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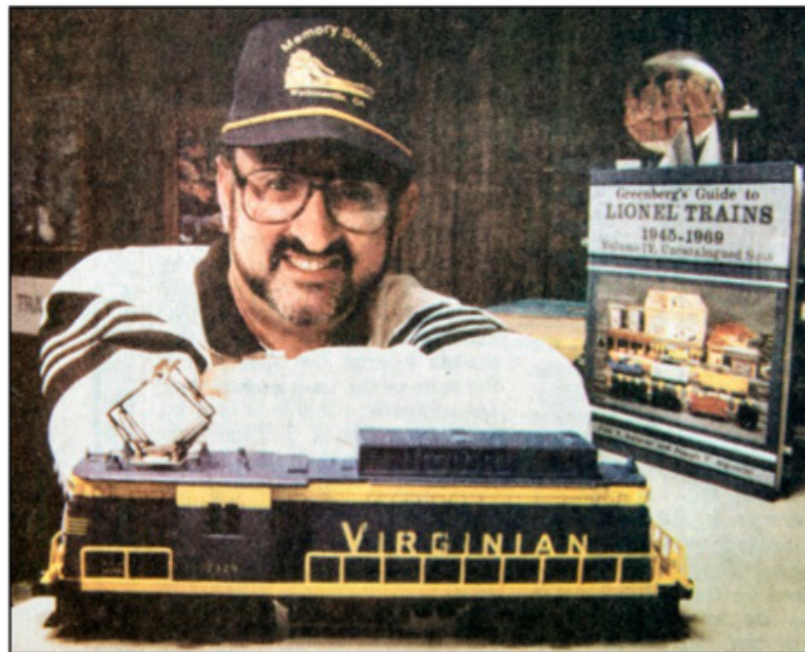
ARTICLE CAPS A QUARTER-CENTURY OF RESEARCH AND DEDICATION

This issue of *Classic Toy Trains* packs a punch! It offers a compact Christmas O gauge layout built by Mark Boyce and an American Flyer railroad done by Craig O'Connell, who grew up in the shadow of the A.C. Gilbert Co.'s factory in New Haven, Conn. O gauge modeler Neal Schorr recalls how his kids helped with his three-rail replica of the Middle Division of the Pennsylvania RR.

Lots to smile about in the pages that follow. Yet a hint of sadness creeps in as well. For an incredible project spanning a quarter of a century concludes in this issue. Longtime CTT contributor and Lionel expert Joe Algozzini completes his deeply researched and carefully written year-by-year analysis of Lionel trains for the entire postwar era.

What Joe has done since first looking at Lionel for 1954 in the January 1995 issue is remarkable. He has examined the sets and models the most important American toy train maker was developing from the end of the war through 1969.

Joe launched his enterprise by focusing on the products of the middle 1950s. Then



he worked backward from the earliest part of that landmark decade toward the end, before turning his focus toward the 1960s. While making progress in the direction of the end of the era, Joe decided he needed to consider the start. Soon he was writing about the years between 1945 and '49.

Joe's research has been impeccable. He has been collecting and studying Lionel trains for more than 50 years. He owns hundreds of cataloged and promotional sets, nearly all coming from the retailers or customers who first acquired them.

Joe has supplemented his research in original complete sets with visits to every major collector of postwar trains and interviews with former Lionel employees. A background in business and statistics enhances his understanding of what Lionel's executives aimed to achieve, how they sought to reach their engineering and marketing goals, and why they did so.

One more thing. Joe refuses to compromise his work or accept the conclusions of others without conducting his own research. Take the article about Lionel for 1969 on page 32. What others have seen as a

time when the firm showed little drive to innovate, manufacture, or even push forward, Joe proves was a productive year.

We are proud to have presented these beautifully illustrated and extensively researched articles. Together, they provide the fullest investigation of Lionel and the trains responsible for its postwar glory.

Thanks Joe!

Roger Carp

Roger Carp, Senior Editor

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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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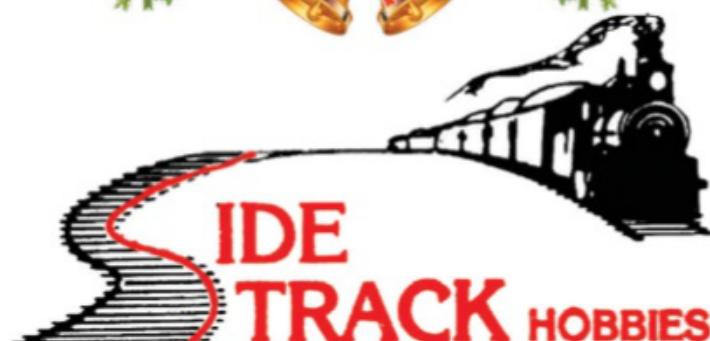
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Reading and railroading

THIS YEAR GIVE THE GIFT OF EXCITEMENT

I remember reading a story about a 1950s railroad executive who was in a tense meeting with unhappy locomotive engineers. Their complaints were many and varied. The frustrated executive finally said, "If you dislike it that much, why don't you get a factory job?" The response from the floor was immediate: "Where is the romance in *that*!"

The excitement of large machines blasting down two ribbons of steel, hauling carloads of passengers and hundreds of tons of raw material and finished products, is probably why you are reading this.

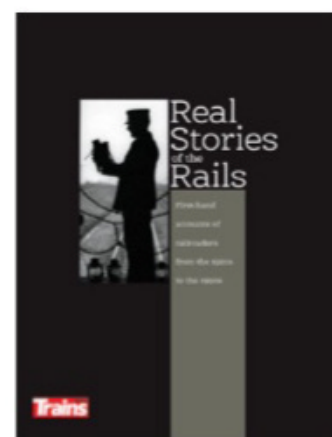
At some point in our life we saw a train, or got a wave from a smiling engineer, and thought "Wow!" We build model railroads in S, O, or Standard gauge because railroading is exciting. We still stop what we're doing to look at that freight roll by.

Since the holidays are near, here's a crazy thought: Instead of giving a freight car or station or water tower to add to your son or grandchild's layout, turn back the clock. Give them some excitement – a book of railroad tales.

Our sister magazine, *Trains*, has just published *Real Stories of the Rails*, a collection of 40 first-hand accounts from real railroaders from the 1920s to the 1990s. Visit www.KalmbachHobbyStore.com for more details.

There are other books as well, some of which I've read many times, and they can still get my heart going. All are out of print, but copies are easy to find. None are terribly expensive.

The Long Trains Roll by Stephen Meader (Harcourt, Brace & World, Southern Skies Edition, 1965). A young lad, a strategic mountain main line, heavy trains



***Real Stories of the Rails*, a collection of 40 essays by working railroaders, is the latest publication from Kalmbach Books.**

full of military cargo, and German saboteurs. 'Nuff said!

The Phantom Brakeman and Other Stories, edited by Freeman Hubbard (Scholastic Publications, 1959). This was my first train book. I bought it through an elementary school book fair. These are stories from the pages of *Railroad Magazine*, which Hubbard edited at the time. Still an enjoyable read and not too "inside baseball" for modern kids to enjoy.

Clear the Track: True Stories of Railroading by Louis Wolfe (J.B. Lippincott, 1952). This book is a solid collection of factual tales of railroaders doing what needs to be done.

Young Readers Railroad Stories by Charles Coombs (Grosset & Dunlap, 1953). Another collection targeted at young readers, and not a smiley-faced blue steam engine to be found!

While there are many significant volumes of modern and vintage railroading history in my collection, I have only a handful of railroad fiction books.

These titles are some of the few that helped fire my imagination and which keep me looking at an O gauge train blast by and wonder, "What if....?" **CTT**

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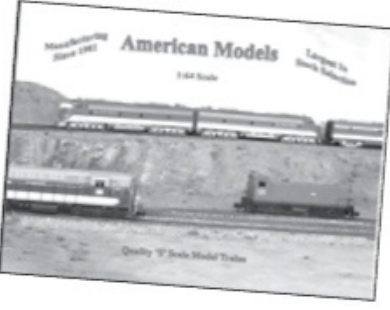

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PHOTO ALBUM

YOUR PICTURES

► GEORGE DONALD'S O GAUGE LAYOUT

How clever of George Donald to bring us a *Back to the Future* moment on his O gauge model railroad, which is soon to be showcased in *Classic Toy Trains*. From the look of the MTH RailKing "Buy War Bonds" trolley (product no. 30-2569-1) and the cabin nearby, you might assume the calendar reads December of 1944 or 1945. But a glimpse of the snowmobile on the left side suggests it's December of 2019! Who knows what George had in mind when he modeled this frosty scene in Easton, Pa.

PLEASE SEND your best pictures to CTT Photo Album, 21027 Crossroads Circle, Waukesha, WI 53187-1612 or email them to photoalbum@ClassicToyTrains.com. Digital photos must be taken with the camera set at the largest-possible file size. Include your name, address, and daytime telephone number; a description of each image; and the name of the photographer or layout owner. If your photo is published, we will pay you \$50 as long as we have not previously bought the photo.

For more on photos specs, please go to www.ClassicToyTrains.com/SubmissionGuidelines.





PHOTO ALBUM

► DAVE VAN ESSENDELFT'S O GAUGE MODEL RAILROAD

Absolutely no question about whether the settlement on Dave Van Essendelft's O gauge layout will experience a white Christmas this year. Check out the heavy snowfall that occurred over the past three days. The MTH RailKing no. 30-5145 bump-and-go trolley can barely make its way to the platform to pick up a few shivering travelers. Dave reports with gladness winters are not as bad at home in Princess Anne, Md.



▲ JIM BURKE'S STANDARD GAUGE LAYOUT

Talk about getting hit by a massive snowstorm! The white flakes coming down on Jim Burke's Standard gauge layout are so big, they may give Santa Claus a concussion! Luckily for Old Saint Nick, he can reach safety by climbing aboard the American Flyer President's Special set, one of the many prewar gems in Jim's impressive collection in Pittsburgh Pa. He enjoys creating human interest stories on his layout using his many vintage figures and vehicles.



▲ STEVE TERNI'S S GAUGE LAYOUT

Seems as though every child in the Rocky Mountain village on Steve Terni's S gauge layout is outdoors on this frigid day. Most are skating or sledding. A few kids are building snowmen. Still others are doing what Steve admits he would be doing: greeting the *California Zephyr* as it makes its way from Colorado to the West Coast. Steve's railroad in Glastonbury, Conn., photographed by Susan Terni Taff, will be featured in an upcoming issue of *Classic Toy Trains*.

► IAN MCKECHNIE'S O GAUGE DISPLAY

Vintage O gauge trains, a fragrant fir tree, and lots of homemade ornaments showing off the latest addition to the McKechnie family. These are the primary elements of the Christmas display Ian and other members of the clan assemble every year as they enjoy the holiday season at their home in Lindsay, Ont. In case you're wondering, the Lionel nos. 2046 steam engine and 2343 Santa Fe F3 diesel Ian loves to run originally belonged to his father.



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VIEWS FROM THE UNDERGROUND

WITH LOU PALUMBO

The Christmas tree people

CUSTOMERS NEW AND OLD MAKE THE HOLIDAYS

It is fun to operate a full-time train store during the Christmas season. I opened The Underground Railroad Shoppe in 1985, and this year will mark my 35th season. We're open seven days a week from the third week of November through the first week of January. My selling season amounts to Thanksgiving to New Year's Day.

Our merchandise includes Lionel and MTH train sets ready to run and complete with track and transformer. Also in stock are S, HO, and N scale sets.

I do most of my retail sales during the Christmas season. I've learned something interesting, namely, I sell the same quantity of trains to different people every Christmas.

I love the season because it gives me opportunities to talk to new and returning customers about – what else? – toy trains and the hobby. I call the people that come into the store during the holiday season, “the Christmas tree people.”

Many folks are coming to the shop for the first time. They're shopping for a train to put around their Christmas tree. Newcomers usually fall into one of two categories. They're grandparents buying a first train for their grandchildren or newlyweds.

Newlyweds? Often, they're expecting their first child and so want to start a tradition for themselves and their soon-to-arrive baby of a train under the tree.

We have a large O gauge layout in our backroom open to the public only during the holidays. People come to the store to see our landscaped display during that time. We change parts of the layout every year to enhance their enjoyment.

Youngsters love to watch all the trains and animated accessories on our layout. Even so, I believe adults enjoy it more.

Often the people buying a train to put around their tree never return to the store. The holiday season is the last I see of them, except if their train needs repair. Then they bring it in for us to help them.

There are exceptions. Some people buy trains for their expected child or young grandchild and then start adding pieces to the set each year. They purchase more rolling stock or perhaps an accessory so the children have something to play with when they get older. In the meantime, the train runs around the couple's Christmas tree every year.

Some of the popular add-on pieces are the Christmas-themed railcars manufacturers catalog each year.

These items feature the current year printed on them. Folks buy that car to designate the year they bought their first new train or the year of birth of their first child.

Christmas tree people are not to be confused with train collectors, at least not at first. Some do turn into collectors, becoming regular customers.

Don't get the wrong idea and think I dread the months before and after Christmas. As much as I love the holidays, I enjoy the other nine months of the year when things settle down.

Christmas tree people rejuvenate me. They are bringing new blood and enjoyment to a hobby that never goes out of style or loses its enthusiasm and wonder.

The feeling of the holiday season is great motivation for selling trains at this festive time of the year. The look on the faces of my customers reminds me of boys on a scavenger hunt when we were in elementary school. You may recall looking forward to the holidays and getting new toys, including a train set.

Happy holidays and Merry Christmas to all – and keep searchin' **CTT**



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

Get ready to find layout bargains

START A LIST OF MODELING ITEMS TO BUY AFTER THE HOLIDAYS

It's the time of year so many toy train hobbyists love: Christmas! For lots of *Classic Toy Trains* readers, it's a tradition to set up a train around the tree or host a holiday open house. I propose starting a new tradition: plan to shop during the post-holiday sales!

One ongoing series on MR Video Plus is "Off the Rails," hosted by Gerry Leone. While his layout is HO scale, don't let that turn you off. Episode 33's focus is scouring Christmas clearance sales for items useful for your layout—of *any* scale.

Gerry visits two crafts stores, a hardware store, and a big box store, and gives you a list of what to look for after Christmas. You may be thinking, "Yeah, I know, look for those little green village Christmas trees." But consider this: You've seen those packages of rope lights—LED lights

inside a clear flexible tube. Have you considered buying a few packs of them and using them year-round as accent lights around your layout? What a "bright" idea that looks great and costs very little!

I've mentioned just a couple of Gerry's tips. Watch the video at MRVideoPlus.com/OTR33 to see more. **CTT**



Want helpful how-to videos?

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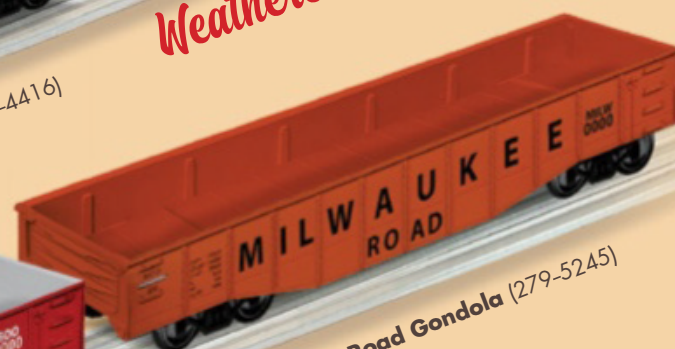
Lighted! Milwaukee Road Caboose (279-4380)



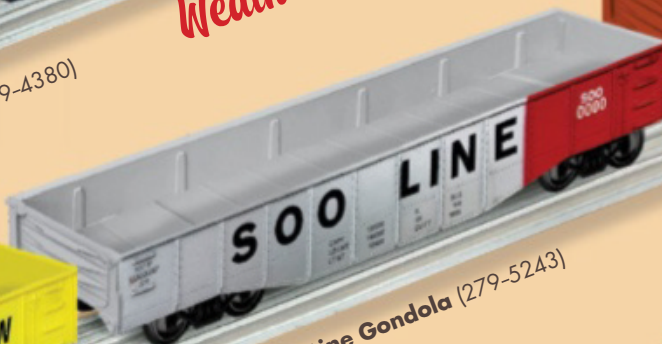
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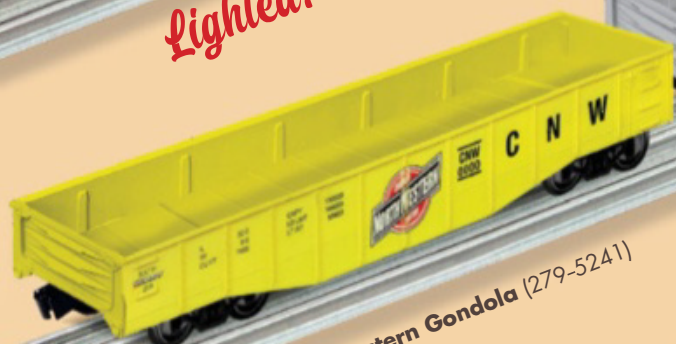
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Milwaukee Road Gondola (279-5245)



Soo Line Gondola (279-5243)



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With a prelit interior and two red alternating marker lights, these cabooses are sure to capture your attention. These track-powered cabooses use modern technology to maintain constant lighting, even while in motion.

GONDOLAS

Haul anything from logs and lumber to scrap metal in these 40-scale-foot gondolas. Made from brand new molds, this gondola is the perfect size for nearly every layout. Choose from 12 unique road names.

LIGHTED TRAIN BRIDGE

The dual track lighted bridge is a terrific way to add detail to your layout. Measuring 24" long and 8" wide, this bridge has plenty of clearance for two sets of track. And, the icing on the cake are 4 LED warning lights on the top.

PRODUCT NEWS

WITH THE CTT STAFF



DOGGY DELIGHT: The no. 279-4494 J. Shepherd & Sons Dog Food Factory is a new addition to the Menards line of structures. The O gauge building is 11 inches high, 10 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches wide, and 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches deep. It features interior and exterior LED lighting and an illuminated sign with an animated pouring effect. Includes six workers, Jack the German shepherd, two silos, a dumpster, and a loading dock with dog food bags. The lights require a Menards no. 279-4050, -4061, or -4062 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ -volt power supply (sold separately). The factory is \$99.99 plus shipping, or select free shipping to a local Menards store. Order at www.Menards.com/trains.



POWER ON TAP: The MRC no. 1311 Throttlepack AC100 is the latest AC transformer from Model Rectifier Corp. The compact power supply is rated at 100 watts. Track output ranges from 0 to 19 volts AC. There is also a fixed 18-volt DC accessory output. Horn, bell, and direction buttons are included. The transformer has a suggested retail price of \$199.98. At retailers or online at www.modelrectifier.com.

CONDUCTOR'S CAR: The no. 279-4380 Milwaukee Road lighted caboose from Menards includes an illuminated interior and two alternating LED red marker lights that illuminate with track power. The O gauge caboose is 7½ inches long and 2½ inches high, and it operates on curves as tight as O-27. Metal wheels and operating couplers are included. The illuminated caboose costs \$24.99 plus shipping, or select free shipping to a local Menards store. Order at www.Menards.com/trains.



500 PIECES, 3 RAILS: The no. 69713 America's Colorful Toy Trains 500-piece jigsaw puzzle from *Classic Toy Trains* features an image from our Readers Choice staff-built O gauge project railroad. The puzzle costs \$14.99. www.kalmbachhobbystore.com/product/gift/69713.

PRODUCT NEWS



DEALS ON WHEELS:

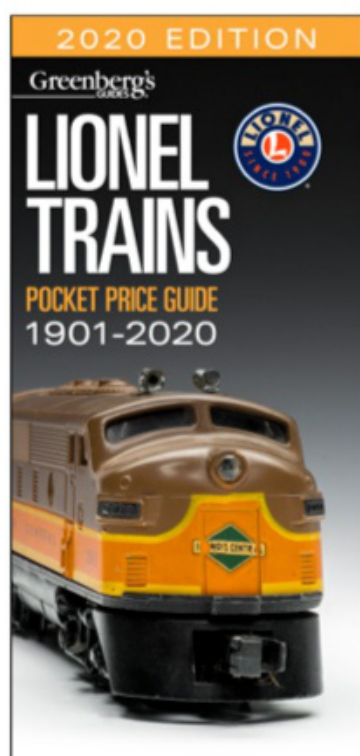
Wheeler's Auto Dealers is the latest injection-molded plastic structure kit in Atlas O's Hillside Structure Series. The O gauge building measures 10 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 8 $\frac{5}{16}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches and retails for \$39.95. See your Atlas O retailer or visit www.atlasrr.com for more information.



WEATHERED BOXCARS: Menards has released four factory-weathered O gauge boxcars. At 11 inches long, the cars will run on O-27 and wider-diameter track. The boxcars feature metal wheels and operating couplers. Current production road names include the nos. 279-4412 Santa Fe, 279-4414 Baltimore & Ohio, 279-4416 Frisco, and 279-4418 Milwaukee Road. The boxcars cost \$24.99 each plus shipping, or select free shipping to your local Menards store. Order online at www.Menards.com/trains.

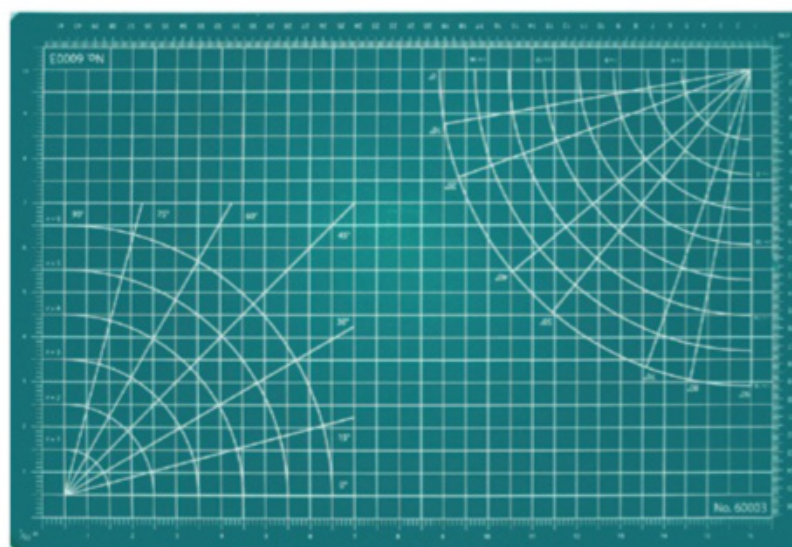


BULKHEAD FLATS: Atlas O is offering new paint schemes for its O scale two- and three-rail Trainman line 62-foot-long bulkhead and short-bulkhead flatcars. Standard bulkhead cars include Canadian Pacific (dark green), CSX (patched reporting marks), TTX (yellow with black-and-white logo), and Union Pacific (oxide red). The short bulkhead cars are decorated for the Allegheny & Eastern (red) and the Northwestern Oklahoma (oxide red). Two road numbers are available per scheme. The O gauge cars feature side stake pockets, simulated tie loops, and a fish-belly center sill. They sell for \$61.95 (undecorated, \$56.95). See your Atlas O retailer or visit www.atlasrr.com for more information.



VALUABLE GUIDE:

The latest edition of *Greenberg's Pocket Price Guide to Lionel Trains 1901-2020* is now available. The updated guide is the only price guide to list values of prewar, postwar, and modern-era toy trains. The guide is \$21.99. Order from www.kalmbachhobbystore.com/product/book/10-8720.



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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

WITH JOSEPH L. MANIA AND THE CTT STAFF



The Lionel no. 2056 steam locomotive, cataloged in 1952 during the Korean Conflict, lacked Magne-Traction. Is there a way to improve its pulling power?

Improved traction for a Lionel no. 2056

HOW TO GET MORE PULLING POWER FROM THIS POSTWAR ENGINE

Q My Lionel no. 2056 steam engine runs great. However, it was built without Magne-Traction, so it can't go up the steep grades on my O gauge layout. Can I replace its drive wheels with those from a no. 2046 steamer? Or should I use after-market wheels with traction tires? I did put electrical tape on one rail of the grades. It worked well at first, but then caused maintenance problems when gunk built up on the wheels and ended up on the rest of the track. Any ideas? – *Richard Sheats, Ligonier, Pa.*

A Increasing the tractive force of the 2056 makes more sense than trying to increase the adhesion of the rails. The 2046 and the 2056 differ in a few notable ways. While the wheels do carry different part numbers, the magnetism transferred to them does not come from magnetized axles as in some engines

but through magnets contained in the frame. Since the disassembly and subsequent transfer of all the parts needed to achieve this would be a huge job, you may find it easier to swap the entire motor assembly from a 2046 into your 2056.

I'm not aware of an after-market replacement wheel that has the groove for traction tires

although some modern-era locomotives had traction tires that would work. Maybe the Lionel no. 8206 New York Central 4-6-4 Hudson (cataloged from 1972 through 1975). It came with Baldwin disc wheels, so they won't look the same. More important, pulling off the wheels and replacing them properly is a bigger task than just swapping motors.

CULVERT LOADER PERFORMS UNPREDICTABLY

Q I have a Lionel no. 37972 Bethlehem Steel operating culvert loader purchased new. When I used it, all

went fine: The unloader moved across the conveyor beam to the gondola, and the magnet was lowered. Then it stopped on the lowest culvert. After that, the unloader did not move back and forth across the conveyor beam, and the magnet did not move up or down. The power was on, the gondola was in the proper position, and the lights were blinking. What do I do now? – *Steve Polaha, Media, Pa.*

A Since the lights were blinking, the infrared detector must sense the presence of the gondola. Did the light in the building come on? That light should come on

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The A.C. Gilbert Co. placed the S gauge no. 740 motorized handcar in the firm's American Flyer line from 1952 through '54. Three variations have been reported, including this one which has a red-white-blue shield without striping.



after six or seven blinks of the warning light. If not, it would indicate the control printed-circuit board controlling the motors had a malfunction.

MAINTAINING A FLYER NO. 740 HANDCAR

Q After removing dried and hardened grease and cleaning the carbon-loaded armature on my American Flyer no. 740 handcar, the motor ran well yet the unit didn't move. Then I noticed the main drive gear, which is driven by a worm gear off the armature, freely spun on the axle it was on. A schematic showed

the axle should have splines to affix the gear on the axle once it is slid on.

How can I affix this gear to the axle without removing the wheels and axle from the unit? Loctite could be applied through a small hole drilled in the gear perpendicular to the shaft. Thanks for any help. – Mickey Demian, Cedar Grove, Wis.

A Loctite should work. Be absolutely sure the axle and gear bore are clean of all oil and grease before applying it. I would try to slide the gear to one side slightly, apply the Loctite, and slide the

gear back into position rather than drilling into the gear.

HEADLIGHT REPLACEMENT ON A MARX OLD-TIME STEAMER

Q How can I replace the headlight bulb in a Marx O gauge Wm. Crooks old-time steam locomotive? – Frank Dies, St. Louis, Mo.

A The bulb and socket are attached to a small metal plate under the headlight housing. A small tab from this plate can be seen directly behind the headlight. I've always found it easiest to

pry the plate down from the bottom front with a small screwdriver. As it pivots down and forward it can be wiggled out. The bulb can be replaced and the plate snapped back into the housing. **CTT**



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SIX EASY STEPS TO BRING A LOCOMOTIVE BACK TO LIFE

FROM STORAGE TO STARDOM!

Story and photos by Stan Trzoniec

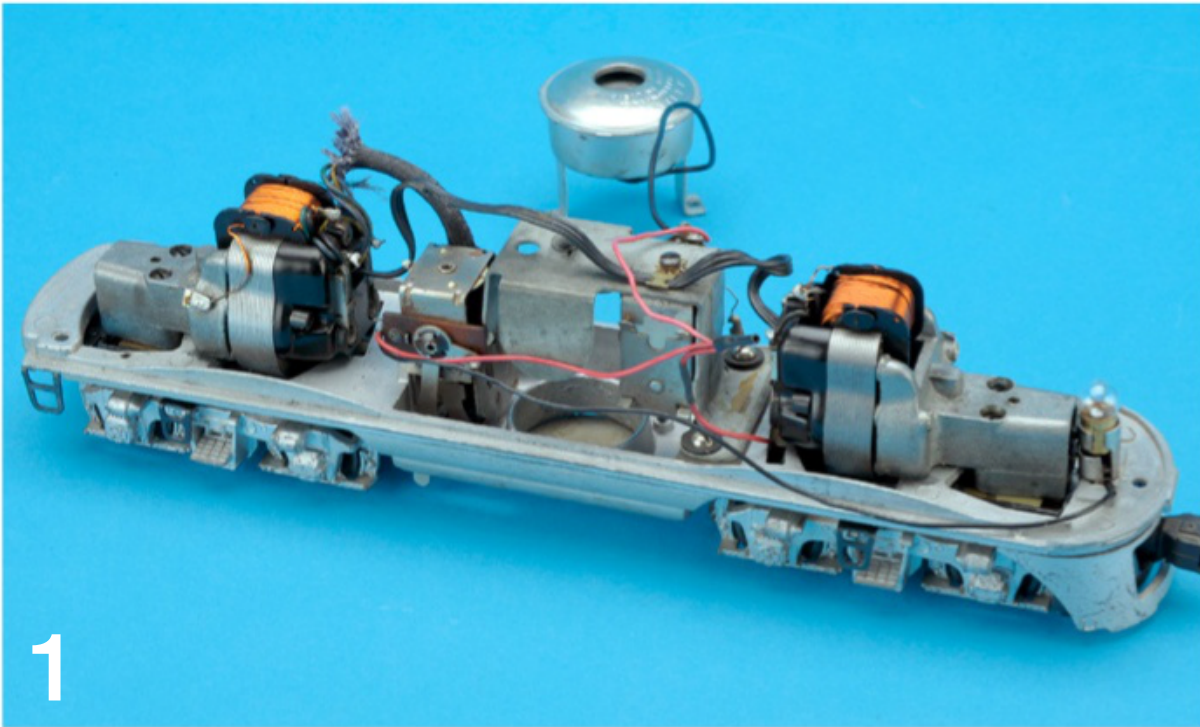
With traffic on my O gauge

Delaware & Raritan Valley RR expanding and the used market on Electro-Motive Division F3s declining, our motive power department was searching in earnest for a set of “covered wagons” to pull our future executive train around the system.

With that in mind I set out in search of a used A-A set of Lionel F3 locomotives. Here are the steps I followed to find the right locomotive set, check it for proper operation, and give it a D&RV RR custom paint scheme.

Before buying a previously owned locomotive, either from a private party or at a train show, you should run the unit on a test track to make sure it operates to your satisfaction.

Stan Trzoniec’s newly renovated double A units on his O gauge Delaware & Raritan Valley RR are taking their first run. Here, he describes how to overhaul and repaint an A-A set of nearly 70-year-old Lionel F3s.



After testing for proper operation and purchasing a previously owned locomotive, it's time to remove the shell and check everything for proper wiring and general wear and tear. For early Lionel F3s, remember to inspect the battery compartment for damage from battery leakage.

Unscrew the motor and then clean and lubricate with a high-quality lubricant, such as those made by Labelle. Remember, a very little lubrication goes a long way.



In painting the frame, Stan used a spare shell to protect the internal components with only minor masking needed for the front coupler and wheelsets and around the windows.

Depending on your intent – collecting, running, or trading – now is the time to pay attention to the details that can make or break your purchase.

Check all the running gear, like the wheels, rollers, and wiring (if possible), to see if the couplers still operate. Light bulbs can be replaced. I also consider plastic cab windows and portholes expendable items since they can be replaced at nominal cost from many of the advertisers in *Classic Toy Trains*.

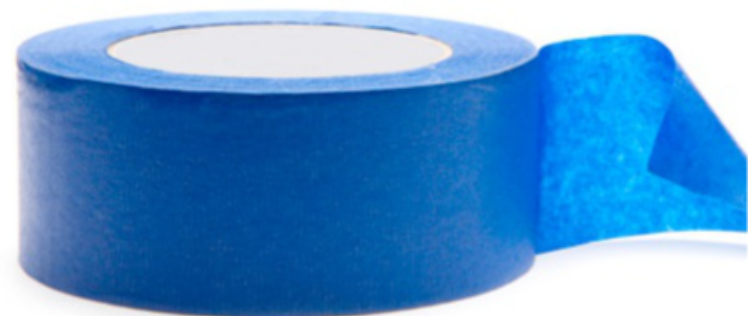
First things first

If possible, ask the seller if you can separate the shell from the chassis to check the wiring to the motors, E-unit, and horn. This is not always possible, but the overall condition of the units should give you a good idea of what's inside. Talking to the seller may also provide hints about the condition. In my case, the seller said he took very good care of his locomotives and I felt he was honest.

You can expect some normal wear on the wheels and rollers and a scratch here and there. You should have an idea of the overall condition you're willing to accept. Remember, condition dictates the price. I was willing to accept a certain amount of cosmetic wear and tear since I planned to overhaul and repaint the engines. This set met my requirements to a tee!

This pair of Lionel no. 2343 Santa Fe diesels was made in the early 1950s. Once I had them on my workbench, I was happy to see the seller had indeed taken good care of the locomotives (**Photo 1**). There was some dust around the motors due to the wear on the brushes and commutators. Removing the motors showed them to be in good shape. I moved the retaining springs to one side to check the brushes, and they appeared to have been recently replaced. Brushes are a common item, easy to find and easy to replace.

I then operated the powered unit with and without cars in tow. Being a typical Lionel F3, it growled down the tracks, bringing back memories of times past. The E-unit did not work, but a check revealed the unit's lever was set in the forward-only mode. A quick flick of the switch showed the E-unit to be working perfectly.



If there had been a problem, I find a mild aerosol electronics cleaner often works miracles. If the E-unit is shot, replacements are available in the form of a rebuilt unit or a new digital-type assembly.

Battery leakage is always a concern with these units. I was pleasantly surprised to find the inside battery chamber just as clean as the day it left the Lionel factory. After a trip to a hardware store to pick up D-cell batteries, I found the horn worked to perfection.

Oil works wonders

Removing the rear motor again, I added a little light lubrication in the form of the Labelle no. 106 lubricating grease at the rear end gears (**Photo 2**). Keep in mind, a little goes a long way. While I was at it, I applied a drop of Labelle no. 107 oil in the hole between the mounting screws to keep the bearings in fine shape.

Removing the brass cover, I added a little lube. A drop of oil on the bronze bushings at each end will keep everything moving freely.

Unless the unit you've purchased is the next thing to a junker, this should do it for initial maintenance. It always amazes me that mechanical devices almost 70 years old can still be going strong. With all the replacement parts out there, they will continue to run for years to come.

In the paint shop

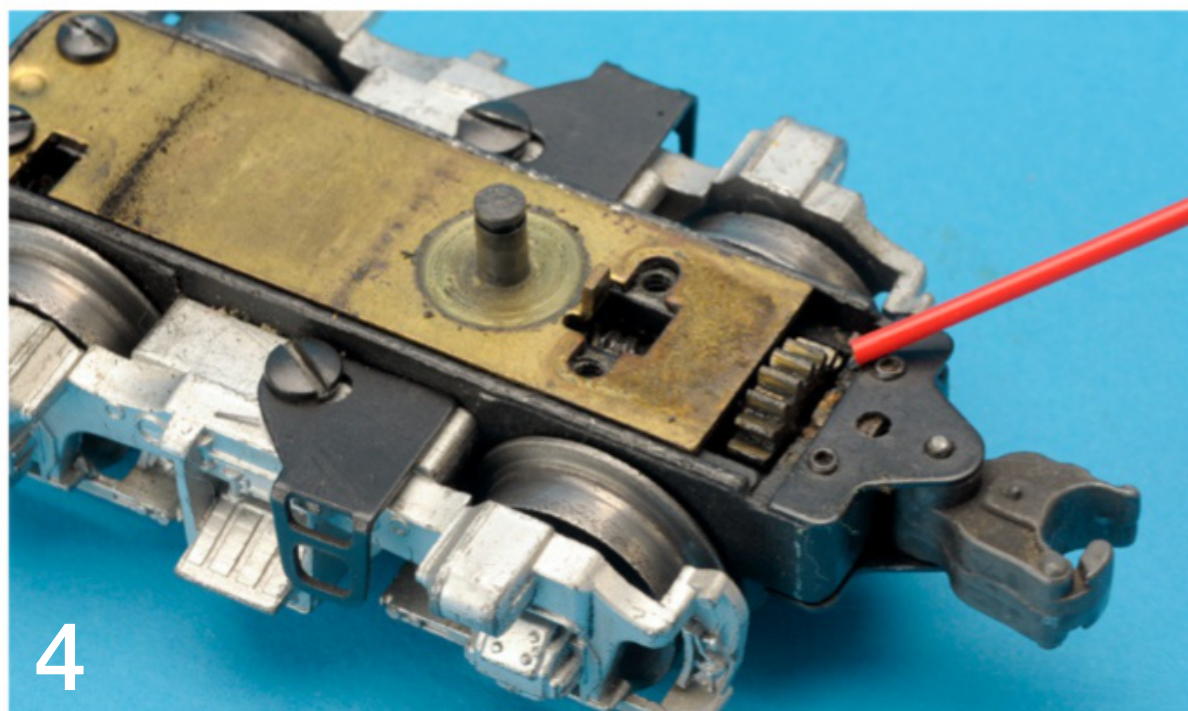
I will probably get letters stating that I shouldn't repaint vintage toy trains. Sorry but to me bringing the engines to life again under my road name is well worth the effort.

I use the Scalecoat II brand of paints made for plastic models and sold in 6-ounce aerosol cans by Minuteman Scale Models (www.minutemanscalemodels.com).

Rather than going through the trouble of unhooking the wiring, battery holder, and E-unit before painting the chassis, I simply cover the internal parts with another old shell with minor masking around the windows, couplers, and wheels (**Photo 3**).

I remove the trucks from the chassis, lubricate the gears, and then remove the truck side frames (**Photo 4**). I clean these in warm, soapy water, leaving the factory silver finish intact. Knowing Lionel's skill in mass production, there is no need to mark the location of the frames. They will fit the wheel assemblies equally well on either unit.

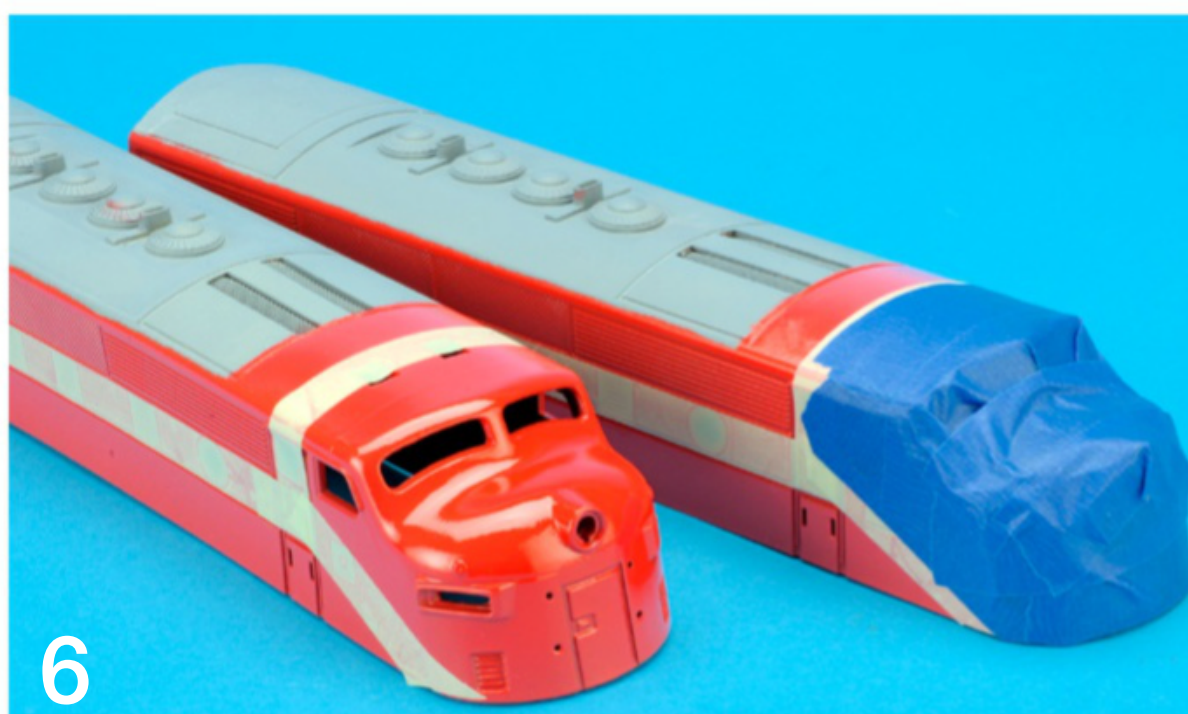
Once the side frames are off, I am ready to clean the wheels if needed. Because of the problems associated with the removal of the front pilot, I removed the black coupler shield



With the trucks removed, again check them for wear and tear, add a drop of light lubricating oil on each end of the gear, and add a bit of grease to the gear. Taking the side frames apart for further inspection and cleaning is easy. Just remove the large screw holding the steps.



Remove all plastic parts, including the windshield, portholes, ladders, and front grab irons, before you strip and repaint the body. Anything that needs replacement or is broken in the process can be easily replaced by aftermarket parts.



Taking your time while masking pays off later when the tape is removed. Stan painted the cab and side Scalecoat II no. 2029 SP Scarlet Red, before masking and finishing with no. 2112 Detail Black applied to the roof and lower part of the shell.



and left the pilot to be painted by hand.

On the dummy A unit, I remove the trucks via the e-washer. From there, cleaning is easy.

To simplify painting the shells, I remove everything that is easy to remove! The side porthole windows, cab window shell, front lens, front grab irons, and side cab ladders are easy to pry out. So are the number boards (**Photo 5**). By squeezing the tabs on the twin horns, they come out with little effort.

The final stages went without a hitch.

I immerse both shells in Minute Man Wash Away Paint Remover for around 15 minutes per side. Then, using warm soapy water and a toothbrush, I scrub away the

tired and shabby original factory paint.

Since the lettering on these units is heat-stamped, it took a little effort to sand the name off to create a smooth finish for decaling. I use a sanding sponge to start, followed by 600-grit sandpaper, and finally 1,500-grit wet-or-dry sandpaper from 3M. While I am at it, I carefully sand off the dings on each shell.

I next prime the shells with Krylon Colormax primer. This is good for O gauge models, as the spray comes out in a mist, so you don't have to contend with any runs or drips.

Because my units are painted with two colors of Scalecoat II paint, I first apply SP Scarlet Red over most of the shell (**Photo 6**). When this coat has fully cured, I mask the shell and apply Scalecoat II Detail Black on the bottom, the top side, and the roof. I use a fine-line masking tape for

this, and use a fingernail to burnish the edges to ensure good adhesion with a nice clean line. Later, I touch up any masking problems with a small brush. I find the ½-inch-wide type a perfect width for painting a center stripe.

I left the trucks silver to complement the frame in a different shade.

For a clean look, I ordered a new cab window assembly, front headlight lens, and GM decals for the rear side of each locomotive. I reinstalled both horns facing forward to add a bit of individualism. Finally, my railroad name is proudly emblazoned with custom-made decals ("Give your railroad an identity," January 2017 *Classic Toy Trains*).

Refinishing a locomotive is easier than you may imagine. I hope that in this article I have paved the way for you add a diesel to your road name or revisit a past "fallen flag" paint scheme. **CTT**



Stan Trzoniec's railroad is featured in our special publication, *Best Toy Train Layouts*. www.KalmbachHobbyStore.com/BestLayouts.



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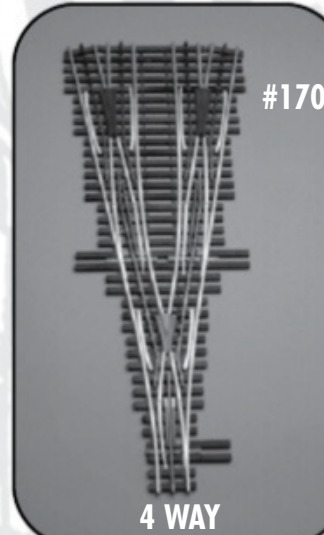
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LIONEL TRAINS FOR

1969

THE FINAL
CHAPTER
OF THE
POSTWAR
SAGA



By Joe Algozzini and Roger Carp

Photos by William Zuback

The original Lionel Corp. of Joshua Cowen, Joseph Bonanno, Thomas Pagano, Lawrence Cowen, Frank Pettit, and a host of others had witnessed the end of the glory years back in 1959. That was when the elder Cowen had decided enough was enough and it was finally the right time for him to leave after 59 years of work since co-founding the business.

Ten years later, the once-proud firm finally took it on the chin, as annual net losses and internal turmoil led executives into believing the train line was to blame. So, as shown in “Lionel for 1968” (November 2018 issue of *Classic Toy Trains*), they decided to let those responsibilities become another company’s problem. Lionel handed the baton to General Mills, which leased the rights to manufacture and market the line of trains.

New view of the train line

Let’s appreciate what Lionel achieved in 1969. Although executives knew General Mills would soon be in charge of production, they never quit trying. To the contrary, the men in charge gave a green light to six sets whose contents matched or even surpassed what had been put in the O-27 sets marketed the previous five years.

To start, four of the six outfits cataloged for 1969 came as five-car freights. Lionel had not cataloged as many long trains with

Outfit no. 11740 was one of four five-car freight trains cataloged by Lionel for its O-27 line of 1969. The colorful set belies the widespread view that Lionel had little to offer at the end of the era.



so much play value since 1964. Since then, only two of the O-27 sets Lionel offered in 1965 and '66 had been five-car freights.

Second, Lionel stated only net prices, a decision that allowed dealers to price the sets at whatever they chose. In reality, sets went for less than \$20 to \$76 (based on the pricing policy or objective of each retailer). The prices were in line with what Lionel had established in the recent past.

Finally, management packaged the sets in an innovative way. Knowing a picture was a valuable marketing tool, they placed a photo of the set contents on a label affixed to the side of each set box. It gave dealers a quick look at what they were selling while showing consumers the contents of an outfit they were thinking of buying.

New view of production

Personal research and interviews with key personnel from Lionel reveal something notable. The O-27 sets shown in the consumer catalog for 1969 and many of the separate-sale items offered represented new products being made for that year.

Two sources about what was going on appeared early in 1969. Lenny Dean, who then served as

service manager and so had insights into parts production, wrote in the March newsletter sent to authorized service stations: "Production of all items shown [in the consumer catalog] will be in high gear shortly – ready for shipment by July 1st, and I would appreciate receiving an order for your needs now to insure delivery."

Lenny's statements prove Lionel had been preparing for 1969 production since the end of the previous year. He suggested Lionel's final 1969 production of trains would be closely watched and adjusted accordingly by the early orders received.

On April 28, Lenny told dealers, "An agreement has been signed by The Lionel

Corporation, Hillside, New Jersey and General Mills, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota pursuant to which Lionel and General Mills will cooperate in the manufacture and sale of Lionel's toy trains and other toy products during 1969."

Lenny was making clear Lionel's intentions to manufacture substantial quantities of new trains. Those products were needed to fill orders of outfits, engines, and more.

Suggested retail prices

We observed that dealers were pricing outfits for 1969 from less than \$20 up to \$76. Ascertaining that basic yet vital information proved to be quite difficult.

During the last decade of postwar production, Lionel's yearly consumer catalogs had offered suggested retail prices for each set cataloged as well as the separate-sale items. Then circumstances changed in 1968. The consumer catalog had included prices for separate-sale items only. It revealed nothing about the price of the only set cataloged: the no. 11600. A Lionel order form sent to dealers in 1968 indicated it was listed at \$90.

For 1969, Lionel's pricing policy continued that same way. Meaning, the dealer price lists we're familiar with included only net prices (instead of suggested retail) for each set offered. Retail prices were again included for items offered for separate sale.

There were at least two known Lionel price lists for 1969. The prices for cataloged



The consumer catalog showed a 2-8-4 Berkshire steam engine and a Fairbanks-Morse Train Master diesel on the front cover. Too bad neither of those stalwarts of the post-war period was cataloged by Lionel for that last year.

Outfit no. 11730 featured a new NW2 diesel switcher and a matching Union Pacific caboose. Lionel needed to produce sizable quantities of those and other new items during 1969. The notion the firm relied on unsold inventory to fill orders makes no sense.



sets found in the second price list were approximately 11 percent higher than those in the first.

We'll use the second list, where sets ranged in net price from \$13.90 to \$37.80. It failed to include O-27 passenger sets, which Lionel had discontinued after 1966.

Last O gauge hurrah

By the end of 1968, leaders at Lionel had already made plans to manufacture, assemble, package, and market as fine a line of toy trains as possible for 1969. They chose to focus on O-27 sets, refusing to make any O gauge outfits. Instead, Lionel hoped to entice modelers in that niche with a handful of separate-sale goodies.

That marketing strategy probably made sense from Lionel's perspective. After all, the production and sales of O gauge outfits the previous few years had been low and not as profitable as before. Still, like any other manufacturer, Lionel was aware of other parts of the market and so made a final attempt to increase sales and profits.

The gems for O gaugers were the five no. 6464-series near-scale boxcars Lionel had brought back "by popular demand." Production supervisors at the company were going to improve that rolling stock by fitting the boxcars with die-cast metal trucks rather than the plastic AAR examples the company had introduced in 1957.

With a suggested retail price of \$9 each, the nos. 6464-75 Rock Island, 6464-200

Pennsylvania RR, 6464-400 Baltimore & Ohio Time Saver, 6464-425 New Haven, and 6464-500 Timken provided O gauge enthusiasts with something to cheer about.

Some consumers in 1969 and later were confused to discover Lionel had stamped the black-painted New Haven with the number "6464-725." It had reserved the number "6464-725" for the orange-painted New Haven boxcar that debuted in 1962 and continued through 1968.

More notable models

Sensing O gaugers wanted more, Lionel cataloged the no. 6560-25 Bucyrus-Erie crane car for \$9 and the no. 6822 night crew searchlight car for \$8. It revived the no. 6415 Sunoco three-dome tank car after an absence of two years at \$9. The nos. 6315 single-dome chemical tank car and 6361 timber transport car each went for \$7 each. Even though the consumer catalog pictured the 6315 with Lionel Lines markings and circle-L herald, the chemical cars released in 1969 came with a Gulf logo.

Everyone must have been glad to see a motorized unit in the 8-page catalog. Lionel had priced its remaining and unsold inventory of no. 54 ballast tampers at \$15.

Executives at Lionel sought to dispose of leftover inventory during the production year. They worked out a deal with the Toy Train Operating Society to letter several hundred of old Southern Pacific-type cabooses for the association to distribute during its annual convention.

Also in the mix was a no. 3362/3364 operating unloading car priced at \$7. To clarify any confusion, when the basic model came with three helium tanks, it was designated a 3362. But when it came with three brown-stained logs, it was referred to as a 3364.

The idea of taking one operating model and giving it two separate identities, based on whatever load it carried, was Lenny Dean's. Another clever way to use up the old stocks of wood logs and tanks.

Two other models came back, although they probably had outlived their usefulness when it came to sales. The no. 3376-150 operating giraffe car (priced at \$8) and the no. 6473-60 rodeo car (priced at \$7) returned to the line after a few years off.

Decision makers at Lionel likely aimed the two novelty-type cars at youngsters, who would view them as add-ons to the O-27 outfits being sold. Production of the 3376 and 6473 was probably kept to a minimum, with fewer than 1,000 made of each. Both cars ended up packaged in the new checkerboard type of box Lionel had introduced in 1968.





Low-end freight cars

A few other O-27 cars were targeted to the low end of the market. We're referring to the nos. 6014-85 orange and 6014-410 white Frisco boxcars (\$6 each) and 6062-50 black New York Central gondola with two unmarked red-plastic cannisters (\$4).

There also were the nos. 6476-135 yellow and 6476-160 black Lehigh Valley hopper cars (\$4 each). The 1969 consumer catalog added to the confusion regarding

the yellow LV hopper by referring to the separate-sale version as the no. 6476-185, though the car actually came boxed as the aforementioned 6476-135.

trend and clever pricing strategy had continued at Lionel through the 1950s and into the 1960s. With the growing popularity of promotional sets, Lionel had been given the ammunition needed to gain a foothold in as many households as possible, to make a realistic profit, and to satisfy the firm's many shareholders.

The no. 11710 was a three-car set with a net price to dealers of \$13.90. Although short-sighted by today's standards, this set featured as its motive power a no. 1061 steamer with forward-motion only. It had first appeared in 1963 with an 0-4-0 wheel arrangement in advance catalog set no. 11415. Now the 1061-75 was a 2-4-2 with a 1061T-50 Lionel Lines slope-back tender.

Set 11710 included the nos. 6402-50 flatcar with two orange-plastic cable reels and 6142-100 Lionel green-plastic gondola with two unmarked red-plastic canisters. Last rode the no. 6059-50 Minneapolis & St. Louis red-plastic Southern-Pacific-type caboose. It came with both an operating and a non-operating knuckle coupler.

The 1061 in that set could be the scarce version with a paper label attached below the cab window. A 1061T-25 unmarked black-plastic slope-back tender was substituted possibly to deplete inventory.

Diesel power – O-27 style

Models of diesel locomotives had distinguished the line since the first F3s in 1948. Three more made guest appearances in 1969. Too bad they weren't as glamorous or powerful looking as earlier ones.

The no. 2024 Chesapeake & Ohio Alco came painted blue and pulled four cars in set no. 11720. With a net price of \$18.60, it had play value, thanks to its nos. 6142-100 Lionel green-plastic gondola with two unmarked red-plastic canisters, 6402-50 gray-plastic flatcar with two cable reels, and 6176-75 yellow Lehigh Valley hopper.

The outfit finished with a no. 6057-25 unpainted brown-plastic Southern Pacific-type caboose. However, supervisors at Lionel apparently took some liberties when assembling and packaging cabooses for 1969. As a consequence, a 6059-50 Minneapolis & St. Louis maroon-plastic SP-type caboose was often substituted in sets.

Five-car beauties

The first five-car freight for 1969 was outfit no. 11730 (it had a \$20.80 net price). Leading it was the new no. 645 NW2 diesel switcher decorated for the Union Pacific. The 645 derived from the no. 635 UP NW2 switcher introduced in 1965.

The rolling stock would have made any young railroader smile. Start with the new no. 6402-25 flatcar with boat. A reissue of the no. 6801 flatcar with boat (cataloged from 1957 through '60), it featured a new boat in a different shade of blue.

The other cars included the reissued 6014-75 orange Frisco boxcar, 6142-100

→ Although executives knew General Mills would soon be in charge of production, they never quit trying.

Looks like a Scout set

Nice as the cars were, Lionel earned the most money by selling boxed sets. The few outfits assembled during the final year of postwar production deserve attention.

Lionel, as it had done ever since 1946, kicked off its cataloged O-27 line with an inexpensive starter set. That marketing





Lionel green-plastic gondola with two unmarked red-plastic canisters, and 6176-50 black Lehigh Valley hopper. At the end came a no. 6167-75 Union Pacific mustard-plastic SP-type caboose (uncataloged from 1963 through 1965).

The final O-27 diesel set of the postwar era recalled the great Alco A-A duos from the 1950s. The new no. 2041 Rock Island diesels were attractive enough to run on any O gauge layout. They led a five-car freight, the no. 11740 (net price of \$23.40).

The outfit had as its rolling stock a few familiar faces. We're referring to the nos. 6014-325 white Frisco boxcar, 6142-100 Lionel green-plastic gondola with two unmarked red-plastic canisters, 6315-25 Gulf single-dome chemical tank car, and 6476-75 black Lehigh Valley hopper.

The final component of set 11740 was the no. 6059-50 Minneapolis & St. Louis maroon-plastic Southern Pacific-type caboose. That model lacked its own component box, yet apparently carried the same product number and suffix as the red-plastic variation of the 6059-50 M&StL caboose.

When boxed, the maroon-plastic SP-type caboose came numbered "6057" on the box. At the same time, evidently, the red-plastic version of the M&StL SP-type caboose was assigned 6059-60.

The scarce variation of the no. 3376 operating giraffe car with yellow heat-stamped lettering, associated strictly with 1969 production, offered proof Lionel manufactured trains that year.

Last of the postwar steamers

Lionel had opened the postwar period with a steam locomotive and tender (the no. 224 packed in outfit no. 463W cataloged in 1945). Fittingly, therefore, it closed the era with an excellent steamer and tender combination at the head of two O-27 outfits in 1969. Both the nos. 11750 and 11760 used a no. 2029 engine to pull the five cars used in each.

Outfit 11750, which had a net price of \$28.60, paired its 2029 steam engine with a no. 234T-25 non-whistle tender with Pennsylvania RR markings. Behind rode the 6014-75 orange Frisco boxcar, 6315-25 Gulf single-dome chemical tank car, 6473-25 rodeo car (no. 6473-60 when boxed), and 6476-75 black Lehigh Valley hopper. The no. 6130-25 Santa Fe work caboose had an unpainted gray-plastic tool tray and a red-plastic cab with a white herald.

By the way, collectors should be aware the Gulf chemical tank car was usually missing the rubber-stamped built date that was part of the design for the scarcer version of the car included in set 11740. Anything was possible at Lionel during the last days of postwar production!

Top of the line

Costing a few dollars more at \$37.80 net, outfit 11760 offered a lot more for anyone acquiring it. Lionel had substituted a no. 234W-25 Lionel Lines whistle tender for a 234T-25 as well as a 3376 operating giraffe car in place of the rodeo car. Best of all, a more powerful no. 1044 90-watt transformer now replaced the no. 1025 45-watt transformer.

Be aware that the outfit generally came with the common version of the giraffe car with white heat-stamped lettering. But occasionally the scarce variation of that neat operating model with yellow heat-stamped lettering appeared.





The other cars in the 11760 were a 6014-325 white Frisco boxcar, 6315-25 Gulf single-dome chemical tank car, and 6476-75 black Lehigh Valley hopper.

According to the catalog, the outfit finished with a no. 6119 work caboose with an unpainted gray-plastic tool tray and an unpainted red-plastic cab with a Santa Fe herald. However, some examples of the 11760 came with the 6130-25 Santa Fe work caboose with red parts.

Why would different sets have different work cabooses? Evidently, Lionel had inventory to get rid of as fast as possible. Therefore, either caboose could be packed.

Promotional sets for 1969

In spite of the problems and other issues facing Lionel at this critical point in its history, sales executives managed to assemble additional sets. Three promotional, or uncataloged, outfits are known or are reported to exist from 1969.

Those three sets – the nos. 10613SF, 10653SF, and 10663SF – are difficult to find these days, most likely because Lionel almost certainly packaged them in small quantities. After all, the principal intention for the firm in creating them was to reduce existing inventory while boosting sales and profits.

Promotional outfits associated with 1969 included current-production items as well as earlier ones. Examples included the 1061 steam engine as well as common cars, such as the 6402 flatcar with two cable reels, 6042 gondola with various loads, and 6167 Lionel Lines Southern Pacific-type caboose. All were assembled and packaged then.

Getting more specific, Lionel had a few of the no. 1065 Union Pacific Alco A units

left (shown in the advance catalog for 1961). It used them as the motive power for set 10653SF. Also in that promotional outfit were leftover green-plastic cable reels. Plainly, Lionel was doing everything it could to deplete leftover inventory and simply clean house then.

Models for TTOS

Lionel executives made yet another attempt to bring in money while reducing inventory at the company. They contracted with the Toy Train Operating Society (TTOS) to provide that group with specially marked cabooses and a hopper car to be offered to attendees at its fourth annual national convention (held in Los Angeles) as souvenirs.

By collaborating with TTOS, Lionel assembled or produced 558 Southern Pacific-type cabooses as well as 493 open hoppers. The latter models were heat-stamped “6476-1.”

The quantities of the items for TTOS enable us to gain perspective on how much leftover inventory Lionel had at the time. That information, in turn, lets us hypothesize that many more units of new inventory were necessary to fill projected orders for 1969.

Final thoughts

With this article, we have completed our extensive and in-depth investigation of Lionel for every year of the 1960s, the last years of what’s known as the postwar era. We have focused on the cataloged and promotional outfits to show how executives at the company responded to a declining market, often with ingenuity, determination, and optimism. This was true right through 1969, when Lionel was

The roster of O gauge rolling stock offered for separate sale in 1969 was impressive. Highlights of the cataloged line included (left to right) the nos. 6361 timber transport car (with gold-colored chains rather than the customary blackened ones), 6560-25 operating crane car, and 3362/3364 operating unloading car (pictured here with the load of helium tanks).

more successful and more productive than often said.

Too bad Ronald Saypol, who held the positions of president and chief executive officer of the Lionel Corp. at the end of the era, could not have viewed the firm and the hobby from our perspective. He might have taken different actions and expressed greater confidence in the electric trains that had been Lionel’s bread and butter since its start.

Saypol evidently believed interest in toy trains was in an irreversible tailspin. He sought to find another business to take over production and marketing while he promoted the diverse subsidiaries owned by Lionel as the hope of the future. He said as much to Lionel shareholders in various communications sent out between 1968 and 1970.

Yet if circumstances were as dire as Saypol assumed, why would management at General Mills have moved forward with an agreement to license the rights to produce and sell Lionel trains? They must have recognized the ongoing strength of the market among families. Perhaps they even saw the growing passion among adults to collect older trains.

Of course, from our vantage point we can do nothing more than speculate about the decision-making processes at both Lionel and General Mills at this critical moment. Of more immediate value is acknowledging the achievements made by sales executives and production supervisors at Lionel right until the end. They carried on the proud heritage always associated with the business. **CTT**

Thanks to John Schmid of Project Roar Publishing, Bob Osterhoff, Ray Fetzner, and Vladimir Dragan. Special thanks to the late Lenny Dean, who kept the fire burning at Lionel. Look for more insights into Lionel for 1969 in future publications from CTT.

MARK BOYCE PROVIDES
ALL THE INSPIRATION AND
INSIGHTS YOU'LL NEED

The ideal **CHRISTMAS LAYOUT**

By Roger Carp • Photos by Mark Boyce

O gauge modeler Mark Boyce is a patient and forgiving gentleman. He is able to abide just about anything. But when it comes to folks spewing excuses about why they just have never built a layout, well, he'll have no tolerance for any rationale. A layout at Christmas is absolutely essential to him.

"Anybody can have a great-looking and enjoyable layout at Christmas," Mark said. "You can do it at minimal cost in minimal time and with basic tools that most people already have." No one, he says, has any reason to skip the pleasures of building a toy train display, especially when family and friends plan to visit at the holiday season and can share in running the trains.

Of course, it's one thing to assert about what others should do and something very different to give them the information and inspiration to carry out the project. Luckily, Mark is one guy who can back up his claims. For in a short time he has built an entertaining and attractive compact three-rail layout while spending little money!

Enterprising fellow

Mark stands out in the O gauge hobby as one of those enterprising fellows who manages to get the most out of his trains. His roster isn't immense, and the trains hardly tap into the upper reaches of what Lionel and MTH keep putting out.

Yet what Mark does own means a great deal to him. He carefully studies what is available on the market before making prudent purchases. In time, he will put his locomotives through many hours of operation until he trusts that they can handle all his demands. Sitting on a shelf just gathering dust – that is not the life of a brand-new locomotive or accessory joining the Boyce household!



The attitude about choosing your trains with foresight and then making sure to get the most use out of them has influenced Mark right from the time he acquired his first model train at the age of 12. He emphasized that no one, not his parents or grandparents or even Santa Claus, presented him with a wrapped gift.

"I wanted an electric train as much as any kid growing up in the 1960s," Mark recalls, "but Dad didn't see it as a priority. He said it was too expensive."

Mark understood it was his responsibility to save up money to buy what he dreamed of. Which is what he did. When he was 12 he felt free to spend his hard-earned cash on an HO scale set by Tyco.



The right attitude

The determined lad built a simple layout in the basement of his family's home. He saved money to bring home a sheet of plywood. Mark had been reading *Model Railroader*, so he had ideas about developing the layout beyond an oval of track on the 4 x 8-foot surface. Before long, he was finishing an over-and-under plan.

Encouraged if not directly assisted by his father, Mark didn't hesitate to experiment with wiring the layout and then making scenery and adding structures. You see, his father had instilled in Mark the "always give it a try" attitude and many of the carpentry and electric skills so fundamental to model railroading.

1 The North Pole Central set from Lionel drifts past the front of the 4 x 7-foot O gauge layout Mark Boyce designed and built during the most recent holiday season. He filled the two-level temporary display with cool porcelain structures.

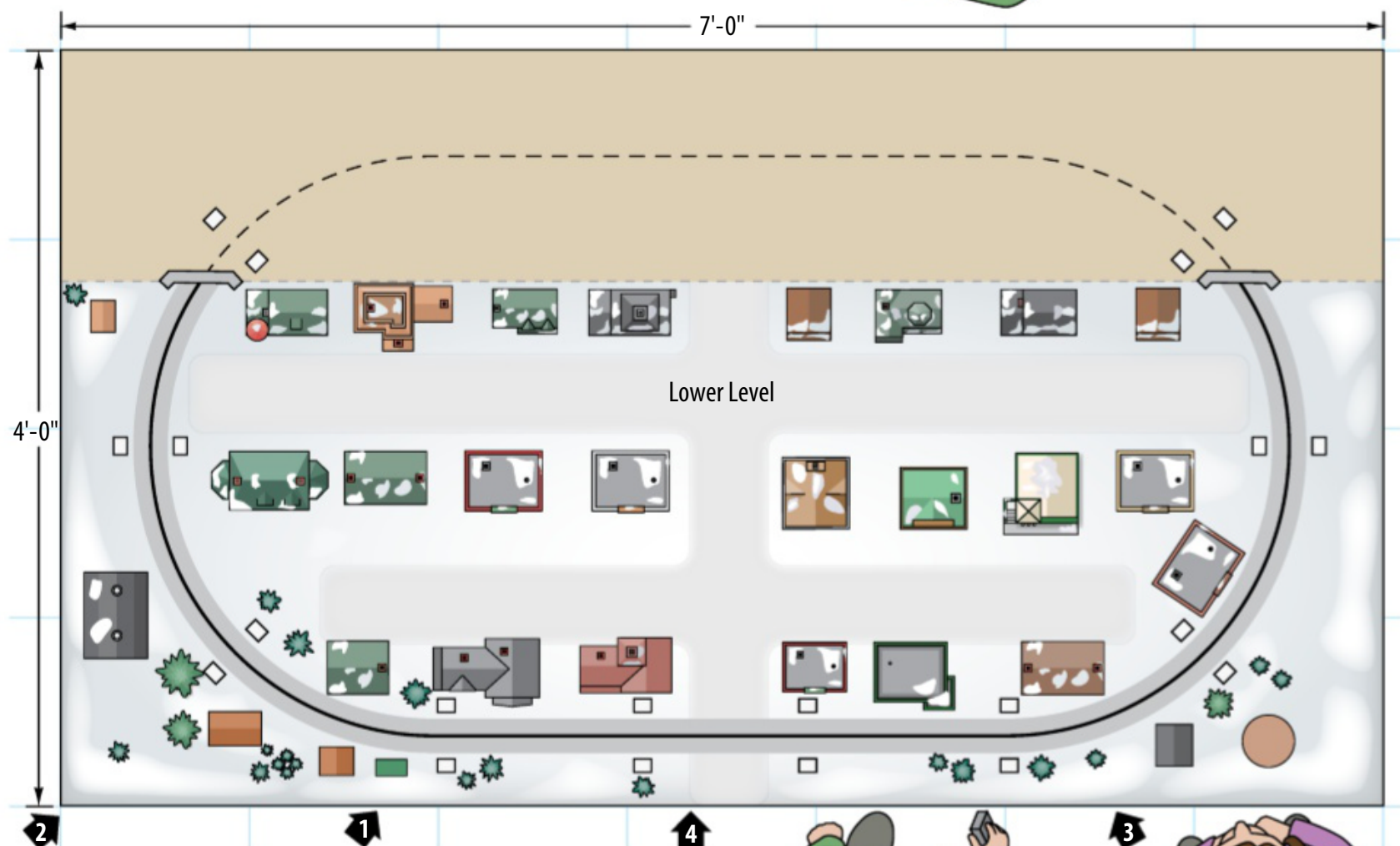
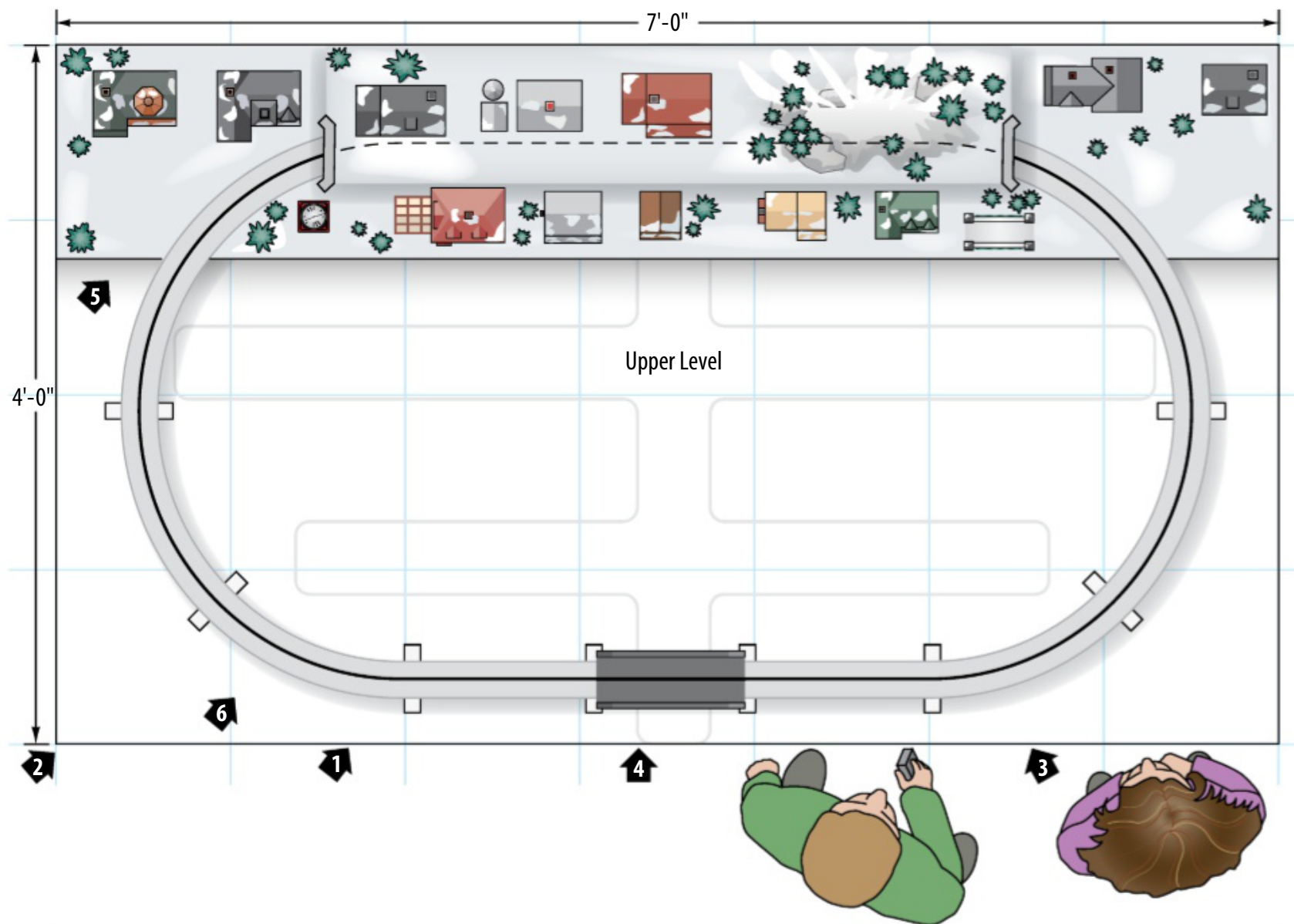
When it came time for scenery, Mark knew how to proceed. Not by spending all his dollars. He understood the benefits of scrounging for materials (twigs, brush, and dirt) and opting for inexpensive kits.

Even before starting high school, then, Mark had formed a philosophy about the model railroading hobby that would stand him in good stead for decades after. Reading whatever he could in order to keep learning about the hobby and always daring to make a full-fledged attempt all but ensured success for Mark.

Relying on inexpensive materials and common items would keep things interesting and safe. Mark didn't have to worry about wasting his resources if things didn't turn out just right. He had only to relax, take a breath, and try again.

Time to celebrate

Christmas is special in the Boyce household for many reasons. Mark and his wife, Kim, look forward to decorating their home and inviting friends to join them for the festivities. As important,



Amazing how much action and interest an experienced modeler such as Mark Boyce can pack into a two-level layout encompassing less than 30 square feet. The numbered arrows correspond to the numbers in each of the captioned photos he snapped for this exclusive article.

Illustration by Kellie Jaeger



2 LEFT The layout occupies a central spot in Kim and Mark's home. Every Christmas, the husband-and-wife team, joined by their dog, Annie, open their doors to friends.

3 BELOW Because Mark wanted his two-level layout to call to mind the displays Lionel built for clients during the 1950s, he often runs postwar engines, including this no. 621 Jersey Central NW2 diesel switcher. It's pulling some colorful K-Line cars on the upper level.

Christmas provides Mark with the perfect reason to develop a compact three-rail display to share with many visitors.

So even though Mark continues to refine his permanent O gauge layout, he puts everything aside in November and December to concentrate on what he knows will be a temporary addition. The shift in focus pleases him, because it allows him to use novel materials and approach work from a different angle.

Recently, Mark finished a 4 x 7-foot holiday railroad that stands 37 inches off the floor. Not particularly high, yet he admits the height would be even lower if small children inundated their home. The elevated area hits 44 inches.

Mark wanted a compact and portable

layout. So, he said, "it rests atop a folding table. There are 2 x 4 pieces of wood every 16 inches or so that extend beyond the edges of the table to add support."

Mark placed a 2-inch-thick sheet of dense insulation foam on top. Doing so gave him a smooth and flat surface, almost like a tabletop, to be the foundation.

To enhance the display visually and make operation more enjoyable, Mark elected to put on a second tier. How to support it challenged his imagination – or it did until he stumbled across an enterprising and money-saving solution.

Mark had not long before added a new railing to his home's front porch. Left over were several plastic uprights. The rectangular parts could support the next level. Mark cut them to size with a miter saw and arranges them in an upside-down U-shaped formation to support a track bed of ¼-inch-thick Masonite.

Track and trains

Lionel FasTrack ended up being Mark's choice for the curves and straights. It goes together like a charm and offers good-looking plastic ties and roadbed. Maybe it

AT A GLANCE

Name: Mark Boyce's O gauge layout

Dimensions: 4 x 7 feet

Track: Lionel FasTrack (maximum diameter is 36 inches)

Motive power: Lionel, MTH

Rolling stock: Atlas O, K-Line, Lionel, MTH, Weaver, Williams

Controls: Lionel type-ZW transformer

Structures: Department 56, Dickens Collectibles, Lemax

Figures: Department 56, Dickens Collectibles, Lemax





4 The different Polar Express outfits Lionel has introduced over the past decade find homes on holiday layouts of every size and level of complexity. Mark is letting the 2-8-4 Berkshire steam engine and tender fly a few days before Christmas of 2018.

doesn't muffle the sound of the moving trains, but Mark hardly cares. The racket suggests a layout from the 1950s.

For the main level, Mark placed track on top of the insulation foam. Already in the foam he had put plastic wallboard anchors. Then it was a matter of securing the track to the anchors with screws. For the elevated area, Mark screwed every piece of track directly to the Masonite.

These techniques have worked well for the 28-square-foot layout. Mark adds that for his larger and permanent O gauge railroad he goes with more sophisticated methods and costlier materials.

The same distinctions come into play when considering the trains on Mark's holiday display. The stars are LionChief Plus sets he runs with conventional control. Nearly all of them feature names and

decorative elements related to children's literature (Harry Potter and *The Polar Express*) and Christmas.

The colorful, whimsical, and nostalgic trains differ remarkably from the prototypical look of the locomotives and cars dominating Mark's permanent railroad. There, he relies on the Digital Command System marketed by MTH.

What pleases Mark most about the sets is how easy it is to get them running. Not that he tries to take them out of their boxes, pop everything on the track, and couple them blindfolded. But he insists little kids can do it!

"Look," Mark says, "the point of my layout is to bring to life great memories of Christmas

displays from long ago. The Lionel North Pole Central train set does that very well, particularly when I'm running it with a postwar ZW transformer."

Grandma helped, too

Important as it was to select trains that operated smoothly and nurtured warm sentiments about the holidays, Mark and Kim state the key to the layout's success is its appearance. It had to look like something a store would have built at Christmas if it was going to weave its magic.

"Look," Mark says, "the point of my layout is to bring to life great memories of Christmas displays from long ago."



Husband and wife shared visions until they knew what the layout was going to look like. Mark made the mountains from cardboard and Styrofoam. He colored them with a white exterior latex paint left from a previous task.

Before the second and final coat of paint had fully dried, Mark was sprinkling on a commercial type of snow to obtain what he described as a “flocked effect.” Then came a “snow blanket” once sold by Harrison Trains he carefully draped over the mountain. Last, fell another blizzard of fake snow.

Thoughtful placement of porcelain structures completed work on the many different scenes. For the assortment of Department 56 and Lemax buildings, Kim can thank her deceased grandmother. She inherited the large collection begun by Grandma; now, Kim brings home similar treasures she finds at local thrift shops.



5 ABOVE Lionel FasTrack secured to sections of Masonite handles the trains and trolleys run on the elevated level. Trees, details, and figures surround the busy main line.

6 LEFT This MTH Western Maryland Alco RSD-5 is a favorite of Mark's.

Frankly, Mark says, “Kim and I own enough of the porcelain structures, details, and figures to fill as many as three layouts. We just have to remember to change the themes of our temporary model railroads and not repeat anything.”

You can do it!

Gazing around the layout reminds Mark of the many people who influenced his love of the hobby. Besides his wife, who encourages him to design a new Christmas display every year, he thinks of folks who have given him the structures.

Mark thinks of his good friend Brian Oliphant, who suggested the mountain at the rear of the room include buildings on varying levels. The sight recalls towns on hillsides in West Virginia and Pennsylvania where Mark has lived. To show his gratitude, he named it Mount Brian.

Best of all for Mark is knowing he met his goals without spending much or disrupting his life. He believes anyone can achieve what you're admiring here. And he hopes to inspire readers to get out of their armchairs, sketch a track plan, and then create their own holiday display. **CTT**

“IT WAS SCARY. IT WAS FUN. IT WAS A BLAST!”

By Howard Johnson

Former Lionel engineer
Dan Johns recalls the early
days of the modern era

A few years ago, while golfing in South Carolina, I was introduced to Dan Johns, who had worked in various positions at Model Products Corp., both before and after it began making Lionel trains in 1970.

The two of us became friends and Dan shared stories about his years involved with Lionel trains. His experiences covered three chapters in the history of the premier American manufacturer of toy trains, ranging from the demise of the old corporation, the shift to having General Mills lease the rights to make and market trains, and then the acquisition of the assets by Richard Kughn (who later consolidated the properties as Lionel LLC).

Dan's background

Dan was born in the middle 1940s in Mount Clemens, Mich. He received his



A highlight of Dan Johns' long and productive career at Model Products Corp. during the years it manufactured and marketed Lionel trains and accessories was getting to know and work alongside the late country music singer and O gauge enthusiast Johnny Cash.

first Lionel train set in 1949 or '50. Upon graduating from high school, Dan served in the U.S. Air Force for four years. He then returned to Michigan and acquired a position with Michigan Bell Telephone.

While attending a class on transistor theory, he pointed out that one of the instructors had made a mistake on the use of a particular transistor. Dan's special

training in the Air Force enabled him to spot the error. Unfortunately, Dan was reprimanded by his supervisor for bringing up the mistake. Told he would be fired if he did so again, Dan beat them to the punch and immediately quit.

Fate stepped in, however, and guided Dan in a better direction. A few days later, Dan was driving by Model Products

The line of Lionel trains released in the early 1970s by Model Products Corp. continued to grow. Items derived from postwar designs shared space on the three-rail track with brand-new ones.

Corp. (MPC), a maker of miniature plastic cars used for displays in car dealer showrooms as well as plastic kits marketed to model builders.

On a whim, Dan pulled into the parking lot and applied for a job. George Toteff, the founder of MPC, interviewed him. Impressed by Dan's high school drafting designs and experience in the Air Force, Toteff hired him to work in the engineering department. Dan started at the lofty wage of \$1.25 per hour.

The Lionel journey begins

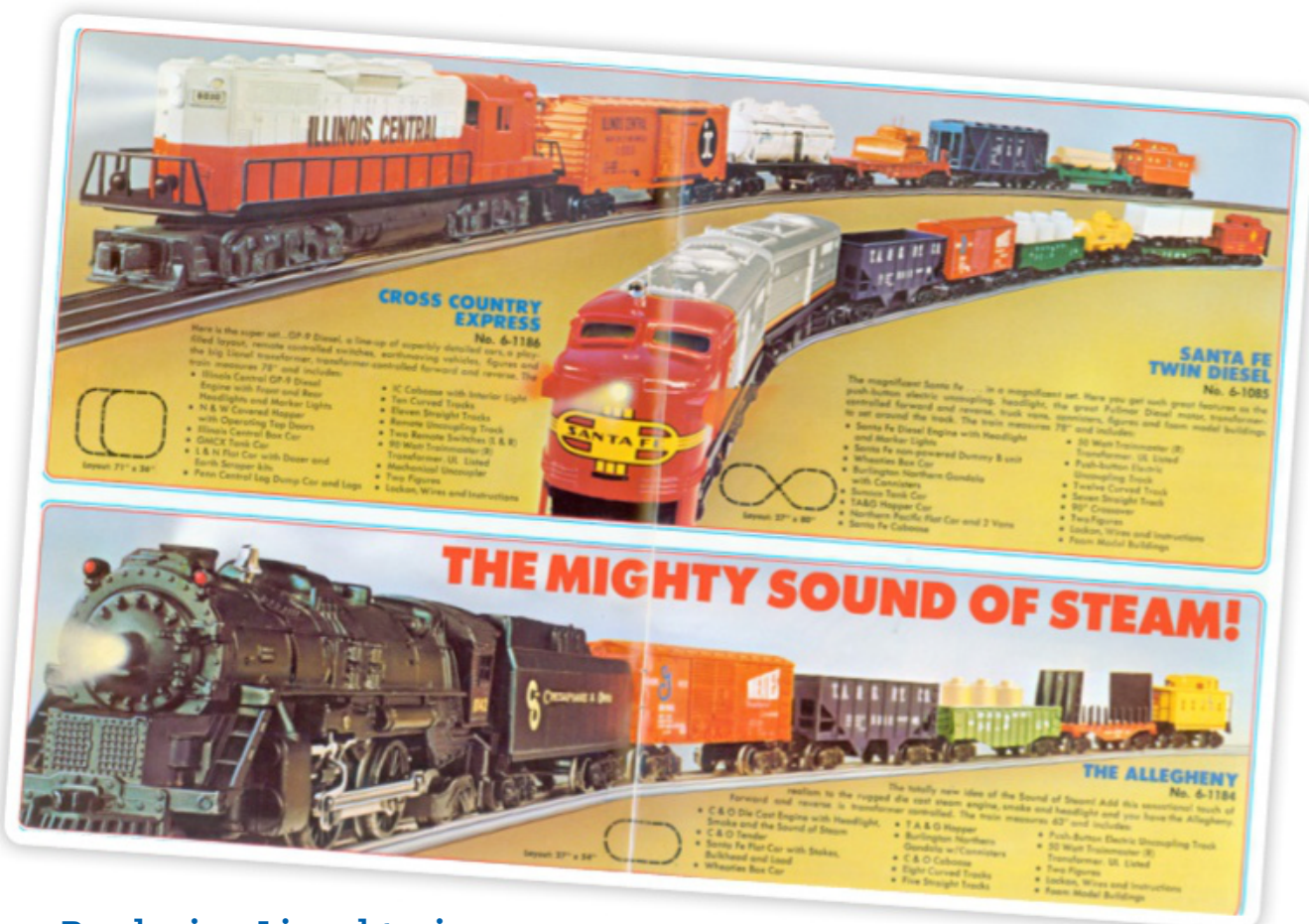
General Mills, a conglomerate involved in consumer goods, was expanding into the toy field in the late 1960s. Based in Minneapolis, Minn., it first acquired MPC and eventually organized the model maker into its Fundimensions group.

As production of miniature plastic cars started to ebb, Dan began to devote more of his time to the planned acquisition by General Mills of the Lionel Corp. Once he was promoted to chief engineer ("I could fix things," Dan explains), his focus became the operations Lionel had maintained at facilities in Hillside, N.J., and Hagerstown, Md. Specifically, he was involved with consolidating them with MPC in Mount Clemens.

About that time, Dan met Lenny Dean, who had been working at Lionel since the 1940s. Lenny had risen to the position of supervisor of the Service Department and proved himself invaluable to the company in many ways. Dan remembered Lenny fondly and learned much from him.

Dan took over managing the Customer Service Department, a change that meant Lenny and his staff reported to Dan. They were not excited about moving to Michigan from New Jersey, where repairs continued to be made. Lenny never did move.

However, the inventory of parts was transported to Mount Clemens. Dan recalls a couple of the "old timers" traveling to Michigan to train employees how to use the parts to make repairs. The two individuals, Dan laughs, were "absolutely genuine characters!"



Producing Lionel trains

Dan spent a lot of time trying to perfect the processes involved with producing the trains. With the plastic bodies manufactured for pieces of rolling stock, he emphasized streamlining the process and reducing the amount of shrinkage and waste caused by applying paint to the shells.

The needlepoint axle was perhaps the most important innovation associated with the early years of General Mills production. That improvement increased the number of cars a locomotive could pull compared to postwar predecessors.

Dan wasn't involved with the development of the needlepoint axle. Still, he was concerned the metal axle might cause long-term problems fitting into a plastic truck. Fortunately, what could have been a serious issue never materialized.

Another change Dan remembered involved the production of die-cast metal steam locomotives.

Supervisors modified the process to include applying a powder paint coating to the shells before they were baked in ovens. Adding that coating, Dan noted, resulted in a nearly "bulletproof" finished product compared to all predecessors.

From engineering to marketing

After a few years as chief engineer for the manufacture of Lionel

trains, Dan was promoted to a leadership position in the Marketing Department. His engineering background and his drafting skills served him well and he soon was named the director of marketing. Despite the long hours and many demanding tasks, he was attending night school and graduated from Northwood University and Central Michigan University.

As marketing director, Dan spent a lot of his time formulating the contents of the annual Lionel catalogs. Here again, his drafting training and experiences all the way back to high school proved advantageous for him and the company. Of course, the years in engineering left him thoroughly knowledgeable about the product line as well as what might realistically be manufactured in the future and so be added to the Lionel offerings.

Memories of Toy Fair and York

As director of marketing, Dan made sure to attend the International Toy Fair, which was held in New York City early each year. During one such event, he made his first visit to Madison Hardware Co., the renowned retail outlet for Lionel trains. In the cramped store, he met Lou Shur, who owned and managed Madison with his brother, Carl Shaw.



Dan and his wife, Charlotte, enjoy reminiscing about his fulfilling career at Model Products Corp. and General Mills. She also worked there, involved with sales.

Innovations kept on upgrading the Lionel cataloged roster in the 1980s. For 1982, the line included novel sets that came with a train, assorted ancillary items, structures, and even a colorful play mat.

Dan also attended a number of other toy shows around the country during his Lionel career. In the mid-1970s, the Power Passers model car racing sets were part of the Fundimensions line. Dan remembered one of those events, not for the show itself, but for the celebrities he encountered. He shared a limousine with Arte Johnson (from *Rowan & Martin's Laugh In* television program) and movie stars Lillian Gish and Ruth Roman.

As the limo passed the Soviet embassy with a huge guard in front, Arte opened the sunroof and stood up. He yelled at the guard in a fake Russian accent. Everyone burst into laughter as the Russian tried to figure out what Arte was saying.

Dan attended several of the meets put on by the Eastern Division of the Train Collectors Association in York, Pa. He remembered being asked very specific questions. One collector wanted to know why MPC had made one boxcar "with 17 rivets and another with 11 rivets." Dan was stunned, as he was primarily interested in



Cadillac convertible ready to work. The commercial called for him to stand on the front of an engine, with synthetic smoke being made from canisters on a flatcar in front of it.

Johnny had to be strapped to the locomotive while making the commercial, with the smoke surrounding him. Sometime during the filming, the smoke canisters, not far from him, ignited! The crew raced to untie Johnny from the locomotive and get him out of there. That sure ended the day's commercial-making activities!

Other memories Dan had while working with Cash involved getting an all-evening tour of Nashville bars by June Carter Cash and one of her girlfriends. The next day was a bit tough on productivity! Another day, while waiting for Johnny to arrive, Dan got to play guitar in a state-of-the-art recording studio. That was a special experience, because he had played guitar in several bands before giving it up to "make some real money."

An unforgettable dealer in Ohio

Dan distinctly remembered the many interactions he had with Glen Uhl, the well-known owner of a hobby shop in Ohio. Glen, whose store carried Lionel electric trains had gained a reputation for being forthright about what he thought Lionel should be adding to its line. He never hesitated to express his opinions and wishes directly to Dan.

Dan met Glen at a TCA meet in York. From the get-go he realized many of Uhl's requests could not be practically manufactured or otherwise accommodated. So, it fell to Dan to answer honestly and tell Glen it wasn't possible.

Additionally, Uhl and a few other advocates often attended the annual meeting of General Mills shareholders. They would ask questions and provide thoughts about what Fundimensions should be making and offering in the next line.

The board of directors did not appreciate the input. Dan's job one year was to make certain Uhl never got to the microphone to express his views. It was a challenge Dan somehow accomplished.

Moving on

General Mills eventually sold the rights to manufacture Lionel trains to the late Richard Kughn. The change meant Dan's career in the toy train industry was over.

In 1988, George Toteff contacted Dan regarding his latest venture, Craft House. Toteff had launched the hobby and crafts business, whose products included paint-by-number kits. He offered Dan a position at the firm, headquartered in Ohio.

Dan responded enthusiastically and resigned from Lionel. He later served as president of Craft House, where he stayed for nine years before buying a business that manufactured molded foam football pads for sporting goods companies. He was there for 17 years before retiring.

Dan summed up his career in this way: "It was scary. It was fun. It was a blast! My life has been incredibly sweet!" **CTI**

On a whim, Dan decided to pull into the parking lot at MPC and applied for a job. He was quickly hired. He started at the lofty wage of \$1.25 per hour.

learning from the TCA members there what new locomotives and cars they wanted MPC to make.

Working with Johnny Cash

In the early 1970s, Lionel used radio and TV commercials featuring country music star Johnny Cash to market trains to dads and children. Dan, in his marketing role, was there for many shoots and got to know Johnny Cash and his family.

Dan remembered Johnny rolling up to a railroad track near Nashville they had reserved for the day. Up came Johnny, bouncing through a field in his oversized

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MAKING FAMILY MEMORIES WHILE BUILDING A LAYOUT

GROWING UP WITH TRAINS

Story and photos by Neal A. Schorr

OVER THE YEARS, I have written a number of articles for *Classic Toy Trains* describing the progress on my three-rail layout depicting the Middle Division of the Pennsylvania RR. Most have included mention of my children, Steven and Caroline, and their involvement with the layout.

Like so many people in the hobby, my involvement began with the gift of a Lionel train set. Mine was given as a Hanukkah gift in 1960. My father purchased a basic O-27 starter set. Outfit no. 1627S consisted of a diminutive 2-4-2 steam engine and tender, a gondola with orange cable reels, and a red flatcar carrying an HO scale arch bridge. A Tuscan red Lionel Lines caboose brought up the rear.

My set came not from a retailer, but from J.A. Williams, a local distributor in my home town of Pittsburgh. I have no idea what else J.A. Williams distributed, but I do know that my mother's first cousin Saul worked for the firm and was the source of my set. Like so many kids in that era, I was hooked for life.

Steven joins in

I constructed quite a few Lionel layouts before switching to HO scale trains for a time. But the steady evolution of O gauge trains into near-scale models over the past 25 years drew me back.

In 1997, I began work on a three-rail layout featuring real-

istic scale-sized engines and rolling stock.

Less than two years later, my son Steven came into this world. Little did I know how important he would become to the construction of the layout.

Around the time Steven was two years old, I was in the process of lying flat on my back underneath the layout installing switch machines while he stood by to hand me no. 4 sheet-metal screws used to fasten the machines. This is my first memory of him helping with the layout.

As work progressed, Steven and I began to construct scenery. One of the final stages of our scenery construction was to ballast the track. If you have followed my progress in the pages of CTT, you are aware that my layout is quite large. With as many as four tracks representing the great "Standard Railroad of the World," there is a lot of track to ballast!

Starting around the age of four, and for many years thereafter, Steven helped out as chief ballaster, laying down ballast, spreading it with a chip brush, and gluing it down with diluted white glue. Once the glue dried, he used a toothpick to pick errant granules of ballast off the sides of the rails and tops of the ties.

A three-person show

Four years after Steven came into the world, he had a little sister by the name of Caroline. She did not want to be left out of the action. By age three, she too became a member of the ballasting crew working alongside Steven.

I weather all of my track, generally by means of an airbrush. Now if there's one thing I really dislike, it's an airbrush. My yard is eight tracks deep,

For many readers, memories of electric trains are linked to family involvement. Neal Schorr and his son, Steven, built a large model of the Pennsylvania RR's Middle Division with the assistance of daughter Caroline.





and each track is more than 30 feet long. I didn't relish the thought of airbrushing all that track, especially when the rear tracks are usually hidden from view by trains on the front few tracks.

With that in mind, I airbrushed the front three tracks, then asked the kids to help by hand-painting the rails of the rear five tracks. Now those tracks are a long reach even for an adult, and Steven and Caroline weren't very big at that time. I just lifted them onto the layout and had them start painting! All that was needed was a piece of scrap plywood to protect the rails, and in no time the yard tracks

I was surprised and thrilled when I returned home from work one day to find both of them running trains just for fun at their own initiative.

were painted. After that, they cheerfully turned their attention to ballasting the yard as well!

An important milestone in construction of the layout came in 2004, with completion of the main line. On April 1st of that year, after almost seven years of construction, Steven and I laid the final piece

of mainline track. The two of us conducted a ceremony, complete with the ceremonial driving of the golden spike.

Over the next few years, Steven developed excellent mechanical skills. He created a number of battery-powered vehicles fitted with Weaver metal wheelsets. His mechanized creations would travel down the tracks at high speed. He loved the experience, but I wasn't always thrilled to find one of these in the path of a train I had pulled out of the yard!

Steven mastered command control and taught Caroline how to run Lionel's TrainMaster Command Control and MTH's Digital Command System.

I was surprised and thrilled when I returned home from work one day to find both of them running trains just for fun at their own initiative.

Over the next few years, Caroline's interest in the trains waned as her interest in animals increased. But not all was lost. The two of us eventually joined the Greater Pittsburgh Aquarium Society. After becoming involved in the organization, we gave a presentation about how the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago had transported fish by rail. Naturally, we mentioned the postwar Lionel no. 3435 aquarium car and its modern-era iterations!

As my daughter's interest in trains faded, Steven's increased. He began to paint structure kits, carve foam scenery, apply ground cover, and assemble Woodland Scenics tree kits.

Having gained a mastery of scenery techniques, Steven began to show interest in diesel motive power and rolling stock. If anything was lagging on our layout, it was weathering locomotives and freight and passenger cars. Steven took note and, without prompting from me, weathered his first car, a Weaver 50-foot Railbox boxcar, using Bragdon's weathering chalks.



With as many as four tracks representing the "Standard Railroad of the World," the author's Middle Division O gauge layout had plenty of tasks to keep his children Caroline and Steven busy.

With that car completed, Steven began weathering entire trains! He also created custom loads for a number of cars.

Steven had received a digital camera at about the same time he was honing his modeling skills. Over the next few years, he took hundreds of model railroading images. One of his efforts earned Steven the Best Special Effects award in the photography contest at the 2016 National Model Railroad Association convention. He has also had a photograph published in the scale-oriented Kalmbach publication, *Model Railroad Planning* 2017.

The involvement of my children made my hobby more special to me. Many of us have fond memories of growing up with trains and the involvement of our loved ones in our hobby. These are mine. **CTT**

THE LIONEL GG1 IN BLACK & ON LOAN

THIS SCARCE LOCOMOTIVE BONDED A FRIENDSHIP

Story and photo by Anthony Murad

Friendship depends on trust and consideration. We all know this basic point, but sometimes we choose to forget it when objects we badly desire are involved. Let me share a story about an old train that deserves to be judged my greatest find. Good as it is, there was no way I would let it ruin a friendship.

One so-called friend

The story begins about 30 years ago, when my good friends Ed and Elena Powell asked me to store some household objects they had reclaimed from Ed's family home, which was being sold. Among the items being salvaged were simple a 4 x 8-foot train table and a box containing old Lionel electric trains.

Ed had received the Lionel engine and heavyweight passenger cars as a 10-year-old in 1947. He had grown up in Roxbury, Conn., but thought his parents had bought the outfit in Waterbury, where his father worked.

The toys that had meant so much to Ed now had little value to him. A few years earlier, he had given most of his old trains to a so-called friend, who knew a guy who knew a guy who said he could service and restore them.

Guess what? Neither the trains nor the "friend" were ever since again.

Sad to say that all Ed was left with amounted to a single box of odd items.

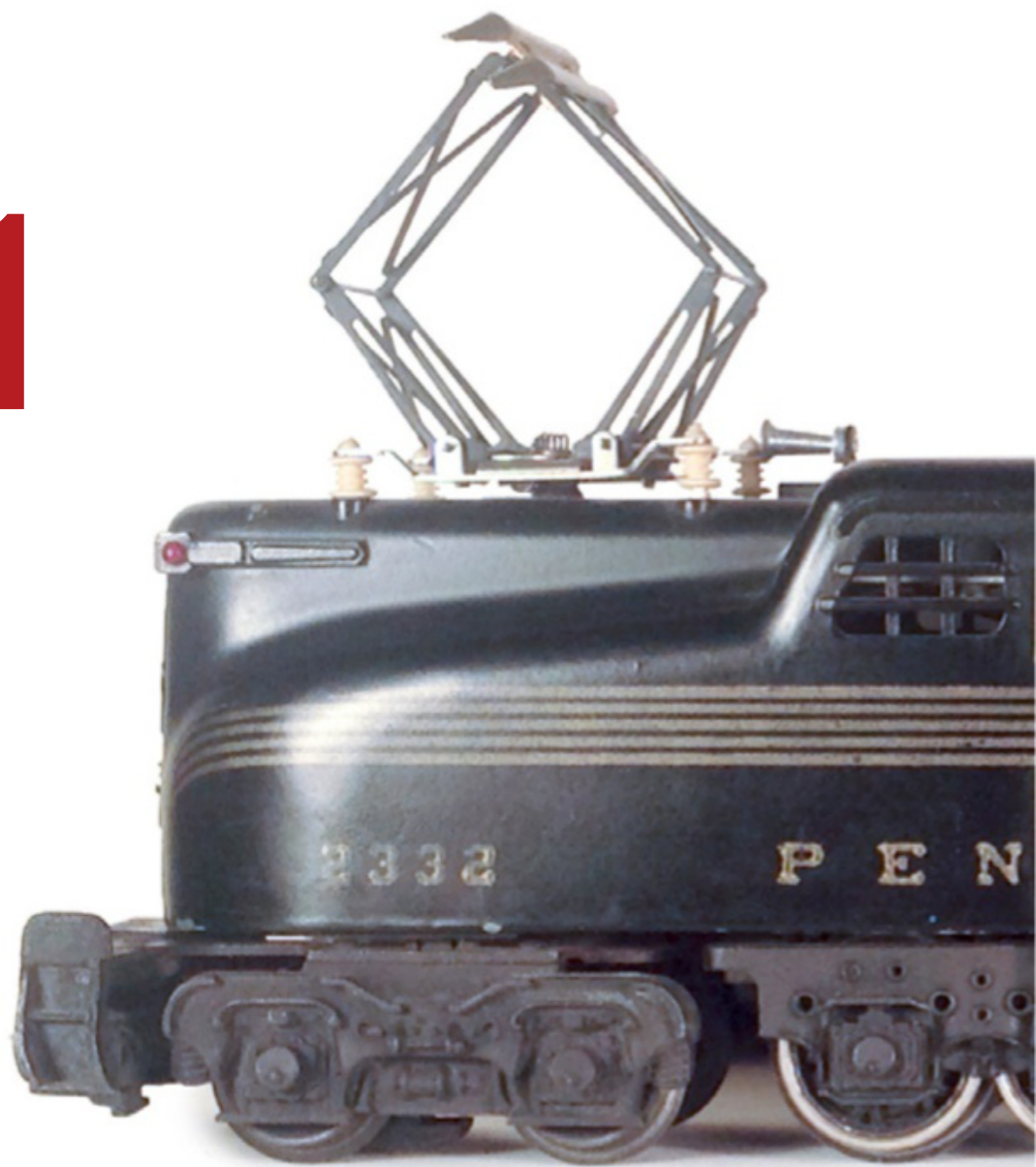
Curious about the engine

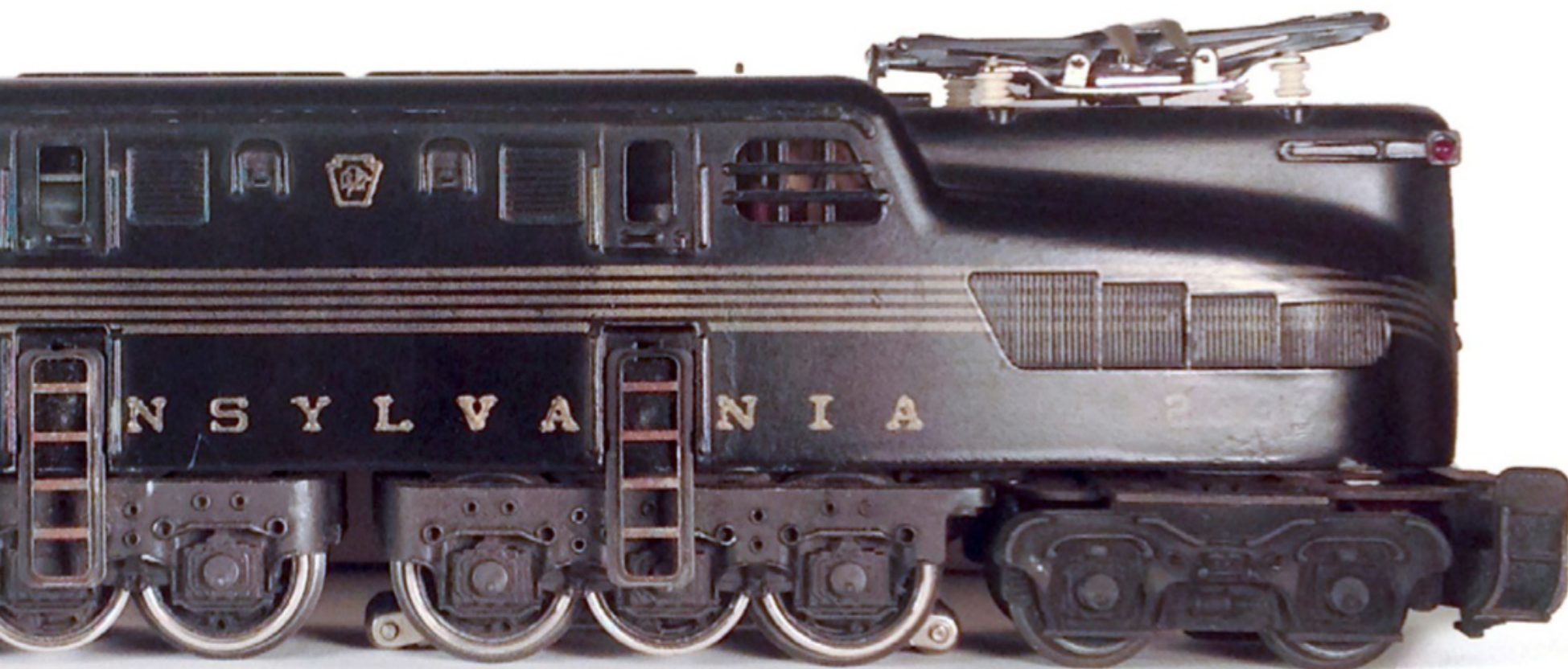
I had started collecting Lionel trains and accessories from the postwar period a few years earlier as a great way of reliving my childhood memories. About a year after storing Ed's stuff, I read a reference guide on postwar trains. There, I learned a great deal about Lionel's classic O gauge models of the Pennsylvania RR's GG1 electric, in particular, the first one (the no. 2332). The earliest examples came painted black.

The reading piqued my curiosity because I remembered Ed had a GG1. I went to the barn where his box of trains was stored. To my amazement, the engine was indeed a 2332. Best of all, the model looked black, and the stripes were in excellent condition. All that was missing were a pantograph and a nose decal.

I told Ed about the find, but neither of us had any idea about the value of the locomotive. A few years later, a black GG1 sold at auction for \$25,000!

When I told Ed, he replied I must be a true friend,





ABOVE This black-painted example of the Lionel no. 2332 Pennsylvania RR GG1 electric from 1947 ended up in a box of old toy trains the author was storing for a friend. Once he learned how valuable the engine was, he made certain to share the news.

because otherwise, he said, I might have offered to buy his trains for a few hundred dollars without telling him about the GG1's value. Frankly, the thought had never crossed my mind!

Friendship preserved

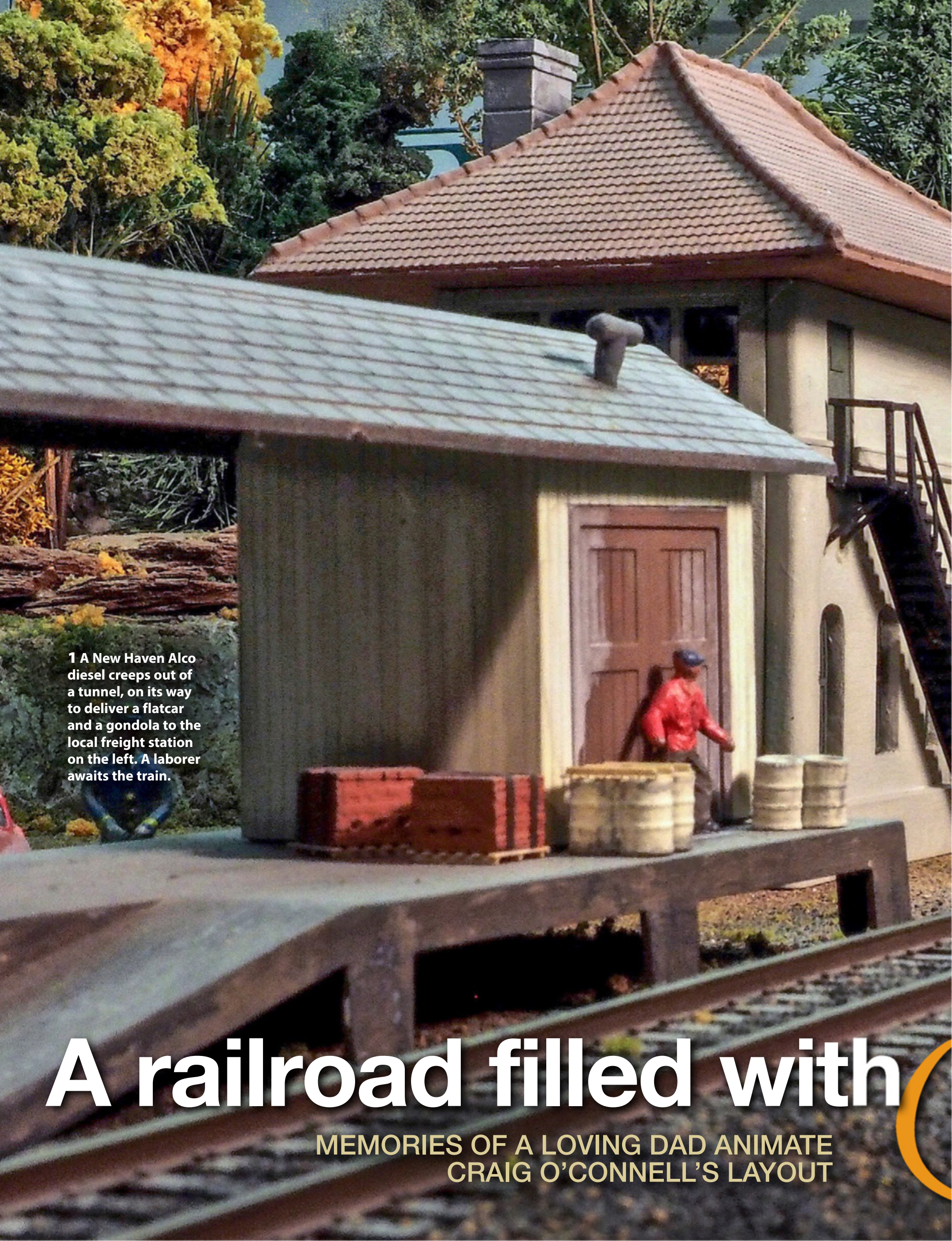
Ever since that day, I have kept the 2332 in my display cabinet, with the understanding that it's "on loan." At the time, Ed and I joked that selling it would pay for his daughter Kristina's college education (she was only five at the time).

Kristina graduated long ago and has moved on to a solid business career. The value of black GG1s has faded, as more came out of the woodwork.

Our friendship remains as strong as ever. Meanwhile, noises have been made that with Kristina and her husband having a baby boy, the old trains may finally have to go to her – and I'm fine with that.

Whether the GG1 remains with me or moves to a new home, I will always consider it my greatest find. I just hope Kristina doesn't encourage her son to play with this scarce and stately locomotive. **CTT**

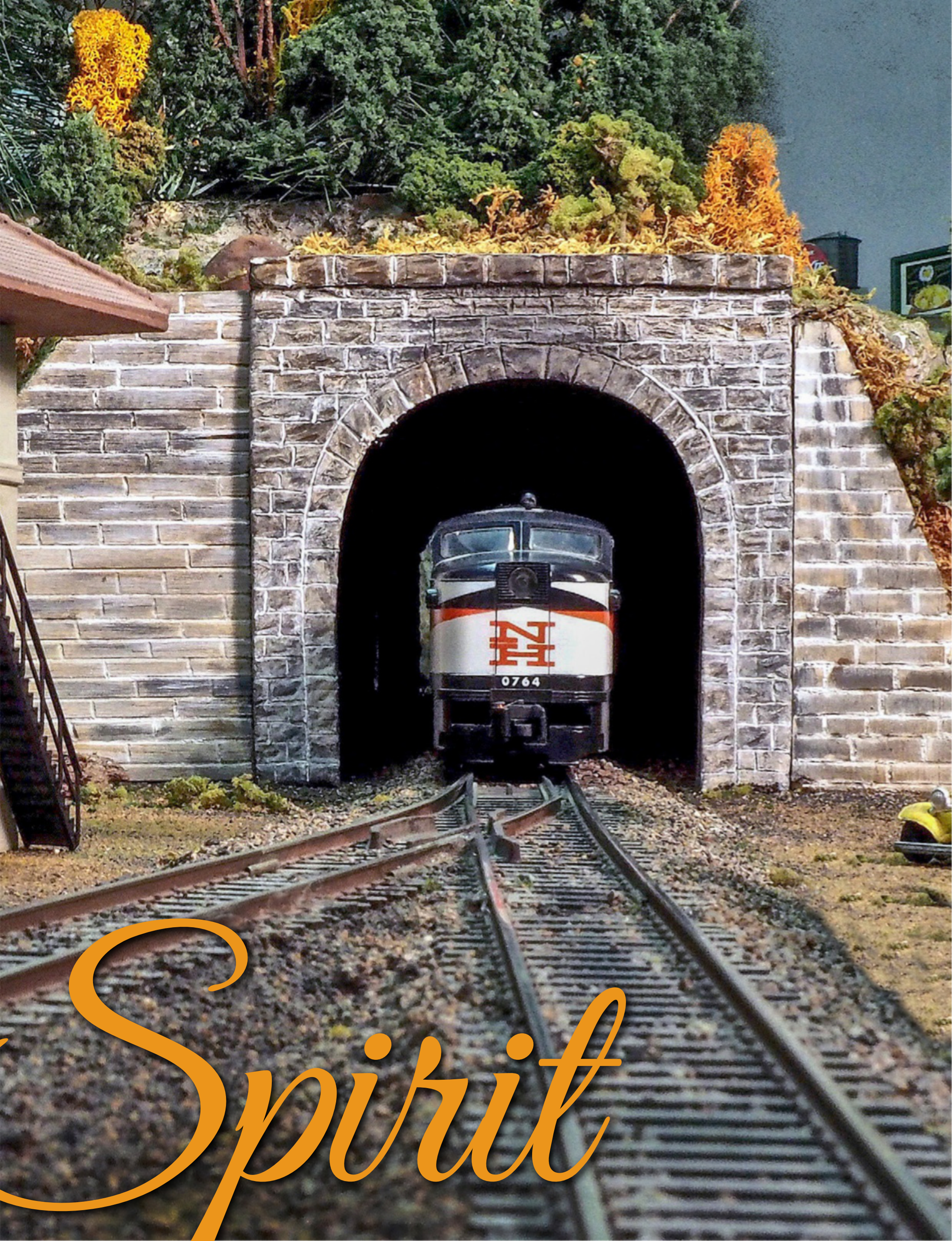
LEFT Black-painted GG1 electrics have been linked with Lionel outfit no. 2124W from 1947. This likely was the set the author's friend Ed Powell had received as a boy.



1 A New Haven Alco diesel creeps out of a tunnel, on its way to deliver a flatcar and a gondola to the local freight station on the left. A laborer awaits the train.

A railroad filled with

MEMORIES OF A LOVING DAD ANIMATE
CRAIG O'CONNELL'S LAYOUT



Spirit



2 The sun may have gone down on Craig O'Connell's S gauge layout, but an American Flyer no. 375 Texas & Pacific GP7 road diesel continues to work. The display pays tribute to the hard-working men and women, who, like Craig's father, were employed at the A.C. Gilbert Co. and built the trains people still prize.

By Roger Carp • Photos by Craig O'Connell

Outstanding operation making use of the latest command control technology can cause a toy train layout to rise above its peers. So also can highly detailed and beautifully imagined scenes. A third way to distinguish a great model railroad is by its spirit.

Tricky to define yet obvious when you encounter a layout with a spirit. Its look and purpose carry you to a different place.

Think of the model railroads in *Classic Toy Trains* built to appeal mainly to kids or individuals with physical or emotional challenges. Or recall the layouts designed as tributes to the artisans responsible for the greatest displays from the past. They exude spirit and leave you feeling touched.

Craig O'Connell's 12½ x 15-foot L-shaped S gauge display is a layout with real spirit. Every square foot reminds him of his late father, who worked at the A.C. Gilbert Co., where he introduced Craig to American Flyer. Viewers, now including CTT readers, learn about his dad and how he influenced the Flyer story.

Open to all

Craig doesn't use the word "spirit" when asked to describe the S gauge railroad he began building at home in 1991. Instead, he inserts into his conversation terms such as, "child-friendly," "hi-rail," "fun," "nostalgic," and "scale-like." He

takes pride in what he calls its "tolerance": His sizable display incorporates some of the best features of American Flyer trains from the postwar era as well as what he considers finest about current models.

The expansive view Craig took when designing the layout imbues it with true spirit. Something about the grand project that has monopolized much of his energy and imagination for almost 30 years makes it inviting to everybody.

Go to Craig's admission he aimed to develop a model railroad capable of touching anyone who saw it. Isn't this the open, easy-going attitude you'd expect from a gentleman who spent his career teaching elementary school?

Concern for youngsters sheds light on a key element of the layout, one noticed the moment you walk into Craig's train room. He has built the S gauge display fairly low to the ground. Specifically, the 7 x 7-foot

extension stands a mere 38 inches above the floor. As a result, boys and girls can see everything.

Knowing how Craig discovered a love for toy trains as a child, he wished to introduce his hobby to kids. Making the main lines accessible to young visitors, including his students, was essential. So was enabling them to push the buttons necessary to animate the accessories.

No wonder kids love the layout and leave with an appreciation for the toy trains and other items cataloged long ago by the Gilbert Co. They have a lot of fun playing with Craig's vintage pieces. Thus the layout creates a spirit of joy.

Reaching out to adults

At the same time, Craig understood that adults, notably fellow hobbyists, would be observing the layout as well. He had in mind friends from two clubs: Connecticut S Gaugers and New Haven Society of Model Engineers.

To make the layout accessible to club members, Craig erected the primary section 44 inches high. His reading had helped familiarize him with L-girder benchwork. Therefore, the system of legs (2 x 4 lumber) and girders (1 x 4 and 1 x 2 wood) went together like a charm.



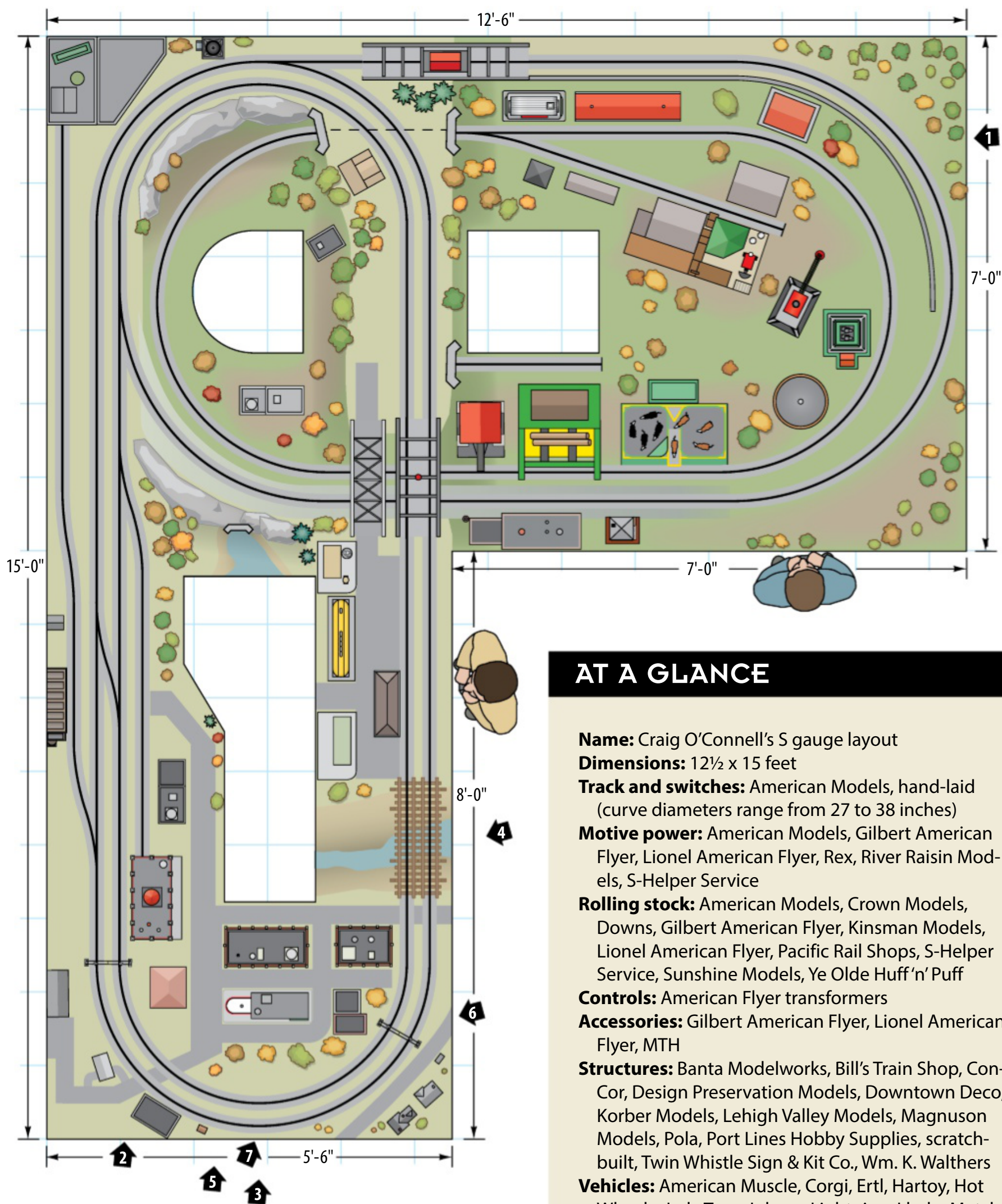


Illustration by Kellie Jaeger

ABOVE Realistic scenery, many animated accessories, and tons of details characterize the S gauge layout Craig has continued to improve since the 1990s. The numbered arrows correspond to the numbers in each of the captioned photos he snapped.

LEFT Visitors to Craig's child-friendly and hi-rail layout get to watch in action many of the finest American Flyer engines, including this no. 293 4-6-2 Pacific.

AT A GLANCE

Name: Craig O'Connell's S gauge layout

Dimensions: 12½ x 15 feet

Track and switches: American Models, hand-laid (curve diameters range from 27 to 38 inches)

Motive power: American Models, Gilbert American Flyer, Lionel American Flyer, Rex, River Raisin Models, S-Helper Service

Rolling stock: American Models, Crown Models, Downs, Gilbert American Flyer, Kinsman Models, Lionel American Flyer, Pacific Rail Shops, S-Helper Service, Sunshine Models, Ye Olde Huff'n' Puff

Controls: American Flyer transformers

Accessories: Gilbert American Flyer, Lionel American Flyer, MTH

Structures: Banta Modelworks, Bill's Train Shop, Con-Cor, Design Preservation Models, Downtown Deco, Korber Models, Lehigh Valley Models, Magnuson Models, Pola, Port Lines Hobby Supplies, scratch-built, Twin Whistle Sign & Kit Co., Wm. K. Walthers

Vehicles: American Muscle, Corgi, Ertl, Hartoy, Hot Wheels, Jada Toys, Johnny Lightning, Lledo, Matchbox, Muscle Machines, Racing Champions, Revell, Route 66, Vanguard

Figures: Gilbert American Flyer, MTH, Railmaster Exports



3 ABOVE Craig's L-shaped S gauge display boasts two distinctive and independent sections. The smaller one (7 x 7 feet) on the right appeals to children with lots of operating accessories.

4 RIGHT Every square inch of the layout features details sure to attract interest. Take the riverbank, with its hobos, brush, and debris. Craig modeled the water using Enviro-Tex two-part epoxy. The wood trestle spanning it he built from scratch.

On top went a ¼-inch-thick layer of Homasote. Craig first painted the beveled sections to seal them from moisture. Then he glued them to the tabletop.

Track represented an opportunity for Craig to contemplate on how the S gauge side of the hobby has changed since he received his first American Flyer set in 1957. When he put together the straights and curves packed with his no. 20315 Keystone Rocket, the best track on the market came from the Gilbert Co.

Thirty-plus years later, however, Craig faced a range of choices. The toy-like sections that had pleased his boyhood eye no longer looked realistic. From other operators he learned about the advantages of the system put on the market by American Models. Craig found its .148-inch nickel-silver sections satisfactory.



Yet what had worked esthetically and technologically in the 1990s lost luster as decades passed. Over time, Craig gradually replaced the commercial switches with custom-made closed-frog turnouts easily controlled with Tortoise machines.

Another substantial change involved ripping up large portions of the track. Craig moved forward by trying his hand at laying his own straights and curves, with the rails spiked to wood ties he secured to the roadbed with an adhesive.

The experience of laying the S gauge track, which some modelers might regard

as tedious, Craig considered immensely gratifying. The results surpassed his expectations, and he fully believes he will eventually replace all the old track.

Aiming for realism

A growing commitment to realistic modeling influenced decisions about the controls for the layout, the scenery Craig made, and the structures he added.

Let's begin with the control system. Craig describes it as "conventional." Then he mentions using some transformers left from the Gilbert period of American Flyer



5 A sleek and shiny American Flyer no. 350 Royal Blue steam engine hits the double-track main line in the middle of the afternoon. The signs, details, and people invite modelers to study the scene to learn how to improve vignettes on their layout.

production, in conjunction with handheld throttles manufactured by Rix.

The combination of new and old reflected what Craig had observed and then learned to use at the modeling clubs he had joined. For his layout he had converted Flyer transformers to direct current through the Rix throttles with built-in rectifiers. Meanwhile, 20- and 22-gauge feeder wires went in where it seemed necessary. Distances varied from every 10 inches to as far as every 36 inches.

Finishing the electronics steered Craig toward scenery. Inspired by layouts shown in publications such as *S Gaugian*, *Model Railroader*, *S Gauge Herald*, and *Mainline Modeler*, he looked ahead with optimism to creating landscapes.

Craig recalls depending on traditional techniques for making hardshell scenery and more recent breakthroughs using Styrofoam. He slathered Hydrocal over both types of exteriors and, after it had dried, colored them with acrylics from crafts stores and water-based house paints from home-improvement centers.

Full speed ahead to sprinkling on various shades and textures of ground cover from Woodland Scenics, followed by handcrafted trees and brush made from weeds gathered locally. Craig also took wood dowels and glued on disks of cleaning pads he spray-painted in the appropriate greens and browns.

Backdrops add depth and realism to Craig's scenes. Besides securing in place products from Wm. K. Walthers, he painted scenes on Masonite panels.

Again, knowledge and respect for the toy-like decoration popularized in the 1950s and '60s combined with interest in new techniques and products. In tandem, they were making it possible for Craig to embrace realism and fancy.

Go for the adventure

Step by step, Craig was constructing an S gauge railroad that achieved twin goals. First, it featured the action and entertainment young visitors liked. Second, it blended aspects of the post-war and modern eras hobbyists appreciated.

Craig came to believe he was doing for both types of audience exactly what meant the most to him. That is, he was teaching. His American Flyer layout became a vehicle by which to convey information about products and techniques others might try on their own layouts.

Above all, Craig hoped his layout would motivate modelers of all ages to take a few risks. It should, particularly when it came to structures, push them to

act more adventurously so their buildings assumed unique looks and identities.

Gaze around the L-shaped railroad and you'll spy models of residential, commercial, and industrial structures from a host of old and new manufacturers. Craig almost revels in listing them, starting with Gilbert. He adds Design Preservation Models, Walthers, Magnuson Models, Korber, Port Lines Hobby Supplies, Lehigh Valley Models, and Bill's Train Shop.

But picking and choosing selections from what a dozen or so companies have

Craig hoped his S gauge layout would be something his late father would proudly have watched being constructed and then enjoyed operating.

offered over the past half-century hardly gets at what Craig encourages S gaugers to do. They should follow his lead by modifying commercial items.

Like Craig, they ought to mingle parts from different kits to create new buildings. Similarly, painting and weathering structures seems important to him, although he cautions against altering vintage American Flyer pieces. Chalks, along with hobby colors like grimy black and rust, always work wonders.



6 ABOVE A freight train consisting of some of the most collectible American Flyer boxcars cataloged during the 1950s swings through the main city on the hi-rail layout.

7 LEFT One of the enjoyable elements of Craig's display is how he named businesses after his wife, Ann, and their grown-up daughter, Chloe.



Spirit of the past

Craig wanted to develop a medium-size S gauge layout that would please youngsters and impress his grown-up peers in the hobby. He sought to blend the best of the past and present while embracing realism. The railroad should challenge his modeling skills in ways that would cause him to grow, all the while showing others how doable every project was. Finally, it should honor the Gilbert heritage and convey to viewers the glories of the post-war line of American Flyer trains.

Craig felt compelled to design a layout filled with the spirit of the past because he came of age in New Haven, Conn., where Gilbert maintained its corporate headquarters and manufactured its educational toys. More importantly perhaps, Craig's father had worked in the company's plant.

Sixty years after his dad died in an industrial accident, Craig speaks with respect and fondness of him, the man known to everyone as "Okie."

Craig still remembers visiting the factory with his father and tagging along on

trips to the store open to employees only. There, Erector Sets, Flyer trains, Mysto-Magic outfits, and other items made by Gilbert were available at nice discounts.

"As my dad came home from the plant each day, I knew how hard he had to work to buy those trains. Yet how excited and awed I was to own a piece of rolling stock that my father had, in some small but important way, helped to produce."

S gauge at its best

Craig set out to do more than build a layout he thought would provide personal enjoyment. And he aimed to reach people other than his immediate family (Ann, his wife, and Chloe, their daughter) as well as the guys he knew from the local model railroading organizations he belonged to.

Craig's display was going to express his philosophy and reflect his talents. It would communicate a friendly and open attitude about toy trains so as to make it accessible to children and novices in the hobby.

Craig hoped his layout would be something his late father would proudly have watched being constructed and enjoyed operating. It should link them and merge memories of the past with dreams for the future. Then it would be an S gauge display imbued with the right spirit. **CTD**



Photos by Gordon I. Peterson

Photo 1. Gordon I. Peterson made a temporary diorama to create the illusion of a winter wonderland on his O gauge layout. He then snapped photographs to use for his annual Christmas cards as well as on this month's cover.

Every year there's a white Christmas

HOLIDAY DIORAMAS OFFER NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR YOUR LAYOUT

For several years, the approach of each holiday season turned my model railroading thoughts to the winter diorama I would create and photograph for the year's Christmas card (Photo 1).

One of my diorama scenes is shown on the cover of this issue of *Classic Toy Trains*. Having regularly staged many scenes over the years, here are my tips for this creative and fun project.

While my basic scenery elements remain the same – it's always a white Christmas – I was inspired to take my diorama to the next level by one of legendary railroad photographer O. Winston Link's photographs of the Norfolk & Western Ry. from the 1950s. I thought his classic image of a father and son hauling their fresh-cut Christmas tree along a frosty

country road as a streamlined N&W 4-8-4 thundered across a stone viaduct could be staged easily with a few modifications.



Fortunately, a narrow five-track staging yard at one end of my Port of New York & New Jersey RR O gauge layout (**Photo 3**) offered sufficient space and easy access to build the scene I envisioned. Lacking the room for a scale viaduct, I decided to modify Link's composition by depicting one of my locomotives making a head-on pass toward the camera. Only one of the tracks would be needed, so I planned to cover

the other tracks with temporary snow scenery. The emotional appeal of the photograph's holiday theme would remain in the way I staged the diorama shown in **Photos 1 and 2**.

My plan called for figures to be placed to the left side of the locomotive. The farmhouse in Link's photo would be located on the other side of the track. Armed with the concept of the scene I desired, it was time to get to work!

■ A TEMPORARY STAGE

For starters, I tacked a length of ¼-inch-thick foam board over the two tracks closest to the edge of the layout. This provided a level surface and additional room for the diorama. I placed a thicker section of corrugated cardboard on top of the other tracks in the background to serve as the



2

base for the MTH O gauge farmhouse.

I covered these temporary stages right up to the track's ties with strips of white toilet tissue and then applied a layer of "snow" to blend them together. The layer of paper helps to avoid blank areas and speeds clean-up when the diorama is disassembled.

I used Woodland Scenics no. SN140 Soft Flake Snow to create the winter won-

drifts with a soft artist's brush.

I use a variety of basic scenic details for my holiday photos. My snow-covered, bottle-brush fir trees of varying sizes, purchased at a crafts store years ago, came out of storage. Lionel holiday figures were dusted off. I painted an MTH white frame house a nice shade of light green to provide more contrast with the snow-covered landscape. Figures from Model Power and other firms were pressed into service as extras. A Busch HO scale illuminated Christmas tree was a perfect prop for the front lawn of the farmhouse.

My photographs are close-up images, so small

features help create the illusion. They include a Lionel snowman, sleds, a mailbox, and miniature wreaths (purchased at the crafts store) on the farmhouse.

My layout depicts the 1940s, so a period automobile covered in snow added the right touch. For the left side of the diorama, I built a fence by pressing small finishing nails into the foam board and

stringing two lines of model-ship rigging between them. A liberal number of bottle-brush fir trees completed the country look of the scene.

To power the farmhouse lights and Christmas tree, I ran wires to the accessory terminals on an adjacent control panel for the yard's tracks. The two interior lights in the MTH farmhouse are very bright. I masked them with tissue paper.

■ HIDING BACKGROUND CLUTTER

I paid particular attention to avoiding undesirable clutter in the background of the diorama as it came together. The staging yard on my layout had two- and three-story industrial warehouse building "flats" aligned against a sky-blue backdrop.

Clearly, a row of them would be an inappropriate background for my rural setting.

Strategic placement of tall bottle-brush trees behind the farmhouse, some "planted" on small jars of paint or blocks of wood for added height, effectively blocked most of the incongruous buildings from view. Bingo! Like a stage play, it's all about the art of illusion.

My layout depicts the 1940s, so a period automobile covered in snow added the right touch.

derland shown in **Photo 4**. I was very pleased with the results. The extremely fine artificial snowflakes were easy to apply and to clean up. Also, they did not have the chemical drawbacks of my old standby, baking soda.

After adding more scenery and arranging the props, I sifted a second snowfall over the scene and gently built up snow

Temporary backdrops (**Photo 5**) are another easy way to mask background areas, add depth of field, and provide a suitable sky for the diorama's photo.

These can take many forms, ranging from a simple blue-sky poster with a few clouds to a permanent backdrop. Staples, the office supply retailer, sells a variety of sky-and-cloud paper panels and wallpaper rolls with a realistic look.

I have a portable sky backdrop attached to a folding three-section cardboard display panel – also sold at Staples – for occasions when I photograph layouts lacking a permanent backdrop. I took several photos of my diorama using this temporary backdrop. In the end, however, I simply relied on my existing permanent backdrop manufactured by BackDrop Warehouse (www.backdropwarehouse.com) and camouflaged the building flats with trees.

■ CUE THE TRAIN

My photo sessions began after all elements in the diorama were in place and a Lionel LionChief 2-8-2 steam locomotive – repainted, weathered, and marked in my PONY & NJ RR road name – was positioned. A smaller Lionel 0-4-0 Dockside switch engine also made an appearance.

Proper illumination of the diorama is essential to obtain a high-quality photograph. I augmented my train room's "daylight" fluorescent lighting with a single Calumet Photographic no. CF0003 Quattro professional floodlight.

The light features four 35-watt spiral



3

Photo 3. This five-track staging yard provided sufficient room and easy access for building Gordon's temporary winter diorama.

fluorescent lamps, each of which is equivalent to a 150-watt incandescent light, generating a 5,500K "daylight" color temperature. I mounted the lamp on Calumet's portable tripod stand. Aiming this light source at the room's ceiling flooded the area with well-balanced illumination.

I use a tripod-mounted Canon Rebel digital SLR camera for my model photography. After pre-focusing in its manual mode, I select its automatic exposure setting and time-delayed release function to avoid any hand-induced shaking. This results in a 5-to-10-second time exposure, producing a sharply focused photograph with excellent depth of field.

I experimented with a variety of light settings, camera angles, and scenery

adjustments to compose photos in both vertical and horizontal formats.

Family and friends tell me they look forward to seeing the change of the season manifest on my miniature railroad at the end of each year. I wanted this effort to do justice to their expectations.

Temporary dioramas like mine will allow you to showcase a favorite locomotive in a winter scene easily and inexpensively. I hope you will have as much fun as I do in the process! **CTT**

Read more about Gordon Peterson's PONY & NJ RR in *Best Toy Train Layouts*, a 100-page special publication from the editors of *Classic Toy Trains*. For more information visit www.KalmbachHobbyStore.com/BestLayouts.



4

Photo 4. The bottle-brush fir trees are positioned behind the locomotive to permit a head-on, vertical photograph. For the horizontal image, Gordon repositioned the trees behind the farmhouse to block the layout's industrial buildings from view.

Photo 5. Posterboard covered with a pre-printed sky and cloud design serves as a temporary backdrop to mask structures that would be incompatible for achieving the author's desired winter scene.



5

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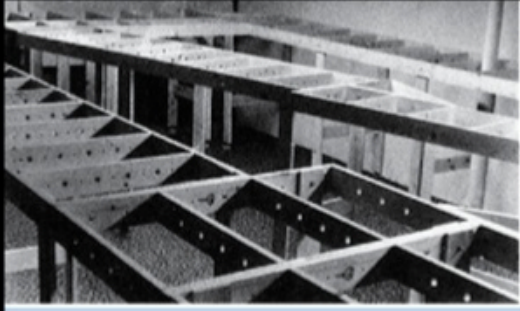
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Hand salute!

O GAUGE KCS SD70ACE HONORS VETERANS

I like big and boxy diesels. I can't help it. Baldwin Centipedes, Lima-Hamilton transfer engines, and any General Electric with a radiator overhang will do. My current favorite is the Electro-Motive SD70ACe. The large, sharp-cornered wide-nose cab and its in-your-face radiator bulge make me smile.

The original SD70ACs were built between 2003 and 2015. The locomotive steadily evolved, passing through EPA Tier 2 to Tier 3 emissions standards to achieve Tier 4 certification, making it one of the cleanest-burning locomotives on rails. The popular diesel has been built for customers around the world.

■ OPENING THE BOX

It might be easy to forget that railroad workers can also be soldiers, sailors, pilots, and marines. In 2018, the Kansas City Southern RR sought to acknowledge that fact by repainting no. 4006 in the line's Shreveport, La.,

shops in a one-of-a-kind scheme to honor the patriotism and service of its employees. This included veterans as well as guard and reserve personnel who work for the railroad.

The decoration of the MTH Premier line O gauge model is the first thing I noticed when lifting the box lid. The blue field and white stars on the cab really pop out! Suggesting the design of the American flag, red and white stripes flow from left to right, rippling as if on a flagpole during a windy day.

The rear third of the carbody has the familiar yellow ribbon design on a back-

The decoration of the MTH Premier line O gauge model is the first thing I noticed when lifting up the box lid.



ground of green and gray camouflage.

As I said, I like boxy locomotives and this cab is great. There are angles all over! The front of the nose gently juts forward, while the sand filler caps are mounted on downward-angling sections cut from the sides of the snout. Right behind that feature designers added another downward slope just ahead of the cab.

There are grab irons by the filler caps and on the angled sides. The two-pane windshield juts forward as well, and there are grab irons on both sides of the engine number and headlight. While the roof is



Painted in the Kansas City Southern's one-of-a-kind veterans scheme, the MTH Premier line SD70ACe is a visually striking O gauge model of a popular contemporary diesel locomotive.

flat except for communications gear, the sides slant downward and end in shades over the windows. The rear of the cab is ramrod straight.

The long body has ample hinge, door, and latch detailing. The black air-intake screen, located behind the cab, is a nice contrast to the red and white stripes. The smoke unit is just ahead of the horn. And this plateau gets double points: It is lower than the rest of the roof line, and there are

four lift rings on this section for removing the prime mover on the real diesel.

Three radiator fans occupy the rest of the roof. Their screens are see-through, and fan blades are visible. Four grab irons are placed around the rear radiator. The end of the locomotive is almost a throw-back to an EMD Geep – flat with a headlight, and two angled sides.

The SD70ACe may be my favorite contemporary locomotive design!

O GAUGE KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN VETERANS SD70ACE

Price: \$519.95 (no. 20-21157) **Features:** O-42 operation, ProtoSound 3.0 command and sound system, smoke unit, die-cast metal trucks and remote couplers, illuminated interior and crew figures. **Command low speed:** 2.0 scale mph **Conventional low speed:** 4.5 scale mph **High speed:** 68.4 scale mph **Drawbar pull:** 2 pounds, 2 ounces **Current production:** Kansas City Southern (veterans), Union Pacific, Union Pacific (Chicago & North Western heritage) Union Pacific (Missouri Pacific heritage), and Union Pacific (George Bush 41).



The wide nose cab is a signature feature of modern Electro-Motive diesels. The two members of the locomotive crew enjoy a roomy cab with excellent visibility. Add-on grab irons, windshield wipers, and cables complete a well-detailed cab.

PRODUCT REVIEWS



■ ON THE TEST TRACK

In the “things you learn” department, I initially experienced some quirky behavior from the unit. It was dead as a doornail, which has not been my experience with MTH locomotives. My iPhone MTH app fired up an MTH Amtrak diesel that had been loaded previously. I was mystified. But then a light bulb came on!

Suppose, I wondered, the problem is not with the locomotive, but with the smartphone app? I deleted the app from my phone and then reloaded it from the Apple App Store. Shazam! The locomotive loaded on the phone fine and started right

up. Everything was A-OK.

Problem two was also not attributed to the locomotive but rather the design of our test track. The locomotive has a minimum curve radius of O-42, which we thought we had covered with O-48 curves. But in the four or five years we've had this layout, this was the first model to brush against our trackside detailing! As it rolled around the curves, the long locomotive

The MTH SD70ACe is a big and boxy model with excellent pulling power and a full range of control, sound, and lighting features. The roof has a lot to look at, from the smoke-unit-equipped exhaust to the three radiator fans with see-through screens.

nudged the inside wall of our tunnel and a retaining wall. Gee, we thought things were set back far enough! So that was two lessons for us in one day.

This was a fairly heavy locomotive, and the drawbar pull was great. Speed was good in all ranges (after some fast modifications to the objects along our right-of-way). The smoke output was prodigious.

The sound system was good, and it eventually drew people down the hall to see what was going on.

Considering the purposeful shape of the MTH SD70ACe body and its solid performance, this locomotive could become a star on your railroad (and be at the ready for hauling any military train in your fleet). – Bob Keller

Eyes on the road

As kids, we would hold our heads down close to the track as the train raced past, trying to imagine what a little scale-sized locomotive crew saw

as they barreled down the three-rail track. And yes, we all probably got our face bopped when we got too close!

Someone at Lionel must have done the same thing! The no. 85072 O gauge CupolaCam camera caboose permits us to see what is going on our train from a caboose cupola-level perspective.

■ OPENING THE BOX

This caboose is a great choice for housing a built-in video camera. The Lionel model is a



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PRODUCT REVIEWS

The caboose has a full range of features, including factory-applied grab irons, see-through decking, a roof-mounted marker light and even opening doors. The camera lens is in a forward-facing cupola window.

standard extended-vision caboose, which is about as nice as they come.

The scale model has terrific platforms on both ends of the car. You'll find safety tread on the deck and safety striping on the steps. The platforms have a support structure with a ladder running to the roof. There are brake wheels and safety chains at the gap in the railing.

There are add-on grab irons on the corners and end of the platform, and the doors open – crews will have no trouble getting in and out! There are also grab irons above and along the outer sides of the end windows. The roofwalk running along the top has see-through decking.

The top of the cupola is just as nicely detailed with its corner grab irons and radio antenna. A smokestack adorns the roof further to the rear. The car has interior illumination that can be turned on or off. There are crew seats and a well-hidden camera lens inside the cupola. There are center-mounted red lights on both ends.

The car has thumbtack-equipped die-cast couplers. Take a look at the underside and you'll find a battery box and under-

carriage detail for the brake line. You will also find three controls: the interior light switch, the camera on/off switch, and a button for resetting the camera.

But as nice as the car is, the real draw is the camera.

■ LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

First, the boring-but-important part: reading the instructions.

The magic happens via Wi-Fi. Don't worry if you use Android (PC) or iOS (Mac). The car includes a disc with soft-

ware for either computer operating system. The company hasn't forgotten smartphones. You can download the Lionel app from either the Google Play store or the Apple App store for free.

We had a bump or two getting the app to load (inside a building with a weak Wi-Fi network and all that). Once downloaded though, we found it easy to use.

The track needs 5 volts or so to activate the camera. The train does not need to be moving. Next, we connected to the camera through the settings on our phone. You'll be able to view what the camera sees on your device.

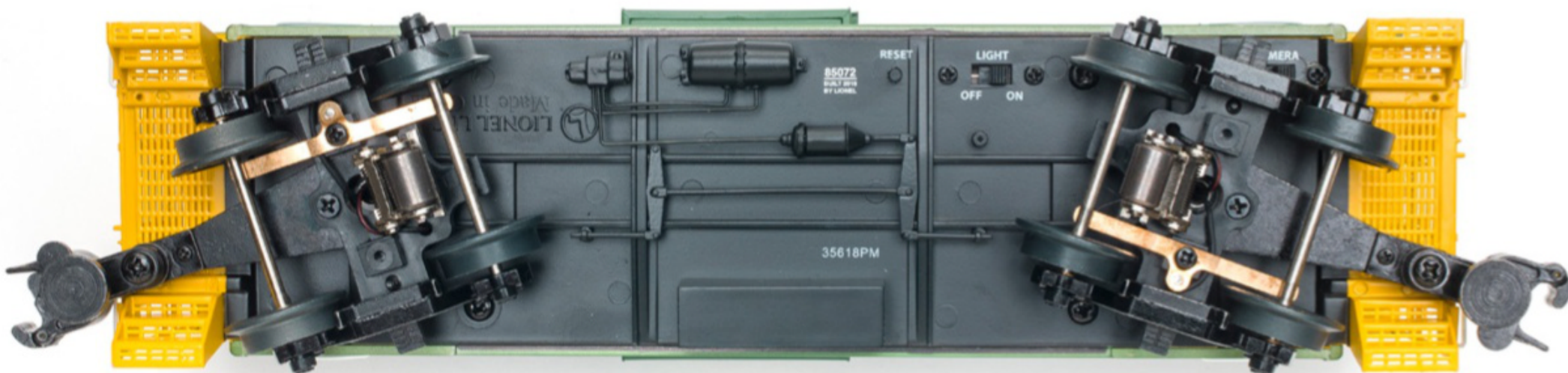
The caboose has no microphone. This is rigged for silent running.

There are some controls on the app's screen: Live video, snapshot, and record are the most important. Live is self-explanatory – you see what the camera sees. Snapshot takes a photo of what the camera is seeing. Pressing Record saves a recording of your journey.



O GAUGE CUPOLACAM CABOOSE FROM LIONEL

Price: \$124.99 (no. 85072) **Features:** O-31 operation, camera mounted in cupola, interior illumination, die-cast trucks and couplers, camera on/off and reset controls. **Current production:** Burlington Northern, Chessie System, CSX, Norfolk Southern, Pennsylvania RR, Reading, Santa Fe, and Union Pacific.





Hook 'er up and let her roll. You don't need to record to just watch.

During testing I was a bit of a contrarian and ran the caboose on the front of a train (which looked unrealistic but made for cool video). Running from the back of the train was good as well.

If you record, you can save the recording, delete it, or email it from your device. (Hello YouTube!)

Don't expect high-definition quality. The picture is good, much better than the K-Line camera car we tested many years ago. We did observe, while running the caboose on a straight line, the camera focused and remained focused. Swinging in and out of curves, however, the footage got a bit blurry. Interesting to me was that the blurry curve video made it seem the train was moving even faster than it was.

We tested the camera with an Apple iPhone, but the image is more impressive on the bigger screens of an iPad or Android tablet.

This Lionel model adds a dimension of fun I really hadn't expected. The product looks good, generates a decent trackside image, and is reasonably priced. The only danger is getting fixated on the video and failing to see that train rolling at you at high speed! – Bob

The underside includes a battery box and brake equipment, along with undercarriage detail for the brake line. There are also controls for the interior lights, the camera on/off switch, and a button for resetting the camera.

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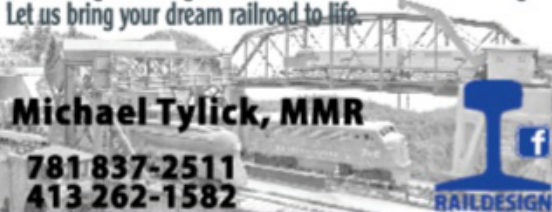
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CLOSING DATES: Jan 2020 closes Oct. 8, Feb closes Nov. 7, Mar closes Dec. 6, May closes Feb. 13, July closes Apr. 8, Sept closes June 10, Nov closes Aug. 12, Dec closes Sept. 10.

Events

CA, TURLOCK: Toy Train Operators, Inc. Train Show. Stanislaus County Fairgrounds, 900 North Broadway. December 7-8, 2019. Saturday 10:00am-5:00pm and Sunday 10:00am-3:00pm; Admission \$8.00, children under 12 free. Food court. Free parking. Operating layouts and dealer/vendor tables. Information: Ed Cathcart, 209-479-4432, email: doloresherrera36@yahoo.com

CO, LOVELAND: Rocky Mountain Train Show November 30 & December 1, 2019. The Ranch Complex, 5280 Arena Circle, Loveland, CO 80538. Saturday, 10:00am-5:00pm, Sunday 9:00am-3:00pm. 200+ sales tables, 50+ vendors, operating layouts, model trains of all scales. Admission \$8.00 under 12 Free, Free parking. 303-364-0274 www.RockyMountainTrainShow.com Information@RockyMountainTrainShow.com

FL, JACKSONVILLE: TCA-Southern Division Toy Train Show at Morocco Shrine Auditorium, 3800 Saint Johns Bluff Road S., Saturday November 23, 2019, 10:00am-3:00pm. Admission, \$5.00 (children 12 & under FREE). All Scales Trains, Operating Layouts, & Free parking. Refreshments on-site for purchase. Contact information: Chuck Bryner, 904-272-7060 (before 9pm) or Bryner@comcast.net

FL, OCALA: Lions Semi-Annual Train Show. First Christian Church, 1908 SE Fort King St. Saturday, November 2, 2019, 9:00am-3:00pm. Adults \$5.00, children 12 and under free w/ adult. Bring two canned goods and receive \$1.00 off admission. Information: Bob 352-694-6381 or cell 352-208-5284

FL, PINELLAS PARK: Regal Railways Presents a Toy Train, Collectible and Hobby Christmas Show/Sale. Lopez Hall, 7177 58th St. North, Saturday, December 7, 2019. 9:00am-2:00pm. Adults \$5.00. Vendors, videos & operating layout. Serving lunch items. Contact Joe: 727-244-1341 or visit www.regalrailways.com for more information.

FL, TAMPA: 22nd Tampa Model Train Show & Sale. December 21 & 22, 2019. Florida State Fairgrounds (Special Events Center). Saturday, 9:00am-5:00pm, and Sunday, 10:00am-4:00pm. Admission: \$9.00, good for both days (under 12 free). Operating layouts. Over 300 tables. Info: Charles Miller, 3106 N. Rochester St., Arlington, VA 22213. Email: rrshows@aol.com or www.gserr.com

IA, MONTICELLO: M.R.R.C. Annual Train Show and Swap Meet. Berndes Center, Jones County Fairgrounds, 766 N. Maple St. Sunday, January 26, 2020, 9:00am-3:30pm. Admission \$5.00, children under 12 free. Table \$20.00. Vendor set-up on Saturday available. Contact: Ron Ackermann, 319-480-5671 or rack611@gmail.com

IN, WARSAW: Warsaw Model Train & Toy Show, Kosciusko County Fairgrounds, 1400 E. Smith St. December 14, 2019, 11:00am-3:00pm. Admission \$3.00, 12 and under free. All gauges. Tables \$15.00, free parking, lunch available. Contact: Gabe Fitzsimmons, 574-527-8554 or fitzgl01@gmail.com

MI, ANN ARBOR: Rails On Wheels,Â Southeast Michigan Model Railroad Show & Sale, Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds, 5055 Ann Arbor Saline Rd., 48103. Sunday, December 1, 2019, 10:00am-3:00pm. Admission: \$4.00; under 12 free w/adult. Early bird- \$10.00 (8:00am-10:00am). Tables available. railsonwheels.com Contact: Walt Trancygier 734-552-4581 Email: trancywj@gmail.com

MI, EAST LANSING: Lansing Model Railroad Club Show and Sale. Michigan State University Pavilion. Sunday, November 10, 2019, 10:00am-4:00pm. Admission \$6.00, under 12 free. Michigan's largest train show: layouts, demonstrations and 500+ tables. Free parking. Flyer, table forms and map, www.lmrc.org or call Ron St. Laurent 517-256-3588

MO, JOPLIN: Museum Complex Train Show and Swap Meet - Saturday, November 30, 2019. Schifferdecker Park, 7th Street & Schifferdecker between the golf course and pool. 9:00am-3:00pm. \$3.00 adult, under 12 free. Rick Gardner, 11486 County Lane 214, Oronogo, MO 64855; 417-673-4888 or e-mail rickgardner4449@gmail.com

NY, ALBANY: Albany Train Show, Polish Community Center, 225 Washington Avenue Extension, Albany NY. Saturday November 23, 2019, 9:00am-3:00pm. Admission \$5.00 adults, Kids 12 and under FREE. O, HO and N gauge working layouts. Over 100 vendor tables of Trains, and Train-related items. www.albanytrainshow.com or Jeff Stedje 518-852-7725.

OH, COLUMBUS: 66th Buckeye Model Trains & Railroad Artifacts Show & Sale. Saturday, December 7, 2019 Ohio Expo Center (Lausche Bldg.) 717 E. 17th Ave. (Exit 111 off I-71), 9:00am-4:00pm. Admission: \$7.00 (children under 12 free). Info: Gordon Hartranft, 58 Creed Circle, Campbell, OH 44405. 330-755-1914. Email: rrshows@aol.com or www.gserr.com

OH, HIGHLND HTS: North East Train Society, Highland Heights Community Center, 5827 Highland Road, Zip 44143. Saturday, November 9, 2019 10:00am-3:00pm. Admission: \$5.00, kids under 12 free with adult. For information call 440-357-8890 or www.northeasttrainsociety.com

OH, KIRTLAND: Christmas Train and Toy Show. Lakeland Community College (AFC) Main Gym, 7700 Clocktower Dr. 1-90 and Rt. 306. Sunday, December 15, 2019. 10:00am-3:30pm. Adults \$6.00, Children 6-12 years \$3.00, Family \$12.00. 216-470-5780, www.christmastrainshow.com

OH, MASSILLON: CJ Trains Winter Massillon Train and Toy Show. Knights of Columbus Hall, 988 Cherry Road NW, 44647. Sunday, December 8, 2019, 10:00am-3:00pm. \$5.00 admission, 12 and under free. \$25.00/dealer table, 152 - 8' dealer tables. Jon Ulbright, PO Box 446, Wooster, OH 44691, 330-262-7488, cathijon@sssnet.com www.cjtrains.com

OH, PARMA: Cuyahoga Valley 'S' Gauge Association, UAW Hall, 5615 Chevrolet Blvd., Parma, Ohio 44130. January 4, 2020, 10:00am-3:00pm. Admission is \$6.00 each, children under 12 free with adult. This is an ALL GAUGE SHOW. 440-833-4366, www.cvsga.com

PA, EAST GREENVILLE: East Greenville Fire Co., Sponsored by North Penn S Gaugers, 4th & Washington St, East Greenville, PA 18073. Saturday, November 16, 2019. Admission: \$3.00 per person, \$5.00 family. Free parking. Refreshments. Two operating layouts and approx. 85 sales tables. See website, www.npsgauge.org for more information.

PA, KITTANNING: Train Show, Kittanning Township Volunteer Firehall, Rt. 422 East of Kittanning. Sunday, November 24, 2019, 10:00am-4:00pm. Adults \$4.00, children 12 & under FREE. David Campbell, 734 Freeport Rd., Butler, PA 16002 724-352-1113

SC, CHARLESTON: Charleston Area Model Railroad Club Train Show. Danny Jones Armory Park, 5000 Lackawanna Blvd., North Charleston, SC. November 16-17, 2019. Saturday 9:00am-5:00pm and Sunday 10:00am-4:00pm. Adults \$7.00, under 12 & Active Military Families FREE. Additional information or table rentals, contact: trainshow@chamrc.com or www.chamrc.com

SC, LAKE CITY: Ragsdale Old Building, 245 S. Church Street. Saturday, November 23, 2019, 9:00am-3:00pm. Admission \$5.00, under 5 FREE. Over 200 vendor tables. Lots of G, O, HO, S, N gauge. More info at CarolinaTrainShows.com

TN, NASHVILLE: Music City Chapter of the Dixie Division of the TCA, 26th Annual Christmas Toy Train Show. Tennessee State Fair Grounds, New Expo #2 Bldg. December 14, 2019, 9:00am-4:00pm. Adults \$7.00, children 12 and under free. Info: Vic Petrone, 7600 Indian Springs Dr., Nashville, TN 37221, 615-646-2232, www.dixiedivisiontca.com

WI, GREEN BAY: 10th Annual First Freeze Fall Train Show & Swap Meet. Stadium View Bar and Grill, 1963 Holmgren Way. Sunday, November 24, 2019. 9:00am-2:00pm. Adults \$3.00, 12 and under free. Over 100 tables, operating layouts, train races, door prizes, food/beverages. Information: Bob 920-465-7913 or www.newogaugers.org

WI, LA CROSSE: The 29th Annual Great Tri-State Rail Sale. La Crosse Center, 2nd & Pearl Streets. January 25, 2020, 9:00am-3:00pm. Admission \$5.00, under 12 free. 300 Tables; All Scales; Model, Toy & Antique Trains & Memorabilia. Information: 4000 Foundation, PO Box 3411, La Crosse, WI 54602, 608-781-9383.

WI, MILWAUKEE: Milwaukee Lionel Club Swap Meets. Oct 20, Nov 17, Dec 15, Feb 23 and March 15, 8am-noon. Four Points Sheraton Airport, 5311 South Howell Ave., Milwaukee. Call 414-764-5375 to reserve a table. Buy, Sell, Trade, New and Used O gauge and other gauges.

Classifieds

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AD INDEX

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60 YEARS ON RAILS

Warm memories of Christmas and Lionel

A train set picked up at the Lionel factory in 1958 is the gift that keeps on giving.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

Starter set basics

Train sets have gone high-tech, but still offer an easy path to model railroad fun.

Holiday display in a Detroit theater

An O gauge layout highlights a glorious movie palace.

American Flyer's collectible oddities

Sorting out what separates a factory error from a scarce production variation.

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TIPS & TECHNIQUES

WITH THE CTT READERS AND STAFF



Photo 1. This abandoned and forgotten O gauge steam engine adds a neat detail. Best of all, turning a seldom-used model into a battled and rusty wreck is an inexpensive and simple project.

Photo 2. A motor tool running at low speed distresses the plastic shell of this junkbox steam engine.

Photo 3. A coat of Sophisticated Finishes Iron Metallic Surfer from Triangle Crafts starts an amazing transformation.

Photo 4. When the surfer has cured, a coat of Sophisticated Finishes Rust Antiquing Solution from Triangle Crafts creates a genuine rust finish on the model.

Make a junkyard train

CREATE A UNIQUE SCENE

Junkyards make wonderful additions to layouts. The varied colors and textures add an exciting counterpoint to more conventional scenery. Put in an abandoned locomotive like the one in **Photo 1**, and you have a detail sure to fascinate any and all visitors.

I first selected a junkbox locomotive. This O gauge model had a cracked, poorly repaired shell, but it still operated well. I gouged and distressed the shell using a Dremel motor tool set at low speed. You can also create the damaged appearance shown in **Photo 2** with simple hand tools.

I masked the running gear and windows and loosely applied Sophisticated Finishes Iron Metallic Surfer by Triangle

Crafts (available at crafts stores). I let it cure overnight (**Photo 3**).

The next day I applied a wet coat of Sophisticated Finishes Rust Antiquing Solution (also from Triangle Crafts). Used with the surfer, this excellent product creates actual rust in an amazing transformation that takes about an hour. The result is shown in **Photo 4**.

Finally I set the derelict steam engine in the junkyard on my layout and added typical ground debris. This is where you can really personalize a scene.

By using a junker locomotive that still operated, I can surprise my guests by plucking the rusted hulk from the junkyard and sending it on a trip around my layout! – *Lawrence Goodridge*

WANT TO SHARE? Write to "Tips" at 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.

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