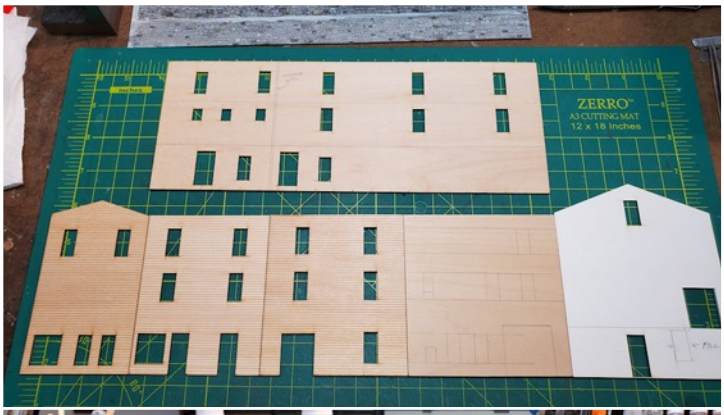
Every viewer of New Tracks Modeling is encouraged to send in one or more photos of their modeling to the show's host, Chris Coarse at, railrunner130@hotmail.com in advance of the next MY BUILD show. Chris will organize these photos into a PowerPoint slides how. During the show, each participant is given the opportunity to discuss their slides. You can share valuable tips, discuss techniques, answer questions from the audience, or pose your own questions about something you want to learn.

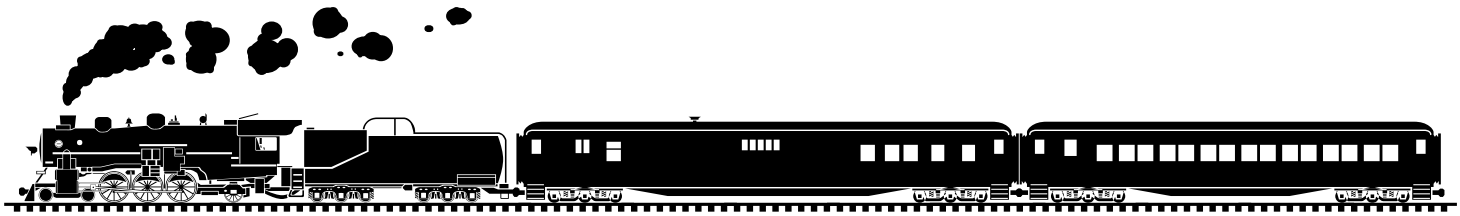


Martin Brechbiel MMR NTM - martinwb@verizon.net – O scale – THI&E stock trolley home built from Indianapolis Car Company and Midwest Train Hobby parts. Powered by a double Magic Carpet drive.

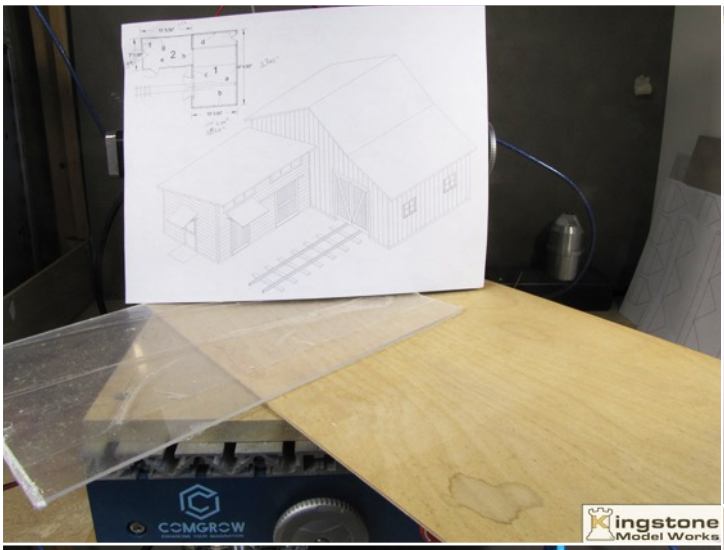
Greg Cassidy NTM - gcassidy2@verizon.net – HO scale – Darden's Mill Kitbash: Mill served by Western Maryland Railway in Elkins just outside the yard. This will be installed on a layout with elevated tracks in back like prototype.

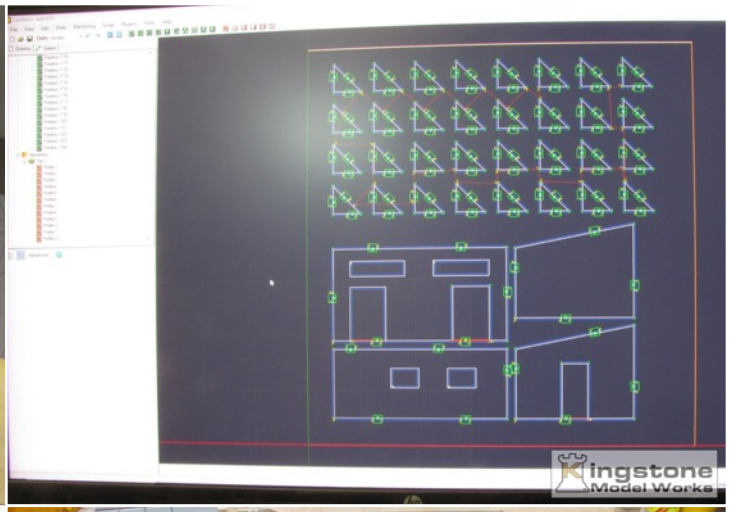
We could not print all the images in this build so check out the video here!

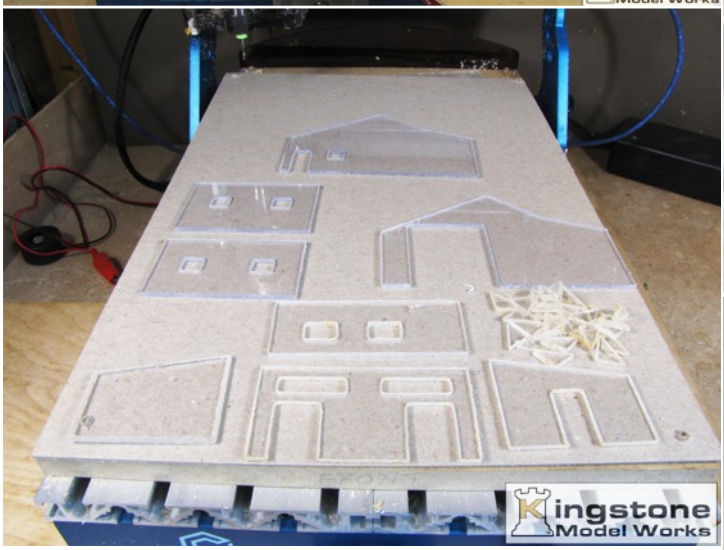


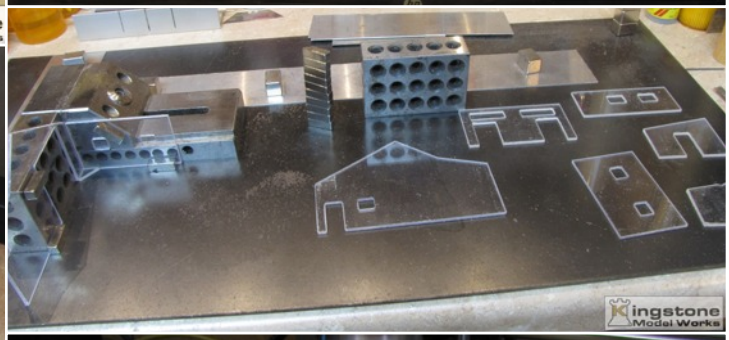


Jeff Jordan NTM -mjordan.jordan54@verizon.net – O Scale –This building stood about 7 miles from my home and no longer exists. The black and white photos are the only photos of the building I have found. I estimated dimensions from the photos and scratch built it in styrene.









Bernd Fanghanel NTM – protolancer@kingstonemodelworks.com - HO scale critter shed build in two versions, one using Acrylic and one using plywood.

We could not print all the images in this build so check out the video here!

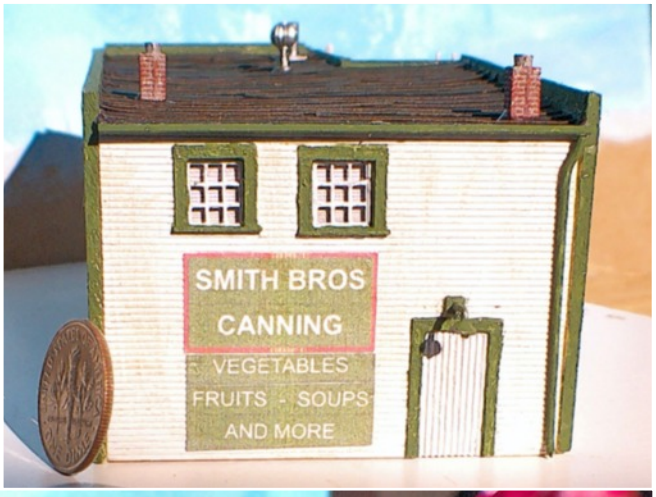
Gary Shurgold MMR NTM – gshurgold@gmail.com - HO – C&O Bud Car. Scratchbuilt from plans in RMC in the 90s. Tenoshodo power unit. Lettered after his home layout railroad. Used for his Model Power AP certificate.

Bob Farquhar NTM – bob.farquhar@sympatico.ca – HO Scale - This is my very first scratch build done in HO scale. I named the factory for my best friend who has since passed away so this build will never be sold.

Ron Walters NTM - rwalters@friars.us– HO scale - The Wayside Transfer Shed is one of FOS Scale Models HO scale "Free Kits" that came with a purchase I made a few years ago. I have not gotten to building the kit I purchased to get the free kit, but this one went together very quickly in the course of a weekend.

Ron Walters continued: HO scale - Supple Plumbing is an HO scale kit from Bar Mills. I changed the signage that came with the kit in Inkscape to name the building after one of my dad's friends who was a plumber.

Bill Stimson NTM – wstimson@q.com – N scale – A completely scratchbuilt shack (except for the stovepipe), Smith Bros Canning (scratchbuilt except for windows, ladders and roof details), both from Model Railroader articles. Standard Public Warehouse (scratchbuilt except for windows and roof details) from a book called Easy-to-build Model Railroad Structures.



Ken Myers NTM - kmyersefo@mac.com – The following structure models are in 1:87 scale, HO. Photos 1 & 2 This is my kit-bashed version of a ScaleScenes kit. The kit is a free download of the R002 Small Goods Store.

Photos 3 & 4 The next model was completely scratch-built. I drew the plans in the open source, vector drawing program, InkScape. https://inkscape.org/

Photos 5 & 6 I also designed the third model in InkScape. The model is a freelance, double sided structure. When viewed from one side, it appears to be Ken's Fresh Market with an ACE Hardware next door and apartments on the second floor. When viewed from the other side, it is seen as the Old Barn Star furniture builder shop, next to Mike's Upholstery.

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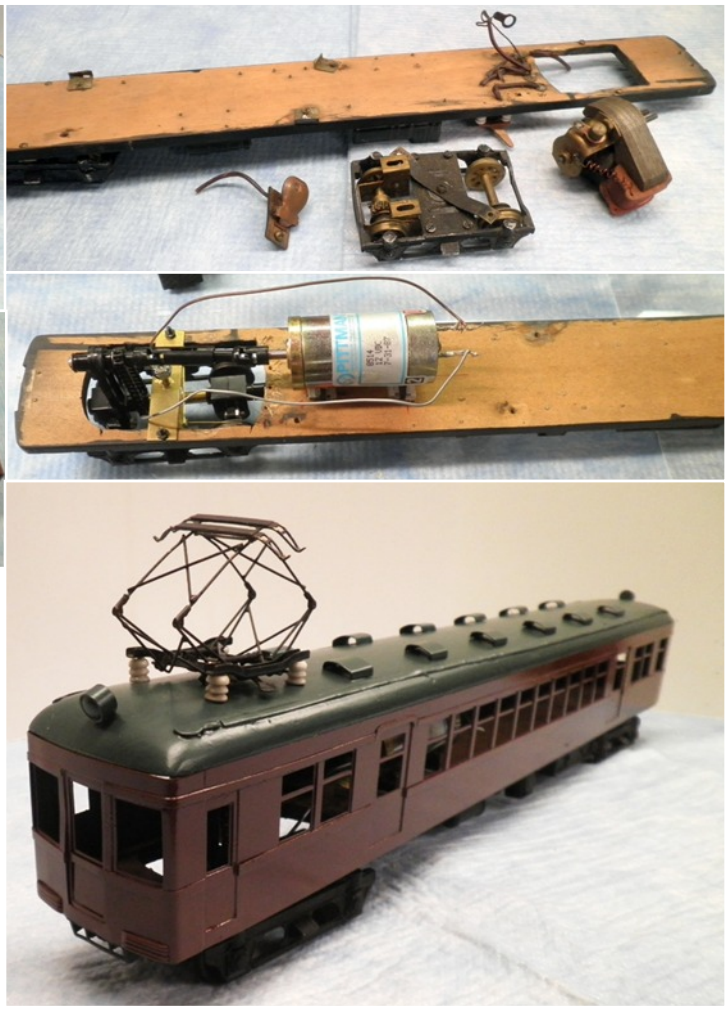
"My Build" Featuring Models From Our Viewers (03-26-25)

You can see a video of the entire MY BUILD segment here.

Each of the participants has an email address included, and welcomes your contact.

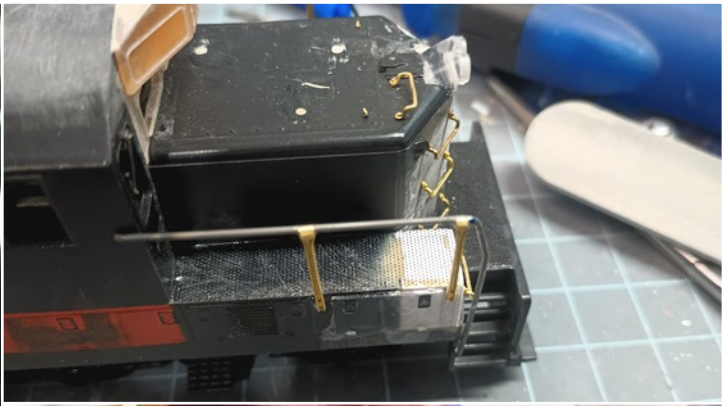


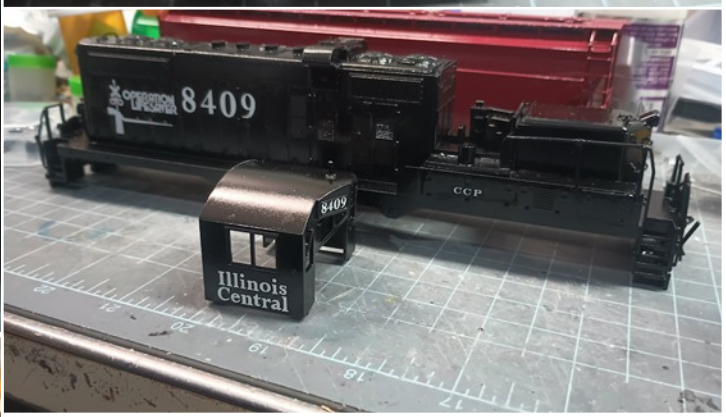
Martin Brechbiel MMR NTM – martinwb@verizon.net – O scale – IMP 1950's Interurban. Weaver RS-3 drive unit. Can Motor.

Greg Cassidy NTM – gcassidy2@verizon.net – HO scale - I picked up this and The Weekly Herald kit for $10 at Timonium. My plan was to build them using as many of the original parts as I could, even if I could have made or substituted better parts.

We could not print all the images in this build so check out the video here!

Tony Dixon NTM – tex50613@gmail.com – S Scale – Working on another S scale Paducah rebuild GP-10 in S scale.



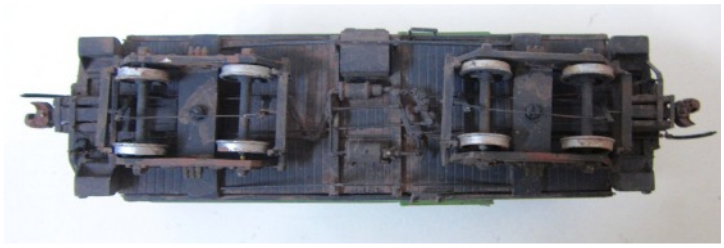


Jeff Jordan NTM - mjordan.jordan54@verizon.net – My new snow plow project.

Bill Stimson NTM – wstimson@q.com – N scale – Pictures of my FSM Rail Car Shed in progress and also some HO scale vehicles.

Bill Davis NTM – mycarolina47@gmail.com – This is a kitbash of a Bachmann On30 combine.

Also a scratchbuilt miner's cabin. A complete description of the build is the January/February 2025 The O Scale Resource Magazine.



WHAT'S ON YOUR WORKBENCH?

This series shows our readers what other modelers are working on. All that's needed is a simple snapshot of what your workbench looks like and the project on it. Send us a picture or two along with a short description of what you are working on so we can share it here. If it's a project under construction, send it in. Repair job, send it in. Completed project, send it in. Send your pictures and descriptions to: daniel@modelrailroadresource.com

By Al Oslapas

I mocked up what could be a section of a new layout. The goal is to have an elevated line, a street car line underneath and industrial trackage in the same area. It's inspired by an area of Brooklyn in NYC.

The availability of the 3D printed structure made the scene fairly easy to model.

●The EL structure is produced for Mr. Muffin's Trains, Sedgwick Models.

●The streetcar track and road are from KLine SuperStreets, it will run 3 or 2 rail with a flip of a switch (my mod).

●The EL cars are by MTH and will be converted to 2 rail.

●The streetcar is a MTH Bump and Go for now.

The goal is to create a city scene out of Brooklyn NYC from the late '40s. It will be part of a much larger layout that will be slowly coming together.

O Scale Shows & Meets

Have an upcoming O Scale event? We would like to help publicize it. Send us the information up to one year in advance, and we'll place it here along with a direct link to your Website and/or Email.

East Penn Traction Club Model Trolley Meet
May 15 - May 17
In the spring of odd numbered years, the East Penn Traction Club sponsors the largest trolley-only model meet in the country. The next meet will be in May 2025 and will be held at Allentown Fairgrounds.
https://eastpenn.org/meet/

Detroit Model Railroad Club
Saturday, May 17, 2025
The Detroit Model Railroad Club invites you to join us for our 90/51 Anniversary celebrating 90 years as a club and 51 years in Holly.

The session will begin at 9:00 a.m. with coffee and doughnuts while you tour the layout and get oriented with our railroad. Feel free to take as many pictures as you would like. Around 9:30 a.m. we will gather upstairs in our club meeting room to go over our operating system, our throttles, and to make crew assignments. Operations will run until about 1:00 p.m. For those who have to get home, we thank you for attending. After a quick break for lunch, those who are still hungry for operations will be able to operate until about 4:30 p.m
See their Website for this and other things going on that day!
Website: https://www.dmrrc.org/

O Scale West
May 23rd through 25th, 2025
O Scale West presents the 33rd Annual
2025 O Scale West
May 23-25, 2025 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Santa Clara, California.
Website: https://oscalewest.com/
Email: info@oscalewest.com

East Penn Traction Club Model Trolley Meet
May 15, 2025 - May 17, 2025
The meet draws the premier modelers and manufacturers from all over the country for a weekend of viewing models, layouts, films, photos, slides, model contests, and how-to clinics on subjects ranging from hanging trolley wire to modeling subway cars. The theme for the meet will be Cars of the St. Louis Car Company.
Website: https://eastpenn.org/meet/

Harrisburg Narrow O Summer Meet
June 13 - 14th
New Hope Church, 584 Colonial Club Drive, Harrisburg, PA
See their Facebook page for more information.

Strasburg 2 Rail Train Show
August 9, 2025
Strasburg Train Show: Two-rail swap meet at the Strasburg Fire Co, 203 W. Franklin St, Strasburg, Pennsylvania. 9 am-1 pm. Admission $7, wives/children/military w. ID free, tables $35 for first table, additional $30 per. Great food, modular layout, clinics. Contact Richard Yoder EST evenings 484-256-4068 Click here for info.

2025 National Narrow Gauge Convention
Collinsville, IL / St Louis, MO September 3 - 6, 2025
Join us in the beautiful Midwest for the 45th National Narrow Gauge Convention. You will find outstanding clinics, world-class narrow gauge layouts, stunning modular displays, your favorite exhibitors and vendors, and "The Contest"- all under one roof at the popular Gateway Convention Center in Collinsville, IL. You will also have the opportunity to attend one or more extra fare venues. Many fine Non-Rail activities are also included, and local attractions are just a short drive away.
Website: https://www.45thnngc.com/

Indianapolis O Scale Show 2025
September 19th-20th, 2025
LaQuinta Inn Indianapolis South
5120 Victory Dr,
Indianapolis, IN 46203
Fri. Sept. 19, 3:00 – 7:00 PM
Sat Sept. 20, 9:00AM – 3:00PM
Website: indyoscaleshow.com
Email: indyoscaleshow@gmail.com

Harrisburg All O Scale Meet
September 20, 2025 9AM-3PM
Sponsored by: Narrow Gauge Modeling Company
New Hope Church
584 Colonial Club Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17112
See the Facebook page for more information.

Strasburg 2 Rail Train Show
October 11, 2025
Strasburg Train Show: Two-rail swap meet at the Strasburg Fire Co, 203 W. Franklin St, Strasburg, Pennsylvania. 9 am-1 pm. Admission $7, wives/children/military w. ID free, tables $35 for first table, additional $30 per. Great food, modular layout, clinics. Contact Richard Yoder EST evenings 484-256-4068 Click here for info.

The O Resource Scale — Classified Listings

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