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July 2017



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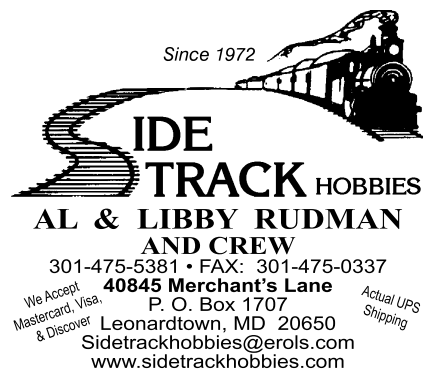


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Family Memories with Toy Trains

WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR STORIES OF TRAINS LINKING GENERATIONS

To be honest, I do not have fond memories of my first train. That train was flimsy, soon broken, and replaced. But I do treasure the memory of receiving it from my parents and the memory of my father helping me build my first layout.

The fact that toy trains tighten the bonds between family members has been a well-understood aspect of our hobby for more than a century.

Decade after decade, families have joined in the enjoyable task of planning and building a layout or holiday display. Manufacturers understood this and embraced the idea, making it a recurring theme in their advertising – as shown by the accompanying 1950s Lionel catalog illustration.

More importantly, individual hobbyists frequently tell us how rewarding it was to share their model railroad with parents, grandparents, and other family members.



I'm sure many of you have great family train stories to share, and I am encouraging you to do just that – *Classic Toy Trains* is gathering memories and vintage photographs for use in an upcoming issue. We want to hear from you!

What do you remember about sharing toy trains with older or younger members

your family? Did you build a layout with a parent back in the postwar era? Did an older relative pass along a vintage train set to you long ago or in more recent decades? Did you give a vintage train set to your children or grandchildren? Perhaps the electric train was one you received when you were a child.

Please share your memories, being specific about the manufacturer of the trains and anything regarding the set or locomotive at the heart of your story. Besides your name, we would like to learn the area where the story took place and the name of any department stores or toy shops involved.

If you have vintage photographs of yourself as a child playing with toy trains long ago, we would enjoy seeing them and, possibly, publishing them in *Classic Toy Trains*.

Please let us hear from you in the coming weeks. Send your memories and photographs to Senior Editor Roger Carp at rcarp@classictoytrains.com.

Thank you in advance for your help – and for your memories of growing up with toy trains.

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Before preparing an article, contact us to determine whether we're interested. Guidelines for writing articles and taking photographs are available on our website.

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CLASSIC TOY TRAINS

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Classic Toy Trains is the indispensable source for toy train hobbyists. Our mission is to enhance our readers' enjoyment of the toy train hobby by publishing useful information and engaging insights about layouts, how-to projects, and hobby news and heritage.

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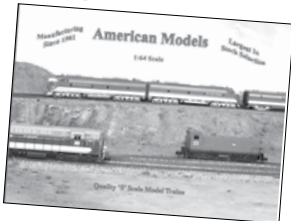
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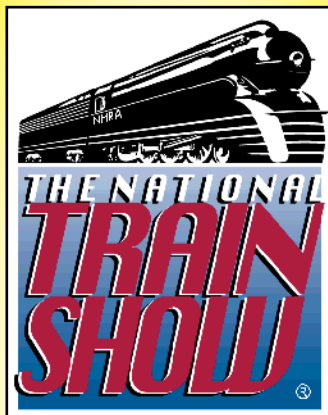
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LETTERS FROM OUR READERS



The Lionel no. 2251W O gauge diesel freight outfit from 1955 cost \$69.50, the equivalent in purchasing power of \$625.90 today. Reader Cal Pappas shares his thoughts on timeless values and relative values.

TRAIN VALUES AND A SCRATCHBUILT AEM7

Quality and value, then and now

Roger Carp's "Guide to Lionel sets" article in the May 2017 issue of *Classic Toy Trains* really opened my eyes to the state of today's train business. What caught my attention was the original cost of the train outfits and what that cost translated to in today's dollars. A Virginian locomotive with five cars for today's equivalent of \$625.90 and a Canadian Pacific passenger set for \$858.91!

Where today can one buy such quality for these prices? Absolutely nowhere is the answer. Lightweight, can motors, and plastic everything is the rule. And usually selling for prices far exceeding that of the postwar trains in equivalent dollars.

That's why I'm a postwar fan, operator, and collector. America will never again see those days of quality and value.

Cal Pappas
Willow, Alaska



This highly detailed S gauge model of an Amtrak AEM7 is the result of hundreds of hours of work.

hours of scratchbuilding.

Would I have paid the \$459.95 charged by MTH for an O gauge model for a similar engine in S? Oh, yeah! But lack of a factory model will not sway me from my love of S.

Jerry Poniatowski
Wayne, Mich.

A one-of-a-kind AEM7

Opening the May issue and seeing a review of the latest MTH O gauge Amtrak AEM7 made me smile. Being an S gauger, I am used to things that will never be offered in S.

So back in 2000, when I saw an earlier version of the MTH O gauge AEM7, I decided to make one for myself in S.

The unit, shown in the above photo, made its debut at the 2001 national S gauge convention where it won first place in the Craftsman Diesel/Electric

scratch category, as well as Best in Category, Best in Show, and Popular Vote.

My AEM7 features a lighting module that operates directional headlights, classification and marker lights, strobes, and number boards. It can run on AC or DC, has opening doors, functional operating pantographs, and detailed interior.

Folks refer to S as a scratchbuilder's scale, and sometimes you have to do that to get exactly what you want. My AEM7 is the result of hundreds of

Correction

In "Add layout-boosting Detail" in the May issue, the car shown on page 49 is identified as a 1957 Ford Skyliner. In fact, the model depicts a 1959 Skyliner. As far as I know there are no 1:43 models of the 1957 or '58 Skyliner.

David H. Dudt
Chief Technical Adviser
International Ford
Retractable Club
Claysville, Pa.

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YOUR PICTURES



**BOB AND PAT
KEARNEY'S O
GAUGE DISPLAY**

Bob and Pat Kearney enjoy reliving their days in southern California by running this O gauge version of the Santa Fe's streamlined *Super Chief*. Their son Doug caught all the action on the family's 17 x 26-foot Ohio & Southwestern RR in Moreno Valley, Calif.



PHOTO ALBUM



◀ LENNY WALTON'S S GAUGE LAYOUT

The teenagers waiting for the battery to get jumped just wanted a little time to themselves at the American Flyer no. 767 Branford diner on Lenny Walton's S gauge layout. But their coupe would not start, and now they're in trouble. At least they'll have a great view of the no. 497 New Haven Alco PA diesel dashing by. Flyer trains and Plasticville structures fill Lenny's display at his home in Lancaster, Pa.



◀ EDWARD TUCKER'S O GAUGE LAYOUT

Folks at Heather's Bookstore savor the quiet moments when they can browse through new editions. Too bad their reverie is about to be shattered by Amtrak's Acela (a Lionel model) blasting through on the double-track main line Edward Tucker laid. Even when activity ebbs on the O gauge layout he built in Collegeville, Pa., there's no guarantee silence will reign. After all, Edward makes his living as a drummer!



◀ CHRIS KALABOKES' O GAUGE LAYOUT

The laborers on the O gauge layout belonging to Chris Kalabokes manage to refine, barrel, and ship oil right from the wellhead! Lionel derricks from the modern era stand tall amid the other operating accessories, including two Lionel reissues of the iconic American Flyer no. 779 oil drum loader. With so much going on, it comes as no surprise that Chris needs plenty of figures to complete this scene in San Rafael, Calif. Don't overlook the terrific backdrop of the Pacific Coast he painted.



▲ JOHN CUNIUS JR.'S O GAUGE LAYOUT

Blending Lionel trains and accessories from the postwar era with contemporary reissues is the principal reason John Cunius Jr. never stops modifying his display. Here he has a no. 2363 Illinois Central F3 A unit rolling along a Lionel FasTrack main line. The worker greeting the diesel has just finished his shift at the no. 464 operating sawmill, located in a town much like John's home of Wilkes-Barre Township, Pa.

◀ THOMAS STURM'S O GAUGE LAYOUT

The photo Thomas Sturm sent of a train passing by the farm on his latest O gauge display shows cows and horses. Not a chicken in sight! Then you spy the Lionel refrigerator car decorated for Kentucky Fried Chicken. Guess where all the hens are! Tom, who resides in North Huntingdon, Pa., builds a different display every year.



PRODUCT NEWS

WITH BOB KELLER



SMART DEVICE CONTROL: MTH Electric Trains 2017 starter set line now comes ready to run with your Apple or Android smartphone or Apple iPad. Outfits will come with a 75-watt 5-amp power supply and a DCS TIU-1 receiver with Wi-Fi. Just download the MTH DCS app and you are ready to roll. The trains may also be controlled via the separate-sale DCS remote commander, or with any standard O gauge toy train transformer. See your MTH retailer or go to www.mthtrains.com for more information.



VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF ROLLING STOCK: The three cars added to the Menards lineup of O gauge rolling stock could not be more different. They are the nos. 279-3948 Santa Fe flatcar with a Santa Fe Trailways bus for \$19.99, the 279-3954 Milwaukee Road three-dome tank car for \$19.99 and the 279-3434 Canadian National flatcar with bulkheads and log load for \$29.99 plus shipping. Order online at www.menards.com and select free shipment to your local Menards store.



DEPTH AND TEXTURE: Woodland Scenics offers several products to enhance your layout's water effects. Suitable for use with the firm's Deep Pour Water system are the nos. CW4534 olive drab and CW4535 yellow silt water undercoats (\$8.99 each), and CW4524 yellow silt water tint (\$5.99) for underwater texture. Also available for water surfaces are the nos. CW4515 water ripples and CW4516 water waves (\$15.99 each). Go to www.woodlandscenics.com to order.

IN MEMORIAM:

Richard Dodd, maker of the T-Tracker and T-Tracker II tools for joining sectional track systems, passed away in March. Returning to the toy train hobby after a multifaceted business career, his T-Tracker and T-Tracker II are industrial-quality tools that have helped join track on countless layouts around the country.



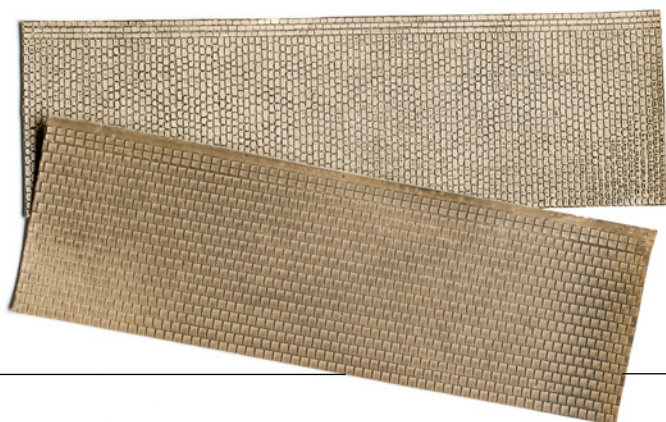
FALL IN: Atlas O's O scale troop cars are in stores now. The Atlas Troop Car Series uses tooling formerly owned by Weaver Models and offers (left to right) the nos. 3007706-1 troop hospital car in Army green and white or undecorated, 3007704-3 Pullman troop sleeper in Pullman or undecorated versions, and 3007705-4 troop kitchen



A HOME IN THE COUNTRY: The latest Built-&-Ready Structure from Woodland Scenics is the no. BR5860 O Scale Old Homestead house. The assembled and weathered structure is a small country home and includes details such as an outhouse, water pump, mailbox and Bowser the dog doing security duty on the front porch. The O gauge building, which has two interior LEDs, is priced at \$139.99. See your hobby retailer or to view the entire Woodland Scenics Built-&-Ready line go to www.woodlandscenics.com.



FAST 'N FROSTY DELIVERY: There may be no more iconic an American delivery vehicle than the Divco milk truck, and Williams by Bachmann is adding it to the EZ-Streets O gauge vehicle fleet. Four liveries of this highway classic will be offered: the nos. 42737 Chilly's Ice (shown here), 42738 Pasture Pure Dairy, 42739 Daisy Fresh Diaper Service, and 42740 Kensington Hardware & Supply delivery truck. The 7¼-inch-long trucks operate forward only. They can run on E-Z Streets track or three-rail O gauge track. Price and delivery date are to be determined. For more information, go to www.bachmanntrains.com.



FROM THE STREET TO THE CEILING: Scenery and detail maker Chooch Enterprises announces two new flexible plastic products to customize the appearance of your O gauge layout's Taintown. The nos. 8658 large cobblestone street sheet and 8924 shake roofing sheet are made of detailed and flexible vinyl that can be painted, weathered, and trimmed to suit your needs. Each sheet measures about 3¼ x 12 inches and is priced at \$12.99. See your hobby retailer or go to www.choochenterprises.com for more information.

TANKS FOR YOUR FUEL: Menards has added road names to its line of O gauge three-dome tank cars. Among them are the nos. 279-3950 US Army, 279-3952 CSX (shown right), 279-3958 Pennsylvania RR, and 279-3960 Union Pacific. The tankers cost \$19.99 each plus shipping or in six-car dealer packs for \$99.95 plus shipping. Order online at www.menards.com and opt for free shipment to your local Menards store.



car in Army green and gold or undecorated, all for \$99.95 each. The no. 3007707-2 express boxcar (at right) comes undecorated or painted and lettered for Burlington, Chesapeake & Ohio, New Haven, or New York Central. The price is \$74.95 each. See your Atlas O retailer or visit www.atlaso.com for more information.

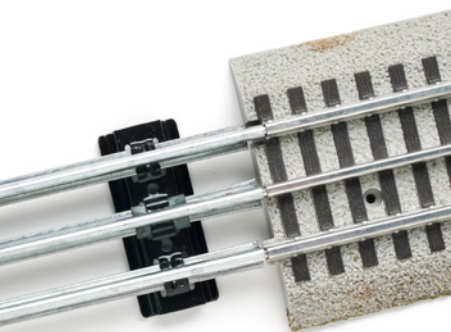
PRODUCT NEWS



COMMUTER LINE CARGO HAULER: The latest custom-run O gauge model available from the Nassau Lionel Operating Engineers is a Long Island RR PS-2CD covered hopper. The Lionel car has 1:48 scale dimensions, reprises a Long Island livery from the 1990s, and comes with die-cast metal sprung trucks with rotating bearing caps. The Pullman-Standard model also has operating couplers and opening hatch covers for \$72 plus shipping. Shipping for the first car is \$9, and each additional car is \$5. Canadian orders please add \$10; Alaska and Hawaii orders add \$12. New York State residents add \$7 per car sales tax. Buying a car will also make you an associate member of the club. Orders must be received by June 15, 2017, with delivery expected in December 2017. Send your check or money order payable in U.S. funds to **Nassau Lionel Operating Engineers**, P.O. Box 343, Levittown, NY 11756.

THE GOOP GOES ON AND DUST COMES

OFF: Train layouts have lots of odd-shaped textures and features, and the no. CW4539 Dust Dabber by Woodland Scenics can help you get dust and debris off layout water surfaces, particularly any made with the firm's products. Just take some from the jar and press it where you need to tidy up; the particulates and debris will come up when you lift it off. Dust Dabber costs \$5.99 a jar. To order go to www.woodlandscenics.com.

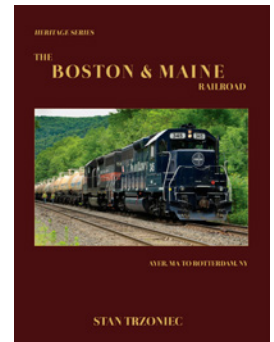


GET CONNECTED: Like the look of FasTrack, but still have a ton of traditional tubular tinplate track on your layout? Menards can help you bridge the gap between old-school track and next-generation track with the no. 279-3868 O gauge tubular track adapter two-pack for \$9.99 plus shipping. Each section is designed to slide into FasTrack and maintain a smooth line of power flow and track alignment. Order online at www.menards.com.

THE BEANTOWN & POTATOVILLE

LINE: Photographer, modeler, and rail enthusiast Stan Trzoniec has added another railroad to his railroad heritage series with the release of *The Boston & Maine Railroad: Ayer to Rotterdam, NY.*

The book features more than 268 photos supplemented with antique postcards and a detailed history of the western portion of the railroad from Ayer, Mass., to Albany, N.Y.'s capital district. The hardcover book costs \$65 plus \$5 shipping and can be autographed if desired. Order from **OutdoorPhotoGraphics**, 562 South St., Shrewsbury, MA 01545.



GET SALTY: Menards has released another massive industrial structure with the no. 279-3847 Morton Salt Factory. The O gauge building is designed for drive-through rail loading and has an approximate footprint of 10½ x 11 inches; it stands about 15½ inches tall. There are security and interior lights as well as two large Morton's Salt signs that flash and have chase lighting for the sprinkles of salt falling from the salt box. The base has greenery installed, and you'll find workers and Jack the German Shepherd positioned around the plant. The Morton facility costs \$99.99 plus shipping. Order online at www.menards.com.



SHIFTING CARGO: Quickly deliver wood products to your trackside industries with the Williams by Bachmann no. 47929 Little River Logging Co. operating log dump car. The car requires an O-27 or O gauge uncoupling track to trigger the log dump, or you can use the no. 47999 operating car remote controller to wirelessly trigger the action. The remote can control as many as 24 Williams by Bachmann operating cars (log or coal dump or operating boxcars). The log dump car costs \$159.95, and the operating car remote controller costs \$69.95. See your Williams by Bachmann retailer or go to www.bachmanntrains.com for more information.



A CENTER OF COMMERCE: Menards beefs up your O gauge business district with a three-in-one structure. The no. 279-3971 Watkins building hosts three businesses – a branch of the J. R. Watkins company, maker of spices, soaps, and liniments; a small Red Owl grocery store; and a walkup office for an attorney. You'll find figures, a coin-operated pony, and Jack the German Shepherd. The building costs \$99.99 plus shipping. Order online at www.menards.com.

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PRODUCT NEWS



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GET WET: Woodland Scenics has introduced a product for creating a body of water with apparent features suggesting the flow of water. Applied in layers, it gives water the appearance of depth. The Deep Pour Water is available in two versions: the nos. CW4510 –clear and CW4511 murky, both retailing for \$29.99 each. Go to www.woodlandscenics.com for more information.

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LIONEL'S NO. 218 STANDARD GAUGE DUMP CAR

Lionel acted boldly when it introduced a new line of toy trains in 1906 by declaring it the standard. Domestic competitors saw what Lionel was doing, yet refused to quit designing locomotives and cars to run on track spaced differently. Only Lionel kept making models for metal track measuring 2½ inches from the center of one outside rail to the center of the opposite one.

Eventually, however, those rivals conceded. Lionel dominated the marketplace after World War I, so Ives in 1921 and American Flyer four years later switched to the same gauge. However, the two firms avoided the term coined by Lionel. They insisted on calling it Wide gauge.

The leaders at Lionel most likely scorned their counterparts for being so picky. Instead, they pressured supervisors at their factory in northern New Jersey to keep improving the trains. Breakthroughs came in the middle of the 1920s. The no. 218 dump car has much to tell about how Lionel was pushing ahead.

A basic freight roster

Every major manufacturer of toy trains developed a roster of freight cars. They selected the obvious candidates among rolling stock to produce. A flat-car was essential. On top of its simple frame solid sides could be added to make a gondola. Put a roof on sides raised higher, and you got a boxcar.

Should the long sides feature slats, a firm called it a stockcar. Securing a cylinder with closed ends and a small dome in the middle to the frame meant there was a tank car. Then finish the list with a caboose.

The process just described applied to what was going on at American Flyer, Dorfan, and Ives as they strived to emulate Lionel in the early 1920s. They also modified the open four-sided body riding on the flat frame to announce they had a hopper for coal or gravel.

Lionel had anticipated the variety of freight cars needed for a full line as early as 1906. The models produced for its no. 10 series, which remained in the catalog through 1926, filled an assortment of niches. Kids were encouraged to load

sticks, rocks, small toys, and figures so they could imagine their rolling stock was moving raw materials and finished goods as full-size cars did.

More for play

Giving kids more to do with their trains, Joshua Lionel Cowen, co-founder of the company, understood, was the path to market success. Letting them play was vital.

From the start, therefore, Lionel put out what it called a “ballast car.” The design of the compact body meant the sides could swing open from the top. Levers inserted at each end of the car fabricated out of sheet steel enabled a child to manually tilt the car upward so whatever it carried might easily be dumped out.

The no. 116 version, which Lionel introduced in 1910, four years after the no. 16 made its debut, operated differently. Equipped with just one lever, that part controlled a mechanism causing whatever was carried to drop out of the bottom of the railcar.

A notable upgrade occurred in 1926. Lionel, never reluctant to challenge Ives, Dorfan, or Flyer, heralded a new series of Standard gauge freight cars longer and more vividly painted and decorated than anything it had previously sold.

Every member of the no. 200 series deserves mention.

Here, we turn the spotlight on the no. 218 dump car, with its brown-painted body on a black-painted frame. One or two brass knobs and plates (black lettering), nickel journals, and Type II trucks and couplers are the norm.

The 218 remained in the line through 1938. With it, Lionel stayed a step in front of its rivals by emphasizing fun and play. – Roger Carp

LENGTH
11¾ inches
HEIGHT
4½ inches

Lionel cataloged the no. 218 dump car from 1926 through 1938. The 2017 edition of Greenberg's Pocket Price Guide to Lionel Trains values this Standard gauge freight car at \$220 in good condition and \$365 in excellent.

QUESTIONS • ANSWERS

WITH JOSEPH L. MANIA AND THE CTT STAFF

A VINTAGE SCALE-CRAFT LOCOMOTIVE



Q Recently, I purchased a Scale-Craft O gauge 4-6-4 Hudson steam locomotive. It is a brass model built from a kit dated 1940, powered by a K&D No. 2 Universal motor. The motor runs on the test bench, but only in reverse. I am trying to find a way to change the direction so the locomotive will move forward and not backward. Is there a way to do this by moving the wires? The motor has four wires: two go to the brushes, and two go down in the coils. There is no reverse unit or any kind of switch for directional control. Is it possible to install a directional control switch? – Ken Ruzyla, Houston, Tex.

A Since this model was built from a kit, it is difficult to diagnose the wiring, as builders generally

do whatever is required for their own situation. Typically, these motors are wired with the brushes

and field wired in parallel in a shunt arrangement. Swapping the brush wires should reverse the

motor. You may want to check with Dallee Electronics (www.dallee.com) about a reverse unit for it. **CTT**

CTT READERS HELPING READERS

• **Tony Bolen** is interested in installing track lighting for his train room. While many of the layouts we've visited have track lighting, we've never focused on that element of train display.

Do CTT readers have any ideas, warnings, or recommendations to pass along to someone still in the planning stages of this project? Send them in and we'll share them here!

• **Thomas Devine** has a Lionel postwar HO power pack no. 0104 he hopes to get back in operation, but he is looking for a parts supplier. He has checked some of the major online parts retailers, but has found their HO parts to be minimal. Have a source for Lionel HO spare parts? Let us know your source and we'll pass it right along to Thomas.



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VIEWS FROM THE UNDERGROUND

With Lou Palumbo

Granddads & new dads

DIFFERENT GENERATIONS STILL WANT TOY TRAINS

Personal experience – backed up by what my accountant tells me – shows I sell about the same quantity of train sets and individual items every holiday season. So the amounts don't change. But the people buying continue to be different.

I do have many regular customers at the Underground Railroad Shoppe. These terrific folks have been purchasing new and vintage trains from me throughout the 31 years I've been in business.

I value the people who return year after year, but I pay special attention to new faces – individuals and families who walk into my store for the very first time.

Many new customers are drawn to the store by the O gauge layout I open to the public from November to January. The variety of products amazes them.

The ranks of potential customers are filled with granddads. They're quick to tell me they've come to look for a train set.

Why do these men, most of whom have recently retired, want an electric train? They believe it will lure their grandchildren to visit them. Anything grandpa wants is okay with grandma, as long as it's for the kids.

Once I start talking with the granddads, I realize they're interested in picking up a hobby to fill the free time that comes with retirement. Some of them not only played with American Flyer or Lionel trains when they were young but they managed to keep those classics. It comes as no surprise when they bring in their postwar locomotives or accessories to be repaired. They want to run the old trains with the new set they bought.

Granddads aren't the only group of newcomers flocking to my store. I see lots of recently married couples. They come looking for a train to operate under their Christmas tree. Traditions like that never lose their popularity or meaning.

Once those young families grow accustomed to the magic of an electric train at the holidays, it's a solid bet they'll want another one once their first child arrives. Many times the boy or girl is still in diapers, but these new dads insist on getting started early in the hobby. It's much like what happened in postwar days.

The excitement in the eyes of the new dad is evident. I think the train is for him. Mom also is happy with this purchase.

I steer the granddads and new dads to ready-to-run (RTR) sets from Lionel and MTH. These trains sell consistently at the holidays. They typically include a locomotive, three or four railcars, a circle of three-rail track, and a transformer. Everything comes in a colorful set box.

Lionel offers a LionChief remote-control system in all its new RTR sets. MTH also packs a remote system with its RTR sets, so there's no way a customer can go wrong. Both companies continue to upgrade their trains, helping to boost sales and bring more granddads and new dads into the hobby.

Best of all, at least from the view of a retailer, new customers may develop into longtime customers. They go on making purchases, as they enlarge their layouts for themselves and others. More trains and track, structures and scenery materials, accessories and lights become essential

Sets and catalogs showing them promote the hobby. If someone is thinking about a new train, I make sure he or she goes home with a new catalog from Lionel or MTH. People still like to leaf through them, the way we loved to with what we called "wish books" when growing up.

Imagining what you'll buy next is almost as good as running a new train. Whether you're a granddad or a new dad, the toy train hobby is waiting for you.

Keep searchin'. **CTT**

LOU PALUMBO, owner of the Underground Railroad Shoppe in New Castle, Pa., writes this exclusive column for CTT. He can be reached at 1906 Wilmington Rd., New Castle, PA 16105 or email at trainplum@yahoo.com



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BUILD A

Story and photos by Frank Knautz

TALL TRESTLE FOR UNDER \$50

MAKE AN IMPRESSIVE AND STURDY
BRIDGE FROM COMMON WOOD SHAPES





LEFT FIG 1. Bridges add significantly to any layout, not only in functionality, but also for visual interest. The author shows how he built this trestle bridge in a few evenings.

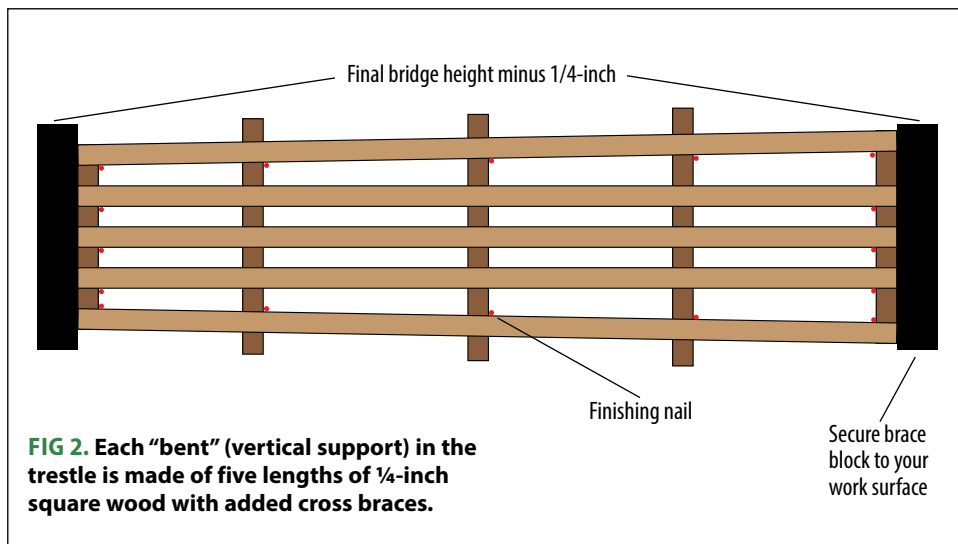


FIG 2. Each “bent” (vertical support) in the trestle is made of five lengths of ¼-inch square wood with added cross braces.

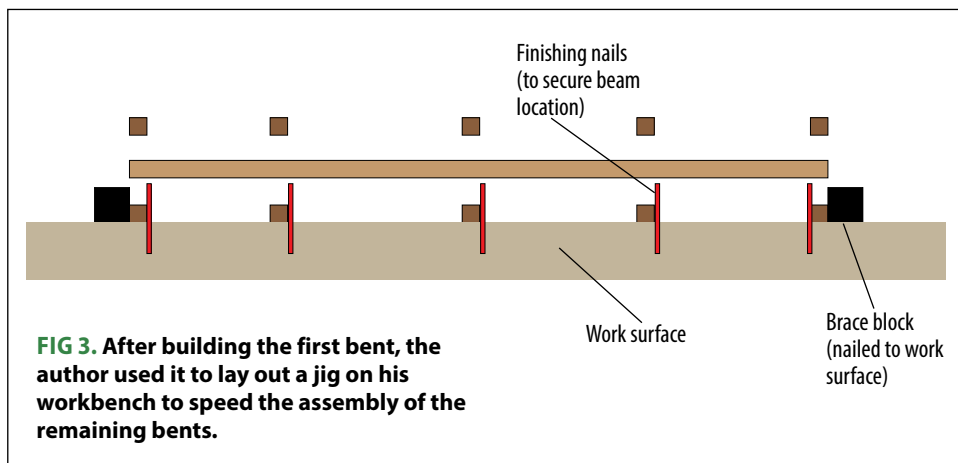


FIG 3. After building the first bent, the author used it to lay out a jig on his workbench to speed the assembly of the remaining bents.

While there are many commercial sources for trestles, they can be expensive and not always available in the configuration you need. In building my O gauge railroad (featured in the November 2013 *Classic Toy Trains*), I found I needed a tall trestle to support part of the O-31 reversing loop shown in **Fig. 1**. After some trial and error, I built this trestle in just a few evenings.

This simple project requires no special tools and is incredibly strong – fully capable of supporting my 170 pounds. As an added benefit, you can purchase the materials needed to build this trestle for less than \$50.

I built my bridge project entirely from ¼-inch

square hardwood lengths, readily available in 36-inch lengths from home-improvement centers. Depending on the height of your structure, you will need three or four lengths for each bridge support (these structural supports are properly called “bents”).

SIZING IT UP

Before building my trestle, I had to determine the size and configuration of each bent. My goal was to have a minimal footprint, so I did not “fan out” the bases of the bents. Instead, I extended the left- and right-hand timbers outward about ½-inch, as shown in **Fig. 2**. I then added three vertical supports in the middle with horizontal braces at the top and base. I





FIG 4. Finishing nails and wood blocks ensure each bent will be identical. They also serve to hold the pieces together as the carpenter's glue dries.



FIG 5. With the bents in position on the layout, the author was able to easily measure and cut the remaining horizontal supports to the needed sizes.



FIG 6. Extra railroad ties (two ¼-inch square wood pieces glued side by side and painted flat black), add the finishing touch to the bridge deck.

then added three additional horizontal braces on each side.

I used yellow carpenter's glue, a razor saw (available at any hobby shop), and a flat workbench on which I assembled a simple jig.

I measured the overall height I needed and built my bents ¼-inch shorter, as I would be adding a ¼-inch track support runner along the tops of each bent.

MAKING A JIG

Once I determined the final size and configuration, I built one bent. After the glue had fully set, I used this bent as a guide for making the jig shown in **Fig. 3**.

I nailed two ½-inch-square braces to my workbench and marked the location of the vertical supports with finishing nails. I established the locations of the supports and then placed the top and bottom horizontal members. Using carpenter's glue, I attached the verticals to each top and bottom support. **Figure 4** shows the configuration of the jig and the placement of brace blocks and the nails I used to establish consistent position from bent to bent.

Once I had my bents, I arranged them for basic positioning. Using Lionel O-31 tubular track, I placed one bent beneath each track joint.

With the bents in place on my layout, I began final construction. I added three horizontal members to each side of all the bents. These pieces extend past the ends by ¼-inch on each side to support the horizontal connecting supports running from bent to bent.

Building my trestle on the layout made it easy to establish the length of the horizontals between bents. I did this simply by placing a horizontal support between two bents, marking the length with a pencil and cutting with a razor saw.

As shown in **Fig. 5**, I added diagonal braces for more stability and visual impact. I measured each brace in place before cutting it to size. This is the beauty of building a trestle "on site." There is very little chance of an error in measurement.

I continued placing horizontal connectors from bent to bent, bypassing the lowest connecting point at the place where a track or road needed to pass through.

By adding ¼-inch-square members spanning from bent to bent, I made the supports for the track. These run the full span of the trestle. I cut the joints of the supports at an angle to follow the curve.

I also made extra ties (**Fig. 6**) by gluing two ¼-inch square pieces together. After painting these flat black, I glued the

ties to the track support runners on top of the trestle. The track is held in place using one screw per section. I blended these in using a black permanent marker on the screw heads.

I opted to finish the bridge with a basic brown wood stain.

And there you have it – a simple, sturdy trestle bridge at a modest price, built in a few evenings. It is sure to be a focal point for your layout. **CTT**

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27441 U.P. SD70 Heritage w/2 Frt Cars
28051 Alaska GP-38-2 w/PS 2.0
29021 G.N. GP-35 Diesel w/PS 2.0
29351 G.N. SD-45 LH Diesel w/PS 2.0
31681 UP 4-6-6-4 Challenger w/PS 2
34831 S.P. 4-8-4 GS-4 w/PS 3.0 #4449
34851 S.P. 4-8-4 GS-4 w/PS 3.0 #4444
34981 C.N. U1F Steam Pass Set w/PS 3
34991 G.N. 4-8-4 w/PS 3.0 #2579
35011 G.N. 4-8-4 w/PS 3.0 #2584
200341 N.P. GP-9 Diesel w/PS 2.0
200343 N.P. GP-9 Dummy Unit
200351 Amtrak Turbo Train
201201 BNSF Dash-9 w/PS 2
201431 G.N. SD-70Ace Diesel
201471 Milw U25B Diesel w/PS 2.0
201641 U.P. Veranda Turbine w/Tender
202351 C.P. FM Trainmaster Diesel w/PS 3
202481 S.P. GP-9 Diesel
202911 S.F. GP-35 Diesel w/PS 3
202941 B.N. SD-45 Diesel w/PS 3.0
203391 G.N. DC-3 Rail Inspection Car w/PS 3
204021 G.N. F-3 ABA Diesel Set w/PS 3
204121 Milw SD40-2 Diesel w/PS 3
204171 BNSF Dash 8 Diesel w/PS 3
204211 BNSF Dash 8 Diesel Frt. Set w/PS 3
204651 Pennsy GE 44-Ton Diesel
204681 S.F. GE 44-Ton Diesel
205061 GE Evo Hybrid ES44AC w/PS 3.0
205101 BNSF ES44DC w/PS 3.0
206541 N.P. SD-45 LH Diesel w/PS 3.0
200241RK N.P. RS-3 w/PS 2.0
200243RK N.P. RS-3 Dummy
200831RK N.P. Alco RS-1 Diesel w/PS 3.0
201161RK G.N. SD-45 w/PS 3
204621S Milw E-6 ABA w/5 Pass Cars
28181RK NP RS-11 Diesel w/PS 2.0
29831RK BNSF GP-9 Diesel w/PS 2
29901RK MRL SD70Ace w/PS 2

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Seneca Falls

A 9 X 14 FOOT O GAUGE TRACK PLAN USING MTH REALTRAX

By Michael Tylick

A client asked me to develop a track plan for him that focused on two of his non-train collecting interests: The movie *It's A Wonderful Life*, and the Boston Red Sox Major League Baseball club. An odd pairing you think? Not really. What are most toy train layouts but a salute to nostalgia and personal interests?

While it's wonderful to start collections, before we know it we have a basement full of collectibles sitting on shelves. In my client's case, many of these items are Boston Red Sox and *It's a Wonderful Life* buildings made by Department 56 and compatible products from MTH Electric Trains. He wanted to use them on an O gauge layout, but he had so much stuff and so little room.

The compromise was to try and model Seneca Falls, N.Y., the inspirational setting for the James Stewart and Donna Reed movie and tie it in (via accessories and a pile of MTH track) with Boston to make the Red Sox connection.

THINK OF THE SHAPE BEFORE FILLING IT

If you begin with a good-sized room, it's tempting to fill the area with a very large table. But what a headache, both during construction, and for routine access afterward. The table has to be strong enough

to walk on, and even a young person soon tires of crawling into tiny access hatches.

A walk-in design allows us to view our prizes close up and is much easier to maintain. Visitors are more immersed in the layout when, rather than standing on the outside looking in, they are standing in the middle of it surrounded by trains. The railroad is placed against the top and right walls, great for scene-setting wall backdrops but still making one or two lift-outs necessary.

Space is at a premium, and every element must be carefully in place. Computer-aided design makes it possible to move scale footprints around until everything fits and makes sense. Much easier than dozens of traced, erased, and pasted paper drawings.

Don't forget room for the Seneca River and some shore scenery. Boston could be built on a tabletop, but Seneca Falls has many elevations and is best constructed on an open grid. Counting the short overhead trolley line, we are able to keep three trains running at one time with space to store two or three more.

The 500 mile run between Boston and Seneca Falls are simulated by a wye that enables trains to run in either direction through Boston. The crossovers in Seneca Falls are reverse loops, which are easy to wire with three-rail track.

THE TRACK PLAN

The bulk of the layout is a general representation of the Seneca Falls area. There are variances in elevation and terrain typical of the area. There are good opportunities for cityscapes as well as fields and forests surrounding the town.

Train traffic is more "through" than terminating, so there are only a handful of sidings in Seneca Falls. One serves a loading dock; the opposite end serves as a station terminus. Another siding serves a flag company, and a fourth is a spot to park tank cars at an oil terminal. Boston has just one siding. Located behind a brewery, it's a great spot for beer refrigerator cars.

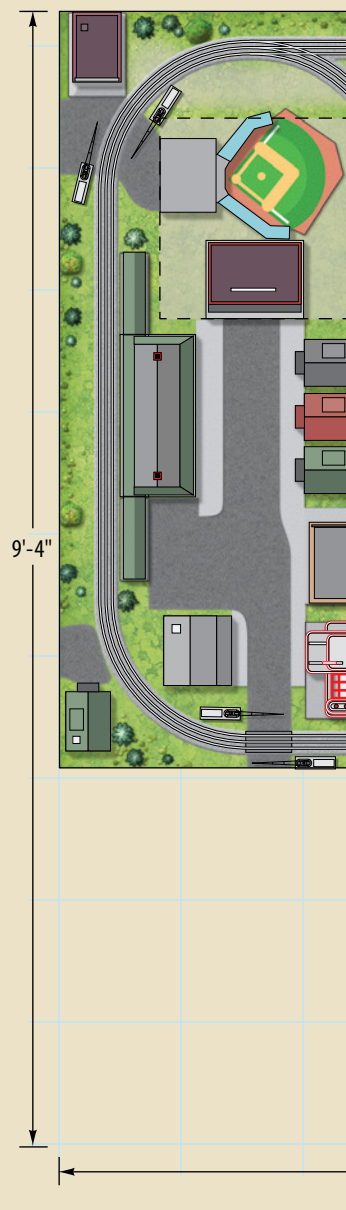
There is basically one main line with diverging lines that loop back to allow longer or shorter runs, as well as either ascending to a trestle or burrowing through a tunnel.

Planned into the Seneca Falls downtown area are the Bailey Building & Loan as well as a bar, drugstore, theater, high school, boarding house, and pizza parlor. Industrial-type structures include an oil storage facility, two train station buildings, a loading dock, a manufacturing plant, and a Texaco facility.

The Boston area is represented by a simple loop of track with a single siding and an elevated bump-and-go trolley. Surprisingly, this design

packs a lot of Boston Red Sox enthusiasm with branded structures ranging from a diner, service station, and restaurant to a theater, a railway station, and of course Fenway Park. My design made room for 17 structures to be placed in Boston, while I penciled in 20 for Seneca Falls.

So with ample space you can combine a number of historic or hobby interests into a toy train layout that reflects nostalgia as well as your hobby passions. Use this track plan as a template, and just imagine which of your favorite places or enthusiasms you can add to your three-rail creation! **CTT**



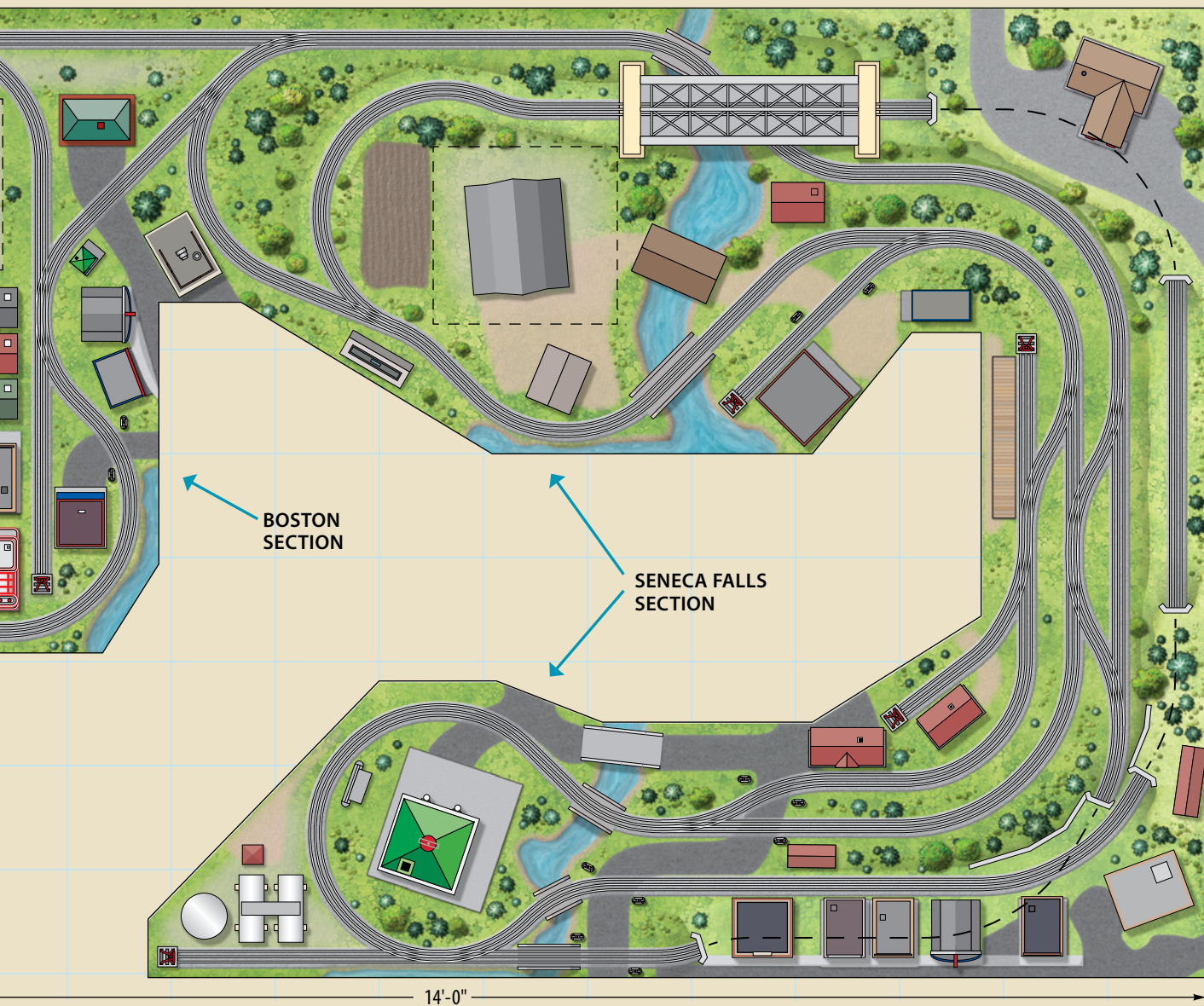
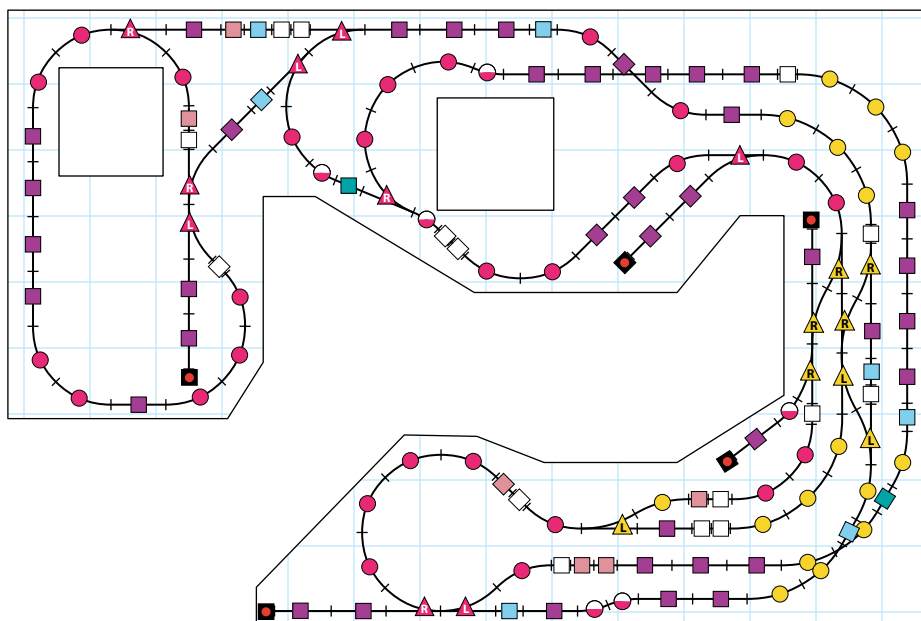


Illustration by Kellie Jaeger



MTH REALTRAX COMPONENTS

Quantity	Description/Number
15	3.5-inch straight (40-1018)
6	4.25-inch straight (40-1017)
7	5-inch straight (40-1016)
2	5.5-inch straight (40-1012)
39	10-inch straight (40-1001)
27	0-31 curve (40-1002)
6	0-31 half curve (40-1022)
16	0-42 curve (40-1042)
5	0-31 left-hand track switch (40-1005)
4	0-31 right-hand track switch (40-1004)
5	0-42 left-hand track switch (40-1043)
3	0-42 right-hand track switch (40-1044)
5	track bumper (40-1024)





RIDING HOME TO BOSTON

Story by Roger Carp
Photos by Bruce Feldman

BRUCE
FELDMAN
RELIVES
HIS YOUTH
ON HIS
O GAUGE
LAYOUT

Every once in a while, a television program or online video points us to a great layout. Bruce Feldman serves as the perfect example. Having his 16 x 32-foot O gauge display featured on TV in his hometown encouraged Bruce to share what he has accomplished and how his layout has evolved.

Going astray at times

Every model railroader knows the path to developing a truly great layout is far from a smooth and straight one. There are unexpected curves and bumps in the road. Detours and dead ends. Put another way, a certain amount of trial and error is necessary.

In the 1970s and '80s, encouraged by his wife, Adrienne, Bruce began to design the layout of his dreams.

Except that even the best intentions can lead to mistakes. Bruce went from two sheets of plywood to a railroad approaching 600 square feet. "I loved it," he said, "but it was a mess." The landscaping was far from realistic and the electronics too often unreliable.

In spite of the errors and random regrets, Bruce told his wife and their two daughters (Meredith and Renee), there was no reason not to keep plowing ahead. Especially after they moved into a larger house with a basement

tailor-made for a layout. When the three ladies saw how determined Bruce was to keep at it, there was no way they would deter him!

"I tried to plan out everything before launching into the construction and wiring," Bruce said. What eventually grew to encompass more than 1,100 square feet also brought countless hours of enjoyment. Once again, however, Bruce let his imagination and wishes get ahead of him. "The layout became confusing and difficult to operate. Another tough yet meaningful learning experience for me."

The peak was in sight

To that point, the ultimate layout had eluded Bruce, yet he believed it wasn't far off. Knowledge and training had prepared him to realize his three-rail dream. Better still, Bruce thought the next railroad would re-create the New England of his formative years.

1. Much as Bruce Feldman likes to indulge his childhood memories of Boston on his layout, there are times when his love of realism prevails. The detailed structures, dozens of figures and vehicles, and neat trains form terrific sights.

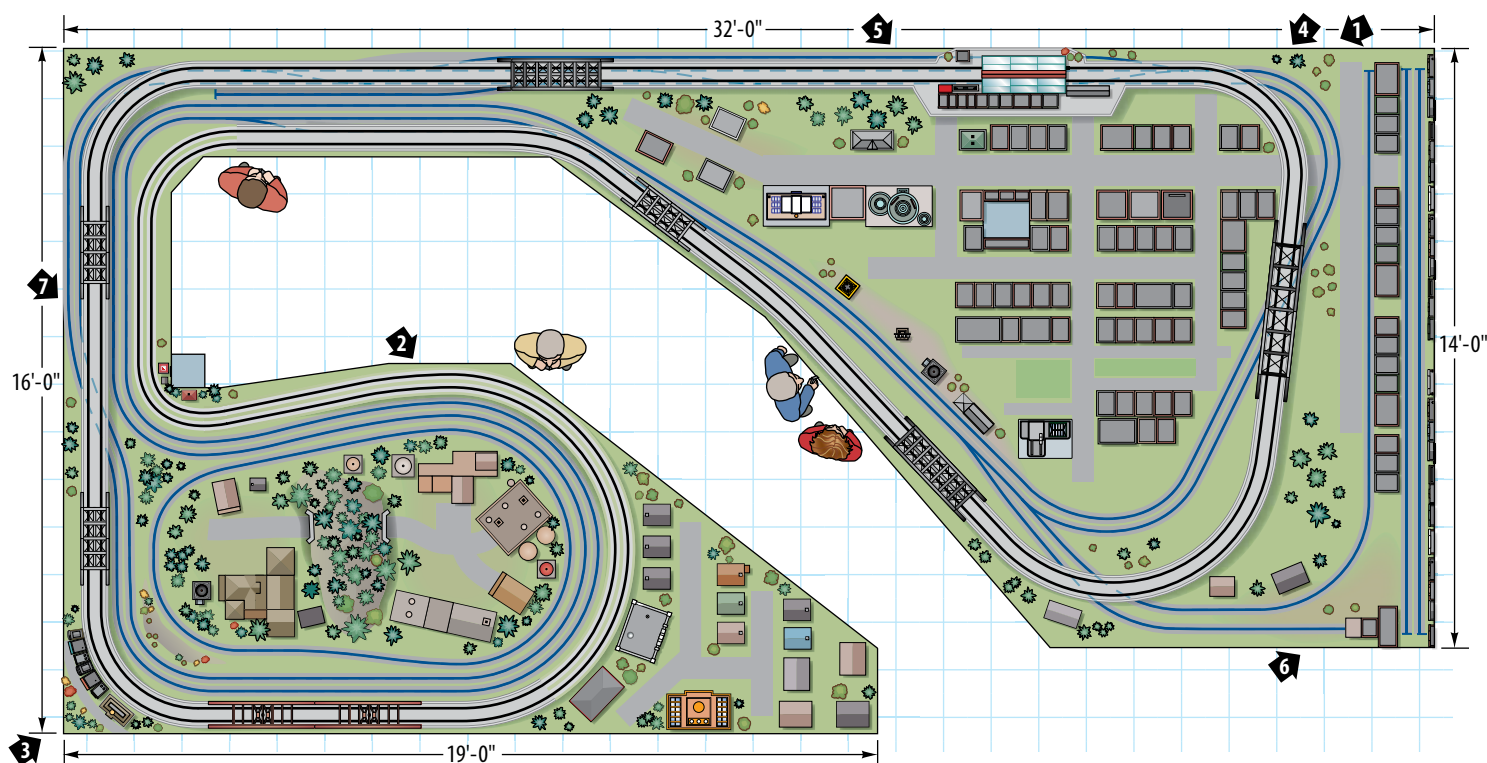


Illustration by Kellie Jaeger



2. The freedom afforded toy train enthusiasts to couple together disparate types of rolling stock made it possible for Bruce to create this freight of his dreams. He can't imagine a better sight than a Boston & Maine diesel pulling a Red Sox car.

All the excitement daily taking place on Bruce Feldman's O gauge layout made it perfect for a local television station to feature. That broadcast motivated him to introduce his 16 x 32-foot display to *Classic Toy Trains*. The numbered arrows correspond to the numbers in each of the captioned photographs he took for us.

Memories galore were going to inspire his finest modeling.

Another move meant another empty basement, although the one now at Bruce's disposal was the biggest he had ever had. Planning commenced for him not long after the movers had left and all the boxes had been unpacked. He thought he could see the peak – the layout he had envisioned building ever since he was a boy gazing at department store displays.

At the crossroads

Experience had given Bruce insight into his strengths and weaknesses as a model railroader. Fashioning the scenery and assembling structures are his favorite aspects of the hobby. The hours spent on those steps always flew by, particularly as he was painting commercial kits and improving them with details.

On the other hand, Bruce had long experience with woodworking tools, but

LAYOUT AT A GLANCE

Name: Bruce

Feldman's O gauge layout

Dimensions: 16 x 32 feet

Track: GarGraves flextrack (O-48 to O-90)

Switches: GarGraves, Ross Custom Switches

Motive power: Lionel, MTH, Williams

Rolling stock: Lionel, MTH, Weaver, Williams

Controls: Lionel ZW, MTH Z-4000 transformers with Lionel Train-Master Command Control

Accessories: K-Line, Lionel, MTH

Structures: Ameri-Towne, Bar Mills, B.T.S., Downtown Deco, Lionel, MTH

Vehicles: Corgi, Dinky, Ertl, Matchbox, Menards

Figures: Artista, Model Power, Preiser



3. Using structures and accessories from several manufacturers helped Bruce create many colorful and eye-catching residential, commercial, and railroad scenes.

never derived much pleasure from cutting lumber and screwing the boards together to form a layout's framework. Laying track also seemed too much like a chore.

Those aspects of construction an O gauge railroad were so mundane that Bruce didn't feel embarrassed to admit he hated them. But deep inside he felt any modeler worth his or her salt should be a master electrician. And he wasn't! Tasks ranging from soldering feeder wires to checking the bus lines left him feeling nervous that something was going to fail at the worst time.

Rather than struggle, Bruce wisely sought a partner, a compatriot whose strengths fill in those gaps. Bruce contacted Rich Roman, the owner of East Coast Enterprises. Rich, who has been designing and finishing model railroads for 30 years, listened as Bruce explained what he needed. Then the two got to work, each focusing on his specialties to complete a tribute to postwar Massachusetts.

Smaller than before

Bruce can't be sure whether the 16 x 32-foot O gauge railroad featured here should be considered his fifth or sixth layout. The reason, he states, is that it represents a reconfiguring of the 1,300-square-foot extravaganza Rich oversaw to

completion in the Feldmans' previous home. As advised by Bruce, he designed it as a modular display easily disassembled and, in 2011, moved to a new residence.

Since that time, Bruce has reduced the dimensions to get a terrific layout he loves to upgrade and operate. Why has he cut it down almost 25 percent?

One reason, Bruce replies with a laugh, was to make it easier for him to reach every spot. More important, he adds, was gaining new opportunities to refine the

landscaping and rethink assorted scenes and the structures put in them.

The benchwork, which Bruce describes as primarily open grid, is especially solid and sturdy. The standard design for East Coast Enterprises has tended to be 2 x 4 lumber for the legs and 2 x 6 wood for all the supports.

Where tabletop construction struck Bruce and Rich as better, they utilized sheets of 5/8-inch-thick plywood. By the way, the main level of the layout stands



4. Childhood yearnings for an O gauge empire inspired Bruce to build a 16 x 32-foot tribute to Boston and its suburbs. He dreamed of a layout filled with structures and trains, including Boston & Maine passenger expresses.



5. Photographing long passenger trains and illuminated skyscrapers has become an aspect of the hobby Bruce loves. His picture of a Chesse System train braking at the main station in Boston shows how skilled he is at capturing realistic scenes.



6. Bruce recalls returning home from school and drinking a cold glass of Hood's milk with a sandwich made of Wonder Bread. So he had to showcase those products on his layout.

37 inches off the floor. Also, the highest elevation rises almost 12 inches above this.

Conversations between Bruce and Rich regarding what kind of track to use revolved around realism versus tradition. Loyalty to the past, which dictated going with old-time tubular sections, failed to overcome a wish for scale realism.

So Bruce selected GarGraves flextrack for the three-rail network to be laid over cork roadbed. Most of the turnouts came from Ross Custom Switches. Said Bruce: "Need and availability at the time of construction dictated what we took."

The curves on the layout are quite smooth and generous. Other than a few spots with O-48 pieces, the minimum diameter is 72 inches and the maximum a comfortable 90 inches. Rich secured everything with screws and a little glue.

Electronics ... maybe

Remember how Bruce hoped to avoid all the hassles he associated with wiring a large layout by engaging Rich and his crew? Well, he was wise to do so.

The guys at East Coast Enterprises know just how to install transformers

from every era, whether Lionel ZW types from postwar days or MTH Z-4000s from the past decade. They're also wizards at soldering 16-gauge feeder wires to the main lines and sidings every 10 feet. They used 18-gauge for accessories.

But, as Bruce will be the first to admit, learning how to use TrainMaster Command Control to its best advantage was up to him. "I thought TMCC would be the easiest and most technologically advanced," he says. "But I find it difficult to control five or six trains running at once. And there are so many codes and numbers to remember. I just may return to a conventional mode of control."

Scenery ... yes

What has not frustrated Bruce one iota is the scenery. He loves conceiving of what different areas should look like and how to create landscapes and add structures to make his visions become realities. Model railroading books and articles in *Classic Toy Trains* offer ideas, but mostly Bruce relies on his vivid imagination.

"Over the years I have used just about every technique for making mountains,

valleys, and other kinds of terrain,” Bruce says. “Recently, I have been leaning toward Styrofoam for the foundation. Then I put on plaster-infused cloth, a coating of Sculptamold, and lots of rock castings.”

Bruce colors the hardened landforms with different commercial brands of water-based acrylic paints. Next come ground cover, grass, trees, and other items from the Scenic Designs catalog. Whatever works successfully pleases Bruce.

The same relaxed approach applies when Bruce adds roads and highways. Sometimes he merely paints them over the plywood base. In other areas, he relies on floor leveling compound poured in place. Still elsewhere Bruce opts for strips of thin wood painted and weathered first.

“There’s no purpose in worrying about the quality of your landscaping,” Bruce concludes. “I enjoy trying different methods and experimenting with a variety of materials. If the results don’t look right, then I remove what I can and start over. Believe it or not, the entire process is fun. It should never be a chore.”

Structures ... wow!

Pose the question to Bruce of what part of building a layout does he enjoy most and you get an answer in no more than a tenth of a second. “My favorite part of the hobby,” he says, “is building structures for the scene I am creating.”

Bruce favors kits he characterizes as “higher end” (more challenging to assemble and more satisfying to paint, detail, and then weather).

Commercial items produced by Bar Mills, B.T.S., Downtown Deco, and a few other firms catch Bruce’s attention. These deserve to be called craftsman kits because they involve laser-cutting technology and

“WITH TIME, PATIENCE, AND AN OPEN MIND FOR CREATIVITY, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE. CREATE YOUR OWN WORLD AND HAVE FUN!”

consist of scale parts made of delicate woods, plaster, urethane, and brass, along with white-metal castings.

Bruce taps his fine-motor skills as well as vast reserves of patience when assembling residential, industrial, agricultural, and railroad structures. Similarly, he carefully weathers every one of them using



7. A Pennsylvania RR freight pulled effortlessly by one of its steam engines dashes by a rural station on a September morning. No matter how much Bruce may favor the Boston & Maine, he still insists on running some Pennsy power on the layout.

pastel chalks or hobby paints. The dry-brushing technique utilizing a flat brush with a light coat of white works well.

Lately, Bruce has broadened his repertoire of modeling talents to include the popular technique known as “kitbashing.” He reports buying different buildings sold by Ameri-Towne, Lionel, and MTH and then “harvesting” the parts to develop structures unlike any others.

Home to Boston

Speaking honestly, Bruce tells you that benchwork and electronics were not going to advance his goal of re-creating in miniature scenes from his youth in postwar Boston. So he’s glad Rich Roman and his staff handled those key steps.

Scenery and structures – these are the phases essential to accomplishing what Bruce desired. He directs our attention to Beacon Hill, Boston Commons, Newbury Street, and other famous sights. “Friends and visitors love to see these areas,” Bruce states. “Their favorite might be the MTA line and stations I did.”

Heading back home to Boston, at least an O gauge version, thrills Bruce. He has channeled his boyhood envy into the finest modeling he has ever done. Further, he has shown how, as he puts it, “with time, patience, and an open mind for creativity, anything is possible. Create your own world and have fun!” **CTT**

CTT ONLINE

TO WATCH A VIDEO of Bruce Feldman’s O gauge layout, please go to www.ClassicToyTrains.com/LayoutVisits



THE DYNAMIC WORLD OF VERNON HART

VETERAN RAILROADER AND MODELER EXTENDS HIS GREAT LAYOUT

Story by Roger Carp • Photos by Dennis Brennan

A life touched by railroading unfolds as you walk through the lower portion of the home belonging to Vernon Hart and his lovely wife, Mary. One corner, filled with timetables and union buttons, reminds you Vernon worked as an engineer for the Frisco and the Burlington Northern. Shelves displaying scale replicas of railcars plus the hobby awards they earned call to mind his commitment to HO modeling.

Fascinated by the railroad memorabilia and plaques, the HO scale diesels and passenger cars lettered for Vernon's Ozark Wilderness Line, you lose track of the minutes. Then you notice the spectacular O gauge layout in the main area and you never want to look elsewhere.



Ready to return

Photographer Dennis Brennan and I had the pleasure of visiting Mary and Vernon a decade ago as we put together a comprehensive look at his 15 x 20-foot O gauge railroad for the October 2006 issue of *Classic Toy Trains*. We had a blast listening to Vernon spin tales about his days in locomotive cabs and learning how he

had used memories of what he had seen to develop his layout.

Explaining to CTT readers the ways they could improve their layouts by studying full-size scenery and prototype railroad practices became a primary goal of the article about Vernon. He generously shared many tips while pointing out elements behind the design and creation of the finest



of his trackside scenes. His model railroad served beautifully as an introductory textbook.

Over the ensuing years, Vernon kept modifying his layout. He substituted new structures for old favorites while updated the landscaping. He expanded the railroad, constructing to one side a mountainous section reminiscent of northern New Mexico and

building at another end heavily forested hills and ravines.

Vernon, on finding the enlarged layout sufficiently satisfying to him, contacted *Classic Toy Trains*. His eagerness to describe how his excellent O gauge railroad had developed since the article was published in 2006 couldn't be missed. He mentioned a replica of the Santa Fe

depot in Albuquerque, N.Mex., along with improved rock formations and mesas. More enticing was news about the addition he had carefully planned and executed with his usual expertise.

My photographer and I hastily carved out space on our schedules to travel to Vernon's home. We knew there was no chance we would be disappointed!

1. Everyone on Vernon Hart's O gauge layout has fun. Kids frolicking in the shallow river as well as travelers heading north in the Denver & Rio Grande Western streamliner.



2. TOP LEFT

Vernon's realistic modeling, so thoughtful and detail oriented, provides the ideal stage for O gauge model trains of any era, even postwar and early modern tank cars.

3. TOP RIGHT

Besides a station, this ramshackle tippie is the only structure on the new extension. The scattered ties and ballast are remnants of a spur that long ago served the mine.

4. CENTER RIGHT

Years spent gazing out of the windows of first- and second-generation diesels gave Vernon an education in the terrain of the Southwest.



World of surprises

Immediately after arriving, Dennis and I remembered to our delight how Vernon, with the cooperation and advice of his spouse, had created a superb setting for his layout downstairs. The Harts agreed a memorable model railroad deserved the right environment. They made certain the

display was one of many elements there and not the sole piece in a cramped or neglected area.

Walking down the flight of steps to explore the brightly lit and spacious room was a pleasure. No ceiling pipes or air ducts to duck under or narrow aisles to squeeze through. Strolling from one spot to the next was a breeze.

The world of surprises greeting Dennis and me included some nooks filled with eye-catching objects. Vernon and Mary have fun putting together displays of items from his career on railroads as well as awards and other pieces reflecting his success as an HO modeler. We could have spent hours studying the vintage timetables and instruction manuals plus the plaques honoring his skills.

Vernon emphasizes how every hobbyist, regardless of background or depth of experience, should take care to show off whatever reflects a love of railroading. Let visitors see what makes you passionate about contemporary or antique miniature trains. Display your favorite stuff, ranging from posters and advertisements to photos and best models. The room must help them get you.

Prepare to be amazed

Above all, Dennis and I aimed to blend Vernon's compact roster of motive power from Lionel and his array of scale rolling stock into the realistic settings he had crafted. As a result, you'll be inclined to exclaim, as Mary did, "It all looks so real! I just can't believe these are models and not full-size trains I'm seeing."



While you settle into your seats and prepare to be impressed, let's review some of the fundamental facts about Vernon's layout, which has grown to 17 x 28 feet. You may recall the railroad highlighted previously measured 15 x 20 feet.

For the eye-catching addition, which features wilderness rather

than civilization, Vernon relied once again on L-girder benchwork formed using pieces of 1 x 4 cabinet-grade particleboard. Homasote went on top to serve as the road-bed. The main level, he said, was

44 inches off the floor; the upper one was 50 inches. GarGraves flextrack has been Vernon's brand of choice since he returned to the O gauge side of the hobby more than 25 years ago. Curves go from O-54 all the way up to O-72. Strips of cardstock neatly inserted beneath the outer

edge of the ties enabled him to superelevate the curves, as he recalled from his days in the cab. Vernon installed turnouts from the same company, pleased with the reliability of GarGraves items. Most switches he controls by hand, merely by flipping a lever. Even though manual operation remains primary, a few turnouts are redirected using components of Lionel's Legacy command system. This brand of control earns praise from Vernon, who depends on it to operate his Lionel fleet.

Landscaping is easy

Compiling information about the products Vernon used filled several of the pages in the original account of his three-rail layout. Instead of repeating that, it seemed more sensible to look in depth at how he makes his great scenery.

Surprisingly, there are no real surprises. Every product and every method will strike experienced hobbyists as familiar and obvious. Vernon simply knows how to take what is common and trusted and use it to achieve great results.

5. This elevated line carries freight and passenger trains from the original layout into the new extension. Vernon once again relied on track from GarGraves when building.

THE SCENERY AND STRUCTURES COMBINE TO REVEAL HOW BEAUTIFUL NEAR-SCALE MODERN-ERA TOY TRAINS CAN LOOK WHEN ARRANGED IN REALISTIC, NEATLY DETAILED VIGNETTES.

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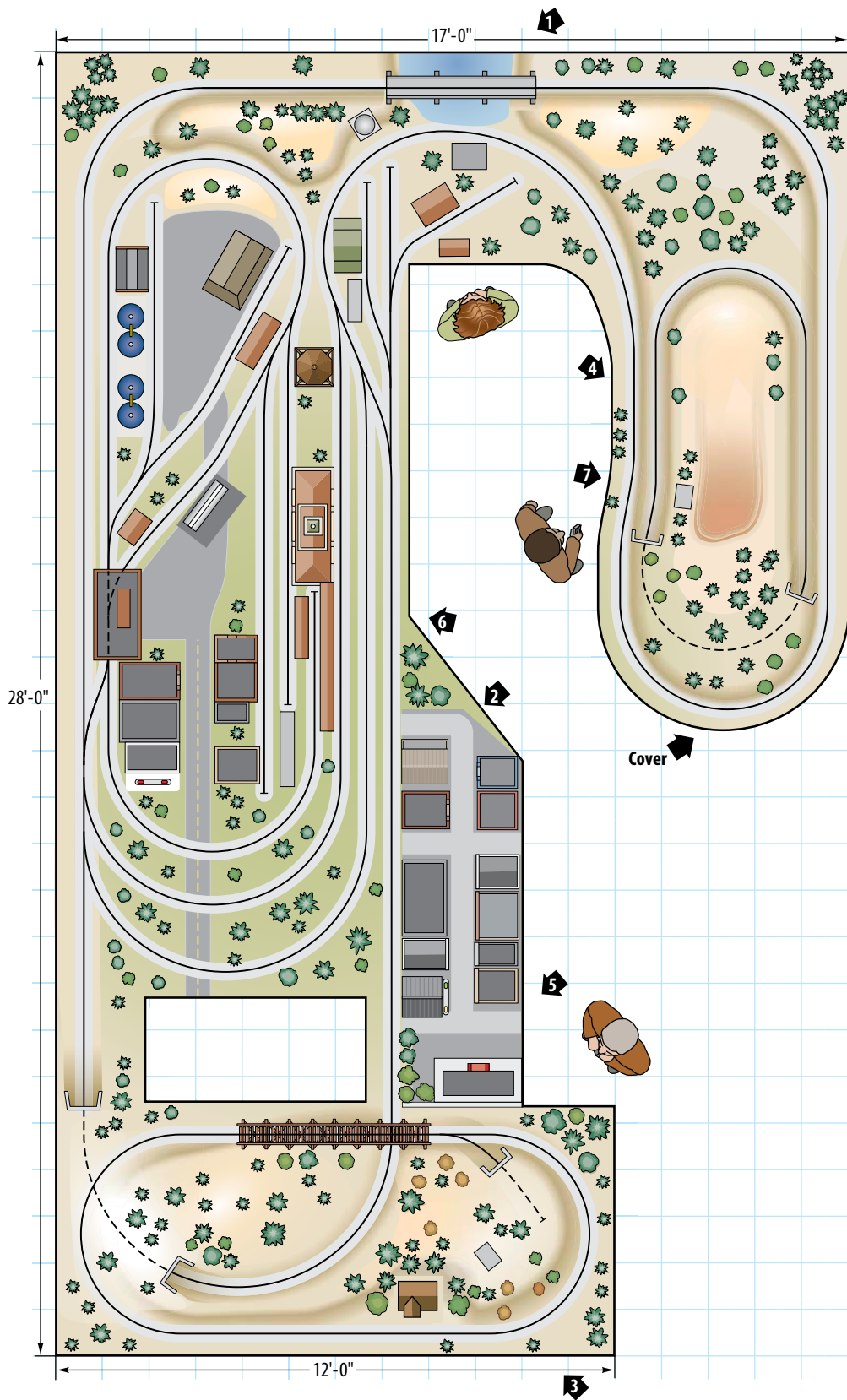


Illustration by Roen Kelly

Since Vernon's O gauge layout appeared in the October 2006 issue of *Classic Toy Trains*, he has designed a superb extension at one end. The numbered arrows correspond to the numbers in each of the captioned photographs taken by regular contributor Dennis Brennan.

LAYOUT AT A GLANCE

Name: Vernon Hart's O gauge layout

Dimensions: 17 x 28 feet

Track: GarGraves (O-54 to O-72)

Switches: GarGraves, Lionel
Motive power: Lionel (post-war, modern)

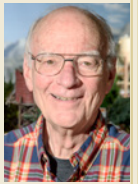
Rolling stock: K-Line, Lionel (postwar, modern), MTH

Controls: Lionel Power-House 180-watt transformer (2) and Train Power Controller 400, MTH 80-watt transformer with Legacy command control

Structures: Ameri-Towne, Cannon Valley, City Seen, Downtown Deco, Korber, Lionel, Menards, MTH Electric Trains, scratch-built, Stan's Tanks, Suncoast Models, TW Train-Worx, Wm. K. Walthers

Vehicles: Brooklin, Diecast Unlimited, Ertl, Franklin Mint, Matchbox, Models of Yesteryear, Road Champs, Road Signature, Solido

Figures: Artista, Woodland Scenics



Plaster-impregnated cloth, available from several commercial suppliers, gave Vernon a solid beginning for making many different landforms. Slathering on light coats of wet plaster finished the task. Then he darkened the hardened shell with tints by Woodland Scenics. After diluting the paints, he brushed them across the surfaces, always making certain to poke his brush into the crevices and hidden cracks.

Where Vernon wanted to add rock formations, he opted for foam rubber molds he filled with plaster before applying. However – and folks should stop to take notes – Vernon cleverly colored the wet plaster before spooning it into the



molds. He applied diluted light brown or gray paint from Woodland Scenics.

Another trick Vernon advocates when it comes time to color various scenery surfaces involves brushing on powdery substances used by cement businesses to tint concrete. Shades of brown and gray, he notes, work the best.

Once the shell looks right to Vernon's sharp eyes, he pours on different hues and textures of commercial ground foam, along with finely sifted gravel and sticks scavenged from his yard and on walks. Last go on particular brands of lichen, talus, and trees sold in crafts stores and bought from Scenic Express.

The spectacular backdrops that leave viewers believing the layout extends for many miles come from Backdrops Unlimited. Adhering the sections to the white-painted walls behind the layout enhances the layout. "Keeping a gap between the walls and the perimeter of the layout," Vernon says, "minimizes the shadows scenic elements can cast on the backdrop. That adds to the realism."



Time to visit

Coming back to Vernon and Mary Hart's home to show again one of the finest-looking and best-running O gauge layouts seems a perfect way to mark the 30th anniversary of CTT. The scenery and structures combine to reveal how beautiful near-scale modern-era toy trains can look when arranged in a variety of realistic, neatly detailed vignettes.

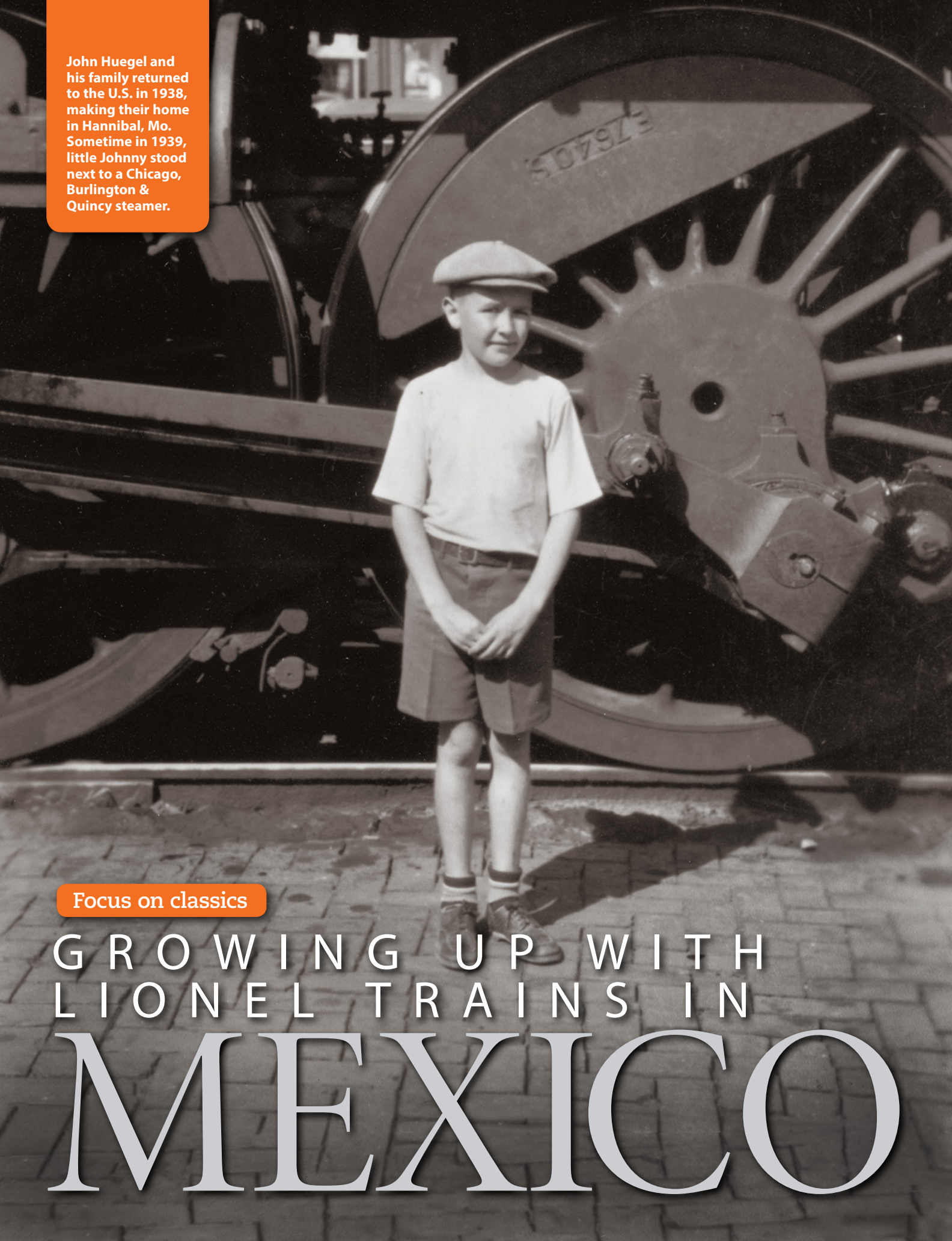
Spend some time studying the

photos accompanying this article and see what you can learn from a great modeler. Pay close attention to how Vernon created scenes using fairly simple and common components: trees, buildings, water, brush, ballast, and shadows.

We feel confident you'll come to admire this 17 x 28-foot three-rail. You should also understand why it has influenced other layout builders to showcase their models in realistic settings. **CTT**

6. ABOVE Friends and family members stopping by the Hart household praise the striking replica of the old Santa Fe depot in Albuquerque as the highlight of the layout.

7. LEFT Vernon assembled this Burlington Northern train with a Frisco gondola at the rear to pay tribute to his former employers. He wishes he had been able to drive a full-size version of the Rio Grande Southern RR Galloping Goose seen parked on his On30 loop.



John Huegel and his family returned to the U.S. in 1938, making their home in Hannibal, Mo. Sometime in 1939, little Johnny stood next to a Chicago, Burlington & Quincy steamer.

Focus on classics

GROWING UP WITH LIONEL TRAINS IN MEXICO

MEMORIES OF THREE-RAIL SETS SOUTH OF THE BORDER

Story and photos by John Huegel

A bright spark jumped out at me as I held the two wires in my trembling hands.

I heard my father yell, "What are you doing, Johnny?"

I was five or six years old, and an idea had popped into my head while playing with my small German clockwork train. Since I was fascinated with electric trains, I wanted to

electrify my set. I tried to insert two wires into a wall outlet – and almost electrocuted myself!

My father ran to my side. When he saw what I had been trying to do, he said sternly, "That's very dangerous. Don't do it again!" Believe me, I never would!

First real electric

My foolish deed prompted my parents to stop my experimentation by getting me a real electric train. On Christmas morning of 1936, I found a Lionel train running around under our family's Christmas tree. It was Lionel Jr. set no. 1064E, which included a no. 1681E locomotive and tender, two nos. 1690 red and brown passenger cars, and a 1691 observation in matching colors. Also included were eight curved and two straight tracks.

I was thrilled and spent many happy hours with my set. Truthfully, I gave it some rough treatment, like the time I decided to lubricate the locomotive with vegetable oil.

We were living in Mexico, where

my parents were missionaries. My mother had bought the set at Sanborns, a store in downtown Mexico City. She paid 50 Mexican pesos, which then was equivalent to about \$10, a bit more than the catalog price of \$7.95.

Frank and Walter Sanborn established the business in 1903, after emigrating from California. In 1919 Sanborns had purchased the House of Tiles, a 16th-century Spanish colonial palace famous for its façade decorated with blue tiles. Besides remodeling the interior, the firm turned the courtyard into a restaurant and the adjoining rooms into an American-style soda fountain, pharmacy, and gift shop.

A few years later, Sanborns began importing Lionel trains for wealthy



The Lionel no. 1668E Pennsylvania Torpedo the author got for Christmas of 1938 poses on the three-rail layout he built in his bedroom in the middle 1940s. Now in his late 80s, John recalls the trains he enjoyed while his family lived in Mexico.

Mexican and American families. I recall one afternoon when my mother took me to Sanborns. In a showcase I saw Lionel's no. 758W Union Pacific streamliner set, with its canary yellow and golden brown locomotive and cars. Illuminated, the outfit looked gorgeous!

Hoping for a second set

In 1938 and '39, we moved back to America, making our home in Hannibal, Mo. Pretty soon after settling there, my mother suggested I give my Lionel Jr. train to the son of the farmer who delivered milk to my grandmother. The boy didn't have an electric train, and my mother hinted

The O gauge railroad John put together in his teens featured quite a network of track and switches for his prewar trains. He added handmade structures and a painted backdrop, along with a Lionel no. 182 remote control magnetic crane cataloged after World War II.

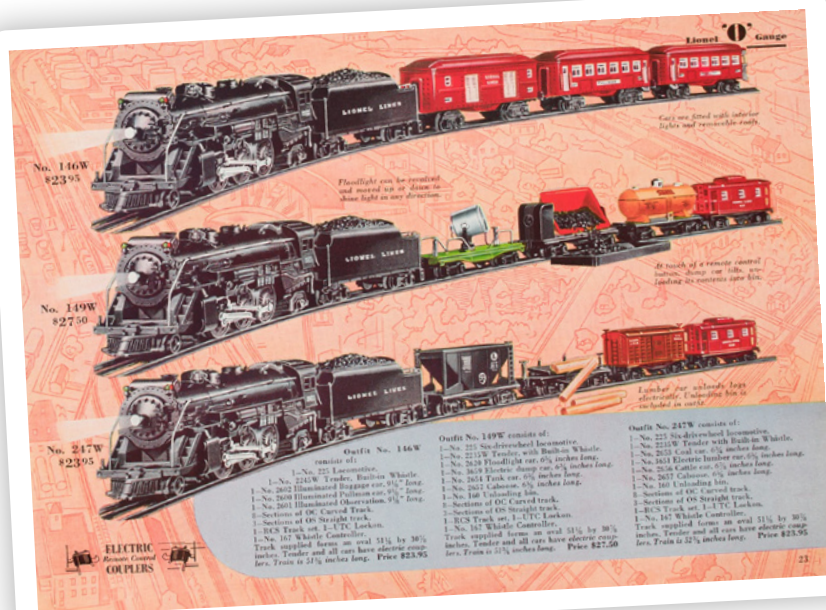


Lionel used its no. 225E steam engine to lead five outfits in 1940. That's probably when the author saw the 2-6-2 at the Puerto de Liverpool store in Mexico City. Several years later, he acquired a 225E from the Salvation Army Children's Home there.

I might get another set. I reluctantly surrendered my 1064E.

My grandfather owned DeGaris Drug-store on Broadway in Hannibal. Located next door was Henn's Electric Shop, which carried Lionel trains. After school each day, I dropped by the pharmacy for ice cream and then walked to Henn's to admire the variety of trains. The locomotive that caught my attention, thanks to the bright red marker lights on the front, was the no. 1668E Pennsylvania RR Torpedo. When I stopped by the store one afternoon right before Christmas, I was distressed to see the O-27 set was gone.

On Christmas, I found a big box under the tree. I opened the box to find set no. 1073W, which included the Torpedo I had been admiring, along with its no. 1689W whistle tender and three freight cars (nos. 1679 boxcar, 1680 tank car, and 1682 caboose), with track and transformer.



Seeing great sets run

After my parents and I returned to Mexico City in the fall of 1939, I came across a Lionel consumer catalog for 1938. I loved going through it, and in the pages I discovered the new no. 225E, a 2-6-2 steam locomotive equipped with disc wheels. I was captivated by this beautiful engine and dreamed of owning one.

While our family was in the U.S., an old and well-established department store called El Puerto de Liverpool (the Port of Liverpool) had become Lionel's official dealer in Mexico. This store, then and today housed in a large art deco building one block from the main square of Mexico City, became my electric train mecca.

Shortly before Christmas 1940, Mother and I went shopping at the Liverpool.

When the doors of the elevator opened on the fourth floor, I saw a large Lionel layout.

A loop of O-72 tubular track circled around a table measuring about 8 x 24 feet. Just inside that loop I spied another O-72 line. The latter used T-Rail solid steel track with a switch to a siding that branched out into eight stub-end tracks leading into a huge illuminated passen-

ger terminal. Each track held a Lionel set from the current catalog

Each train had its corresponding price tag in bold figures on its locomotive. Prices ranged from medium-priced O gauge sets to high-end O-72 sets. In one siding I saw the 225E locomotive at the head of a freight train (set no. 247W). When I saw the price tag of \$50, I knew that, given my parents' limited resources, I dared not even ask for it.

Among the Lionel freight and passenger trains on display was the jewel of all the trains: outfit no. 709W. Known as the Rail Chief set, it featured a no. 700E scale Hudson and no. 700W whistle tender with four red-and-maroon passenger cars (one no. 792 combo baggage/coach, two no. 793 coaches, and a no. 794 observation). The price of 695 pesos was equivalent to

Lionel items exported to Mexico

COMMON POSTWAR ITEMS WITH UNIQUE DISTRIBUTOR MARKINGS



Photograph courtesy Jerral Klaassen

Collectors of trains and accessories cataloged by Lionel during the first few years of the post-World War II period find fascinating models intended to be exported to Mexico. They are aware of a handful of freight cars and small operating items distin-

The most curious and valuable of the Lionel items associated with Mexico are examples of the no. 151 semaphore. Besides regular-production signals with yellow blades (left), some semaphores feature blades painted red.

guished by decaled labels indicating a distributor in Mexico. Stampings on boxes also mark special pieces.

How much business Lionel conducted during the prewar and postwar eras in Mexico or anywhere in Central or South America remains uncertain.



Some Lionel items had this label. It identified them as originally exported to a distributor handling Mexico.

Little proof exists to verify markets elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere assumed importance for the firm.

Published lists of authorized service stations and retail outlets carrying Lionel trains did

\$140. By comparison, the catalog price in the U.S. was \$97.50.

A crowd stood around the table, watching the trains in operation. I, oblivious to everyone around me, was transported into a toy train fairyland. Mesmerizing me was set no. 768W, led by a no. 763 Hudson and no. 2263W Vanderbilt whistle tender. They pulled four passenger cars (one no. 2615 baggage car, two no. 2613 Pullmans, and a no. 2614 observation). The train ran continuously on the outer loop.

Meanwhile, the saleswoman handling the layout chose one of the trains at the terminal, turned on the power to the appropriate siding, eased it onto the inner main line, ran it around a few times, and then reversed it back into the terminal. She then chose another train and ran that one around a few times, before reversing it into the station.

I waited for the operator to bring out the Rail Chief set with its scale Hudson and four magnificent cars. Unfortunately, during the half-hour I stood by the layout she never gave that particular train the high ball to show off its stuff on the main line. All too soon, my mother finished her shopping and it was time to go home.

Finally getting a 225E

For my birthday one year, my father took me to Liverpool to pick out a train. The man next to us bought for his teenage sons two 700E scale Hudsons and eight scale freight cars (two of the nos. 2954 boxcars, 2955 tank cars, 2956 hoppers, and 2957 cabooses). How I envied them!

I chose a no. 1666 O-27 steam locomotive and tender, two of the no. 2630 blue-and-silver passenger cars and a matching no. 2631 observation car. I usually ran the passenger cars with my Pennsylvania Torpedo and the freight cars with the 1666.

One afternoon, several years later while I was still living and working in Mexico City, the telephone on my desk rang. I picked up the receiver and heard, "This is Major DeArman of the Salvation Army

for the children's band."

"How much would a used trumpet cost?" I asked.

The major thought for a moment before saying, "Twenty-five dollars."

I wrote out a check for the amount and drove home with my 225E locomotive, which I still consider one of the most handsome locomotives Lionel ever built in the prewar era. The Elesco feedwater heater on the front of the boiler gives it a

A CROWD OF ONLOOKERS STOOD AROUND THE TABLE, WATCHING THE TRAINS IN OPERATION. I, OBLIVIOUS TO EVERYONE AROUND ME, WAS TRANSPORTED INTO A TOY TRAIN FAIRYLAND.

Children's Home. Recently, a woman donated a box of trains to the home. Would you be interested in them?"

What a question! Of course I was interested! Making an effort to keep calm I answered, "I'd like to see them. I'll drive out to the home this afternoon."

The major received me by placing a small cardboard box on the table. She invited me to open the box. I did so, putting my hand inside and pulling out a 225E steam engine with its no. 2235W whistle tender as well as three no. 2600-series freight cars.

As I tried to contain my excitement, I asked, "What do you need for the home?"

The major replied, "I need a trumpet

distinctive look. When it is not on display on my desk, it is running like a charm on my small layout.

Passing along the hobby

For more than 80 years, I've been enjoying electric trains. Some of my happiest times have been spent building and operating layouts with my kids and grandchildren. It's a good thing my attempt to electrify my first train didn't hurt me!

The fascination lives on! My three sons also enjoy toy trains, and each of them has a small layout in the corner of the world he calls home: David, who lives in Texas; Daniel, who has lived in Malaysia; and Joel, who has followed me to Mexico. 

specify dealers in Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Mexico, among other countries. Further, copies of consumer catalogs and instruction manuals written in Spanish or Portuguese suggest the toy train giant wanted to reach customers living in Latin America.

More telling are the scarce models dating from the late 1940s with telltale decals. Infrequently, nos. 2452 Pennsylvania RR gondolas; 2625 Irvington, 2627 Madison, and 2628 Manhattan heavyweight passenger cars; and 3462 operating milk cars appear

This plain Lionel no. 2452 gondola stands out because a stamping on its box and a decaled label for a distributor on its underside show the O gauge car was intended to be sold in Mexico. Photograph courtesy Stout Auctions

with blue, yellow, and black labels specifying H. Steele y Cia. S.A., a business identified as the exclusive distributors of Lionel trains for the Republic of Mexico. In addition, there are examples of the no. 151 semaphore, some equipped



with red- and not yellow-painted blades.

Interestingly, John Huegel had not heard of any of those

scarce postwar items. He did not recall seeing them or being told about them while living in Mexico. – Roger Carp





A SLICE OF NYC

TWO LEVELS IN BARELY 52 SQUARE FEET
BUILT FOR A SPECIAL MODELER

Story by Roger Carp • Photos by Jillian McAlley

David Geyra has never been one to shy away from personal challenges. As a youngster, he left friends and familiar surroundings behind when his family moved from New Jersey to Israel in 1964. There, he served in the military and launched a career. More challenges arose when, with his wife and their two children, David returned to the U.S. in 2002. He came back with plans to try something different.

Just a few years ago a challenge of a different sort confronted this lifelong model railroader. Scott Mellis, who described himself as having limited mobility, asked David design and construct a special O gauge display for him. Scott wanted a slice of New York City in a small area.

David got down to work. He used everything he had learned about benchwork and track planning. The smiles on Scott's face left no doubt that David had accomplished all their goals and more.

Useful requirements

Among the many traits associated with David is a capacity to listen. He pays attention whenever his wife, Etty, offers a suggestion or clients at his business designing websites and graphic art state requests and ask questions.

Maybe being fluent in more than one language explains David's focus or perhaps his years spent in the armed forces heightened his concentration. Being the father of two children (Sivan and Lee) didn't hurt either. Whatever the cause, David listened with care when Scott approached him about a personal O gauge display.

Scott wanted an exciting and attractive three-rail layout to occupy a modest space. In addition, Scott told David he needed to be able to hide the compact railroad when it wasn't in use.

Rather daunting requirements, but David has been building creative displays in unusual places his entire life. For his latest assignment, he drew on memories of

1. MTH models of MTA R-26/28 subway cars (known as "Red Birds") look sharp in maroon with gleaming silver roofs. They stand out against the arrays of lights blazing from the skyscrapers crowding Manhattan across the East River on the O gauge layout David Geyra built for Scott Mellis.



2. The engineer in the cab of the New York Central diesel slows down so he doesn't frighten a third-shift worker concentrating on lifting that heavy load off the narrow dock.

constructing as a teenager an N scale layout on a shelf in his bedroom in Israel. So did lessons gleaned from an L-shaped O gauge railroad he built as an adult. David shared the story behind that 11 x 13-foot layout in the February 2001 issue of *Classic Toy Trains*.

Drop-down table

Long conversations with Scott addressed what David thought was necessary if the special layout were going to provide maximum satisfaction. A tabletop display standing 30 inches off the floor seemed best. It had to offer easy accessibility from every direction, with David being aware his client's reach extended to about 30 inches.



3. This perspective from the left side of Scott's home layout helps you understand how the compact O gauge model railroad comes down from the display used to hold it and frame the backdrop.

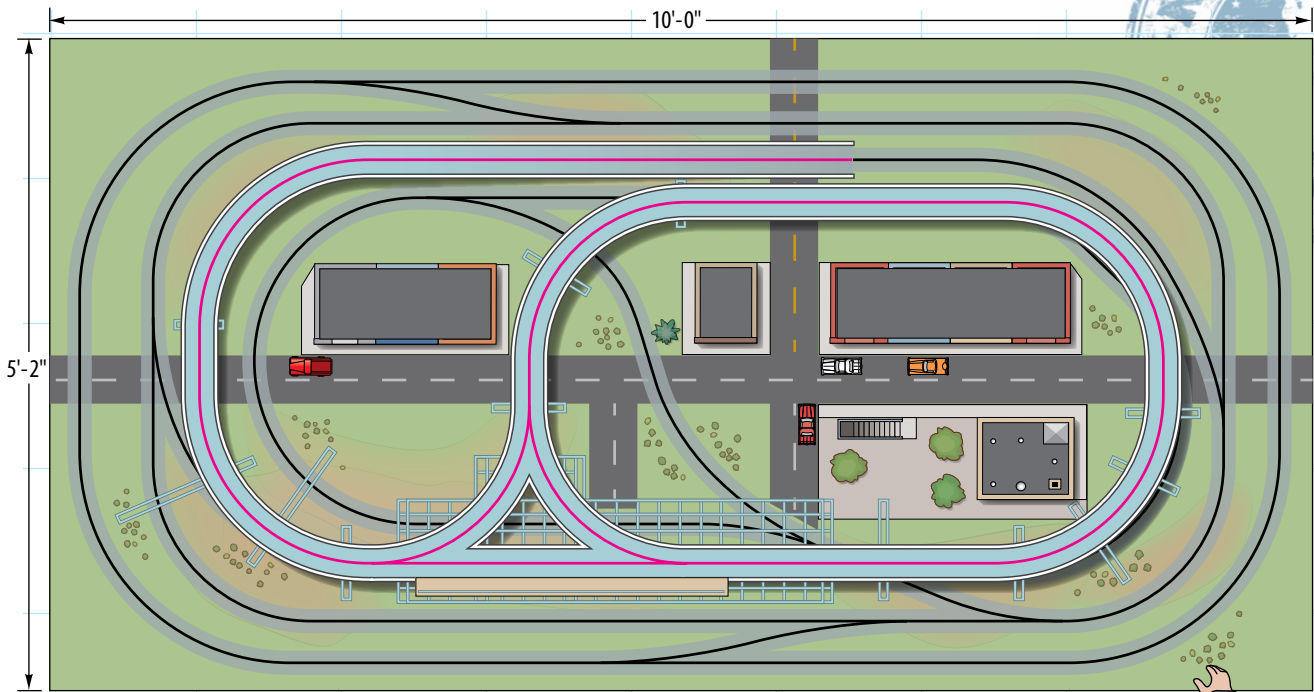
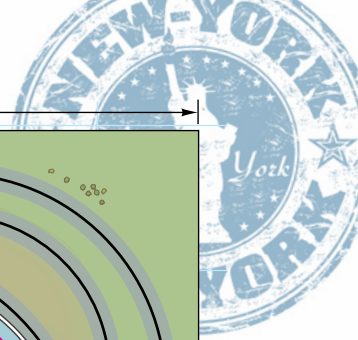
A flat surface measuring 5 feet 2 inches x 10 feet struck Scott and David as ideal. Then David addressed the next item on the list, the need to tuck the layout out of the way when not in use.

"I designed what I consider to be a new concept in train tables," David said. He developed a sturdy table that could be

lifted with an electric hoist onto a wall-mounted housing 12 inches deep. That arrangement allowed an elevated line about 6½ inches off the surface and structures standing approximately 10 inches high. All legs supporting the layout are hinged at the top and to each other and fold when the layout is packed away.

David came up with a display easily opened and, thanks to the legs being on casters, easily moved around. When Scott is finished running trains, he pushes it back into position and, at the press of a button, watches as it folds up. After securing the latches the layout is safe in its wall unit, ready for the next operating session. Pretty neat, yes?

You can study the design and construction of this revolutionary type of benchwork by going to David's website: www.TrainLayoutBuilders.com.



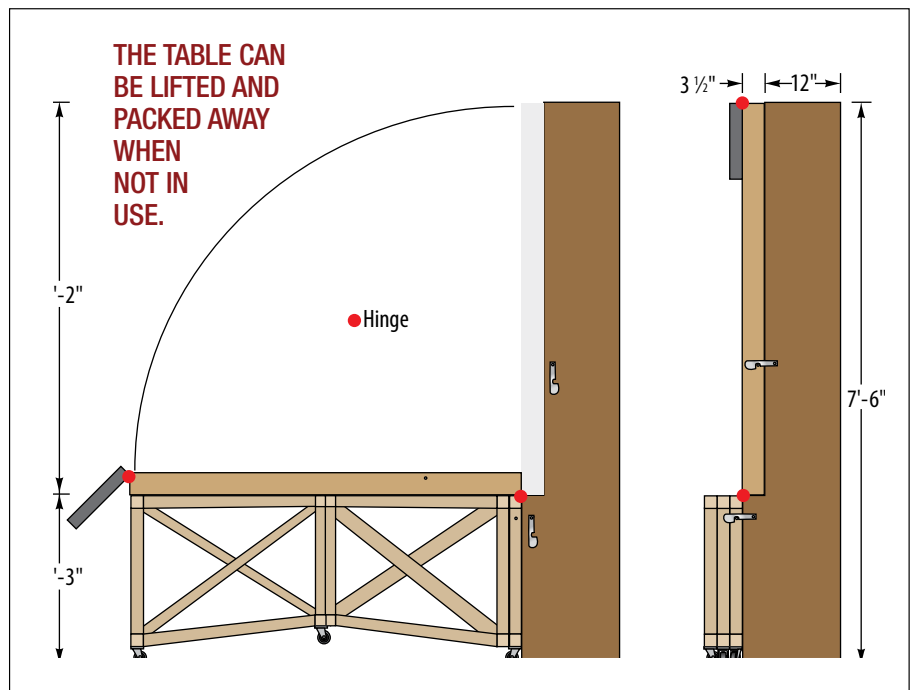
Illustrations by Kellie Jaeger

Astonishing isn't it to realize how much action David Geyra has packed into an O gauge display occupying a bit more than 52 square feet. The numbered arrows correspond to the numbers in each of the captioned photographs he snapped.



LAYOUT AT A GLANCE

- Name:** Scott Mellis' O gauge layout
- Dimensions:** 5 feet 2 inches x 10 feet
- Track:** GarGraves, Ross Custom Switches (31- to 42-inch diameters)
- Switches:** Ross Custom Switches
- Motive power and rolling stock:** Lionel, MTH
- Controls:** Lionel CW-80 transformers (3)
- Signals:** Z-Stuff for Trains
- Structures:** Ameri-Towne
- Vehicles:** Dinky, Matchbox, Revell
- Figures:** Artista



Plenty of action

Scott challenged David in yet another way when he asked to have a slice of New York City in about 52 square feet. Subways and structures provided the answer, and David prepared to create exactly what he recalled from his youth.

The track plan should let Scott run as many as three trains at once over an elaborate line rising and dipping in a visually

pleasing fashion. Even with appropriate buildings, the system won't feel cramped.

On the table David planned two interconnected lines. The outer loop relied on 42-inch-diameter curves. The inner one, really a folded figure eight, had 31-inch-diameter curves. Meanwhile, a siding tied to it could handle a short train.

Simpler yet no less functional was the elevated area. Locomotives should be

powerful enough to pull a few cars up the ramp for a quick dash around before slowing to descend to the principal level. There is lots of action in this compact scene!

David chose sectional track by Ross Custom Switches plus several pieces of GarGraves flextrack. The turnouts from Ross are available in many different radii.

The elevated track system made by Bridgeboss (www.bridgeboss.com) is just



THIS TERRIFIC URBAN LAYOUT IS FILLED WITH ACTION AND INTEREST ON OVER TWO LEVELS IN BARELY 52 SQUARE FEET.

4. Have the streets and sidewalks of New York City ever been this empty and quiet? Maybe David took this picture at dawn, capturing the modern subway train on the upper track and the postwar New York Central F3 diesel below while folks slept.

essential to this New York-themed display. The upper level is the key to the success and appeal of the project.

Throughout construction David tested clearances, readjusting the location of track on the tabletop as necessary. Finally, David had to ensure the grade from the main part to the elevated area was manageable for Scott's fleet of engines and subways. More testing went on for what both men agreed was absolutely vital to the operation of the layout.

Gotham structures

Yet one more key ingredient was the variety of commercial structures. For the entire display to drive home that its setting was New York City, then the right residential, commercial, and industrial buildings and their detailing were critical.

David got to work first on a row of four flats bolstered by foam boards. He studied photos of structures in the city before painting and detailing them. Standing out among the features added were blinds and curtains in the windows. He located images on the Internet and then fashioned his own to insert. Interior lighting from

kits being marketed by Woodland Scenics helped him complete the task.

The sidewalks framing the building flats David made out of fiberboard. He cut out "boards" with appropriate dimensions before painting them with Krylon Stone Textured Finish. After waiting for them to dry, he scored the surfaces with a pick and then weathered everything with black acrylic paint he had diluted.

David realized a small urban park would direct attention to the structures without robbing them of visual appeal. Such a scenic element was sure to enhance the appearance and inject depth in the layout. Three trees, a bench, and a subway entrance sufficed. He painted commercial trees gray to get the best look.

Right electronics

No matter how excellent the structures or the network of track the compact railroad had to operate smoothly and consistently. David elected to use three of Lionel's

80-watt transformers to control the 11 electrical blocks installed.

Power to each of the blocks is directed via a rotary selector switch with an off position as well as one for each of the power packs. All the hardware is mounted on a control rack Scott can easily operate.

The rack, David says, is a modified standard metal shelving unit with a wood bottom functioning as an additional shelf. Casters make the panel mobile. Installing the transformers here (they are screwed to a wood shelf) and not on the surface of the layout facilitates shifting of the heavy rack down under the display when Scott hoists it into the wall cabinet to hide it.

Regarding wiring of the layout, the unique design offers easy access to the underside of the tabletop. David reports using 14- and 16-gauge types for the lines going from transformers to the track sections. Thinner 18-gauge wire connected the selector switches and handled the switch machines from Z-Stuff for Trains.

Off to New York

Once the track plan had been devised and loops constructed, David knew he had created a winner for Scott. The rest of the project proceeded on schedule.

Did David mention the final step in bringing a slice of New York City to Scott's home? The stunning color photograph of the iconic Brooklyn Bridge. It beautifully frames the elevated trains as well as the vehicles puttering along the E-Z Street system from Williams by Bachmann.

A urban layout with action and interest over two levels in

about 52 square feet. And fit on special benchwork lifted and put away when not in use. Lots for CTT readers to consider adapting for their next railroad, thanks to the experience and ingenuity of David Geyra. **CTT**



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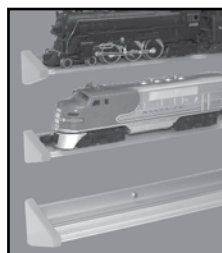
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Kusan's OVERLOOKED BOXCARS

Story by Roger Carp • Photos by William Zuback

THE DECISION BY THE KUSAN CORP. to dive into the toy train market by purchasing the assets and inventory of the struggling Auburn Model Trains must have made good sense to leaders William McLain and Earl Horton as 1954 drew to a close. They believed profits could easily be reaped with low-cost trains.

In retrospect, the move proved unfortunate. Try as the men at the top might, Kusan failed to bolster its bottom line with O gauge trains. Nothing quite mattered, whether the handsome passenger and freight cars issued using AMT tooling or the innovative and exciting space- and military-oriented sets.

Collectors should not overlook Kusan's achievements. The toy firm based in Nashville, Tenn., expanded the O gauge field with novel diesels and operating cars. And it aimed to capitalize on what it assumed was a steady demand for low-end and inexpensive models with its K Series of freight cars. Let's look at the boxcars dominating that group.

A few plastic parts

McLain, after scrutinizing the full line of O gauge locomotives and rolling stock his firm had acquired from AMT, chose to follow two paths. Together, he believed, they would nurture success and profits for his business in the train field.

One course of action was plain: Kusan would continue to produce and decorate the near-scale replicas of F7 diesels and contemporary passenger cars and freight cars, notably boxcars and cabooses. It did so for the rest of the 1950s.

The second course involved more than duplicating what AMT had done. Kusan intended to develop basic and inexpensive

models used to fill out train sets. Their design should, McLain concluded, require fewer parts, a point guaranteed to simplify assembly. Also, all the parts ought to be injection-molded plastic.

Design Engineer George Dunbar accepted responsibility for blazing both trails. Key to the second was reworking the detailed boxcars linked to AMT. He came up with a new plastic body shell molded to include doors – one door permanently shut and the other open.

Since the shells were molded in the colors desired, painting wasn't necessary. Dunbar made sure the shades of plastic mirrored the colors used by full-size railroads Kusan meant to imitate. Even so, painted examples of different Kusan freight cars have been reported over time.

Next, laborers at the Kusan plant in Franklin, Tenn., glued each shell to a separate floor molding. They then attached trucks Dunbar had developed, consisting of two wheel-sets and a frame combining a truck with a coupler). Two caps secured

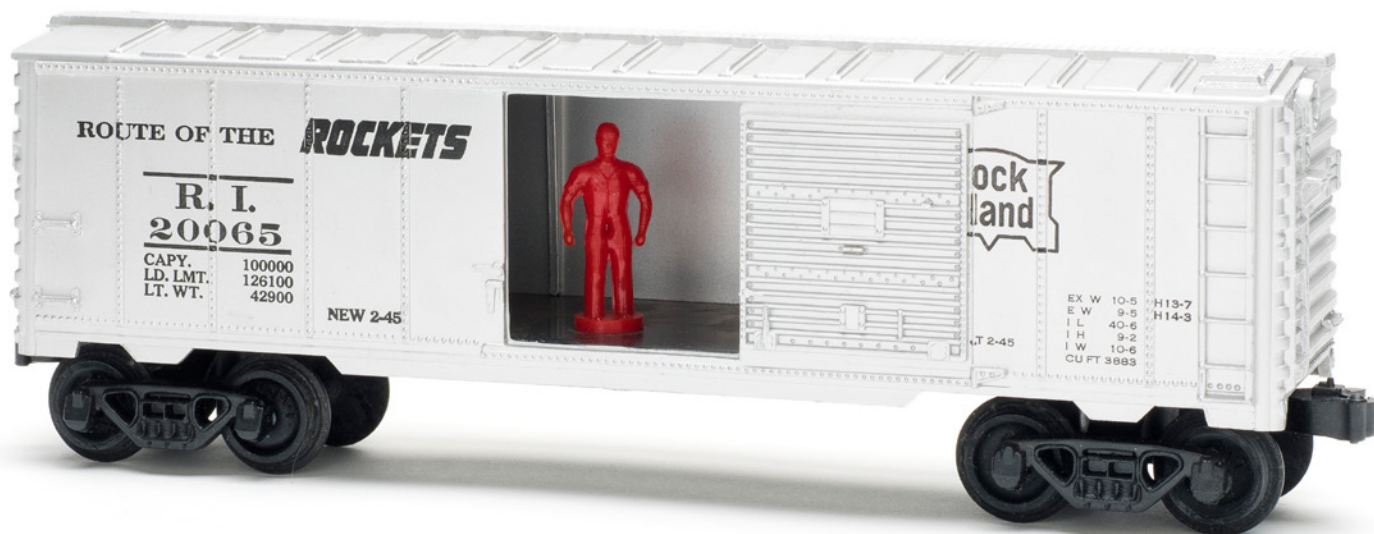


The image displays three model train boxcars. The top-left car is brown with a small white number '5' and '1009' visible. The middle car is yellow and features the 'The Katy' logo in black script, followed by the text 'SERVES THE SOUTHWEST WELL'. Below this, a list of dimensions is printed: EX. W 10'-8", E. W. 9'-0", I. L. 40'-8", I. H. 9'-8", I. W. 10'-4", and CU. FT. 888. The bottom-right car is orange and has a large white 'H' logo. The cars are shown from a side-on perspective, highlighting their detailed construction and branding.

Debut in 1956

managed to work with traditional knuckle couplers as well as the Lift-A-Matic kind created by AMT proved to be a real advantage to Kusan. From the beginning, therefore, railcars in the K Series might come with automatic or Lift-A-Matic couplers.

Anyone buying a boxcar could glue in place the plastic figure packed inside. This Union Pacific model came with Lift-A-Matic couplers. The realistic box art made members of the K Series stand out.



The plastic body shells used for boxcars in the K Series featured on one side a shut door and on the other an open doorway.

models ready to be put on the track. Boxcars included a plastic figure owners might glue in place near the open doorway.

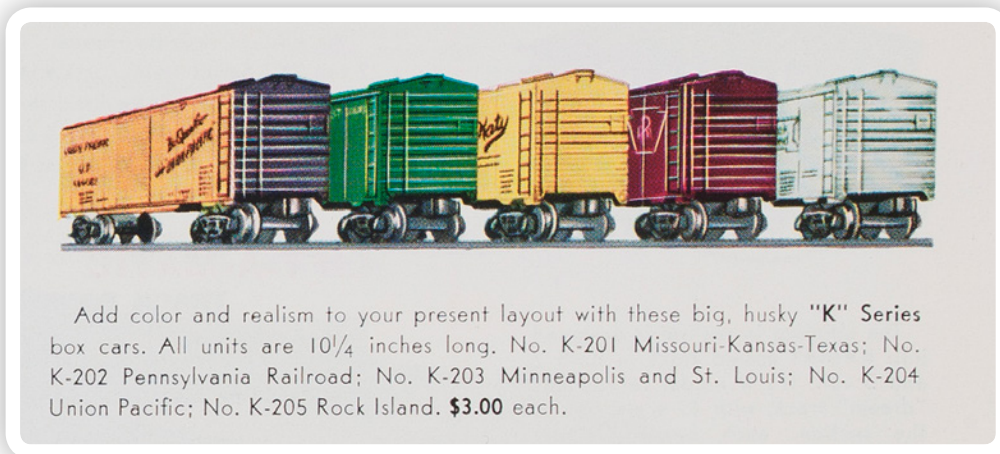
A dozen boxcars

The K Series eventually included a dozen boxcars, along with gondolas, regular and depressed-center flatcars, hoppers, tank cars, atomic and space cars, and cabooses. Simple Alco diesels and truncated versions of an Electro-Motive Division GP7 road switcher served as their motive power in the various sets.

Two of the boxcars came with the name of the manufacturer: the nos. 208 Kusan (red or yellow body) and 210 Kusan Railroad (red or yellow body). A third, the no. 203 Minneapolis & St. Louis (painted green with yellow marking), duplicated an AMT design.

The most valuable cars, according to *Greenberg's Guide to Kusan Trains* (published in 1987), were the nos. 209 Chicago, Burlington & Quincy (red body) and 211 Louisville & Nashville (blue body). In excellent condition, the former boxcar was appraised at \$20 while the latter was at \$35.

Another pair of cars assumed importance because John Bradshaw, the author of the reference guide about Kusan, described them as "NRS" (No Reported



Add color and realism to your present layout with these big, husky "K" Series box cars. All units are 10 1/4 inches long. No. K-201 Missouri-Kansas-Texas; No. K-202 Pennsylvania Railroad; No. K-203 Minneapolis and St. Louis; No. K-204 Union Pacific; No. K-205 Rock Island. \$3.00 each.

Sale). He thereby suggested few if any of the nos. 207 New Haven (painted black and white) and 212 Western Pacific (painted Tuscan red) had been produced.

The remaining five boxcars were, except for variations, common. Three brought to mind items already cataloged by competing firms. The no. 205 Rock Island (silver body) recalled the Lionel no. 6464-175. The nos. 201 Missouri-Kansas-Texas (painted yellow) and 206 New Haven (painted orange) looked like boxcars produced by the A.C. Gilbert Co. for its S gauge American Flyer line.

Final members were the nos. 202 Pennsylvania RR (painted Tuscan red) and 204 Union Pacific (painted yellow). Most of the Pennsy cars had the "Don't Stand

Me Still!" slogan; those lacking that decoration were worth more.

Gone by 1960

Boxcars in the K Series, despite having striking graphics and reasonable prices, failed to captivate the train field. By 1960, Kusan had given up on them and its other attempts to make inroads into the O gauge market ruled by Lionel.

Only a few hobbyists pay attention to the low-end boxcars. They begin by chasing after the familiar members of the K Series, knowing how easy it can be to build a roster. Then they hunt for variations marked to promote automobile tires, children's vitamins, and even dog food. The domain of postwar trains never fails to astonish with how much was offered. **CTT**

The five K-Series boxcars listed and shown in this Kusan catalog were later joined by five other road names, all of which can be obtained fairly easily and reasonably. Two other models have been reported (New Haven in a black-and-white scheme and Western Pacific in Tuscan red), but examples are seldom available.

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O GAUGE MODELS OF THE NEW HAVEN RR
COMET ARE ELUSIVE AND COLLECTIBLE

By Rick Tonet • Photos by Sarah Boley

You can see stars any clear night, but seeing a comet may be a once-in-a-lifetime event. Encountering an O gauge model of the New York, New Haven & Hartford RR's *Comet* can be just as uncommon as glimpsing its astrological namesake.

Although two toy train companies cataloged models of the *Comet* in the mid-1930s (and a third firm made an O gauge *Comet* in the 1990s), all the production runs were quite limited.



The relative lack of interest from toy makers mirrored the reception given the real-life train.

Of all the odd-looking passenger trains created during the art deco streamlining period of the 1930s, the *Comet* may be the least appreciated.

Introduced in 1935, the New Haven's revolutionary *Comet* streamliner didn't shine as brightly in the public's imagination as the Union Pacific's M-10000 or the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy's *Zephyr* trains.

Unlike other early streamliners operating routes hundreds of miles in length, the *Comet* traveled a short 44-mile route between Boston and Providence.

Whether model or prototype, the New Haven's *Comet* was truly exceptional. The three-unit train was manufactured by an airship company – the Goodyear-Zeppelin Corp. – with funding supplied by the federal Works Progress Administration. The design featured a cab with controls and a motor at each end of the train so

it did not need to be turned at the end of the line.

Hoge and American Flyer made models of the New Haven *Comet* in the 1930s. Both are “poetic license” specials with only slight resemblance to the actual train. Let's take a closer look at these early models.

The Hoge Comet

The Hoge Manufacturing Co. was founded in 1909 by Hampden Hoge and originally made office products. In the late 1910s, Hoge

A trio of O gauge models salutes the legacy of the New York, New Haven & Hartford RR's *Comet*. In the foreground is a Consoli Family Trains Co. model introduced in 1992. In the middle is a prewar Hoge. Behind it at the rear is a prewar American Flyer.



TOP The prewar *Comet* models, the author notes, only slightly resemble the prototype. This 1930s American Flyer *Comet* lacks the both the real train's distinctive "duckbill" nose and New Haven's blue color scheme.

BOTTOM Consoli Family Trains Co. made fewer than 50 examples of its *Comet* model in the early 1990s. Of the three O gauge trains, the Consoli *Comet* comes closest to the prototype's unusual shape.

sold the company but it retained his name. In the early 1930s, the company created a toy division and hired a noted toy manufacturer, Henry Katz, to serve as its head.

Katz suggested the addition of model trains to the toy lineup. However, Hoge would not actually manufacture the trains. The work was subcontracted to Mat-tatuck Manufacturing Co. of Waterbury, Conn. – very close to the route of the actual *Comet*.

The Hoge *Comet* includes the duckbill platypus chin, which is such a distinctive feature of the prototype. However, the balance of the train holds little resemblance to the actual *Comet*.

The train cars are connected using an odd vestibule design. These vestibules make the O gauge train challenging to put together, and may have limited the appeal of the models.

All the Hoge streamliners are difficult to find today, the *Comet* especially so. Models have been found with or without a ringing bell feature and a buzzer type of horn. Loss of the chrome finish as well as typical paint chipping are common problems collectors have encountered.

American Flyer's O gauge *Comet*

In 1936, the American Flyer Manufacturing Co. cataloged an O gauge *Comet*. It appears the model was offered for only about one year. Based on its relative scarcity today, the firm only made a few.

Flyer's model is obviously based on the tooling used on its *Zephyr* train, which was already in production. The prototype *Comet* was originally a three-car train, but the Flyer model has five cars.

The model train has a cab at each end, with working headlights. The unpowered rear locomotive is actually a modified windup *Zephyr* body with an added truck and an open vestibule at the rear. The vestibule has a roof pin, which fits into a hole in the coach preceding it to create the articulation.

The circular restroom windows found on the prototype *Comet* were lithographed nicely into the sides of this model, and the name "The Comet" appeared on each locomotive cab. The color is a greenish shade rather

than the Provincial Blue used by the New Haven.

The New Haven *Comet* had a short life, arriving in 1935 and being scrapped just 16 years later in 1951. The two prewar models came and went even faster. No new *Comet* toy trains would be made until the 1990s.

Consoli O gauge *Comet*

In 1978, Antonio Consoli purchased the molds, tools, and original parts inventory of the Western Coil & Electric Co.'s sand-cast aluminum *Zephyr* trains, which were first offered from 1934 to 1938. No center-car bodies were available, so his Consoli Family Train Co. produced new cast-aluminum center coaches and marketed the three-car O gauge streamliner.

In the early 1992, the company announced a three-car cast aluminum *Comet*. Fewer than 50 were made, many of which were sold by the family at the Eastern Division Train Collectors Association show in York, Pa.

Details on the carbodies include prototypically correct swirl-patterned body panels as well as correct colors and lettering. As was true of the real *Comet*, the model's two locomotive power cars are named "Boston" and "Providence." (When the real train was heading to Boston the "Boston" locomotive was in the lead, and vice versa for the Providence run.)

The Consoli cars are lighted and have heavy plastic windows but lack interior detail.

The company was a family-run operation based in Wayne, N.J. It ceased operation after Antonio Consoli's death. Consoli *Comets* are difficult to find.

Santa Claus may have had a "Comet" to pull his sleigh, but finding any of the O gauge *Comets* discussed in this article can prove just as elusive as finding a flying reindeer! **CTD**

The writer extends his appreciation to collector and historian Bob Thon for his assistance.



A postwar Lionel O gauge diesel locomotive operates long-hood-forward with a new LED headlight installed in its hood.

Adding directional lighting to a Lionel 600-series switcher

AN EASY PROJECT TO ADD HEADLIGHTS

Directional lighting is one of those things that make modern toy train operation fun. Change the direction of your train and the headlight changes along with the direction of travel. This is virtually standard on new locomotives, but that wasn't the case in the postwar era.

Over time I've added directional lighting to several of Lionel's postwar no.

600-series diesel switchers, which makes these war-horses look up-to-date when switching cars in my freight yard.

The project outlined here works with 600-series locomotives (such as the nos. 600 Missouri-Kansas-Texas or 610 Erie NW2s) with a three-position reverse unit.

Let's get started

First, I had to file the LED to make it a little

thinner than 5mm to fit into the headlight slot of the Erie 610. I assume you could put a headlight lens in and attach the LED to that, but I wanted to minimize complexity.

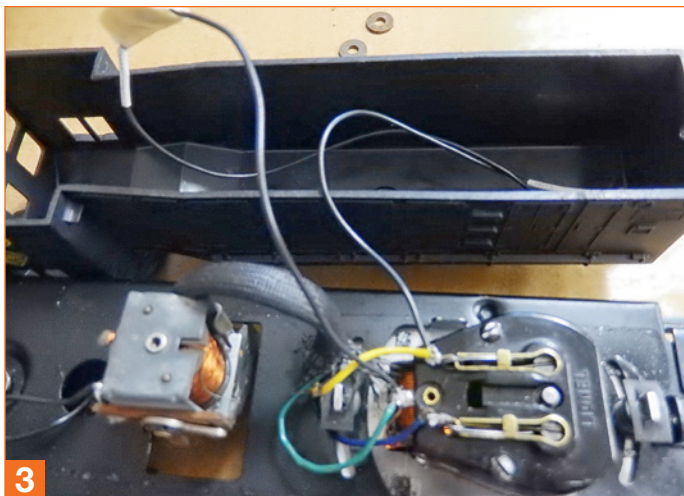
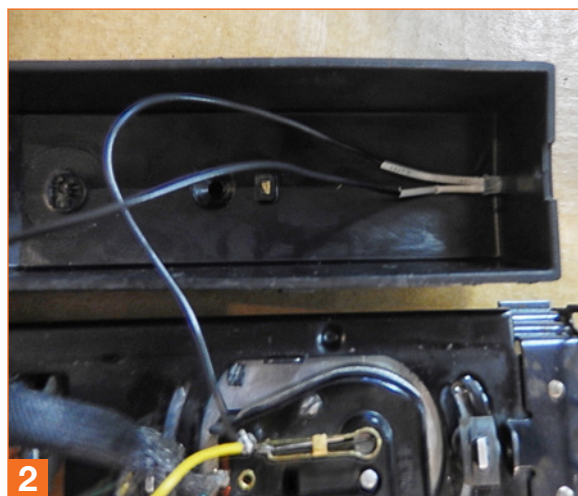
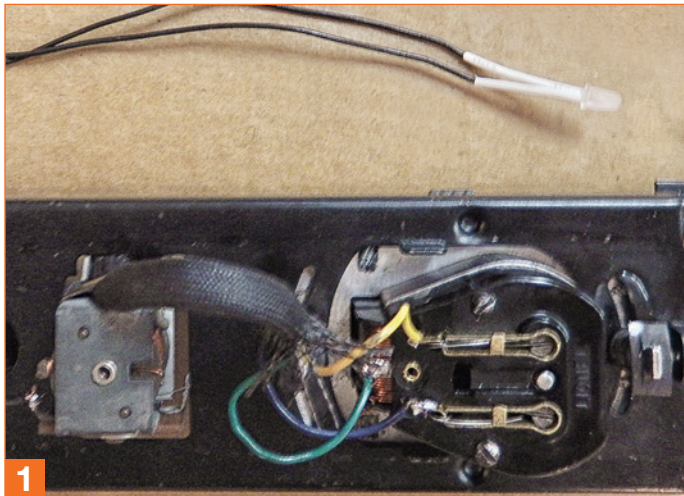
I then soldered two wires to the LED, added a length of heat-shrinkable tubing as insulation, and soldered on the 1K ohm resistor (PHOTO 1).

I then inserted the filed-down LED into the hood end of the Erie



The same locomotive operating in reverse with a new headlight on its cab.

WEEKEND WORKSHOP

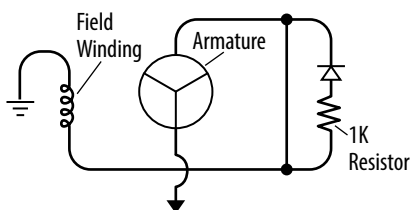


WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

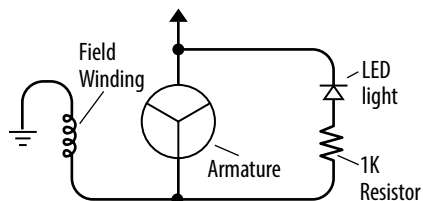
- Two 5mm High Brightness White LEDs (Radio Shack part no. 276-0017) containing 2 LEDs.
- One Kilo-ohm $\frac{1}{4}$ watt Carbon Film resistor (RadioShack Part no. 271-1321) containing 5 1K resistors. (As this went to publication, parts were still available online through www.radioshack.com)
- Heat shrinkable tubing for insulation around LED and resistor leads.

Lionel's postwar 600-series diesel switchers were, by any estimate, budget locomotives. Adding directional lighting is a fairly simple upgrade that will make them look right at home with newer switchers containing more modern electronics.

Motor operation with reverse unit in reverse operation



Motor operation with reverse unit in forward operation



switcher (PHOTO 2). The LED was easily inserted into the switcher shell.

I then soldered the 1K resistor end to the field winding solder point on the armature plate (note, the other end of the field winding is always grounded) and the LED end to the yellow wire brush attachment.

If you connected the LED to the other brush connector, it would light when the engine ran in reverse (PHOTO 3).

The figures at left show operation in reverse (no light), operation in forward (with light on), as

well as the circuit diagram of current flow between the field winding and the armature.

Finally, be sure to view the brief online extra video showing this modified 600-series NW2 engine in operation.

I plan to add a light in the cabin to facilitate operation in reverse.

Since these are LEDs, the current draw is minimal and does not affect operation.

The 1K resistor (also known as a "pull-up" resistor) is used to limit current through the LED to prevent burnout.

Who knows what other creative things can be done? With a three-lead LED supporting two colors, you could have the LED light up white in forward and red in reverse.

In the future, I plan to do this for two-position reverse units in locomotives such as Lionel's no. 614 Alaskan RR switcher.

— Jim Bielanski **CTT**

Greenberg's Repair and Operating Manual for Lionel Trains 1945-1969 is a great source for postwar repair information. Order online at www.kalmbach-hobbystore.com.



Norfolk Southern salute

O GAUGE VETERANS RECOGNITION SD60E BY MTH

The Norfolk Southern is a proud railroad with a tradition of saluting its past and present in the form of custom-painted locomotives. We saw this with its famed heritage series, which re-created the liveries of predecessor railroads on its most modern locomotion.

In 2012 the NS decided to salute America's veterans with a uniquely designed paint scheme applied to SD60E no. 6920. The project was intended to "honor people who had served in the military and reserves, especially those employed by the railroad." At the time, 14 percent of the railroad's workers were veterans.

The locomotive and its patriotic scheme operated throughout the eastern half of the United States. The special diesel might be seen beyond, depending on power swaps with other lines.

The unique decoration combined patriotic colors with the standard NS black and logo on half the body. Intertwined red and white streamers broke the flow of the

black and transitioned the body forward to blue. The cab roof and front pilot were red, and the nose striping was white. The yellow ribbon logo and the words, "Honoring our veterans," were a little behind the center of the body. All painting and decoration on our O gauge version were superbly executed, especially the smaller placards on the body.

THE SD60E

If the designation SD60E is unfamiliar, don't worry. It is, thus far, exclusive to the Norfolk Southern, which has taken previously purchased SD60 diesels and rebuilt them with a Norfolk Southern-designed "Crescent" wide-body cab, upgraded electronics, and a power boost from 3,800 to 4,000 horsepower. Since 2010 more than 130 diesels have been rebuilt.

This O gauge model from MTH Electric Trains is one of those rare diesels with such an astonishing number of detail points it rivals a steam locomotive for "things to look at."



The Norfolk Southern salutes veterans with this SD60E diesel, shown at the railroad's Altoona shop. Norfolk Southern photo

The pilot is painted red, and you'll find a red uncoupler arm resting atop the coupler. The pilot has six multiple-unit/air lines, three on each side of the coupler. You'll also find two steps cast into the pilot next to each group of cables. The black steps are accented with yellow to match the yellow handrails crew members use to hoist themselves aboard. The deck has

PRODUCT REVIEWS



The Norfolk Southern's SD60E has a patriotic color combination. The cab's crown (top left) is a reproduction of the industry's new Positive Train Control antenna array mandated by the federal government in hopes of reducing train-to-train collisions.

safety tread texture, and two ditch lights are affixed to the deck.

The low hood looks a bit boxier than is typical of many modern locomotives. A door is mounted in the center of the nose, and you'll find sand filler caps on the corners. On the front are steps/grab irons, and several more are on top of the hood.

The cab has front and rear side mirrors, and you'll find plastic windows in the panes. Sunshades are mounted above the side windows. The front windows have twin wiper arms. The roof overhangs the front of the forward windows, and there are two lights as well as illuminated number boards. Just up and above the number boards are grab irons.

There are two crew figures inside the cab. The cab's standout features, though, are the curious gray slabs on top. Each has its own set of four lift rings, some knobs, and what appear to be radio antennas. These are the locomotive's Positive Train Control (PTC) antenna array, reflecting a

recently enacted federal safety requirement intended to prevent train-to-train accidents. Wouldn't surprise me if some clever Johnnie began to produce retrofit kits for older locomotives.

Following the roofline behind the cab, you'll find a see-through screen with fan blades. There are spots for a crane to lift this section. Right behind this are two solid screens that bulge out at the sides. Three lift rings are on top of this section. The exhaust (smoke unit) is just beyond that point.

You'll then encounter the horn and three more fan housings. Below them, on the sides, are two see-through screens.

The side detailing is nice. The doors, latches, and hinge detail are raised enough to easily feel with your finger. While the body has a busy livery, it is accented with a large number of safety tags.

The end of the long hood has grab irons going to the top of the hood. There is a sand filler cap up top, and V-shaped grab irons for use by the hostler pouring the sand. On the rear deck ditch lights are configured much like the front pilot.

The die-cast metal fuel tank has red accented caps and a sight gauge, and the die-cast metal trucks are beautifully cast. The speaker is housed in the fuel tank.

The Norfolk Southern SD60E with its Crescent cab (and PTC antennas) is a good-looking O gauge locomotive that has some interesting angles and nice detail points. The salute to veterans on the car-body is a bonus. This MTH diesel will look great on the point of a military train, regardless of the era of the train.

ON THE TEST TRACK

On starting up, the model has a deep, throaty sound. The horn sounds good, and the bell is suitably clangy!

The locomotive was smooth in all speed ranges, and I'd use the word "glide" to describe its low-speed operation. The only thing missing when it rolled past me was the hefty ker-thunk of steel wheels jolting over a rail joint.

Our command-mode low-speed average was 5.9 scale mph, while the conventional low speed was 6.8 scale mph. Our high-speed average was 71.9 scale mph. Drawbar pull was 1 pound, 9.6 ounces.

The Norfolk Southern's livery is a nice way to honor American veterans, and the paint scheme is as distinctive as the carrier has fielded.

But we don't buy our locomotives just to look at; we buy them to pull trains, and having a fun sound package is a great plus. The Norfolk Southern SD60E from MTH is a fine addition to any fleet of O gauge modern power. — Bob Keller

O GAUGE SD60E DIESEL FROM MTH ELECTRIC TRAINS

Price: \$499.95 (no. 20-20594-2) **Min Curve:** O-42 **Cmd Low:** 5.9 smph **Cnv Low:** 6.8 smph **High:** 71.9 smph **Drawbar pull:** 1 lb., 9.6 oz. **Features:** Two can-style motors, ProtoSound 3.0 command and sound system, smoke unit, coil couplers **Current production road name:** Norfolk Southern



Pour me a river (or pond)

WATER MODELING SYSTEM FROM WOODLAND SCENICS

Woodland Scenics just may be the scenery supplier to the world.

Anyone needing to make scenery for a display, slot-car track, school project, or battlefield to display model tanks will benefit from its many products.

Water is something Woodland Scenics has helped to make easier to model. For years, it has marketed a line of products for modeling water and water effects. As you've seen on many layouts featured in *Classic Toy Trains*, ripples, waves, and waterfalls look better when realistically replicated instead of going with my own favorite method – just using cobalt blue paint!

We received a box from Woodland Scenics, and it contained two versions of the Deep Pour Water kit: nos. CW4510 Clear, and CW4511 Murky, for \$29.99 each.

You can also buy coloring pigments to give water depth and texture, colors to represent bottom silt, as well as liquids for waves and ripples.

What prompted my review was the 32-page manual.

What?! Even considering pages 12 through 31 were foreign language instructions, I thought it looked mighty complex. **SPOILER ALERT:** It isn't.

I went to a grocery store and bought a foil cake pan. Next, I got some aquarium gravel. I figured I'd make a small, rocky spot where the currents of the shore or perhaps a river cause junk to wash up. I poured in the gravel, and added junk styrene, old vehicle tires, and the roof of a broken wishing well.

GETTING STARTED

You need to prepare. Seal the water cavity so the liquid won't flow through. This can be done with anything from plaster cloth to aluminum foil. Unless you want to buy this product by the case, I recom-

mend modeling shallow and not very deep water. And be sure to fill the bottom with rocks, stones, and debris. You can use pigments if you want the water to look deeper.

The box comes with all you need (except for a bowl or container for real water), from measuring cups and stir sticks to plastic gloves (be sure to use these stirring may get messy).

THE BASICS

Determine the quantity of liquid you will need (the manual has guidance on this). You will need to mix the water liquid with an activator. The ratio is 2 parts water to 1 part activator. There is a table showing what you need by milliliter (for example, if you need 180 ml, you'll pour 120 ml water base and 60 ml of the activator).

DEEP POUR WATER SOLUTION FROM WOODLAND SCENICS

Price: \$29.99 each (nos. CW4510 clear water/ CW4511 murky water) **Features:** One bottle of water base, one bottle of activator, two measuring cups, two pairs of plastic gloves, two stir sticks, instruction booklet.



Put the bottles of water base and activator in the air-tight bag included. Place them in a container of hot (not scalding) water for 10 minutes. Remove the bottles from the bag, and slowly tilt the bottles back and forth for 5 minutes.

Measure the base and activator in each of the two cups provided. Pour one into the other and gently stir for 5 minutes. If you use water pigments, you'll need to add them about 1 minute into the stirring.

Woodland Scenics states you have about 20 minutes to pour the concoction. It advises waiting about four hours before adding another layer of water base to enable the layers to better bond.

THE OUTCOME

My project turned out fairly well. If I had planned better, I would have made a cup or barrier to more tightly contain the solution (and use less).

The water was crystal clear and looked wet. The white color in the photo is from the photo studio's lighting.

The highest compliment I can give it is that after letting the water sit, it still looked clear and fluid. I was pleased that it was rock solid when I tilted it to the side. The Woodland Scenics water solution is a relatively easy way to make your water effects. – Bob



O GAUGE MORTON SALT FACTORY FROM MENARDS

Price: \$99.99 (no. 279-3847)

Footprint: Approximately 10½ x 11 inches and 15½ inches tall

Features: Fully assembled, worker and dog figures, two large Morton Salt flashing lights, rooftop warning lights, and security and interior lighting (power supply not included)

The Morton Salt factory is a colorful and unique structure that is distinctive and gives your O gauge hopper cars a place to pick up or drop off cargo.

room or office; wonderful network of yellow steps, decks, and ladders surrounding the structure; and two animated Morton Salt signs above the rail entrances. They are instantly recognizable, and the visual impact is pretty darned good.

The building is designed for pull-through rail loading and has an approximate footprint of 10½ x 11 inches, and it measures about 15½ inches high.

The base has greenery installed. You'll find workers wearing high-visibility gear around the structure. Oh yes, Jack the German Shepherd is parked at a strategic point to receive pets from the workers.

If you're concerned about a rise in your track when you feed it over the base, you can approach it in two ways. Either cut the base out in the throughway so the track is on top of the tabletop, or cut a section of longer track and remove the ties that will be on the base (remember to leave ties on the end entering the loading area).

Exterior security and interior lights give the structure a neat appearance in dim light. As mentioned, two large Morton Salt signs flash and have chase lighting for the grains of salt falling from the salt-box. And don't overlook the red safety beacons on top of the building.

This is truly a structure unlike any other available O gauge building, whether ready-made or in kit form. The shape, color, and external detailing will make you ponder acquiring it even if you are on a low-sodium diet! – Bob

Salt for your pretzels

O GAUGE MORTON SALT FACTORY FROM MENARDS

If you turned back the clock 10 or 15 years and asked me to draw up a list of industrial structures that would be made for O gauge, I'd never have written down, "salt plant." So when I opened the box and saw the Morton Salt factory, I was blown away – in part because while I recognized the brand, I still wondered, "What the heck is this?" The dimensions and detailing of the new model from Menards left me thinking, "I have to find a place for this ... whatever it does."

The arrival of the Morton Salt factory

from the Menards home-improvement chain establishes a new expectation by hobbyists for large industrial structures. They must have a compact footprint, a unique design, and an amazing array of safety and security lighting.

This structure is similar to the massive American Power & Light building from Menards. Both tall models have a modest footprint and an open bay to run trains through (or park for loading) in their core.

Three things that make this factory stand out are the "plug-in side" control

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Events

CA, SACRAMENTO: T.T.O.S. River City Toy Train Meet. Scottish Rite Center, 6151 H Street, Zip code: 95819. Saturday, September 30, 2017, 10:00am-3:00pm. Single \$5.00, Families \$9.00, children under 12 free with adult. Free parking. Contact John DeHaan, 707-642-8023

CA, SAN CARLOS: European Train Enthusiasts (<http://www.ete.org>) EUROWEST at Hiller Aviation Museum, San Carlos Airport, 601 Skyway Road, Zip: 94070. July 22-23, 2017, Saturday 10:00am-5:00pm and Sunday 10:00am-4:00pm. Layouts, clinics, vendors, raffle. Admission (<http://www.hiller.org>) includes Air Museum, free parking. Contact Jens Ullmann: eurowest@ete.org

FL, DELAND: 60th Florida Railroad Model Train & Railroad Artifact Show & Sale. Volusia County Fairgrounds (Tommy Lawrence Arena), 3150 E. New York Ave. (SR 44 and I-4). Saturday, July 8, 2017, 9:00am-4:00pm. Admission \$8.00 (under 12 free). Operating layouts. 300+ tables. Info: Charles Miller, 3106 N. Rochester St., Arlington, VA 22213, 703-536-2954. E-mail: rrshows@aol.com or www.gserr.com

FL, TALLAHASSEE: 26th Annual Big Bend Model Railroad Association's Show & Sale. North Florida Fairgrounds, 441 Paul Russell, Buildings 2 (Thomas) & 4. Saturday, June 24, 2017, 9:00am-4:00pm; \$6.00 for children 13 & over & adults, children 12 & under & scouts in uniform free admission. Information: Anne Zimmerman, 850-524-4399, E-mail: GNTrainman@comcast.net Website: www.bbmr.org

IA, ELKADER: 5th Annual Model Train Show & Swap Meet. Johnson's Reception Hall, 916 High St. SE and C J Lanes, 821 High St. NE. August 20, 2017, 10:00am-4:00pm. Admission \$3.00, under 5 free. All scales. Sponsored by Elkader Depot Project. Contact: L. Lerch, 563-880-2066

NJ, BRICK: National Collector's Club Show, Elks Lodge, 2491 Hooper Avenue. Brick, NJ 08723. Sunday, July 23, 2017, 9:00am-2:00pm. Admission: \$6.00; under 10 free with adult. John LaLima 732-845-5966. Go to www.eastcoasttrainparts.com and click on The Brick Show.

WA, TACOMA: Lionel Collectors Club of America will hold its 47th National Convention July 21 through 30 at Hotel Murano. Includes area tours, banquets, and train store exclusively for LCCA members, swap met open to public free Saturday 9:00am-3:00pm. Details on joining LCCA on club website. Complete convention details posted on club website early 2017. Lionelcollectors.org

WI, LA CROSSE: Rail Fair, Copeland Park, Rose & Clinton Streets. July 22, 2017, 10:00am-4:00pm. Admission \$5.00, under 12 free. Railroad Show, Sale & Exhibition. Model, Toy & Antique Trains & Memorabilia, Railroad Exhibits & Displays. Information: 4000 Foundation, PO Box 3411, La Crosse, WI 54602, 608-781-9383

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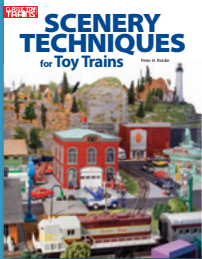
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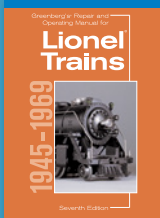
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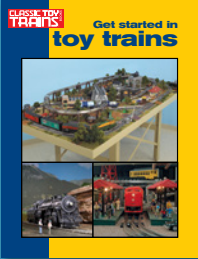
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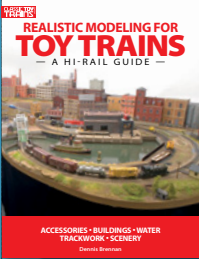
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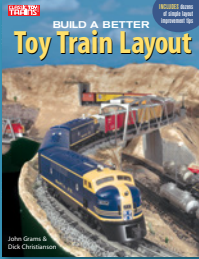
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Once part of a plastic Christmas tree, these branches are now thicker, fuller trees on an O gauge layout.

Make better trees

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I like tall trees on my O gauge layout and in real life. I planted two Swedish Aspens in my front yard more than 20 years ago. They're now 40 feet tall, and they're the largest trees in the neighborhood. They make my house easy to find!

A tree that big in O scale would be more than a foot tall, and they're hard to find in hobby shops. Those you can find are expensive. If you wish to make a forest on your layout, you're looking at a dent in your wallet.

Believe it or not, I found

HAVE A TIP OR TECHNIQUE TO SHARE? Write "Tips" on your letter and mail it to Classic Toy Trains, P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187-1612, or email us at tips@classictoytrains.com and put the word "tips" in the subject line. We'll pay you \$25 for any tip we publish unless it was contained in a previously purchased article.



What you need for the project: Coarse ground foam, branches from an artificial Christmas tree, a spray bottle, and glue if you opt not to use an inexpensive hairspray.

the perfect source for large O scale trees at my church. I had volunteered for its annual spring cleanup and came across an artificial Christmas tree about to be thrown out. This was the type of tree that had braided wire limbs attached to a large green wood dowel that had a lot of holes drilled into it.

I asked permission to take the old tree. One person's trash is another's treasure, and for an O gauge rail-roader this was a king's ransom. I now had the supplies to make more than 100 trees for my layout!

I cut off the branches with a hacksaw and trimmed each branch with a pair of scissors so it came to a point. They looked more like fir trees, except the green branches were too bright and shiny.

Here's how I made them look more realistic. I began

by pouring some coarse ground foam into a clear plastic bag. Next, I sprayed each branch with unscented hairspray from a pump, stuck it in the bag, and swirled it around. I took it out, stuck it in a slab of scrap foam, and let it dry.

If you don't want to use hairspray, try mixing a 50/50 solution of white glue and water (with a drop of dish-washing detergent) and use any spray pump bottle to apply it.

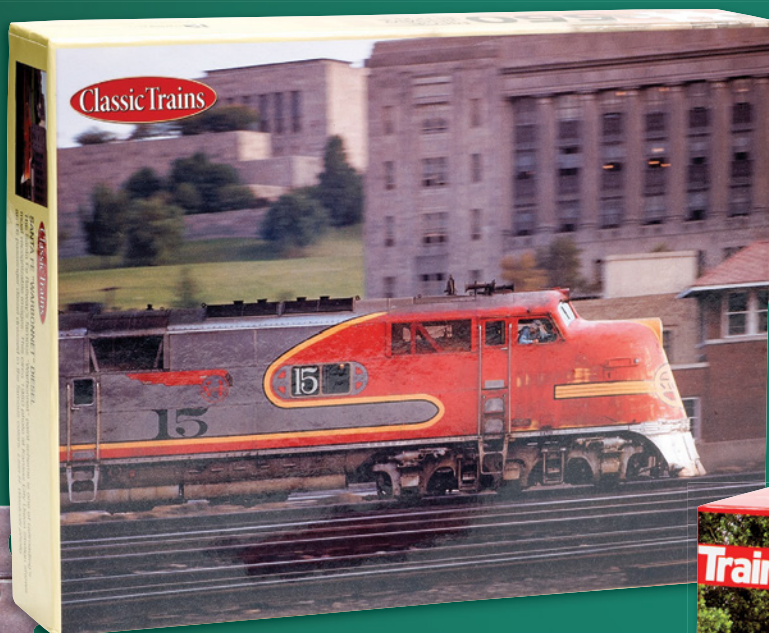
My layout is covered with an inch of Styrofoam, so all I had to do was stick the braided wire stump into the foam. Instant tree! For a little variety, I used different colors of coarse ground foam to make other trees.

People often discard old and new artificial trees. You can also buy them new at discounted prices after Christmas. – Paul Ullrich



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