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Model Railroader®

October 2026

Make realistic choices

A professional railroader explains how he built his model locomotive roster



PLUS

- Tips for building a first 'real' layout
- Prototype to Model: When the roads came
- Koester: Friends make the hobby more satisfying



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On the cover: Seaboard Central locomotives haul the freight on Tim Garland's HO scale proto-freelance layout.

Tim Garland photo

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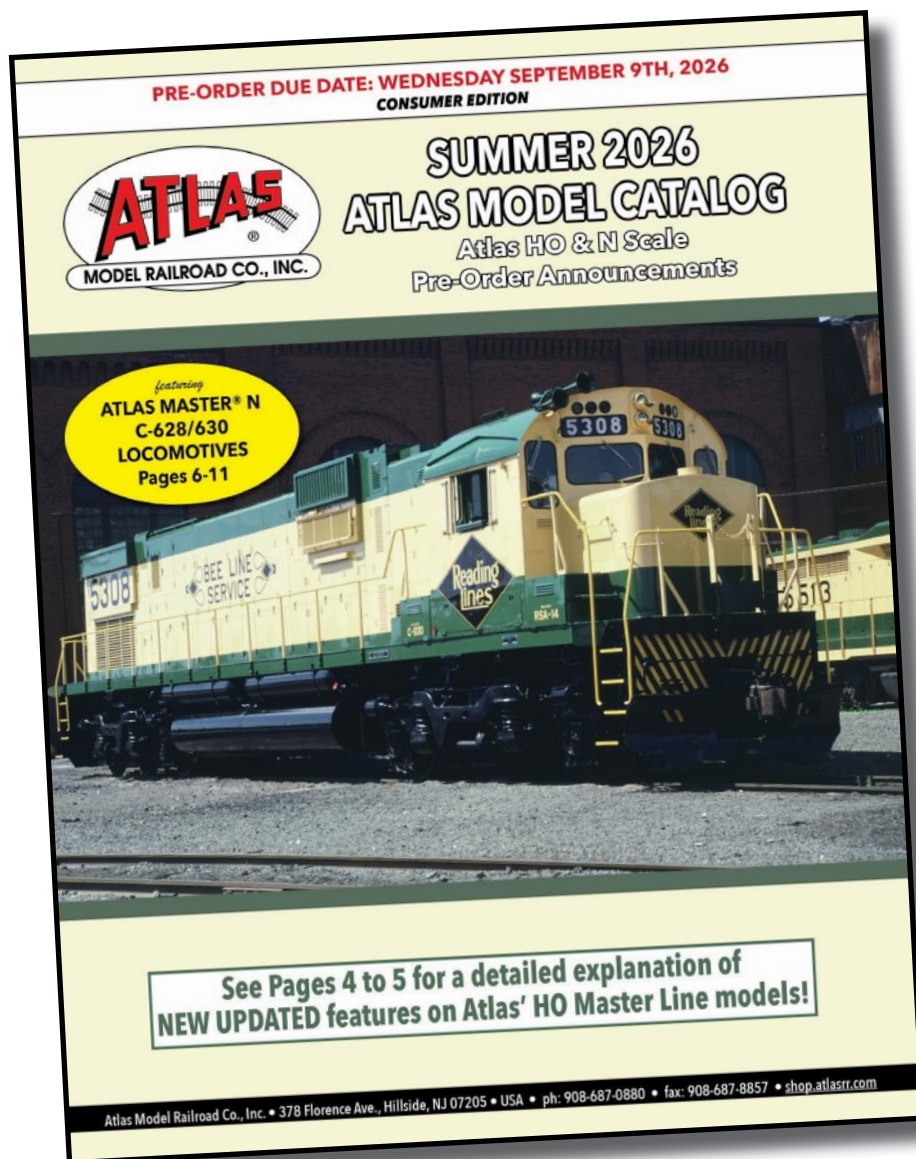
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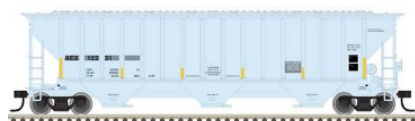
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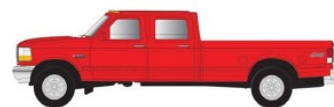
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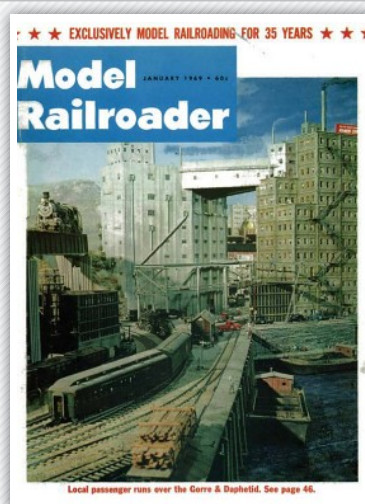
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Ideas for yard design and operation

Railroad yards are integral parts of the prototype and something many people want to include on their model railroads. But prototype yards can be extremely large, and while we may want a yard on our layouts, we may not want our layouts to just be yards.

Well-known layout designer Byron Henderson offers the above-named article on Trains.com pack full of information about yard types (they're not all huge), how to design them, and how they operate. If you want to add a yard to your layout, check out this story.



Advice from the Archive

David Popp has been combing through the bound volumes of *Model Railroader* on his lunch breaks when he's in the office. While you may not have every issue of *Model Railroader* at your fingertips on paper, if you're a Trains.com member, you do have the online Archive. You can check out the January 1969 issue of *Model Railroader* and see what your favorite articles are!



Finding a model railroad club

Are you a new modeler looking for advice? Of course, you can find lots of great advice here in *Model Railroader* magazine and on Trains.com. But what if you want someone to talk to?

A model railroad club may be just what you're looking for! Club members have specialties that keep the club going and could help you out. Joining a club puts you on a fast track to learning skills that will increase your enjoyment. Lucas Iverson has compiled a list of clubs in South Central Wisconsin. Check them out at Trains.com.



Model reviews

Every month, Cody Grivno brings you reviews of the most recent models we've received at our offices. One such model was Rapido's N scale GMDD F40PH-2D, provided to *Model Railroader* free of charge. Online we have room for more photos, so you can learn more about the models. In addition, locomotive models are also treated to a video review, where Cody takes them through their paces. Check them out on Trains.com!

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Saying bon voyage and welcome back

A quarter of a century

can go by fast, he said. As I write this in mid-July, it's the day after David Popp's retirement party where we sent the architect of much of *Model Railroader's* and *Trains.com's* recent accomplishments off to relax and regroup.

Yes, this is the last time you'll see David's name at the head of the *Trains.com* listing in the masthead below, but he's not going far. Just across the dotted line to the left, in fact, to become *Model Railroader's* new Editor-At-Large. He'll be the first person to hold this role.

In gaining this title, David had to give up a few things, such as managerial duties, office duties such as stocking the fridge and encouraging us to keep the office clean and tidy, and a few of the other duties and perks of being a regular employee.

In their place, he gets to continue creating video of the project railroads he's working

on, and writing stories for *Model Railroader* and *Trains.com*. Exactly how that will work out is an evolving process, but I know of a few projects David will be sharing on these pages in upcoming issues, and on the web pages of *Trains.com*.

David joined the staff of

MR in 2001 as an associate editor and rose to managing editor before he left monthly magazine duties behind to create *Model Railroader Video Plus*, one of the first online video modeling subscription services.

David led a team including Kent Johnson, Ben Lake, and Jenny Freeland. They quickly proved there was an audience for well done video how-to stories and model railroad visits. They then expanded into railfan-type video, adding Drew Halverson and Tom Danneman.

David was the organizer of all of this, and he kept the

machine running smoothly so his staff could produce outstanding work.

But David isn't only an excellent organizer and leader, he's also a creative and accomplished modeler who comes up with most of the project railroad ideas we've been building for the last decade or so.

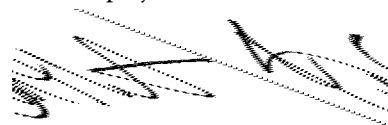
The first one that caught my imagination was the Milwaukee Road Beer Line. Not only was it a compact layout with lots of operating possibilities, but it was also designed to be rearranged to fit different layout spaces.

David and Ben, who moonlights as a technical guru when he's not behind the camera, built another tour-de-force in the N scale Canadian Canyons layout. David wanted to show how to build a helix, so he designed a railfanning layout that included signature scenes from Drew's *Trackside Adventures*, a *Model*



Railroader Video Plus series that included trips to the Canadian Rockies. Ben further enhanced the project with computer-controlled signaling and control and monitoring systems for the lower-level staging area.

We're happy to trade David's efforts to keep the office running smoothly for more of this kind of innovation. Keep your eyes open for the next projects!



Model Railroader

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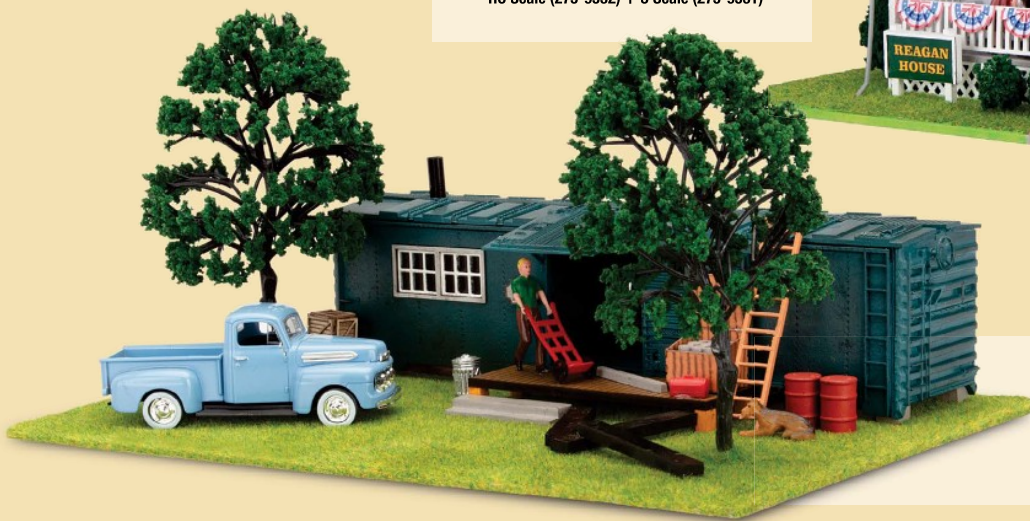
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HO scale



Union Pacific 4-6-6-4 Challenger steam locomotive. This articulated steam locomotive, sent to *Model Railroader* free of charge by the manufacturer for use in News & Reviews, is now available in Broadway Limited Imports' Brass Hybrid line. The HO scale UP Challenger is offered in its post-1947 appearance with an as-delivered, rebuilt, and integral cast cylinder front engine. Broadway Limited also released the

model in three fantasy schemes and painted brass but unlettered. Product features include a brass boiler and tender body, die-cast metal chassis, and factory-applied detail parts. Direct-current models with a factory-installed 8-ohm speaker are priced at **\$899.99**. Versions with a dual-mode Paragon4 sound decoder retail for **\$999.99**. Broadway Limited Imports, 386-673-8900, broadway-limited.com

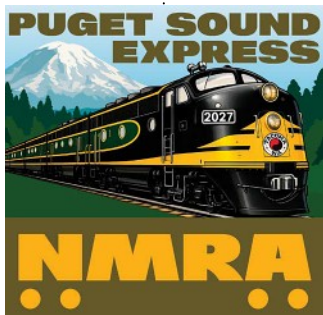
Tacoma, Wash., to host 2027 NMRA National Convention

The National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) announced that Tacoma, Wash., will host the 2027 National Convention. The Puget Sound Express, or PSX 2027, will be held August 10-15. The National Train Show will take place August 14-15.

"We are excited to bring the National Convention to Tacoma in 2027," said National Model Railroad Association President Gordy Robinson. "PSX 2027 will give attendees a chance to learn, connect, and be inspired by the extraordinary railroad history, active rail operations, model railroading, and natural beauty of the Puget Sound region."

The convention theme, "Expand Your Horizon," reflects both the journey to the Pacific Northwest and the opportunity to broaden skills, ideas, friendships, and understanding of railroading. Some of the planned prototype tours include the Port of Tacoma, BNSF Ry. operations, the Northwest Railway Museum, and the Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad. Attendees will also be able to explore museums, waterfront attractions, historic districts, mountain scenery, and the broader Puget Sound region.

The National Train Show, the largest traveling train show in North America, will be open to convention attendees and the public. The two-day event will feature manufacturers, new products, model railroad displays, vendors, demonstrations, and more.



Amtrak Cascades will help make the journey to PSX 2027 part of the convention experience. "The Amtrak Cascades service eagerly awaits the arrival of train enthusiasts from across the country," said Kirk Fredrickson, Amtrak Cascades Passenger Rail

Manager for the Washington State Department of Transportation. "With new Airo trainsets, one of the most scenic rail corridors in North America, and a variety of rail-related activities to enjoy, we know you're in for some memorable experiences. We encourage you to arrive by train to the Tacoma Dome station — the newest train station on our corridor and a short light rail ride from the convention center."

More information, including registration, hotel details, tours, clinics, layout visits, and volunteer opportunities, will be announced as planning continues. For updates, visit 2027.nmra.org.

HO scale locomotives



• **Electro-Motive Division F7A diesel locomotive.** Athearn 80th anniversary. Two road numbers. Injection-molded plastic shell; heavy, die-cast metal weight; and McHenry scale couplers. Minimum radius, 18". Direct-current model with provision for 21-pin Digital Command Control decoder, \$164.99. Roundhouse line. Athearn Trains, 800-338-4639, athearn.com



• **Electro-Motive Division GP40 diesel locomotive.** Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern; Conrail; CSX; Denver & Rio Grande Western; Guilford Rail System; Kansas City Southern; Milwaukee Road; Missouri-Kansas-Texas; New York Central; Rock Island; Soo Line; Wheeling & Lake Erie; and Western Maryland. One to four road numbers per paint scheme. Prototype-specific details; metal side handrails with plastic stanchions; and see-through, etched-metal steps. Minimum radius, 18". Direct-current model, \$249.95; with dual-mode ESU LokSound V5 sound decoder and MoPower capacitor, \$359.95. Rapido Trains, 905-474-3314, rapidotrains.com

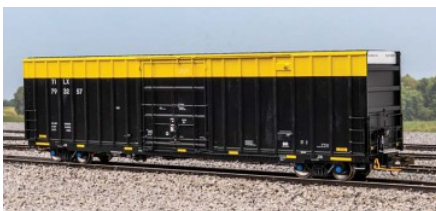


• **Electro-Motive Division chopped-nose GP9 diesel locomotive.** Burlington Northern, Chessie System (Western Maryland reporting marks), Illinois Central Gulf, Iowa Interstate, Precision National, and RJ Corman. Four road numbers per scheme; also available undecorated. See-through steps, with or without dynamic brakes as appropriate, and molded drill starter points for grab irons (detail kit 910-258 sold separately), and Proto-Max couplers. Direct-current model with 21-pin DCC plug and 28mm speaker, \$189.98; with ESU Sound & DCC, \$259.98. WalthersMainline. Wm. K. Walthers Inc., 414-527-0770, walthers.com

H0 scale freight cars



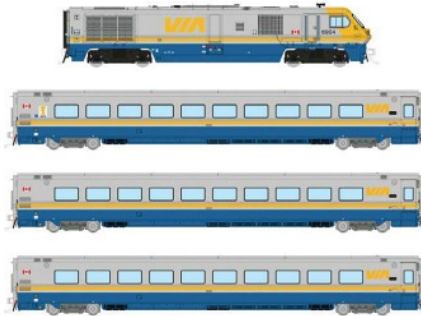
• **National Steel Car 89-foot bi- and tri-level open auto racks.** Bi-level cars: Canadian National (1964+ and 1985+ schemes), Canadian Pacific (1964+), and CP Rail (1969+ Multimark and 1985+ red schemes). Tri-level cars: Canadian National (1963+ and 1985+ schemes), Canadian Pacific (1964+ script), and CP Rail (1969+ red with Multimark and 1985+ black without Multimark). Six road numbers per paint scheme; painted (brown and black) but unlettered bi- and tri-level auto racks with large and small panels and etched-metal safety mesh screen in polybag available as single cars only. Newly-tooled model with full underbody details and air line piping, etched-metal safety mesh screen as appropriate, and semi-scale metal couplers. Single car, \$94.95; six-pack, \$569.70. Rapido Trains, 905-474-3314, rapidotrains.com



• **Trinity 6,886-cubic-foot capacity plug-door, high-cube insulated EcoBox boxcar.** Trinity Industries Leasing Co. (black-and-yellow and white schemes). Six road numbers per scheme.

Factory-applied metal grab irons, uncoupling levers, and train line hoses; die-cast metal semi-scale lower shelf Type E couplers with long shank; and Barber S-2-HD-9C 110-ton trucks with raised foundry data, rotating blue bearing caps, and separate brake beams. \$54.99. Rivet Counter line. ScaleTrains, 844-987-2467, scaletrains.com

N scale trainsets



• **Bombardier LRC box set.** VIA Rail (locomotive, two coaches, and club car in 1981+ delivery scheme), Amtrak (locomotive and three coaches in 1980+ phase 3 scheme), and VIA Rail Demo set (locomotive and one coach in 1980+ demonstrator scheme). Locomotive features working headlights and ditch lights and sounds recorded from VIA Rail 6921. Cars have working marker lights; etched-metal stirrups; illuminated, detailed interior; and redesigned trucks. Locomotive and three cars — without sound, \$399.95; with ESU LokSound decoder and MoPower capacitor, \$509.95. Demo set with locomotive and coach — without sound, \$249.95; with ESU LokSound decoder and MoPower

capacitor, \$359.95. Rapido Trains Inc., 905-474-3314, rapidotrains.com

N scale locomotives



• **Electro-Motive Division SD45-2 diesel locomotive.** BNSF Ry. (Heritage IV and Santa Fe patchout); Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe (freight warbonnet and “Kodachrome” schemes); Clinchfield; Erie Lackawanna; Pan Am Railways; and Reading, Blue Mountain & Northern. Two to four road numbers per paint scheme. Etched-metal fan grills, factory-applied detail parts, and InterMountain metal wheels. Direct-current models, \$189.95; with ESU LokSound V5 sound decoder, \$299.95. InterMountain Railway Co., 800-472-2530, intermountain-railway.com

O scale locomotives



• **Electro-Motive Division SW8 and SW9 diesel locomotives.** SW8 (new paint schemes) — Conrail Quality, Black River & Western, Reading & Northern, and U.S. Army. SW9 (new road numbers) — Illinois Central Gulf, Pennsylvania RR, and Union Pacific. Limited Edition Collectors' Series paint

N scale



Union Tank Car Co. 33,000-gallon LPG tank car. Athearn offers this Genesis-series model decorated for North American Tank Line, Capital Finance, The CIT Group (Primed for Grime), Exxon Mobil Corp., Rocky Mountain Transportation (Primed for Grime), and Transportation Equipment Inc. in three to five road numbers per scheme. The N scale car shown, supplied to *Model Railroader* free of charge by Athearn for use in News & Reviews, features photo-etched metal walkways and end platforms, 100-ton roller-bearing trucks, and body-mounted double-shelf couplers. Single cars sell for **\$39.99** (add \$5 for Primed for Grime). Three-packs are priced at **\$104.99** (add \$15 for Primed for Grime). Athearn Trains, 800-338-4639, athearn.com

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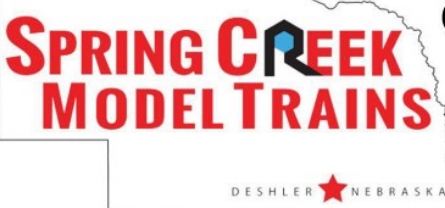
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News & Reviews

scheme — Republic Steel (SW9, American Revolution Bicentennial scheme). One to two road numbers per paint scheme. Die-cast metal chassis, truck sideframes, and hood; factory-applied grab irons; and detailed cab interior. Minimum radius, 24". Two-rail analog, \$379.95; two-rail DCS, \$579.99. Master Line. Atlas Model Railroad Co., 908-687-0880, shop.atlasrr.com

O scale structures



• **Brick freight depot.** Kit includes resin walls, doors, brick chimney, roof supports, concrete steps, railings, and electric meter; subroof; roofing material; signs; window glazing; lumber; styrene; and instructions. Designed by James and Anna Cleveland. Measures 7" x 10" (without wood platform). \$195.95. Frenchman River Model Works, 701-256-2129, frenchmanriver.com

In Memoriam

Walter W. "Bud" Reece Sr.

Walter W. "Bud" Reece Sr., former senior vice president of sales and marketing for Bachmann Trains, died on June 24, 2026.

Bud served in the United States Air Force and Army National Guard. He then entered the toy and hobby industry, working for Western Publishing, Tonka Toys, and Estes Rockets.

In 1993 Bud joined Bachmann Trains, where he stayed until his retirement in 2015. During his time at Bachmann he served on the Model Railroad Industry Division Council and the Hobby Manufacturers Association Board.

Bud was inducted into the Hobby Manufacturers Association Hall of Fame in 2008 and received the Bobbye Hall Award in 2012.

Walthers HO scale EMD GP9



A new run of Electro-Motive Division GP9 diesels is available from Wm. K. Walthers Inc. Making their debut in the HO scale Proto series are Western Maryland chopped-nose units, one in the “circus” scheme with modified skirting and the other in the black-and-yellow scheme with simplified skirting.

Electro-Motive Division produced the GP9 from January 1954 until December 1959 (with production continuing in Canada until August 1963). During that time, more than 4,000 units were built for railroads in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Cabless GP9B units were also built.

The review sample provided to *Model Railroader* free of charge by Walthers is decorated as Western Maryland No. 32, part of the railroad’s 25 through 45 series. The units, built between May 1954 and June 1957, were delivered with high short hoods and wore the black-and-yellow paint scheme with speed lettering.

Western Maryland’s Hagerstown Shops began rebuilding the GP9 fleet with low short hoods in the 1960s. As with most rebuild programs, there were variations. For example, No. 25 had a two-piece windshield. The remaining units had a one-piece windshield.

Nine of the 25 chopped-nose GP9s were repainted into the circus scheme used from June 1969 until 1973. The four-axle units were renumbered 6400 through 6420 under the Chessie System banner; Western Maryland 32 became the 6407. The full-size unit was scrapped in 1987.

The Walthers model features a multi-piece plastic shell, consisting of the long and short hood, cab, and sill unit. Free-standing details on the GP9 include tall, deck-mounted m.u. stands; formed wire grab irons; and a ratcheting handbrake at the rear of the long hood on the engineer’s side. On top, the model has a whip-style antenna, two brass Leslie S5T air horns, a 48” dynamic brake fan, and a winterization hatch with an etched-metal screen.

The WM chopped-nose Geep has a one-piece front windshield and flat cab face. The model lacks an interior, so the wiring plug for the front

headlights and number boxes is easy to see. Crew figures help hide the plug when the model is viewed from the sides.

The sample we received is neatly decorated in WM’s circus scheme. The color separation lines are crisp, and the graphic placement matches prototype images that I found online.

Prototype drawings of the chopped-nose GP9 were published in *Western Maryland Diesel Locomotives* by Patrick H. Stakem and Patrick E. Stakem (TLC Publishing Inc., 1997). The model matches or is within scale inches of published dimensions.

For workbench testing I used an NCE Power Cab. At step 1 the locomotive crawled at less than 1 scale mph. The four-axle road switcher achieved a top speed of 75 smph at step 28. The full-size GP9 had a speed range between 55 and 89 mph depending on gear ratio.

Next, I took the WM unit over to the Winston-Salem Southbound for further

testing. The layout features a mix of commercial and handlaid turnouts, a 30-degree crossing, and a No. 4 turnout. The model performed without issue on the Tar Branch.

It’s exciting to see railroad-specific chopped-nose GP9s being offered in the WalthersProto line. Now that the door has been opened, I’m hopeful we’ll see modified Geeps based on other prototypes in future runs. — *Cody Grivno, senior editor*



Facts & features

Price: Direct-current model with 21-pin DCC connector and 28mm speaker, \$249.98; with ESU LokSound V5 sound decoder, \$354.98

Manufacturer

Wm. K. Walthers Inc.
5601 W. Florist Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53218
walthers.com

Era: 1950s to 1990s (varies by road name)

Road names: Western Maryland (low short hood, black-and-yellow and “circus” schemes), Chesapeake & Ohio, Chicago & North Western, Penn Central, and Southern Pacific. Models feature high short hood unless noted. Undecorated model also available.

Features

- Metal wheel stubs mounted on plastic axles, properly gauged
- Minimum radius, 18”
- Proto-Max metal couplers, at correct height
- Weight: 13.6 ounces

ScaleTrains N Gunderson covered hopper

A newly-tooled Gunderson 3,250-cubic-foot capacity two-bay covered hopper was recently released by ScaleTrains. The N scale car, part of the manufacturer's Rivet Counter line, features prototype-specific hatches, outlet gates, and running boards, among other details.

The full-size 3250 two-bay covered hopper made its debut in 2009. It's listed on The Greenbrier Companies website as a "3250 Sand/Cement Covered Hopper," but the car is also used to transport clay, fly ash, and roofing granules, among other dense commodities. The covered hopper is fitted with three circular hatch covers on top and multi-piece outlet gates below.

ScaleTrains provided a sample of Dowell Schlumberger Industrial (DSIX) No. 10026 to *Model Railroader* free of charge for review. The full-size car, part of the 10000 through 10999 series, was built in July 2017. Cars from this series are in service today.

The ScaleTrains model has a one-piece plastic body with a separate roof. The DSIX car has three ATP round, dual-hinge hatch covers on top. They're framed by a one-piece, see-through etched-metal running board with nine supports per side and wire corner grab irons that are painted yellow.

Molded details on the car sides include eight vertical weld seams, billing card holders, triangle-shaped reinforcement gussets, and Automatic Equipment Identification tags. The rope pulls are mounted on the side sills. Photo-etched metal was used for the stirrup steps.

The freestanding plastic end cages have molded ladder rungs and handrails. At the bottom of each cage is an etched-metal crossover platform. The uncoupling levers and train line hoses are factory applied. The hoses are painted black and the glad hands are silver.

Details on the brake, or B, end cage include a hand brake, brake wheel, and molded chain. Freestanding brake appliances include the air reservoir, brake cylinder, control valve, and lever/slack adjuster with lever supports. The A end has a lever/rod and lever support.

With high side sills, the underbody details are easy to see. A freestanding



train line is attached below the sill on the right side of the car. The molded shaker brackets on the DSIX covered hopper are complemented with factory-applied Miner MKE10513 AutoLOK II outlet gates. The inboard center sill and outboard stub sills are factory-applied parts. The draft-gear box covers are attached with screws.

The model has screw-mounted ASF Ride Control trucks with raised foundry data; the roller-bearing caps are painted blue. The trucks are fitted with 36" machined metal wheels.

The sample we received is neatly painted light gray. Graphic placement matches prototype images of other cars from the same DSIX series that I found online. Except for the builder's sticker and one other graphic, all of the printing is legible under magnification.

As you can see in the image above, the reporting marks, road number, and Plate C box are placed higher on the sides than the rest of the data. That was done on the full-size covered hoppers to prevent the information from being covered by graffiti.

I found some basic dimensional information for the modern two-bay car on The Greenbrier Companies website. The ScaleTrains model closely follows published data.

To see how the model performed in an operating layout environment, I put the covered hopper in a train on our Milwaukee, Racine & Troy State Line Route. The 4 x 12-foot layout has 18" minimum radius curves and No. 6

minimum turnouts. The ScaleTrains model ran without incident.

If your N scale model railroad is set in the modern era, you'll want to check out the ScaleTrains Rivet Counter line Gunderson 3250 covered hopper.

Whether you get one or two to put in a freight train or you get a bunch of them to re-create a unit frac sand train, the short-wheelbase cars will reinforce that your layout is set in the present day. — *Cody Grivno, senior editor*

Facts & features

Price: \$34.99

Manufacturer

ScaleTrains

4901 Old Tasso Rd. NE

Cleveland, TN 37312

scaletrains.com

Era: July 2017 to present (as decorated)

Road names: Dowell Schlumberger Industrial, Cemex, CSX, Greenbrier Management Services, Halliburton, Keg River Chemical, and Union Pacific. One to 12 road numbers per paint scheme.

Features

- 36" machined metal wheels, in gauge
- Body-mounted plastic couplers, at correct height
- Minimum radius, 9¾"; recommended radius, 11"
- Weight: 1 ounce, .1 ounce too heavy per National Model Railroad Association Recommended Practice 20.1

QUICKLOOK

Rapido HO Trenton Works 6348 boxcar

Price: Single car, \$54.95; six-pack, \$329.70

Manufacturer

Rapido Trains
382 High St.
Buffalo, NY 14204
rapidotrains.com

Road names: Canadian National (as delivered, with conspicuity stripes, and URL repaint) and Railroad of Lies (two single cars); also available painted brown but unlettered (single car)

Era: November 1993 to present (varies based on paint scheme)

Comments: New from Rapido Trains is the Trenton Works 6,348-cubic-foot capacity combination-door boxcar. The HO scale model is based on a Canadian National prototype that was originally designed to transport wood and lumber products but has migrated to general merchandise service.



Rapido Trains supplied a review sample to *Model Railroader* free of charge. The boxcar is decorated as CN 598144, part of the 598000 through 598299 series. The full-size boxcars were built by Trenton Works between November 1993 and February 1994.

The Rapido car has a plastic body with a separate roof and underbody. Freestanding parts include the side and end ladders; door rods; and upper and lower door tracks; and see-through, etched-metal crossover platforms. The B end of the car has a factory-applied hand brake and brake wheel.

Like other Rapido models, the Trenton Works boxcar has a detailed underbody. The floor is a separate plastic part with floorboard and stringer detail. The center sills, crossmembers, body bolsters, and draft-gear boxes are

molded as a single piece with screw-mounted draft-gear box covers. The brake system consists of plastic and formed-wire parts.

Following the prototype, the boxcar has the English spelling of Canadian on both sides. The model rides on Barber S-2 trucks with correctly gauged 36" metal wheelsets. The body-mounted semi-scale metal couplers are at the correct height, though the trip pin was low on the B end. At 6 ounces, the boxcar is .7 ounce too heavy per NMRA Recommended Practice 20.1.

Examples of the full-size Trenton Works 6348 combination-door boxcar can be found throughout the North American rail system. If you're looking to add to your rolling stock fleet, take a look at this car from Rapido Trains. — *Cody Grivno, senior editor*



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HO scale gondolas and hoppers ideal for tie service include (clockwise from upper left) the Walther's Mainline Pullman-Standard 4000 gondola, Athearn Thrall 50-foot high-side gondola, Atlas Trainman 70-ton Association of American Railroads three-bay hopper, and ExactRail Bethlehem 3483 quad hopper. Cody Grivno photo

Sources for Burlington Northern cars used in tie service

QI recently ran across some former Burlington Northern hoppers in tie service on the BNSF Ry. After some research, I traced their heritage back to Bethlehem Steel Corp. cars from the early 1970s (521300 through 521599, 525300 through 525779, and 526000 through 526399 series).

As some out-of-production BN cars are now selling for \$75 each on the used market, would the Bachmann Silver Series hoppers be a budget-friendly substitute? I realize the lettering might need to be redone, but that's nothing new.

FRRYKid, via the MR Forums

AIt's no secret that I'm a Burlington Northern fan, so I'm always happy to get a BN question. As you noted, cars in the 521300 through 521599 series were built by Bethlehem Steel Corp. They have 13 exterior posts. The 525300 through 525779 and 526000 through 526399 series cars were produced by Greenville Steel Car. The hoppers have 16 exterior posts.

Out of curiosity, I went to Railcar Photos.com and searched for BN cars in tie service. It looks like you have a variety of options beyond

Bethlehem and Greenville hoppers, primarily older cars nearing the end of their service life. Examples include Bethlehem Steel Corp. 3942 three-bay and 3483 four-bay hoppers; Chicago, Burlington & Quincy-built 2774 three-bay hoppers; Darby Car. Co. 3940 three-bay hoppers; Greenville Steel Car 4000 three-bay hoppers; Ortner Freight Car 4000 four-bay hoppers; Pullman-Standard 4000 gondolas; and St. Louis-San Francisco (Frisco)-built 3433 three-bay hoppers.

There are plenty of off-the-shelf HO scale cars in BN paint that you can easily weather, letter, and detail for tie service. Athearn has offered a 50-foot Thrall gondola as single cars and in multi-car packs. ExactRail (now part of ScaleTrains) produced a Bethlehem Steel Corp. 3483 four-bay hopper. Wm. K. Walther's Inc. cataloged a Bethlehem 4000 three-bay hopper, a 100-ton four-bay hopper, and a Pullman-Standard 4000 gondola. The Association of American Railroads 70-ton three-bay hopper sold by Walther's and Atlas could be used as a stand-in for the CB&Q-built 2774 car. Tangent Scale Models sold PS 4000 three-bay hoppers with single- and double-

rotary end markings. McKean Models produced a Greenville 100-ton hopper that would be a good starting point for BN hoppers. The tooling was later acquired by Con-Cor.

Because many of today's models are produced in limited quantities, some of the cars listed may not be in stock at the manufacturer. However, you might be able to find them at model railroad swap meets and online auction websites.

In addition, Bachmann Trains is releasing Bethlehem Steel 100-ton three bay hoppers decorated for BN and Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe in its new Workhorse Series. The factory-weathered cars would look right at home hauling ties in a maintenance-of-way train.

Some of the full-size cars in tie service carry additional markings, including MOW, MW, and MWR; doors (or gates) welded shut; scrap tie loading only; and tie service only. Since the size and placement of these stencils varies from car to car, refer to prototype images when modeling hoppers and gondolas in tie service. I'm not aware of any commercial decal sets on the market for BN tie cars.

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Q I'm in the planning stages of an HO scale layout and want to build the paper mill featured in Part 4 of "Build the Wisconsin & Southern on a shelf" in the April 2008 issue of *Model Railroader*. I have all the kits needed to build the industry. I know the mill is 9 feet long, but I was wondering if there was some way to find out the width of each kitbashed building.

griff4444, via the MR Forums

A REC Paper Products was one of six rail-served industries on the HO scale Wisconsin & Southern Troy Branch, *Model Railroader's* 2008 project layout. The industry, built by David Popp, was named in honor of our former Managing Editor Richard E. Christianson. It was the largest industry on the layout.

"The mill receives boxcar loads of kraft paper and tank cars of various chemicals," David wrote. "It also receives cars of titanium oxide and kaolin slurry, as well as MAPP gas (liquefied-petroleum gas and methylacetylene-propadiene). The mill ships out various



At 9 feet across, REC Paper Products was the largest industry on *Model Railroader's* HO scale Wisconsin & Southern Troy Branch layout. From left to right are the kraft pulp receiving warehouse, slurry storage tanks, chemical warehouse, chemical house, and paper warehouse. *Model Railroader* staff photo

chemicals reclaimed from the paper-making process in tank cars, as well as boxcar loads of finished paper."

David used modular wall sections from three Walthers Lakeville Warehouse kits and two Pikestuff enginehouses to build the sprawling industry. "Since the space allotted for the mill complex was somewhat flexible

(even with the track already laid), I let the sizes of the kit pieces determine the finished sizes of the buildings. All are built as low-relief structures that rest against the backdrop," David noted.

Here are the dimensions for the buildings in the complex: Kraft pulp receiving warehouse, 2 1/8" x 28 1/4"; chemical warehouse, 1 1/8" x 18 15/16"; chemical

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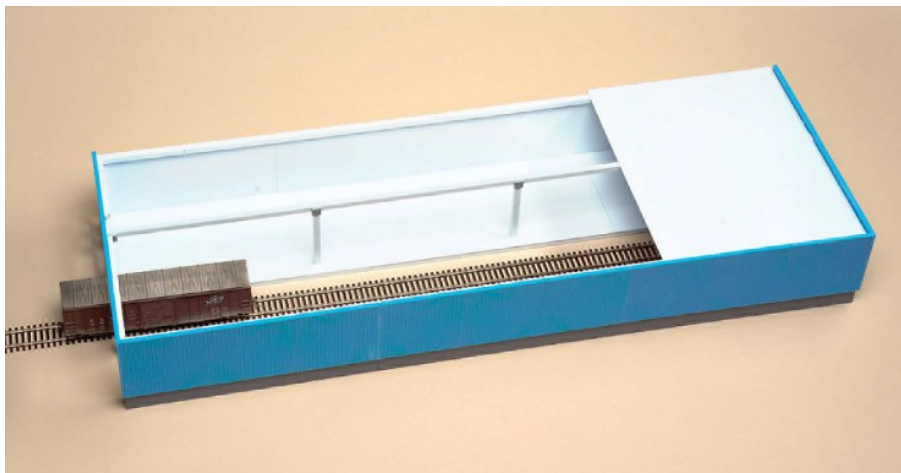


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David used wall sections from three Walther's Lakeville Warehouse kits to make most of the buildings for the REC Paper Products mill. He braced the walls with .250" x .250" styrene strips. The floor, roof, and back wall for the paper warehouse shown here are .040" styrene sheet. *Model Railroader* staff photo

house, 4 $\frac{5}{16}$ " x 16 $\frac{3}{8}$ "; and paper warehouse, 10 $\frac{1}{16}$ " x 28 $\frac{5}{16}$ ".

Because many of the structures were long, David braced the walls and roofs with $\frac{1}{4}$ "-square styrene strip. He used .040" styrene sheet for the roofs. To give the various buildings in the complex a unified appearance, he airbrushed the

steel walls Polly Scale D&H Avon Blue and the trim and storage tanks with the same company's Sand.

Fortunately, the buildings were saved after Firecrown purchased Kalmbach Media in 2024. Perhaps they'll be put to use on another model railroad sometime in the future. [MR](#)

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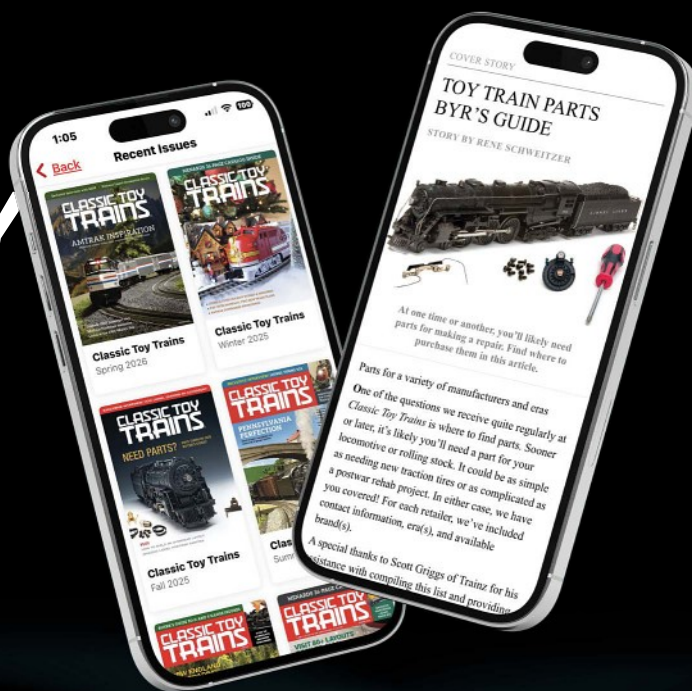
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Oct 24-25	Waterford, MI - Oakland Expo Center
Nov 1	Wheaton, IL - DuPage County Fair
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Nov 21-22	Wilmington, MA - Shriner's Auditorium
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Bob Grech's new stock scale and shed, built following the scale drawings in the June 2026 issue of *Model Railroader*, sit alongside of The Wolcott Meat Co. on his Western Pacific layout featured in *Great Model Railroads 2025*. Bob Grech photo

More scratchbuilding stories, please

Thank you for publishing the livestock scale house article by Nelson Moyer in the June issue of MR. As soon as I saw the pictures and scale plans, I knew I needed to include one for my stockyard. Please continue to feature scratchbuilding articles such as this in the future.

*Bob Grech
Georgetown, Texas*

stage and forgo the satisfaction of creating something real and lasting. Bravo on your position. Keep up the good work.

*Tom Szczepanski
Mays Landing, N.J.*

Your editorial on AI in *Model Railroader* was a huge breath of fresh air! Thank you!

I've been a reader/subscriber since the December 1955 issue and my knowledge and even skill sets have grown with each issue. Of course my guide was the accomplishments of others, and looking back they, too, were improving as time went on.

Without the addition of AI, I could see what truly was possible, and not an "artist's conception." And as you mentioned, us mortals could never hope to match the artificial doings of AI in our hobby.

So, I thank you for your stand, and want you to know I really appreciate your courage.

*William Anderson
Spring, Texas*

Check out this library

I would like to make your readers aware of the C. Robert Craig Memorial Library (CRCML) at www.crcml.org. It's focus is the railways of Canada and it boasts an extensive collection of books, magazines, photographs, and timetables which are typically acquired through donations.

Why would it be attractive to both Canadian and U.S. enthusiasts? The answer is that some donations fall outside of the scope of the library and some duplicate it's holdings. These are added to the appropriate surplus page of the website and are offered at very attractive prices. Shipping to the U.S. is not an issue and we continue to ship worldwide.

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*Dave Venables,
Director, CRCML
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada*

Readers respond to AI editorial

I just read your "From The Editor" July 2026 column and I agree with your take on AI layout photos. Yes I've used AI to add snow to my layout, just to see what it would look like covered in snow. But like you mentioned, my layout looked like it received 8 inches of snow in the middle of June. For actual scenery modeling, adding details to models, etc. I agree, keeping it real helps us improve our modeling. But at the same time, for me it's not a contest.

Twenty years ago, adding super details to my N scale models was enjoyable. Now that I'm 65 and my eyesight is not what it use to be, those super details are no longer that important. I do agree, there are times AI can help us create a backdrop for a well modeled scene or add an interior to a well modeled building. But like you alluded to, we should not use AI to make it look like our layout is in the middle of the Rockies, when we really

still have a Plywood Pacific. Now if you're using AI to see what your Rocky Mountain layout will look like when finished and you are using the photo for modeling ideas, that's a positive use of AI.

*Richard Shirey
Baden, Pa.*

I was very pleased to see *Model Railroader's* position on AI. As a model railroader since 1970 and a retired computer and IT professional, I view AI as something that falls into the category of just because you can, doesn't mean you should. The tangible rewards of physical construction far surpass those of virtual creativity. Each has its place, but AI does not belong in our hobby.

We've already lost so much with the dearth of inexpensive car kits for the sake of high priced RTR cars and engines. The last thing we need in this hobby is to take it to the pure virtual

Comments, suggestions, and additional information on *Model Railroader* articles and departments are welcome in this column. Every comment will be read, but not all can be printed or answered. Make your statement in 300 words or less, and send it to **Railway Post Office, *Model Railroader* magazine, 18650 W. Corporate Dr., Ste. 103, Brookfield, WI 53045**, or email editor@modelrailroader.com. Please include your name, city, and state.

Alternate history

In “Creating the ZigZag Valley” [March 2026] by Ernie Carlson I find it intriguing that the railroad was based on the prototype Mt. Hood RR on the north slope of Mt. Hood but alters history by moving the location to the ZigZag Valley on the west slope.

This kind of alteration of history, if it were taken to the limit by a premise that affected not only the railroad involved but the entire world in which the line is hypothetically located could be considered as part of the subgenre of science fiction known as alternate history.

Since the builders of freelance and prototype freelance model railroads often make such tweaks to railroad history, this is one possible route to science fiction freelance, thus expanding the scope of the hobby!

James W. Scott
Vernon, N.J.

N scale and steam speeds

The May 2025 MR [“Spotlight on N scale” — Ed.] is almost enough to convert me to N scale! Not quite, because it’s too small and I’m too old (my first issue of MR cost 35 cents, and I don’t see all that well any more) — but what great strides N scale has made since it was introduced! The models and the railroads featured are all beautiful, and one can certainly get a balance of track and scenery in any reasonable space with N.

Two items in “Ask MR” caught my attention. One was: did the MR&T (may it rest in peace) run no passenger trains? I would have expected to see at least some 4-6-0s and 4-6-2s, possibly a 4-8-2 or so, as well as the freight engines that were listed among possible steamers. One might, I suspect, even have found the occasional Milwaukee Road Class A Atlantic (4-4-2) detouring across the MR&T!

Also, your answer to George Smitton’s query about speeds seemed only to cover diesels. The rule of thumb for steam engines was: for older (say, pre-1930) engines with spoked drivers and lacking such niceties as cross-counterbalancing, one mile per hour per inch of driving wheel diameter. For newer engines (say, post-1930), with disc drivers and cross-counterbalancing and all, it was 1¼ mph per inch of driving wheel diameter. Thus

a 4-4-2 from 1919 with 81" drivers might be expected to hit 80, or if you really pushed it, 85 mph; while the Milwaukee’s Class A engines, with cross-counterbalanced 84" disc drivers, routinely cruised at more than 100 mph.

Another point about steam engine drivers is that the smaller they were, the harder it was to balance them for higher speeds. Thus switchers with 51" drivers were strictly low speed machines; a Consolidation with 57" drivers probably would never get pushed to its rule-of-thumb maximum. It would be too hard-riding and too hard on the track. On the other hand, a 2-6-0 with 63" drivers (such as SP’s “Valley Malleys”) could fly!

And having said all that, one must never forget Norfolk & Western’s 70"

spoked drivers which were used on both the Class A 2-6-6-4s (think: 1218) and the Class J 4-8-4s (think: 611). The Class A engines were good for both 14,000 ton coal drags and heavy passenger assignments, while the Js were good for 90 mph without strain. On test, one J even attained 110 mph, on a 70" driver yet! But these, obviously, were the exception.

Fletcher Coolidge
Northfield, Minn.

Glad you enjoyed the issue, Fletcher! The MR&T did have passenger trains, but we focused on freight traffic when considering what steam-era locomotives might have appeared. Your ideas make sense. — Eric White, editor



Steve Bradley brings his scenes to life with figures, but unique figures require a bit of work. Steve Bradley photo

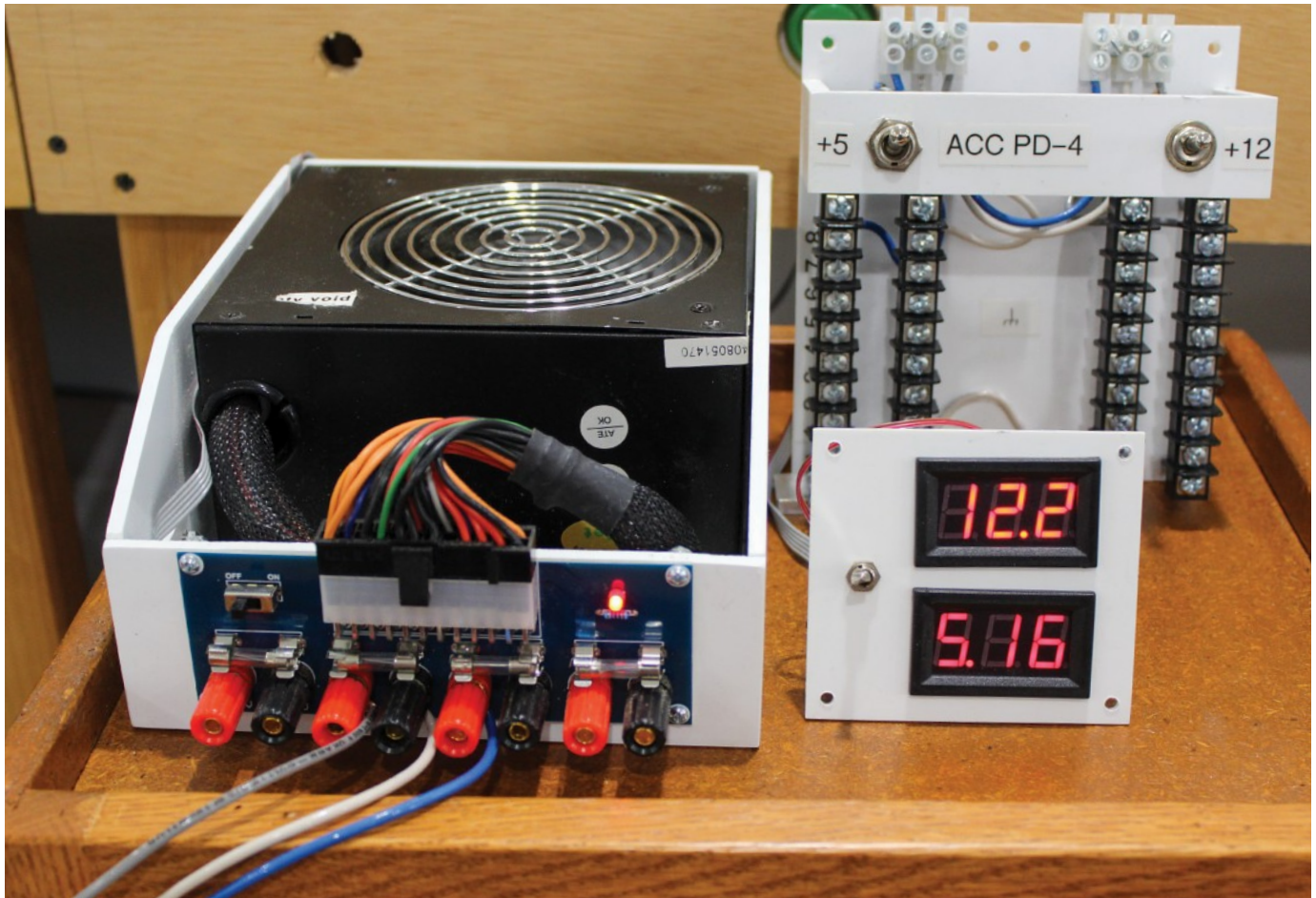
Bring your layout to life

I just read your Editor column for the April MR and could not agree more. Adding figures brings the layout alive. I am always looking for new and unique figures that could work on my layout. Check out the Dos Amigos! and their bottle of wine.

While pre-painted Preiser figures are nice, I am now finding those unique figures I am looking for, are not! So, mini brushes are a must!

Happy modeling!

Steve Bradley AIA
via email



Here is the multi-use hobby power supply John Armstrong built resting on top of the cabinet he will mount it in. Next to it are two voltmeters monitoring the supply voltage. These will be mounted on the cabinet door for a clean look. Behind the voltmeters is an ACC PD-4 (Accessory Power Distribution Panel No. 4). John Armstrong photos

Build a multi-use hobby power supply

In the days before Digital Command Control systems, your DC power pack consisted of two power supplies. The first power supply was the locomotive throttle. The second was the accessory AC power supply. With DCC you have a throttle power supply but no accessory power supply. To power your accessories you basically have four choices.

1. Use the existing Digital Command Control power supply.
2. Tap into the track power supply.
3. Buy a regulated power supply from an electronic supply vendor.
4. Build the power supply yourself.

Many people choose to use the track power for several reasons, such as the low cost and the fact that the track power lines are already all over the layout. But I don't use the existing DCC supply for a few reasons. The voltage is too high; it robs valuable power from the

trains; and it could potentially shut down the track power, making it hard to troubleshoot.

Buying a supply from an electronics vendor can be expensive. Building your own supply can also be more expensive if you don't already have most of the parts. Also, working with 120VAC circuits can be dangerous if you're not used to designing and building them.

I propose a fifth solution. Build your own power supply, but use off-the-shelf components. This is an easy and economical power supply you can use for your layout and workbench.

The power supply I used has four different power supplies in it. It has voltages of +12V, -12V, +5V and +3.3V. A typical 250 watt power supply would provide 8 amps at +12V, .5 amps at -12V, 22 amps at +5V, and 13 amps at 3.3V. This is more than enough power for most average-size

layouts. The two most useful voltages for model railroading purposes are the +5V and +12V power supplies. These voltages are practical for crossing lights, sound modules, building and street lighting, and animated accessories with motors such as water tanks, oil pumps, and draw bridges.

The next most useful voltage is the +3.3V supply. It's handy if you make Arduino projects that use computer boards or accessories that need +3.3V power inputs.

I built this project using just three components: a power supply, a power supply adapter, and a power supply cabinet.

John Armstrong has been modeling in HO scale for 60 years. His other hobbies include computers, ham radio, electronics, Arduino systems, and carpentry.

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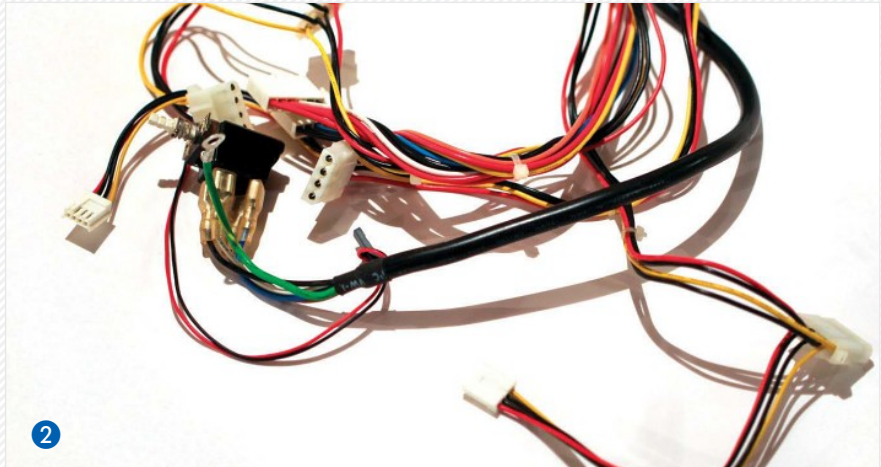
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STEP 1 SOURCING THE POWER SUPPLY



1

The **power supply** is an ATX computer power supply ①. They can be found on Amazon for around \$30. Even better, if you're like me you might have an old computer that could provide the supply. These power supplies are engineered to high standards. In the 40 years I've been using home computers, I've



2

never had one fail from a bad power supply. These power supplies have built-in voltage overload protection, current overload protection, and thermal overload protection.

If you buy a power supply, don't pay for more cable connectors than you need. A typical example of these

connectors is shown in ②. The only connector you need is the big 24-pin connector shown attached to the power supply adapter in photo ③ in Step 3 on the next page. The other connectors power the accessories in a computer. You won't need them. The fewer connectors that come with the power supply the better.

STEP 2 SOURCING THE POWER SUPPLY ADAPTER



1

The **adapter above** can also be bought from Amazon for less than \$10 ①. The first thing you want to check is that it will accept the ATX power supply connector. The connector type is called a 20/24 pin ATX connector. The key here is it should be 24 pins. The next thing is mostly a cosmetic and operational thing.

Some of the adapters have female banana plugs that extend horizontally and away from the board. I prefer the type that extend up from the board as shown above. It makes

for a neater-looking installation. It also gives you better access to the banana plugs below it.

I like that this board has a red light-emitting-diode pilot light in the upper right corner and a power switch in the upper left corner. Make sure the board you pick has both.

The third thing I like about this board is that all four power supplies have fuses in line with them that will safely blow in the event of a short circuit or overload long before the power supply shuts down.



2

The only negative thing I have to say about the adapter is that the supplied female banana plugs aren't as robust as I'd like. I replaced them with some that were more heavily constructed. The one on the left is the type I used ②. The plastic and mounting screws are more rugged.

The plugs were just bolted on, so it was easy to replace them. Before you buy any banana plugs, remove one and check the diameter of the hole in the board to make sure the replacements will fit.

STEP 3 BUILD A POWER SUPPLY ENCLOSURE

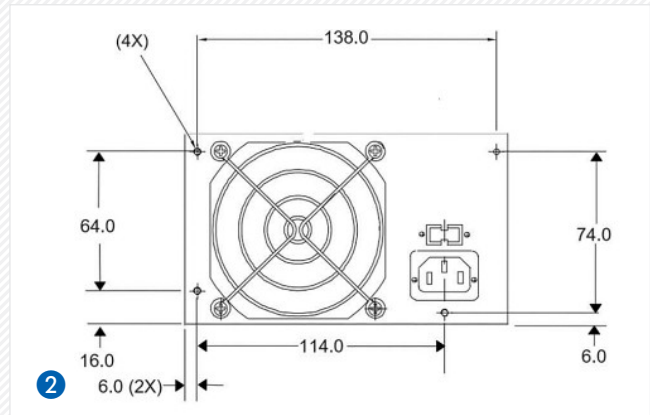


I built the case for the power supply from .125" styrene ①. The power supply is mounted to the back, with the adapter to the front. I recommend the power supply be mounted with the cooling fan facing up. Make sure you don't cover up any of the cooling holes at the rear of the enclosure.

As for the unused power supply connectors, I'd put a piece of electrical tape on the end of each one, then tuck them into the bottom of the case. One note: If the power switch on the adapter doesn't turn the power supply on, make sure that the power

cord is inserted in the back of the power supply and its rear power switch is turned on.

When you build the power supply case, make it $\frac{1}{4}$ " wider and taller than the actual supply. Make the case $1\frac{1}{2}$ " inches deeper to allow room for the power cables in the front. I made a template for the back of my power supply case ②. Note the openings for the power cord and the cooling inlet holes. You can see the 24-pin connector plugged into the top of the power supply adapter in ③.



STEP 4 POWER SUPPLY INSTALLATION

When you install the power supply on your layout, I'd recommend you follow the same rules for the wiring as you would use for your DCC buses.

First, choose a standard of wire colors unique to the power supply. You want to use wire colors to identify the voltages and to distinguish them from your DCC bus lines and other wiring. I use red and black wires for my DCC bus lines. I chose white, gray, and blue wires for the +12V and +5V wires. The +5V supply is blue, the common (ground) wire is white, and the +12V supply is gray. You can see these wires in the lead photo on page 24.

As with the DCC wires, I use stranded wire of the appropriate gauge. Similar to DCC bus lines, the power supply lines are subject to voltage drop. This voltage drop is a result of the power drawn and the length of the wires. I would recommend

using the same gauge wires for the power supply as you do for your DCC bus lines.

Just like you divide your layout into power districts, you should divide your power grid into sections. On my layout I have distribution connections every 15 to 20 feet. These connections have disconnect switches to turn the power off in case you need to troubleshoot any problems. The switches can be seen in the ACC PD-4 in the upper right of the photo on page 24.

I didn't include wires for the 3.3V distribution since I don't have any Arduino projects that run on 3.3V. If I ever do, I can always use step-down

regulators on the +5V or +12V supply to power them.

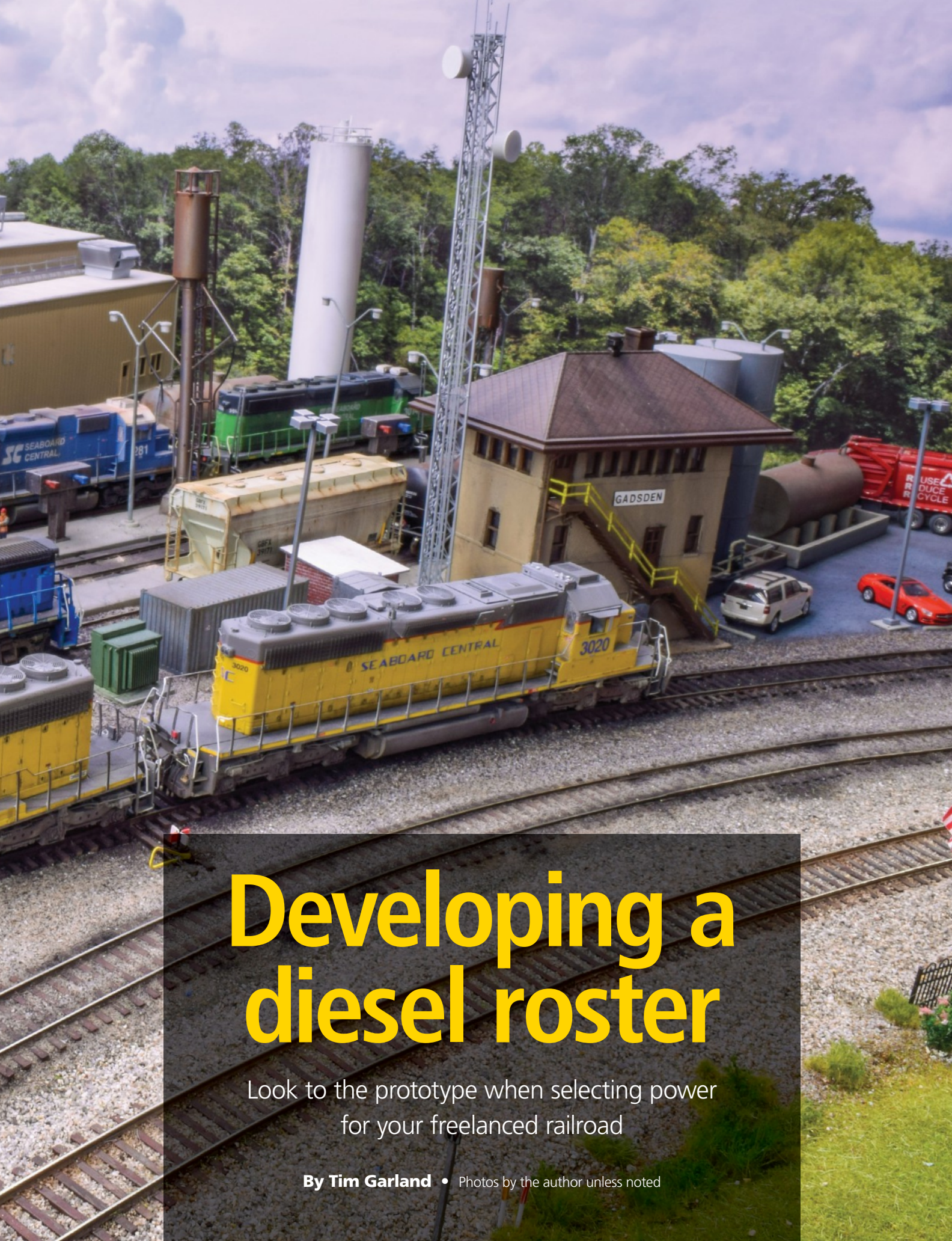
If your layout power supply is mounted in a cabinet, you can wire two inexpensive voltmeters on the outside door of it to monitor the voltage. These are available from Amazon and other electronic suppliers for around \$7 each. There are different shapes and models that show the voltage and amperage.

I have two of these power supplies in my train room. One powers the accessories on the layout. The other one is at my workshop bench for testing and building projects. I think you'll find this project to be a very useful addition to your layout. [MR](#)



The HO scale Seaboard Central locomotive roster is representative of a circa 2015 Class II railroad and features second- and third-generation motive power. Professional railroader Tim Garland shares how he used prototype examples to shape his freelanced railroad's diesel fleet.





Developing a diesel roster

Look to the prototype when selecting power for your freelanced railroad

By Tim Garland • Photos by the author unless noted



① Corporate look. Railroads can easily be identified by their locomotives. General Electric Dash 9-40CW No. 9692 wears Norfolk Southern's black-and-white paint scheme and features the railroad's Thoroughbred herald on the long hood.

At the opposite end of the spectrum are shortline railroads. They may have to settle on older, worn out four-axle DC traction diesel-electric locomotives with a simple patch job and new reporting marks over a previous owner's faded paint scheme.

First-hand knowledge

As a professional railroader, I've worked for both types of railroads. Early in my career I was a conductor on a short line that had two diesel locomotives, a former Baltimore & Ohio Electro-Motive Division (EMD) GP9 road unit and an EMD SW8 switcher of unknown heritage. I'm sure both units had served on many other railroads before making their way to that short line.

The veteran EMD units were tired and worn, holding on until a major component failure would most likely mean the end of their service life. At some point the GP9 had been painted solid red; the SW8 was a rusted maroon color. Both kept their original road numbers and had small reporting marks on the sides of the cab to indicate the current owner. There was no herald or other decoration on either unit.

If locomotives are the easiest way to identify a railroad, why do some carriers operate tired looking patchout diesels? The main reason is cost. Repainting a locomotive isn't cheap. Shortline railroads with a small customer base that generate meager yearly car counts can't justify the expense.



② Best of both worlds. Tim is a fan of Class II railroads because they offer a blend of shortline railroad charm and Class I railroad looks. Aurora Miniatures produced this HO scale General Motors Diesel Division SD50F, based on a Canadian National prototype, decorated in regional railroad Dakota, Missouri Valley & Western's gray-and-orange paint scheme. Cody Grivno photo

When it comes to creating a freelanced model railroad, perhaps the most enjoyable part is developing a locomotive roster. If done with research and thought, it's an excellent way to achieve a level of realism that makes a casual observer believe that the railroad actually exists or existed at some point. This has been a primary goal of mine when selecting motive power for my fictional HO scale Seaboard Central (SC). The railroad links Birmingham, Ala., with Savannah, Ga., and the ports, with a few branch lines in between. You can see the current

layout in the *Model Railroad Planning 2025* and the previous version in the June 2023 *Model Railroader*.

The easiest way to identify a railroad is by its locomotives. Larger, more profitable railroads often have a standardized paint scheme and an easily identifiable herald applied to some of the newest high-horsepower, six-axle AC traction diesel-electric locomotives on the rails. Today's Class I railroads — Norfolk Southern, BNSF Ry., Canadian National, CPKC, CSX, and Union Pacific — are excellent examples of this **①**.

Fast forward five years and I ended up hiring out on a Fortune 500 Class I railroad with thousands of locomotives on its roster, all proudly displaying the corporate paint scheme and herald. During the 30 years I've spent with the company, mostly as a locomotive engineer, I've seen the diesel roster constantly change. Older units have either been rebuilt, sold off, or scrapped to make way for newer, more-powerful and fuel-efficient models.

The best of both worlds

Though short line and Class I railroads are both interesting, I knew from the start the Seaboard Central would fall somewhere in the middle. I wanted the SC to be considered a Class II, or regional, railroad. Examples include Florida East Coast; Dakota, Missouri Valley Western; New York, Susquehanna & Western; Central Oregon & Pacific RR; and Wisconsin & Southern.

In my opinion regional railroads are much more interesting. Why? Because they offer the best of both worlds. Regional railroads often have the charm of the smaller short lines, rostering a unique mix of diesels. But they also have characteristics of Class I railroads. Some Class II lines generate a robust yearly average car count that enable them to have enough cash flow to paint locomotives. Many regionals have attractive paint schemes applied to secondhand units with plenty of life left after being cast off of a Class I railroad ②.

Designing a roster

Drafting a hypothetical roster is a great way to identify the types and numbers of locomotives that would be logical for a railroad if it actually existed. This is exactly what I did for the Seaboard Central ③.

In my version of history, the SC started operations on Jan. 1, 1990 as a Class III, or shortline, railroad. I started studying prototype railroads of a similar size during that time to see what their diesel rosters looked like. This gave me some clues as to the types of full-size locomotives that were on the second-hand market at that time.

As a startup operation, the SC had minimal cash flow and looked for locomotives being sold at rock-bottom prices. During the early 1990s this would have meant first generation EMD units such as GP7s, GP9s, and GP18s and second generation GE units like the U18B, U23B, U30B, and U33B.

All-time Seaboard Central locomotive roster

Road number(s)	Qty	Model	Notes
120-121	2	SW1200	Acquired 1994, sold 2012
150	1	SW1500	Acquired 1994, rebuilt to remote-control unit
151-152	2	GP15-1	Acquired 2012, ex-GATX Capital
153-154	2	MP15DC	Acquired 2012, ex-GATX Capital
155-156	2	MP15AC	Acquired 2012, ex-GATX Capital
160	1	GP16	Acquired 1990, ex-Seaboard System, scrapped
170	1	GP38	Acquired 1990, ex-Conrail (CR), rebuilt to GP38-2
175-178	4	GP9	Acquired 1990, rebuilt to GP20ECO
179	1	GP9R	Acquired 1990, ex-Canadian National, sold 2006
180-181	2	GP18	Acquired 1990, rebuilt to GP20ECO
182-185	4	U18B	Acquired 1990, sold 2006
222-229	8	U23B	Acquired 1990, ex-CSXT, sold 2006
230-231	2	GP30	Acquired 1990, ex-CR, sold 2015
235-239	5	U30B	Acquired 1990, ex-CSXT, sold 2006
240-241	2	GP40-2W	Acquired 2004, 25th anniversary scheme
242	1	GP40-2	Acquired 2006, Cancer Awareness scheme
243-246	4	GP40-2	Acquired 2006, ex-Norfolk Southern (NS)/CR
270-279	10	B40-8	Acquired 2006, ex-NS/CR
280-281	2	SD38	Acquired 2004, ex-Bessemer & Lake Erie
282-283	2	SD38-2	Acquired 2008, ex-Larry's Truck & Electric (LTEX)
286-287	2	SD39R	Acquired 2004, ex-Union Pacific (UP)/Southern Pacific (SP)
361	1	SD45	Acquired 2004, ex-CR
1990	1	GP38-2	Rebuilt from 170, Seaboard Coast Line heritage
2000	1	GP38	Acquired 2000, Central of Georgia heritage
2001	1	GP38AC	Acquired 2000, Southern Ry. heritage
2002	1	GP38AC	Acquired 2000, ex-NS (high short hood)
2003	1	GP38-2	Acquired 2000, ex-NS (high short hood)
2004-2005	2	GP38-2	Acquired 2004, ex-UP/Missouri Pacific
2006-2009	4	GP38-2	Acquired 2012, ex-GATX Capital
2200-2205	6	GP20ECO	Acquired 2012, rebuilt from GP9 and GP18 diesels
3010-3012	3	SD40T-2	Acquired 2004, ex-LTEX and UP/SP
3013-3019	7	SD40-2	Acquired 2012, ex-Helm Leasing and BNSF Ry.
3020-3023	4	SD40N	Acquired 2015, ex-UP

③ **Developing a roster.** This chart shows the all-time Seaboard Central roster. Notice how many of the older first-generation diesels acquired when the SC began operations in 1990 as a Class III railroad were sold off in the early 2000s. The newer four- and six-axle units with higher horsepower were important acquisitions as the railroad grew to Class II status.



4 Start-up power. Seaboard Central 230 and 231, the only two EMD GP30s left on the roster, were acquired by the railroad at startup in 1990. The ex-Conrail units are scheduled to be retired in 2015, the era of Tim's layout.



5 Reliable road switchers. Electro-Motive Division produced more than 2,200 GP38-2 diesel locomotives during a production run that last nearly 15 years. Seaboard Central units 2005 and 2004 wear the medium blue-and-white paint scheme the railroad introduced in 1995.

[First-generation diesels were built from the 1920s through late 1950s, including all Baldwin, Lima, and Fairbanks-Morse units. Second-generation diesels were constructed between the late 1950s and early 1980s. Examples include the Alco C424, C636, and T6; EMD SW1000, GP38-2, and SD45; and GE U25B, C36-7, and U28CG. — Ed.]

Units like the EMD SW-series end-cab switchers could also be found on the used market, along with turbo-charged GP20s, GP30s, and GP35s **4**. Many larger railroads were replacing these

older, less-efficient diesels with high horsepower EMD GP60s and GE B40-8s.

A growing railroad

The early 2000s was a period of growth for the SC. In 2000 it entered a lease agreement with Norfolk Southern to operate the line from Cedartown to Senoia, Ga.

During this time the SC started accumulating second-generation EMD units like the GP38 and GP38-2 **5**. The four-axle diesels have been the most reliable to ever grace the railroad's roster, a

testament to why so many have remained in Class I fleets long after newer units were retired.

Many GP38 variants are still earning their keep today, 50-plus years after they rolled off the production line. Some examples have been rebuilt to GP38-3 standards. The Geeps are perfect for yard switching and industry work where their 2,000 horsepower engines and quick loading abilities make them stand out compared to other locomotive types.

In 2004, the SC acquired the line from Cedartown to Birmingham, Ala., from CSX, including the branch from Wellington to Guntersville, Ala. In 2008 the railroad added the former Central of Georgia line from Forest Park to Macon, Ga., and rebuilt sections of abandoned track to connect the properties.

In response to all of this growth, SC purchased second-generation, six-axle EMD units. At the time, Union Pacific was shedding its roster of a lot of former Southern Pacific diesels, including SD39s, SD40s, SD40T-2s, SD45s, and SD45T-2s **6**. Often times after a merger or acquisition large railroads tend to rid their rosters of units that make up a small percentage of their fleet. In addition, SC acquired a pair of former Bessemer & Lake Erie SD38s from Larry's Truck & Electric, a locomotive leasing and rebuilding company.

The SC diesel fleet saw more roster changes in 2006 as the older original GE U-series locomotives that were purchased at startup were suffering failures. Those units became part sources to keep the remaining units in service.

Around the same time Norfolk Southern was removing ex-Conrail units deemed surplus from its roster. This led to the acquisition of five EMD GP40-2s and 10 GE B40-8s **7**. The arrival of these diesels marked the end of the GE U23B and U30B locomotives. All were sent to Progress Rail to be scrapped.

Moving up

In 2012, the SC acquired the former Central of Georgia line from East Point to Macon, Ga., from Norfolk Southern Corp. The SC had now grown into a true Class II carrier, linking Birmingham, Ala., to Savannah, Ga.

To handle the increase in business, a number of diesels were purchased from GATX Capital and Helm Leasing. Most of the units from GATX were simply patched and renumbered as the paint scheme is very similar to the SC's corporate scheme **8**.

In addition, seven EMD SD40-2s were purchased from Helm Leasing (HLMX). A number of them were patched and renumbered to get them into service right away. Many were former Burlington Northern and BNSF Ry. units still in their original Cascade Green and Heritage I paint schemes, respectively. A few of the SD40-2s were repainted in SC colors **9**, next page.

When it comes to locomotives, no other unit has had as much success as the SD40-2. As a locomotive engineer, the six-axle road unit has always been my favorite to operate. And one can be assured it's well represented on the Seaboard Central locomotive roster.

Some newly rebuilt units from Progress Rail (PRSX) also joined the roster in 2012. The locomotives were rebuilt from the GP9s and GP18s that were purchased at startup in 1990.

The rebuilt diesels were redesignated GP20ECO and painted in the latest blue scheme **10**. In my version of history, the rebuilds are actually owned by PRSX and under a lease agreement that includes a federal tax payer incentive designed to replace older units with a modern, more environmentally sustainable locomotives that produce fewer emissions.

Stopping the clock

For many years I kept the Seaboard Central current, much like Eric Brooman does with his HO scale Utah Belt layout. However, I decided to stop the clock in 2015. By this point in the railroad's history, the SC had used four paint schemes and amassed a fleet of mostly second- and third-generation units that could be found on full-size regional railroads.



6 Adding flare to the fleet. Seaboard Central SD45 No. 361, seen parked at the west end of Ragland Yard, is the most powerful unit on the roster. The ex-Conrail unit was acquired in 2004 but is slated for retirement as newer and more fuel efficient units arrive on the property.



7 Next generation of GEs. A former Norfolk Southern (and before that Conrail) B40-8 is seen leading an eastbound train by the Ragland, Ala., depot. The General Electric unit is one of 10 acquired by the SC in 2006.



8 A simple switch.

Two former GATX Capital EMD GP15-1s and an MP15DC have proven to be reliable power for the SC, with the railroad assigning them to yard service in Gadsden, Ala. Since the lease units were painted in colors similar to those used by the SC, they were simply patched and relettered before entering service.



10 The SC's new look. Seaboard Central GP38-2 No. 2003 and two GP40-2LW diesels lead a freight train over Trout Creek. The units are painted in SC's new dark blue scheme, with the 240 and 241 lettered for the railroad's 25th anniversary.

Few original diesels are on the roster, having either been rebuilt or replaced. As more trackage and business opportunities were secured, larger and more powerful locomotives joined the ranks.

I set the SC between May and August. This time frame allowed for a locomotive and rolling stock fleet that had the charm and diversity I was looking for. Keeping the railroad current beyond this point would have meant repainting a lot of equipment to reflect a more modern

appearance, losing some of the character that helps to tell the history of the SC.

In May, a group of four rebuilt former Union Pacific SD40-2s, now classified SD40N, joined the SC locomotive fleet

11. Rumor has it they will replace the three SD40T-2s and one SD45.

A rewarding journey

I began the SC model railroad in 1990 with two units: A GP16 that was



kitbashed from a Front Range EMD GP9 and a yellow box Atlas EMD GP38. Both were painted Scarlet Red and Southern Pacific *Lark* Dark Gray with white chevrons on the ends.

Models produced during the 1980s and 1990s had nowhere near the quality and details of today's offerings. At some point neither unit would qualify to remain in service. The GP16 was scrapped. Since the GP38 was the first SC unit, I preserved it for sentimental reasons and kept it for display.

As the Seaboard Central grew, so did the roster. In the beginning, you could

⑨ **Six-axle power.** Seven EMD SD40-2s, numbered 3013 through 3019, joined the SC fleet in 2012. The 3014 was repainted in the railroad's new dark blue paint scheme, while the 3015 and 3013 still sport the Heritage I colors of previous owner BNSF Ry.

⑪ **A mix of old and new.** Seaboard Central SD40N locomotives 3020 and 3021, still in Union Pacific's Armour Yellow and Harbor Mist Gray scheme, are seen departing Gadsden, Ala., with train 484. The rebuilt units are equipped with Positive Train Control, as evidenced by the rectangular boxes behind the air conditioner on top of the cab.



argue it was a simple short line with just the two units. However, I knew it would end up being much larger. I acquired many more models. Some ran for years in lease schemes, while others were patched and renumbered. The list of locomotives that I currently operate can be seen in ⑫.

Over the years I've sold a number of SC units online, and I plan to sell more as newer, highly detailed models are released. For example, I sold a number of Kato EMD SD40-2 locomotives and replaced them with the same model from the ScaleTrains Rivet Counter line.

Current Seaboard Central locomotive roster (2015)

Road number(s)	Model	Manufacturer	Notes
150	SW1500	Athearn	Remote-control unit, leased to ADM
151-152	GP15-1	Athearn Genesis	GATX Capital patch scheme
153	MP15DC	Atlas	GATX Capital patch scheme
170	GP38	Atlas	Original unit, stored
230-231	GP30	ScaleTrains	Red-and-gray scheme
240	GP40-2LW	Atlas	25th anniversary scheme
241	GP40-2LW	Athearn Genesis	25th anniversary scheme
242	GP40-2	Athearn Genesis	Cancer Awareness scheme
277-279	B40-8	Atlas	New Blue scheme
280-281	SD38	Athearn	Blue-and-white scheme
282-283	SD38-2	ScaleTrains	Blue-and-white scheme
286-287	SD39R	Athearn	Blue-and-white scheme
361	SD45	Athearn	Blue-and-white scheme
1990	GP38-2	Atlas	Rebuilt, Seaboard Coast Line heritage unit
2000	GP38	Atlas	Central of Georgia heritage unit
2001	GP38AC	Atlas	Southern Ry. heritage unit
2003	GP38-2	Athearn Genesis	New Blue scheme
2004-2005	GP38-2	Athearn Genesis	Blue-and-white scheme
2006-2007	GP38-2	Athearn	GATX Capital patch scheme
2202, 2205	GP20ECO	Prairie Shadows	New Blue scheme
3010	SD40T-2	ScaleTrains	Red-and-gray scheme
3011-3012	SD40T-2	ScaleTrains	Union Pacific (UP) patch scheme
3013-3014	SD40-2	ScaleTrains	Burlington Northern patch scheme
3015	SD40-2	Kato	BNSF Ry. patch scheme
3016-3018	SD40-2	Kato	New Blue scheme
3019	SD40-2	Kato	BNSF Ry. patch scheme
3020-3021	SD40N	ScaleTrains	UP patch scheme

⑫ **Current roster.** This chart shows the current locomotives on the Seaboard Central. Over the years Tim has sold a number of older diesels online, replacing them with models that have better details.

Developing a freelanced locomotive roster has been an enjoyable process. It's been fun refining my diesel fleet over the years to match trends that I see on a daily basis in the prototype rail industry. Commercial locomotives and freight cars in Seaboard Central paint offered by Home Shops LLC have further shaped my model railroad for the better. It shows how, if done with thought and research, a freelanced model railroad can

still be prototypical in appearance and operations. [MR](#)

Tim Garland is a locomotive engineer for Norfolk Southern Corp. Besides model railroading, he loves traveling with his wife, Katia. Tim has been active in the hobby since 1977 and has published several articles. He regularly uploads videos to the Seaboard Central YouTube channel and posts on the SC Facebook page.

Rio Grande THE SKI TRAIN



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RAPIDO

A HEAVY industry showcase

This HO scale Pennsylvania RR layout features steel mills, coal mines, and more

By **Martin (Bo) Sis** • Photos by Lou Sassi



My interest in model railroading and steel mills began when I was a child growing up in Beaver Falls, Pa. At that time the city, located in the western part of the Commonwealth northwest of Pittsburgh, was a busy industrial area. My father and father-in-law worked at the Babcock & Wilcox Tube Mill as a bricklayer and crane operator, respectively.

I received a Lionel train for my first Christmas and as birthday gifts thereafter. I stuck with Lionel trains throughout my teen years. After graduating from aviation school and getting married, we moved away from Pennsylvania to begin my career in the airline industry. When we started a family, I became interested in HO scale. I've built several model railroads over the years due to relocations for my career.

I started work on the HO scale Pennsylvania RR Valley Division in 2018. You might be wondering how I made so much progress in just eight years. Some of it was due to pandemic-related restrictions in 2020. It gave me plenty of time to work on the model railroad. When things began to open up again, I was fortunate to receive help with track laying, backdrops, and wiring from members of my operating group.

Design and construction

The point-to-point track plan is an original design focused on heavy industry and operation. Prototype influences included the Pennsylvania RR and Monongahela RR. The layout is set up strictly for industrial switching with no continuous run option.

The 35-plus industries on the layout, most with multiple car spots, represent those found in western Pennsylvania from the early 1950s until 1967. Mainline industries are served by the Pennsylvania RR (PRR), while those on the branch line are worked by the fictional Beaver Valley & Western (BV&W).

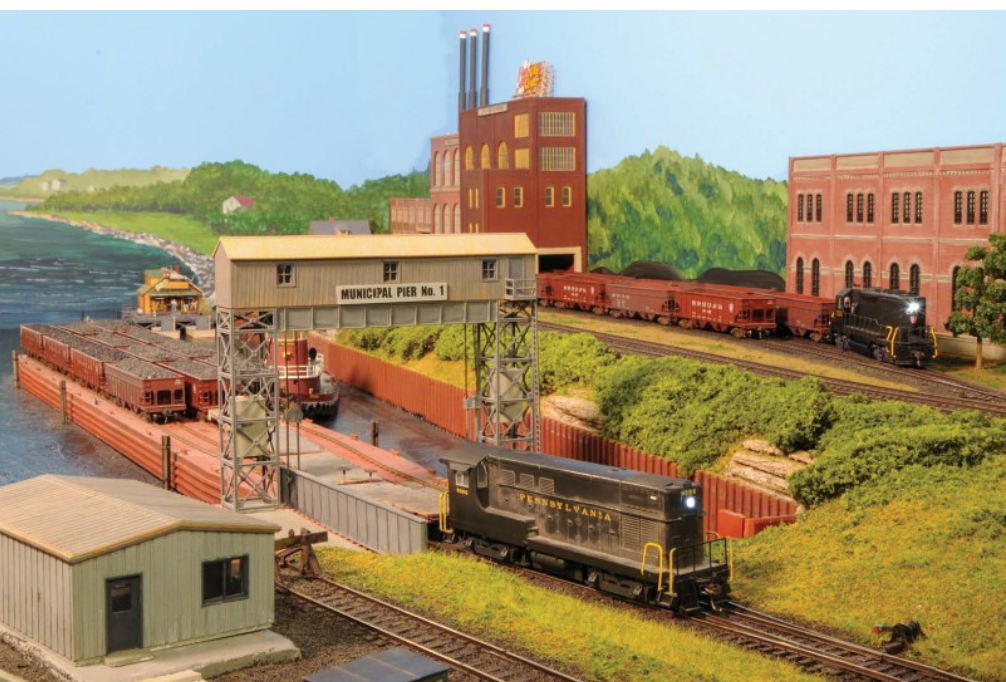
Prior to layout construction, I had the basement walls finished and light-emitting-diode track lighting installed. The layout features open-grid benchwork with 1 x 4 framing and 2 x 2 legs. I used 1/2" oriented strand board (OSB) for the

① A pair of Pennsylvania RR Alco RS3 diesels brings a freight past Davis Steel Co. on Bo Sis' HO scale model railroad. Below, a Beaver Valley & Western caboose marks the end of a loaded coal train passing through Wallace Run, Pa.





2 This overall view shows just a portion of the layout. Martin's Coke Co. in Beaver Junction, Pa., is visible at left. A solid coal train is seen passing through Brush Creek, Pa., in the foreground. In the upper right corner is Waynesville, Pa.



3 At Bridgewater, Pa., Pennsylvania RR Fairbanks-Morse H10-44 No. 9086 spots loaded hoppers on the rail barge at Municipal Pier No. 1. The three flatcars behind the end-cab switcher serve as a handle to keep the heavy locomotive off the barge.

subroadbed, and cork and Homasote for the roadbed.

The fascia is $\frac{1}{8}$ " tempered hardboard. The backdrops are a mix of tempered hardboard and $\frac{1}{2}$ " drywall. John Listerman, a member of Cincinnati Division 7 of the National Model Railroad Association's Mid Central Region, painted the backdrops sky blue and added scenery with acrylics.

Scenery and track

All of the landforms were roughed in with cardboard strips and covered with plaster-soaked cloth. The rock outcroppings were hand-carved from USG Structo-Lite, a lightweight base coat plaster that's mixed with water and often applied over metal lath. You can find the product at most big-box home

improvement centers and well-stocked hardware stores.

For scenery, I turned to tried-and-true products and techniques. The ground foam is assorted Woodland Scenics products. The trees are a combination of commercial offerings and handmade using astilbe foliage covered in ground foam. Woodland Scenics Realistic Water worked great for the car-float scene and other water features.

I used Atlas code 100 flextrack and Peco turnouts throughout the layout. After installation, I painted the track and turnouts with Rust-Oleum Painter's Touch 2X Ultra Cover Satin Espresso (334066). The spray paint is compatible with metal, plastic, and wood, making it ideal for modeling applications beyond track painting. [When using spray paint indoors, make sure the space is well ventilated and away from potential ignition sources. Be sure to wear recommended personal protective equipment. — Ed.]

Once the paint had dried, I applied Woodland Scenics cinders and gray blend fine ballast. The last step in the track installation was adding Caboose Industries manual ground throws. I used Tortoise by Circuitron switch machines in the staging yard.

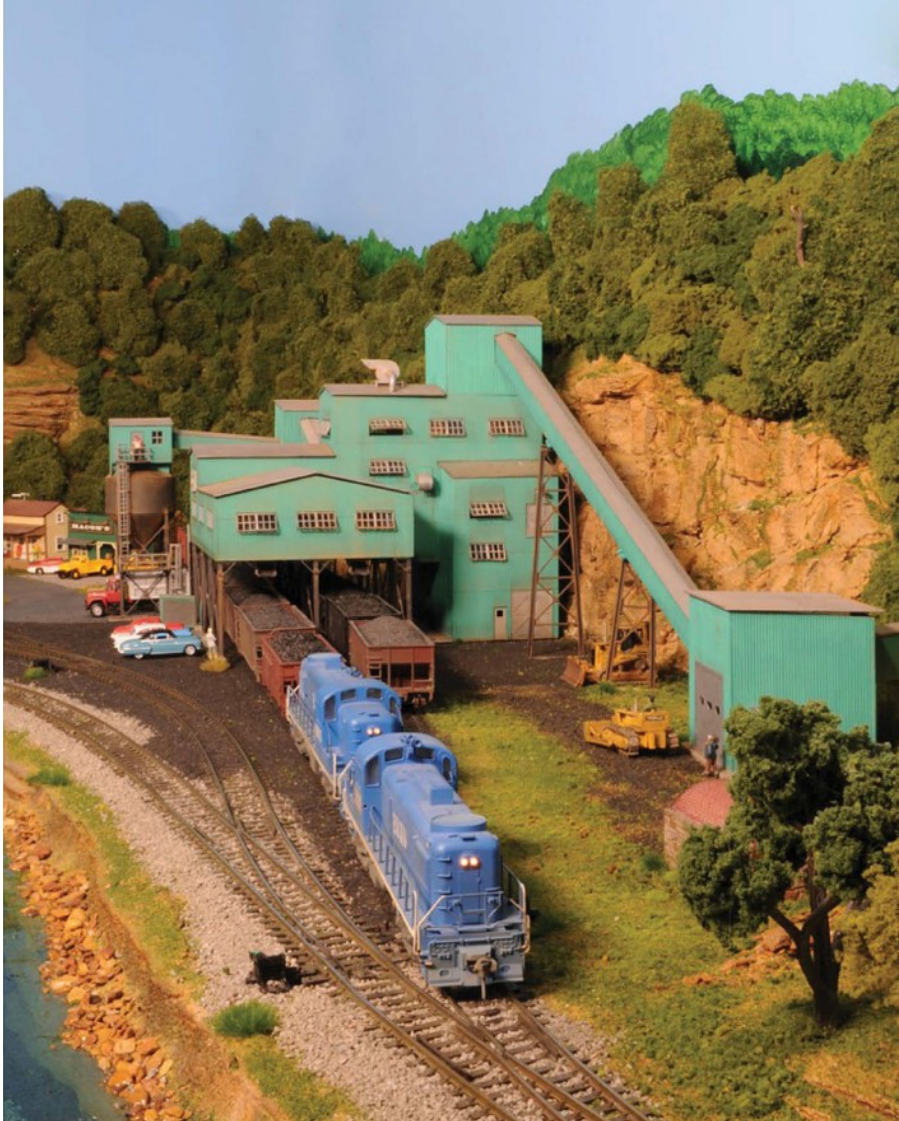
Structures big and small

The buildings on the layout are commercial offerings from Design Preservation Models, Pikestuff, and Wm. K. Walther's Inc., along with some scratch-built structures. My wife added window treatments to some of the buildings. She also installed figures in vehicles.

There are three coal mines on the branch line. Two are Walther's kits that were modified to fit their respective scene. The third is scratchbuilt. All of the buildings are weathered with chalks, a wash made from India ink and isopropyl alcohol, and Testor's Dullcote.

I kitbashed the PRR headquarters building at Beaver Junction from the Walther's Cornerstone Series Milwaukee Beer & Ale kit. I used Design Preservation Models modular wall pieces to construct the nearby tower. The structures are used to camouflage the entrance from the staging yard to the PRR main line.

One of the smaller buildings on the model railroad, M&M Florist in Eastvale, holds special significance. It was given to me by my parents when I was 9 years old. My dad owned and operated a greenhouse to raise flowers and vegetables while my mother made



floral arrangements and taught classes on how to make them. The florist shop, now more than 70 years old, has been on every one of my layouts.

Locomotives and rolling stock

My diesel locomotive fleet consists of offerings from Atlas Model Railroad Co., Bachmann, Bowser Manufacturing Co. Inc., and Kato USA Inc. The majority of the models represent first-generation diesels. Some second-generation diesels are also represented. All of the locomotives have North Coast Engineering Digital Command Control decoders installed; some also have sound.

Accurail, Athearn, and Bowser are among the companies represented in my rolling stock fleet. All of the open hoppers used in coal service have removable loads to facilitate loads-in, empties out operations. Most of my freight cars are weathered with India ink and chalk.

Running trains

I selected the CVP EasyDCC system for layout control. Because of the model railroad's size, I supplemented the command station with two boosters. The layout is divided into five power districts. Members of my operating crew use wireless throttles to control trains.

Operating sessions typically last between three and four hours. During that time we run eight to 10 trains. The railroad is based on heavy freight and coal operations, so most of the traffic is local freights and coal trains. Car cards, waybills, and some train orders are used for car routing. Operations follow a sequence as the railroad was built for fun operations. I don't use a fast clock.

Jobs on the layout include four yardmasters and four mainline engineers. I serve as the dispatcher. The yardmasters are located at Allegheny, Beaver Junction, and New Brighton on the PRR, along with Waynesville on the BV&W. The yardmasters do all local industry switching and monitor all through traffic on the PRR.

The yardmaster on the BV&W switches the three coal mines and industries receiving inbound empty and outbound loaded coal hoppers for the coal marshalling yard at Waynesville. In addition, the BV&W also serves a large cement plant and supply house. The short line's enginehouse and fueling facility are located at Waynesville.

All coal trains originate off the BV&W branch serving a coke plant,

4 The Beaver Valley & Western is a fictional short line that connects with the Pennsy at Beaver Junction, Pa. Here, a pair of the railroad's Alco RS3 diesels pull loaded hoppers destined for the coal marshalling yard at Waynesville from the Laurel Mining Co.



5 The line running to the Columbus, Ohio, staging yard passes through the backdrop. Bo masked the opening by kitbashing the PRR headquarters structure from a Walthers kit and building the interlocking tower from Design Preservation Models modular wall components.



6 Though most of the diesels on the layout are based on first-generation prototypes, some are from the second generation, including Pennsylvania RR No. 2425. The Alco C425 is seen leading a freight through Allegheny, Pa., with first-generation Fairbanks-Morse and Alco products in the background and foreground, respectively.

power plant, and a car float via trackage rights on the PRR. The PRR serves all of the industries in New Brighton, Beaver Falls, Beaver Junction, Allegheny, and Wallace Run.

The Wallace Run area is the hub of steel industry activity. There's a steel mill, two foundries for manufacturing steel products, a ladle and slag car repair shop, a high line for coke and iron ore, a receiving building for limestone, and a repair and engine shop. A slag dump with a crusher and loading facility for hoppers is located nearby. Additionally there are two rolling mills and a tube mill. The stub-end Allegheny Yard serves inbound and outbound trains for the steel mills at Wallace Run and local industries at Allegheny.

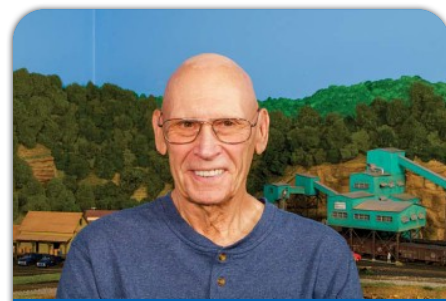
Though most of the traffic on the layout is freight, two passenger trains appear during operating sessions. One

originates in the PRR staging yard, consisting of an Electro-Motive Division GP7 and three coaches. The other starts in Beaver Junction and travels the BV&W branch. The push-pull train has an Alco RS1 diesel locomotive and a coach. The coach has a headlight on the rear that's illuminated in push mode.

Future plans

When I designed the Pennsylvania RR Valley Division, I wanted a point-to-point layout with heavy industries and plenty of switching. Everyone who has operated on the walk-in layout has enjoyed all of the switching, so I feel I accomplished my goals. The only thing I would do differently if I were starting over is to have one continuous loop so I could have trains orbiting the layout during open houses.

My HO scale Pennsylvania RR layout is basically finished. However, I plan on adding more lighting and grade crossing signals in Beaver Falls. I also enjoy building structures and helping other modelers in the area construct their layouts. So the time has come for me to kick back and enjoy running trains through my slice of western Pennsylvania as I remember it from my childhood. **MR**



Meet Martin (Bo) Sis

After moving numerous times for his work, Martin (Bo) Sis settled in Hebron, Ky., with Sandy, his wife of 63 years. They have two grown, married sons and three grandchildren. Bo is now retired after 34 years in the airline industry. He also spent 28 years working as a painter. Away from the hobby Bo likes to watch the Cincinnati Bengals, college football, go fishing, and spend time with his family.



7 Bo's parents gave him the M&M Florist building when he was 9 years old. The structure has been on every one of his model railroads.



First steps to a better model railroad

None of us starts out as experts

By Casey Dowling • Photos by the author



1 The Colorado Midland Western's *West Elk Mail*, powered by a single Rio Grande Alco PA, evokes memories of the D&RGW's *Yampa Valley Mail*, which ran between Denver, Steamboat Springs, and Craig, Colo. It was photographed at East McClure, Colo.



In late 2020, my family was looking for a new home. There were the typical “givens” for such a house — three bedrooms, a garage, etc. With them were the “druthers” — a home office, a guest room, and a basement for a model railroad. I was hoping in addition to a long-term home for our family, I would be able to get a spot to build a real layout.

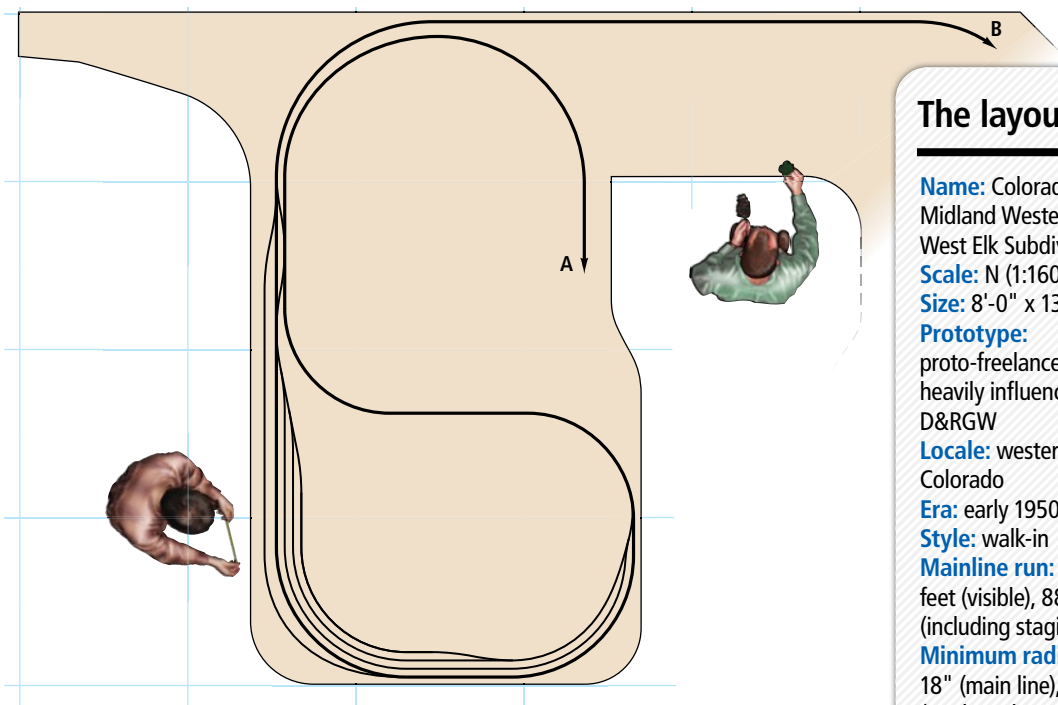
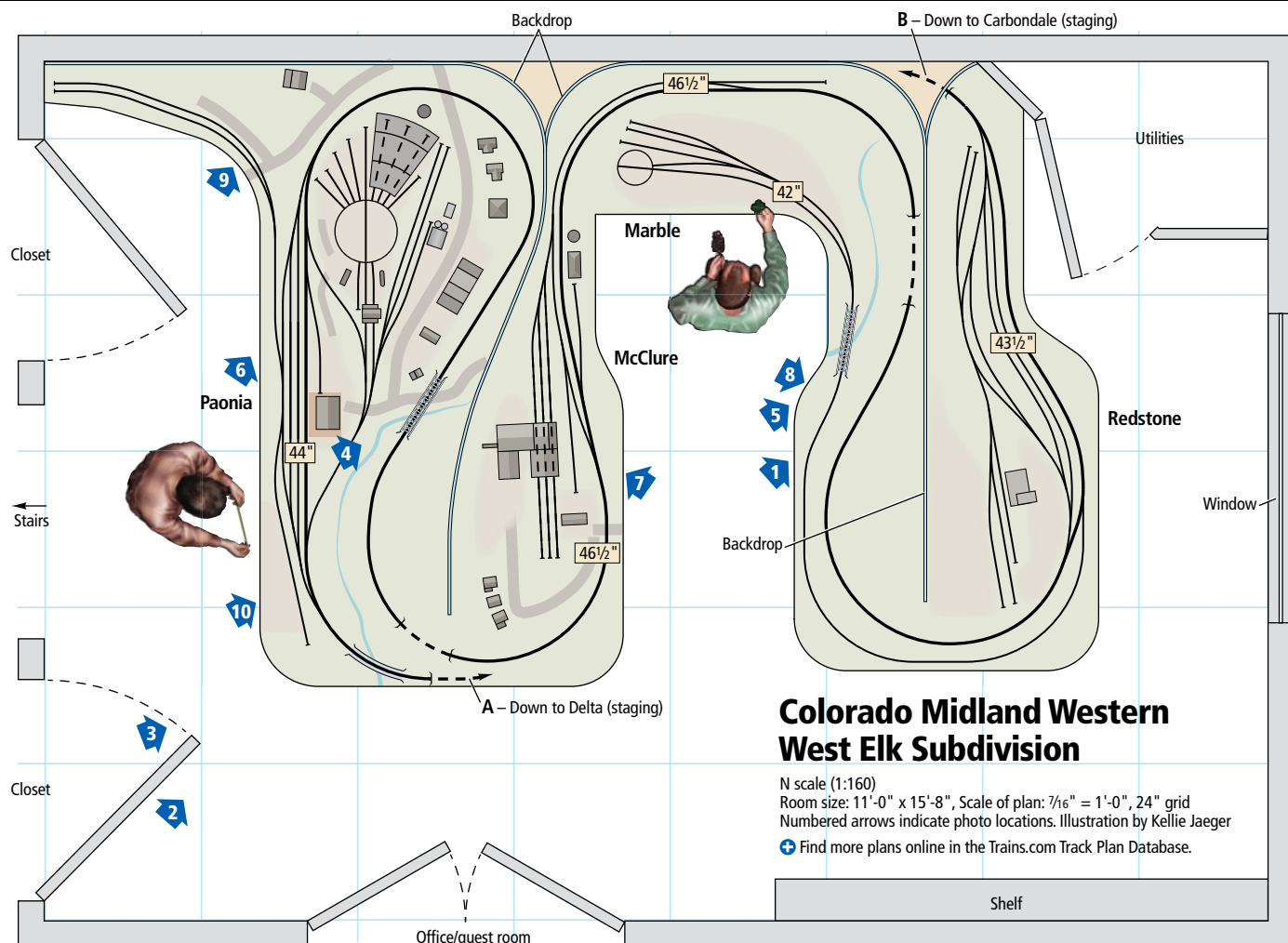
I’ve been interested in railroads for as long as I can remember. My great uncle worked for the Denver & Rio Grande Western, and my grandfather was proprietor of a garden railway where he employed his grandchildren as gandy dancers. My maternal grandparents were from Silverton, Colo., and each summer I would join them and watch the steam locomotives of the Durango & Silverton pull into town.

In middle school, I joined Youth in Model Railroading, a youth-oriented model railroad club in the Denver area. Under the mentorship of the organization’s leader, Larry Price, I developed a close group of friends and built a small N scale layout in my parents’ basement. Through college and early career, the half-finished layout gathered dust. As we were excitedly looking for a house, my dad was counting down the days until he could reclaim that valuable basement space.

We found our new home in early 2021. The house met our needs, and I now had space for a layout in the basement. As we settled in, my mind began shifting to layout planning.

The concept

My initial inspiration for the layout came on one of many geology department field trips in college, years before moving into our new house. In 2008, my class caravaned across western Colorado, visiting the ruins of the massive Yule Marble plant and the coke ovens at Redstone, crossing McClure Pass, and passing the active coal mines near Paonia. I learned Marble and Redstone were once served by the Crystal River & San Juan RR (CR&SJ), while the D&RGW’s (now Union Pacific) Somerset



The layout at a glance

Name: Colorado Midland Western West Elk Subdivision
Scale: N (1:160)
Size: 8'-0" x 13'-6"
Prototype: proto-freelanced, heavily influenced by D&RGW
Locale: western Colorado
Era: early 1950s
Style: walk-in
Mainline run: 48 feet (visible), 88 feet (including staging)
Minimum radius: 18" (main line), 15" (yards and Marble Branch)

Minimum turnout: No. 5
Maximum grade: 2%
Train length: 4.5 feet
Benchwork: L-girder and open grid
Height: 41" to 46.5"
Roadbed: cork
Track: code 55
Scenery: foam insulation board overlaid with Sculptamold
Backdrop: hand-painted MDF board
Control: Digitrax DCS 210+ DCC



② This early view of the railroad shows the Paonia peninsula at left and the McClure/McClure Pass aisle at right; Marble is on the lower deck.

Branch had served the coal mines near Paonia. In *The Crystal River Pictorial* by Dell McCoy and Russ Collman, I found that a rail line had been surveyed over McClure Pass and had been graded parallel to the CR&SJ up the Crystal River valley. This surveyed but never-built line was a convenient “what-if” prototype.

Back to 2021. With dishware unpacked and art on the walls, I was focusing on the layout. Based on the what-if McClure Pass line, I opted for a proto-freelanced route, something that would allow some flexibility but set in an actual location with inspiration drawn heavily from Colorado railroads. The choice to go with N scale was easy: I already had N scale rolling stock, locomotives, and structures, and I could build a “larger” layout in the available footprint than with a larger scale.

As for timeframe, I have always been a fan of the variety offered during the transition era. I wanted the ability to run colorful first-generation D&RGW diesel units alongside steam. I chose to set the railroad in late September in the early 1950s. Fall was an easy choice — the gold of changing aspens, the dark greens of conifers, and the reds/browns of the geology provide a spectacular palette. It also was peak traffic season on the



③ An overview of Paonia, Colo., shows the staging yard accessed through the cutouts in the fascia. The second peninsula, with the Marble Branch and east side of McClure pass, is visible in the background.

D&RGW, the “fall rush.” Domestic coal had to be shipped to market, livestock (sheep and cattle) was being transported from high elevation pastures to the stockyards, and Western Slope produce was carried to the Denver, Pueblo, and Eastern markets. Peak scenery and peak traffic: a winning combo.

The debut of the CMW

Thus came about the Colorado Midland Western (CMW). The premise is that the western portion of the Colorado Midland was purchased by local investors after that actual railroad went under in 1918 to serve Leadville, Aspen, and the Roaring Fork Valley. In my reality, the CMW absorbed the CR&SJ, and the surveyed line over McClure Pass was constructed and

connected to the D&RGW Somerset Branch, forming a continuous rail line to Grand Junction. The McClure Pass line would be the focus of the layout. By the early 1950s, the D&RGW had majority ownership of the CMW, though there was plenty of equipment with CMW lettering that would last late into the decade.

The CMW is based on actual places and contains elements of railway history from Colorado, giving it plausibility. The Midland Terminal Ry. was an actual line that operated on the easternmost portion of the Colorado Midland. The D&RGW takeover of the CMW mirrors what had happened in the 1940s with the Denver & Salt Lake Ry. These historical parallels give more credence to the story of the CMW and enable me to run colorful first-generation D&RGW diesels

MODEL RAILROAD PLANNING

alongside steam locomotives never owned by the D&RGW.

Securing the right-of way

The layout space in the basement was already finished. It was 10 x 15 feet, perfect for a first “real” layout. I could build something that wasn’t overly ambitious, but still more than a typical 4 x 8-foot tabletop layout. I wanted to maximize track length, and the most obvious way

to achieve this would be a shelf layout around the walls of the room.

Unfortunately, the room had at least one door or window on every wall. One wall solely comprised two closet doors on either side of the staircase leading to the main floor. Another had a wide French door leading to the office/guest bedroom. The third had an egress window. Luckily, the last wall was almost empty except for a diagonal closet leading to our sump and water shutoff.

Neither my partner nor I were interested in duckunders, liftouts, or impediments to reach to the storage space, house utilities, or guest room. The layout wasn’t going to wrap around the room. Grateful as I was to have it, my 10 x 15-foot space suddenly felt much smaller.

Givens and druthers

With my concept in mind and my space limitations understood, I turned to John Armstrong’s tried-and-true givens and druthers method to help me focus on what I really wanted.

Givens: I wanted a layout that could keep three or four people busy operating. Given the locale, operations could include local freight traffic, ore/coal trains, and a local passenger train. The layout needed a minimum of two towns with a variety of industries to add some interest to operations.

Trains needed to enter and exit the layout without a clear and visible circuit. However, I also wanted to run trains fairly unsupervised for family and friends, so a continuous loop was needed. Lastly, I wanted broad curves for a natural and realistic look. My childhood layout had curves with radii ranging from 11" to 13". The minimum for this layout would be 15", equivalent to 30" in HO.

Druthers: I wanted to maximize the distance between stations to mimic the distance between towns in western Colorado. I also wanted to have long trains snaking their way through mountain scenery. This meant limiting grades and maximizing siding lengths. Finally, I wanted a branch line, something that could be operated by a single person.

These would be flexible considerations that would be decided as my design progressed and limitations became more apparent. With my concept, my givens and druthers, and my door/window-filled layout room, I sat down and got to work.

A U-shaped layout

What I came up with was a U-shaped layout. The base of the U is along the wall with the least number of doors. The legs of the U are peninsulas, with backdrops running down the middle of both. This maximized the amount of track I could fit in the space, provided view blocks, and increased the illusion of distance. A staging yard sits beneath one of the peninsulas. The main portion of the layout



4 Mikados CMW 1460 and D&RGW 1202 double-head an eastbound freight up McClure Pass. It’s fall 1952, and the train is laden with fresh apples from the North Fork Valley. Both locomotives are from Broadway Limited Imports.



5 Crystal River & San Juan Ten-Wheeler No. 1 drifts downgrade as it crosses a tributary to the Crystal River on the Marble Branch. The main line leading up McClure Pass can be seen above the Bachmann 4-6-0.



6 Eastbound Extra 5561 departs Paonia, Colo., led by a pair of D&RGW EMD F7s. The Paonia engine terminal is visible beyond the train, with Mikado 1202 taking a spin on the turntable. Casey discovered he enjoys painting his own backdrops.

occupies a space approximately 8 x 10 feet, and there's a 2-foot minimum aisle width around the perimeter of the layout.

I was able to fit three towns along the main line: Redstone, McClure, and Paonia, listed east to west. Because of the shape of the layout and position of the backdrops, no town is visible from another, which enhances the illusion of distance. Staging is located beneath the peninsula with Paonia and represents both Carbondale (to the east) and Delta (to the west).

A westbound train starting in staging (Carbondale, Colo.) runs upgrade to Redstone on the far side of the other peninsula. The branch line to Marble leaves the main at Redstone, wrapping around to the opposite side of the peninsula.

From Redstone, the main line climbs around the peninsula to reach McClure



7 Denver & Rio Grande Western light Mikado 1202 passes the massive West Elk Anthracite breaker at West Elk, Colo. Casey added "dog houses" to the tender decks for the head brakemen to ride in to give the steam fleet a Rio Grande flavor.



8 Dynamic brakes whining, D&RGW Geeps 5102 and 5903 lead an eastbound coal train down the east side of McClure Pass. The sandstone cliffs are layered foam insulation board, tilted and carved to mimic the layered sedimentary rock in this part of western Colorado.



9 Harvesters are busy picking the fall apple crop, just one of several mini-scenes Casey created or has planned for the CMW. The spur in the foreground leads to the Somerset Coal Mine.

Pass and the town of McClure on the other peninsula. The main customer in McClure is the West Elk Anthracite Mine and breaker, plus a team track and stock pens. From here, the main line descends around the second peninsula with a broad loop to bring the line into Paonia.

Paonia has a coal tippie, a fruit-packing house, and stock pens. The town is

the largest on the layout and acts as a regional hub, with a small yard and sidings to serve various businesses. The main feature of Paonia is a small engine terminal. Eastbound locals and coal trains originate in Paonia, and helpers are sometimes tacked onto fruit-laden eastbound freights. Westbound trains leave Paonia, enter a tunnel, and descend

Learning Points

- Basing a railroad on a could-have-been and/or fallen-flag prototype offers a realistic method of freelancing.
- Making field trips to the sites your railroad-to-be will serve can be highly informative and inspirational.
- Just as some tasks of layout building can be arduous, you may find others are especially rewarding.
- Joining a club may reduce the time it takes to acquire needed skills and information and be introduced to like-minded modelers.

a loop of track back to staging, representing Delta, Colo.

Staging is run-through, enabling storage tracks to hold trains originating from Delta or Carbondale. I've also included a double crossover that lets me easily turn trains. I didn't attempt a helix, so the staging yard is only 4" lower than Paonia. While I can line switches and right derailed cars, the clearance is tight.

The Marble Branch runs at a lower elevation below the main between Redstone and McClure Pass. Marble is below McClure Pass and will have a highly compressed version of the marble plant. I have recently reworked the track here to better represent the yard arrangement in Marble for more realistic operation based on feedback from Steve Anderson, a fellow CR&SJ modeler.

A time and place

I wanted to capture the look of McClure Pass, but not specific scenes. I drove through the pass a few times, taking pictures along the CMW route and grabbing soil for the layout. For mountains, I used layers of 1" and 2" sheets of extruded-foam insulation board carved to represent sedimentary rock.

My McClure pass photos came in handy while painting the backdrops. I used Mike Danneman's book *Painting Backdrops for Your Model Railroad* for guidance and techniques.

The backdrops instilled a sense of place, even with only basic scenery applied. I enjoy landscape painting;

there's something to be said about painting "happy little trees."

I modify generic building kits to add character and make them similar to buildings in the area. I take a similar approach to scratchbuilding, focusing on structures that fit the region and era rather than specific prototypes. One exception is the West Elk Anthracite breaker, which is based on a prototype in Floresta, Colo., on the D&RGW's narrow-gauge Crested Butte line.

Motive power and rolling stock also represent the equipment of the period but aren't necessarily copies of specific prototypes. Most rolling stock is from Western rail lines I saw in books on the D&RGW. Motive power is a mix of Broadway Limited Imports, Atlas, Kato, and Bachmann. I've added a few details to the steamers including spark arrestors, tender doghouses, and headlight visors to make them appear closer to locomotives rostered by the Rio Grande and CR&SJ.

Enjoying the journey

Since I started sketching out the plans back in 2021, I've completed about 70% of the basic scenery. Marble and

Redstone are the last areas needing scenery and structures. The main line was finished in early 2022, though I've made adjustments based on operating sessions.

I've hosted a few rudimentary operating sessions. Typically, a crew of three or four operate four to six trains over the course of two hours. The sessions include eastbound (loaded) and westbound (empty) coal trains, various local and through freights, and the West Elk Mail, a short mail/passenger train based on D&RGW's Yampa Valley Mail. Traffic flow is controlled by verbal track warrants — essentially, operators confirm the single-track block between one town and the next is empty and claim it.

In 2024, I joined the Boulder Model Railroad Club. New friends and mentors including Rodney Black, John Layman, and Allen Trumpler have pointed me toward various references describing different operation methods, which I look forward to testing on the layout.

By building the layout, I've learned many lessons, such as powered turnout frogs improve operation, under-layout staging should have more clearance than 3 1/2", and wider aisles help with operating sessions. If I build a future layout, there

are things I would change: wider-radius curves, increased distance between towns (even if it means sacrificing one to do so), and longer sidings. With more operating experience, I will design my yards in a way that better replicates the prototype.

I am now a father of two little ones who keep me busy. My modeling time is limited to occasional weekend naptimes and an evening or two a week. I'm in no rush to get the layout done, and I'm happy with where I've been able to get it in the last five years. I have a ways to go, but the journey is proving to be the most fun anyhow. [MIR](#)

Meet Casey Dowling

Casey Dowling has been a train enthusiast since childhood. He is a geological engineer who specializes in landslides and other geological hazards. Casey lives in Longmont, Colo., with his partner, Courtney, their two children, and dog. Outside of his basement, Casey is an avid mountain biker, snowboarder, and trail runner who enjoys adventures with his family.



10 The North Fork Fruit Growers Association packing house is a busy place during harvest season. Workers are loading refrigerator cars with fresh-picked apples on a clear Colorado afternoon in 1952. Casey scratchbuilt the packing house from styrene based on architectural features from multiple packing houses in the Paonia area.

STARTING WITH A **WINNER**

This N scale New England layout was inspired by a contest-winning design

By Brian Chapin • Photos by the author



In 2010 my wife and I downsized to our retirement dream home. My small HO layout based on logging in the Adirondacks had to come down, so I decided to start over and build a model railroad in N scale. Designing a layout had me frozen, but I knew I wanted to model mountains, trees, water, bridges, and small towns. Any railroad would have been fine with me as long as the geography was right.

Then I saw the July 2009 issue of *Model Railroader* magazine and the double-deck N scale layout that won first prize in a track plan contest.

Designed by John Koukol Jr., it was almost exactly what I was looking for. His design captured the 1940s to early 1960s in New England's White Mountains in Vermont and New Hampshire. John's original article

explained his design perfectly, but simply put, trains in this region were usually mixed freight and passenger service to small communities. They moved people, potatoes, pulpwood, furniture, dairy products, feed, seed, and other freight before roads replaced tracks.

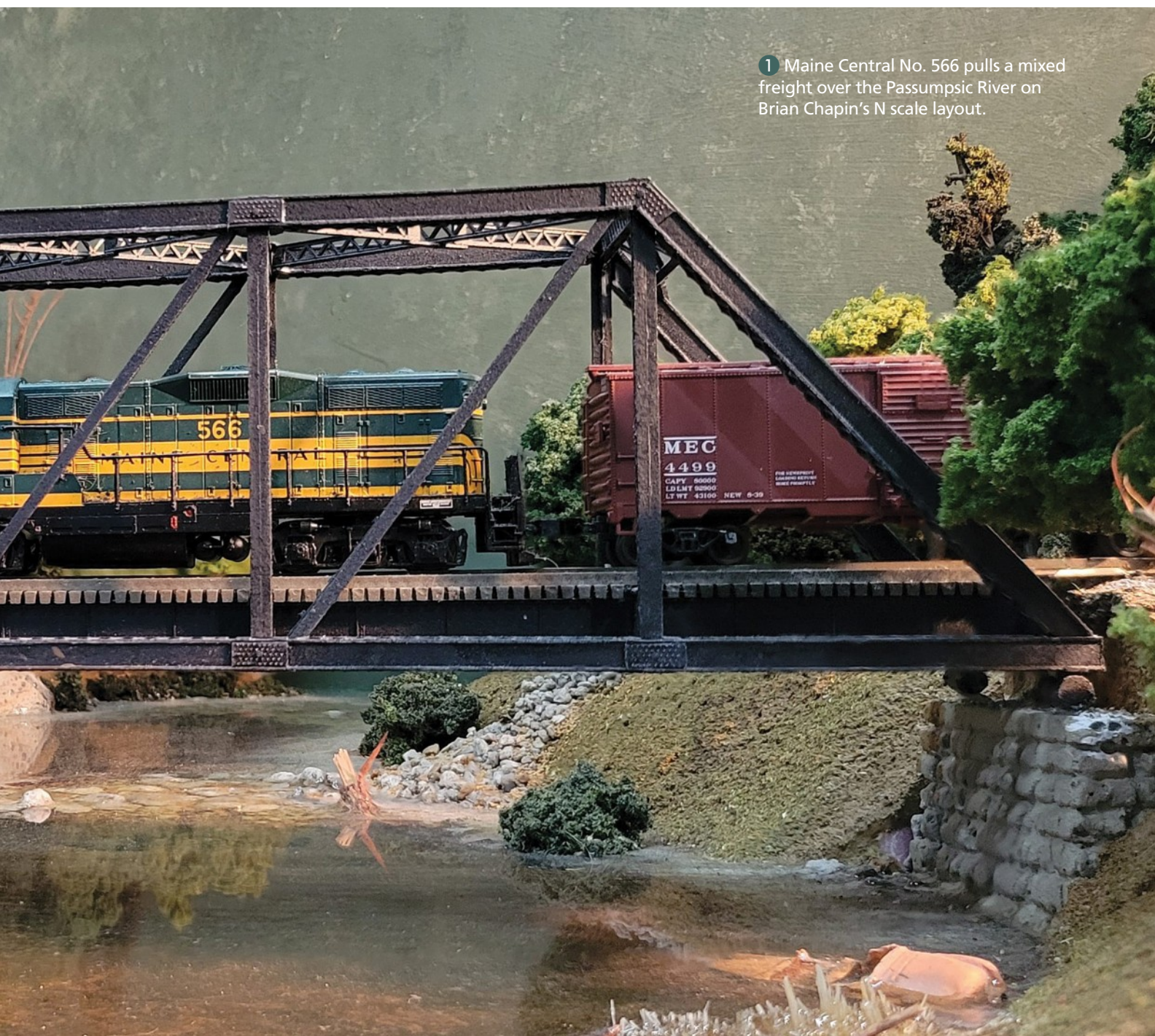
Think of this track plan as a giant Y, with Beecher Falls, Vt., at the upper right (north), St. Johnsbury, Vt., at the upper

left (west), and Quebec Junction, N.H. at the bottom (south), now extended all the way south to Bartlett, N.H.

Adapting the plan

To make it work for my space, I had to flip the entire layout (a mirror image of the original plan) to put the door in the right place. I also enlarged it from 12'-6" x 16'-0" to 13'-6" x 19'-0" and installed four reversing loops to eliminate the duckunder and to allow Maine Central (MEC) trains to run continuously on both levels.

On the original design, a logical compromise was to have the Boston & Maine track in Whitefield represented by a



1 Maine Central No. 566 pulls a mixed freight over the Passumpsic River on Brian Chapin's N scale layout.



2 This is the view of the layout when you enter the room. Beecher Falls is at the bottom, St. Johnsbury is on deck two, and the Frankenstein Trestle is on deck three.

short track that ended in the trees outside of town. In 2015, I extended that B&M track to a fully operational line with a reversing loop around the helix tower and a tunnel through the wall to my shop where I added a small yard and another reversing loop. There were a few other minor changes made to improve operations around the entry and exit points of the helix.

In 2018 I added a third level and a double-track helix to extend the line all the way to Bartlett, N.H., 29 miles south of Quebec Junction. In 2025 I modified that to the track plan you see today, with 489 feet of main line, six fully automated reversing loops, and a 17 level helix.

When entering the train room, visitors immediately see the yard and station at Beecher Falls on the lower deck; the larger yard, nine-stall round-house, and town of St. Johnsbury on deck two; and the 39" long Frankenstein Trestle, named for American Artist Godfrey N. Frankenstein, on deck three. At 520 feet long and 85 feet tall, the first version of the steel trestle was built in 1893 to replace the wrought iron trestle of 1875. As trains became larger and heavier, the trestle was reinforced with steel in 1930 and 1950.

Scratchbuilding the Frankenstein Trestle, which measures 39 inches long in N scale, took several months. I used more than 5,000 hand-cut styrene parts and more than 500 hand-cut ties. It's unique to model since it's actually a trestle within a trestle, and it's curved.

A glance to the right and you see a moose feeding in a marshy pond, and above that, the 38" long Wiley Brook Bridge, also scratchbuilt from styrene with piers and abutments that I hand-carved from plaster.

To the left there is a peak-a-boo view of the layout beyond, but you can never see it all at once.

In the middle of the room is the 17-layer helix tower that connects all four levels.

Built to move

I've seen far too many superb layouts torn down when friends moved or passed away, so one key consideration was to build my new layout so it could be moved. The solution was provided by my friend Bob Wheeler — build it in modules that could fit through a normal door.

The current layout has 30 modules, including the helix, that come apart in three sections. Since no two modules are the same size or shape, I built 3" tall box frames out of 1/2" sande plywood and topped them with 2" extruded-foam insulation board. Where modules are joined together, there are three wooden dowels that align them horizontally and vertically. A few wood screws fasten the modules to each other and to the wall.

Where tracks cross between modules, the rails on both sides of the joint are soldered to brass screws and then the rails are cut to leave a very small gap. All the wiring between the modules passes through Molex connectors. When the

The layout at a glance

Name: Maine Central Mountain Division

Scale: N (1:160)

Size: 13'-6" x 19'-0", plus a staging yard and reversing loop in the adjoining workshop

Prototype: Maine Central

Locale: northern mountains of Vermont and New Hampshire

Era: early 1960s, summer

Style: multi-deck walk-in

Mainline run: 489 feet total, 306 feet scenedicked, 183 feet in the helix

Minimum radius: 13"

Minimum turnout: No. 6

Maximum grade: 2%

Benchwork: open grid

Height: 36" (deck one), 53" (deck two), and 69" to 78" (decks three and four)

Roadbed: cork

Track: code 80 Atlas flextrack and Peco turnouts

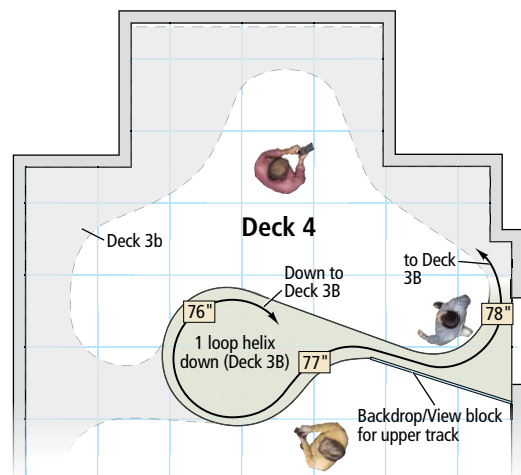
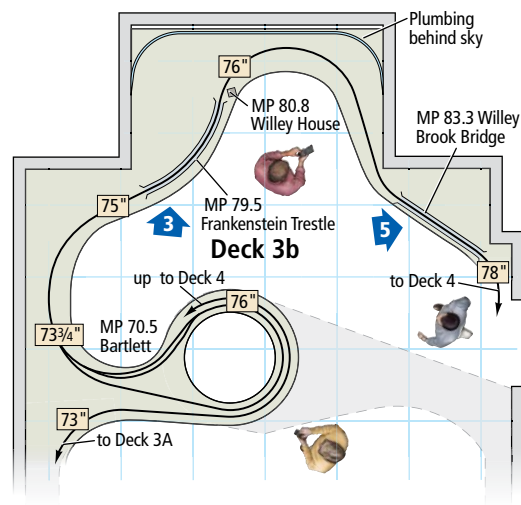
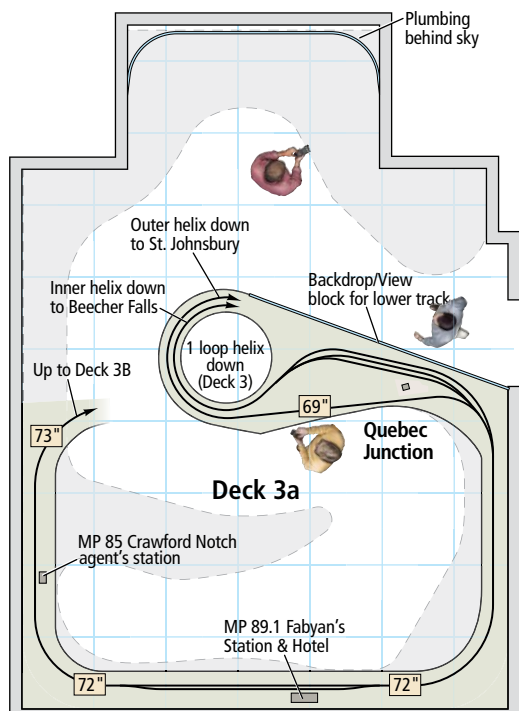
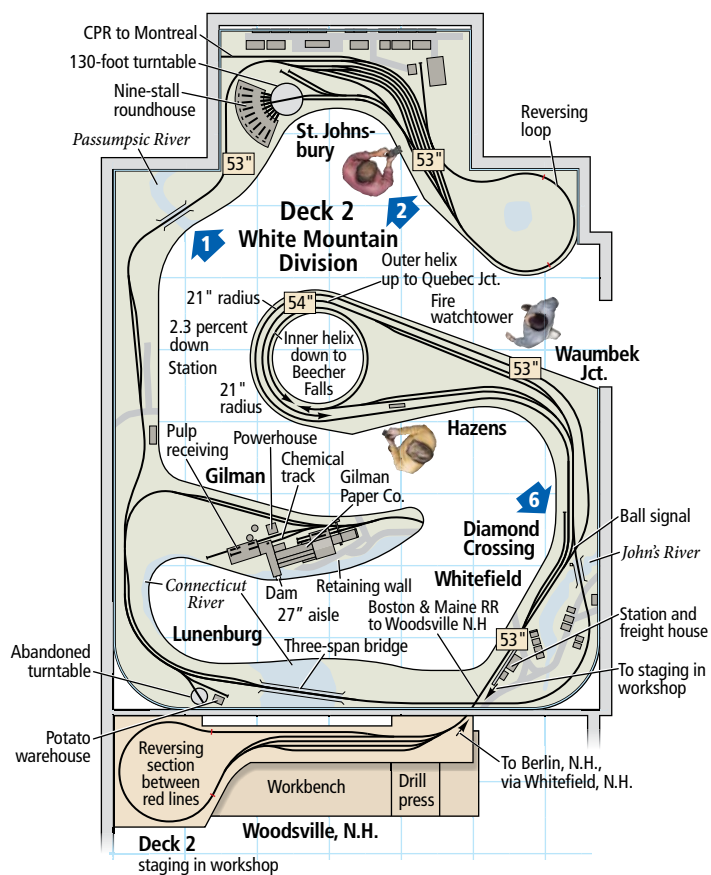
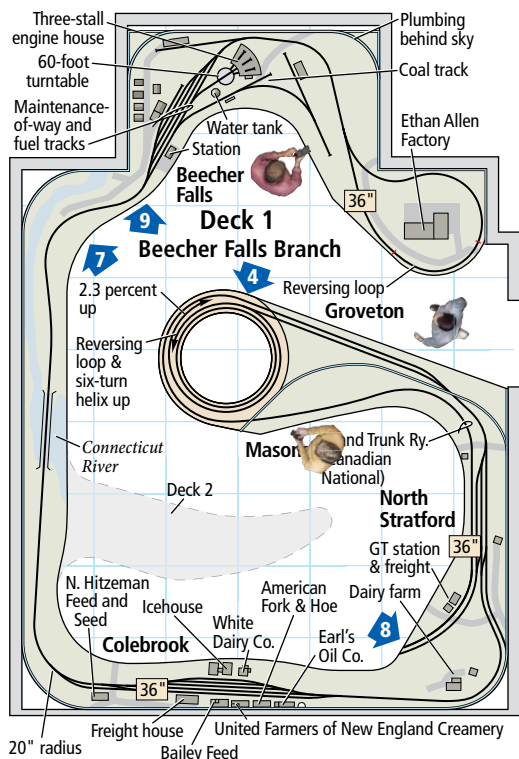
Scenery: sculpted foam

Backdrop: tempered hardboard with hand-painted sky and mountains

Control: Digitrax DCC, with LNWI Wi-Fi interface to use cell phones as cabs (Engine Driver Software)

time comes, just unplug, unscrew, and move the modules out.

Tempered hardboard fascia smooths out the curvy fronts of the modules. The backdrop is also made of 1/8" tempered hardboard sheets that are curved into the corners and painted with a very simple sky (no clouds) and layers of tree-covered



Maine Central Mountain Division

N scale (1:160)

Room size: 13'-6" x 19'-0"

Scale of plan: 3/16" = 1'-0", 24" grid

Numbered arrows indicate photo locations, Illustration by Kellie Jaeger

Find more plans online in the Trains.com Track Plan Database.



3 The 520-foot-long Frankenstein Trestle is a whopping 39" long in N scale. It was scratchbuilt from over 5,000 styrene pieces.

mountains that go from a dark green in the foreground to light gray/blue in the background.

Digital control

My background in electronics and computers probably made it easier for me to do all the electronics on the layout. But with all the model train-specific systems that are available today, it's a lot easier than it used to be.

My layout uses Digital Command Control and is controlled by a Digitrax DCS100 command station and a DB150 booster. Two PM42s control eight power districts so that an operator error or derailment in one section won't disable the entire layout.

In the early days of the layout, I used toggle switches and Tortoise by Circuitron motors to control the turnouts, but this wasn't ideal. After seeing a couple of other layouts that used DCC to control routes, I added that on my layout. Routes allow you to push one button to align a series of turnouts. Think of a yard ladder where you press a button on track 5 and all your yard turnouts align to take your train there!

Eleven Digitrax DS64 stationary decoders were installed and programmed to control 89 turnouts using 43 routes. By nesting the routes, I was able to have one master button that resets all 89 turnouts to run trains on the main line without interruption.

In addition to the routes, there are six reversing loops that are controlled by DCC Specialties PSX-ARFB circuit boards. When a train enters a reversing loop, the track power polarity

is automatically switched and the turn-out is lined so that the train can exit the loop.

When I have visitors, I usually push the master reset button and then set three trains in motion before turning my attention to guiding visitors around the layout. On deck two, an Electro-Motive

Division F3 A-B consist takes a short passenger train out of St. Johnsbury, passing the Gilman Paper Mill and the fully operational ball signal in Whitefield before heading up the helix, through Quebec Junction, past the Mount Washington Hotel, through Crawford Notch, over Wiley Brook Bridge and the Frankenstein Trestle to Bartlett. There, it goes around an automatic reversing loop and heads back the way it came. At St. Johnsbury it goes around another reversing loop and continues to go back and forth between St. Johnsbury and Bartlett until manually brought into the yard at the end of the tour.

On deck one, a mixed freight train leaves Beecher Falls to pass through Colebrook and North Stratford before going around the helix and back to Beecher Falls, also going back and forth until it's manually stopped. In an operating session, trains would make stops to drop off or pick up cars on all three decks of the layout.

On deck two, a B&M mixed freight train runs back and forth between a reversing loop in the workshop (in the next room) and a reversing loop that goes around the helix. This train creates interest in Whitefield where the last operating ball signal in the United States stood guard at a crossing of the MEC and B&M lines. In those days, trains would have to stop, set the ball signal, and then proceed with caution.

My N scale version of the ball signal is fully automatic and operates on a first come, first served basis. The track has occupancy detection for several feet on either side of the crossing. If a train approaches on the MEC track, two balls



4 Seven feet up, the fire tower is almost out of site atop the mountain on this 17-level helix.

go up and power to the B&M track is disabled, meaning that any train arriving on the B&M track will stop and wait until the train on the MEC track is out of the zone. If a train arrives on the B&M track first, then one ball goes up and it disables the MEC track power. This ensures that trains will never collide at the crossing, even though on my layout both could be running without an operator!

Trees, trees, and more trees

The Maine Central was known as "The Pine Tree Route," so of course I had to cover almost every square inch of the layout with them. So far, there are more than 9,000 trees. The majority are hand-made pines, with a few deciduous trees, store-bought trees, and some bare twigs (dead trees) thrown in for variety.

In order not to go bankrupt buying trees, I created a way to make N scale pine trees out of 1" diameter black chenille pipe cleaners that come in 6½-foot lengths. I cut them into finger-length pieces, trim back ½" or so of the chenille to expose a trunk that sticks into ground, carefully rotate it in front of blow torch to melt the chenille into the conical shape of a pine tree, dowse it with hair spray, then sprinkle it with flocking. I use various blends of green and brown flocking to get some variety. One final application of hair spray and it's done. I got to the point where I could make about 80 to 100 trees per hour at a cost of 16 cents each.

Tip: It takes 80 trees to cover a square foot of layout. Unless you want to drill all those holes, use foam as the scenery



Inside fire tower: The one-inch square interior of the fire watch-tower is fully furnished.

base on your layout. The trees can easily be pushed into the foam!

Water, water everywhere

There are several places where rivers cross my layout, as well as a moose pond and many little streams and puddles in ditches.

The same basic technique was used for all the water. After completing the scenery around the water feature, I made sure it was perfectly level and sealed so that nothing could leak out. Then I painted the water area with a mix of dark brown and black, darker toward the center or deep areas, and lighter near shore. Features that would be in the

water, such as rocks, reeds, logs, sticks, debris, boats, and swimmers, were glued down. Then a two-part epoxy glaze was poured to a depth of about ⅛".

My very first attempt at water was with the Connecticut River on the first level, where I included canoes, rocks, rapids, and a couple of fishermen. After pouring the epoxy, I went to bed. During the night, one of the fishermen fell over into the epoxy. Since there was no way I was going to get him out of there, I created a scene with an ambulance nearby and police attempting a rescue.

Make it interesting

It's almost impossible to superdetail an entire layout, but a few really well done little scenes or vignettes create interest and make the whole layout seem finished.

In addition to the drowning/rescue scene mentioned above, I've added about a dozen other scenes. Some have prompted my friends to question my sense of humor. One scene is of a road paving crew with a steam roller. A bicycle and barking dog are beside the road and a little girl tries to get the attention of the crew. Sticking out from under the steam roller are two little legs in a pool of blood.

In a cemetery next to a church, the minister and attendees at a funeral appear to be fainting as they notice two hands lifting the lid of the casket.

Less macabre are scenes of children playing baseball or using hula hoops, raccoons raiding garbage cans, people buying ice cream from a truck, and many more.



5 An A-B set of Maine Central EMD F3 diesels leads a passenger train over the scratchbuilt Wiley Brook Bridge.



6 Both red balls are up at this fully operational ball signal in Whitefield N.H., indicating that a train led by two Maine Central Alco RS11 diesels has the right of way. The MEC train is passing over the Boston & Maine line.



7 A fisherman figure that fell over while the resin cured resulted in this scene.



8 Track workers and a passing MEC train go unnoticed by the grazing cows.



Fortunately, there are many kits of figures like this to inspire your imagination. On one cliff, a figure of a baseball pitcher was repurposed as a rock climber. A few other figures were repainted in skin color and repurposed as skinny-dippers.

A few of my buildings have also been superdetailed and have lighting to draw attention. For instance, The Bakepin Diner in Whitefield has tables with tablecloths, napkins, cutlery and salt and pepper shakers on the tables. There's a waitress walking through and a tiny painting of a cabin on a lake, framed in wood and hung on the back wall.

A dairy includes stainless steel tanks made from dowels connected with copper wire plumbing, all painted silver.

A Victorian house has seven period-specific colors, curtains in the windows (paper), pigeons (bits of solder pinched/shaped with pliers) on the roof, a TV antenna (soldered bits of wire painted silver), a rose trellis, tiny furniture on the porch (made of wire and styrene), a red bowl on the table (a slice of the red spray tube from a WD-40 can), door mats (pieces of fine sandpaper), door knobs

(heads of brass nails) and a carpet hanging over the back porch railing (a picture of a carpet that I reduced to scale size and printed from my computer).

A fire watch tower at the top of the helix has a 1" square room at the top. In it, I added a bed with pillow (modeling clay) and an open book, a desk with a radio and microphone, a pad of paper with a yellow pencil, a chair, a trunk, and another tiny carpet. Unfortunately, no one can see this interior anymore because it's at the very top of my layout, but I know it's there!

I'm clearly driven by modeling scenery and structures, but this hobby offers so many opportunities to express ourselves. Designing, woodworking, painting, electronics, scenery, structures, track work, operations, and so much more.

Fellow members of the North County Interchange (NCI) operating group all have different strengths and interests and have helped me along the way. They are now immortalized with buildings named after them: Bob Wheeler Hardware, Keith Williams Radio & TV, Ken Stinnette Antiques, (Mark) Reed & (Mark) Weiss Law Firm, (Justin)

Jankauskas Manufacturing, Paul Rankin Books, Hotel Kruse "Rooms with a John," and Randall Watson Electric.

My friend Brian Olson has created several videos of my multi-deck N scale layout. You can find them on YouTube by searching for "Brian Chapin Maine Central." May your model railroading experience be as positive and fulfilling as mine has been. [MR](#)

Meet Brian Chapin

Brian and Karen, his wife of nearly 40 years, have two grown sons and have retired to Lake Lanier in Gainesville, Ga. They love to travel and have twice completed the 6,200 mile America's Great Loop on their *Ranger* tugboat. They've recently returned to travel by RV and are typically on the road for several months each year. Brian also enjoys woodworking; carving; and playing piano, organ, guitar, and ukulele.



9 The yard in Beecher Falls serves passengers and a thriving woodworking and furniture industry.



Reading's Allison Hill Freight Station

It's Sunday, Feb. 2, 1947, in a neighborhood of Harrisburg, Pa., called Allison Hill. It's also known as "The Hill." By studying the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of this area, I found that the Reading Co. had a freight station on the corner of 16th and Chestnut Streets. There were seven spurs of the Rockville Branch of the Philadelphia & Reading RR near this corner; two of them are shown in the prototype photograph. It's late winter, as seen by the frozen puddles, but it's also symbolic of an end to an era. On Monday, the road rollers would be rolled off the Chicago & North Western

flatcar onto the ground and delivered to the buyer. They would be used to build roads made of concrete or asphalt, which would reduce the need for a railroad to deliver them. It was during these years that the railroads began to decline.

I scratchbuilt the road roller models from hard maple, basswood, styrene, and brass. The hard maple body was sandwiched between .005"-thick styrene, then shaped with a sander. The rear and front rollers were made from styrene tubing. The roller spokes were cut from thin styrene, trimmed to length, and attached to the

rollers with liquid plastic cement. A fork for the front roller was made from .125"-thick styrene.

The hood louvers were made by cementing .030" quarter-round styrene to a thin styrene strip. The sunroof and supports were made from basswood. I covered the tops of the roofs with thin tissue paper to simulate the fabric that the prototypes were covered with. I secured it with thinned white glue.

Then I airbrushed the bodies and sunroofs with Badger Reefer Orange. The rollers were first sprayed with Red Oxide Primer. After they

were dry, I masked the treads and airbrushed the spokes with Reefer Orange.

The C&NW flatcar is a limited run Life-Like AAR 50-ton, 50-foot flatcar. The lettering matched the prototype photo. I just had to renumber the model with waterslide decals. I added a deck with individually weathered basswood boards; I used a pounce wheel to simulate nail holes. I replaced the model's original solid-bearing trucks with sprung Kadee Bettendorf trucks.

The freight station is scratchbuilt. I scaled the size of the station from the



prototype photo, knowing that the flatcar was 50 feet long. I have several photographs from 1978 of a Reading Co. freight station in Doylestown, Pa.; it looks to be identical to the one in the prototype photo below. I drew up a set of plans in HO scale for both the station and the road rollers.

The brick walls, cornice, and terra-cotta cap used in this structure are laser-etched basswood from Monster Modelworks. I sprayed the brick walls with Rust-Oleum Satin Colonial Red, followed by some spritzes of the same company's Cinnamon. The mortar lines were created with a wash of powdered pastel mixed with alcohol.

The Tichy Train Group windows and doors are painted Camouflage Gray, and the styrene windowsills and header trim are painted

Send us your scenes

Have you modeled a scene based on a prototype photo? Send both the prototype and model photos, along with a brief description of the scene and the modeling techniques shown, to: Prototype to Model, *Model Railroader* magazine, 18650 W. Corporate Dr., Suite 103, Brookfield, WI 53045; or email to Consulting Editor Tony Koester at consulting.editor@firecrown.com.

Concrete. The signs were processed on a PC and printed on decal paper with a laser jet printer. I used 1200-grit wet-dry sandpaper for the tar paper roofing. A nice, weathered look was achieved by brushing it downward with a wire brush.

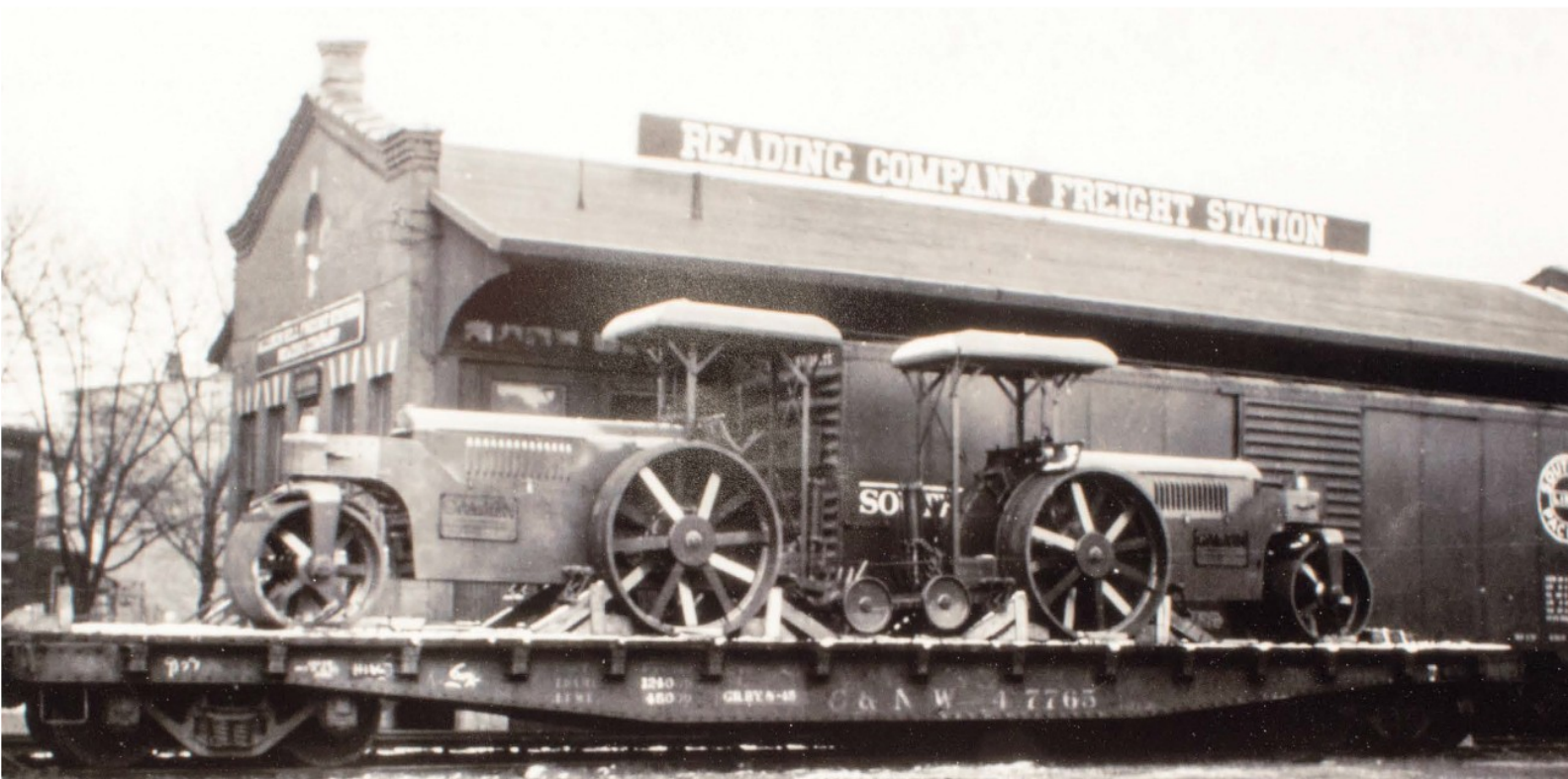
Of my 70 plus years in this wonderful hobby, re-creating this scene has been one of the most challenging, satisfying, and rewarding! The model won first place in the On-Line

Display category at a National Model Railroad Association regional convention.

Jerry Lauchle is an active member of the NMRA, having been awarded the Master Model Railroader designation in 2018. He and his supportive wife, Esther, reside in State College, Pa., where they were employed by Penn State University. Jerry was Professor of Engineering Acoustics. 

It's Sunday, Feb. 2, 1947 and a Chicago & North Western flatcar with a load of two Buffalo-Springfield engine-powered road rollers has been dropped off at the Reading & Philadelphia RR freight station in the Allison Hill neighborhood of Harrisburg, Pa. They will be unloaded during the work week and picked up by the customer for use in building paved roads in Pennsylvania. Jerry Lauchle scratchbuilt the station and road rollers. The flatcar is a Life-Like model, and the boxcar is a custom painted Tichy Train Group USRA steel side rebuild kit.

Prototype image courtesy of National Model Railroad Association archives, Bob Charles Collection; Model photo, Jerry Lauchle



Modeling close to home

I've always been partial to modeling prototype railroads relatively close to where I live. Moreover, in the 1970s when I was contemplating the construction of my first railroad, I didn't have the financial means to travel very far. Today, with the internet, Google Earth (Street View), and other instant sources of info, we can travel virtually.

Ironically, I decided to try freelancing Western logging for my first model railroad endeavor. That meant an AHM 4-4-0, a couple of Rivarossi Heislars, and, for no reason other than it looked cool, a Union Pacific oil-fired Sunset brass 4-6-0, all purchased from a local hobby shop. I still have that "Postabe Railroad" AHM American, which won the Dremel Kitbashing Award in the June 1978 *Railroad Model Craftsman*.

The Postabe (supposed to be) mimicked the pun-style naming of John Allen's Gorre & Daphetid but, just as John later admitted, the name grew old. Then one morning I read in the local newspaper that Jim Shaughnessy was promoting one of his railroad books at a local bookstore that evening. I decided to attend his talk so I could meet Jim and get a look at his new book, *The D&H — The Bridge Line from New England and Canada*. He also had copies of his previously released book, *The Rutland Road*. I leafed through them both and bought a few black-and-white and color photos he had on hand of both railroads. I was especially intrigued by the Rutland photos: green Alco RSs with a single yellow stripe running down their sides. Very handsome.

After returning home, I started thinking about the direction my railroad was



Dana King waits on his Farmall as Rutland RS1s 403 and 405 roll through the Vermont countryside on Lou Sassi's original basement-size HO railroad set near his former home in Charlton, N.Y. Lou Sassi photo

going with locomotives that weren't making sense and modeling a location I knew nothing about. What if I picked a prototype railroad I could study up close? The city of Rutland was just a couple hours from my home and, thanks to successor Green Mountain, some of those RSs were still running in Rutland green and yellow. Many of the stations, bridges, and other railroad-related paraphernalia still existed. I sold the Heislars, American, and 4-6-0 and bought two Sunset RS1s.

A couple years later, I was helping to operate a Colorado narrow gauge modular layout built by Bob Hamm and Don Buesing at a local train show when Brian Saul walked up to me. He asked whether I might be interested in an HO brass Pacific Fast Mail Boston & Maine Mogul. By this time, I had started writing articles on the construction of my (now

Northeastern prototype) railroad for MR, and I had some hobby money saved, so the purchase was made.

Brian also had a Sunset K-series B&M Consolidation for sale. I asked him to stop by my house later that week. That visit led to the purchase of his other B&M engine and another rethink of the railroad. Now it would feature both the Rutland and B&M. Actually, those acquisitions led to the railroad's name: the Boston & Maine West Hoosic Division. This name change allowed me to run both B&M steamers and Rutland diesels while, in time, introducing other Northeast prototype locomotives and rolling stock to the roster.

Even though the railroad represented a B&M branch, I decided to model Rutland stations. Eventually, Bennington and North Dorset depots appeared, compliments of talented model builder and good

friend Rich Cobb. Rich also was responsible for many of the factory buildings and non-railroad structures on the railroad.

The layout eventually filled the entire 26 x 32-foot basement of our home in Charlton, N.Y. It provided me with many hours of operational enjoyment while also becoming the subject of many photo tours and construction articles featured in MR and *Great Model Railroads*. The layout was also the subject of Allen Keller's "Great Model Railroads" video No. 23.

The B&M West Hoosic Division lasted around 30 years but became a fallen flag when we moved to North Carolina, at which time I switched to modeling our present On30 Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes. I say "our," because my wife, Cheryl, now takes an active part in the railroad's construction, but more on that next time. **MR**

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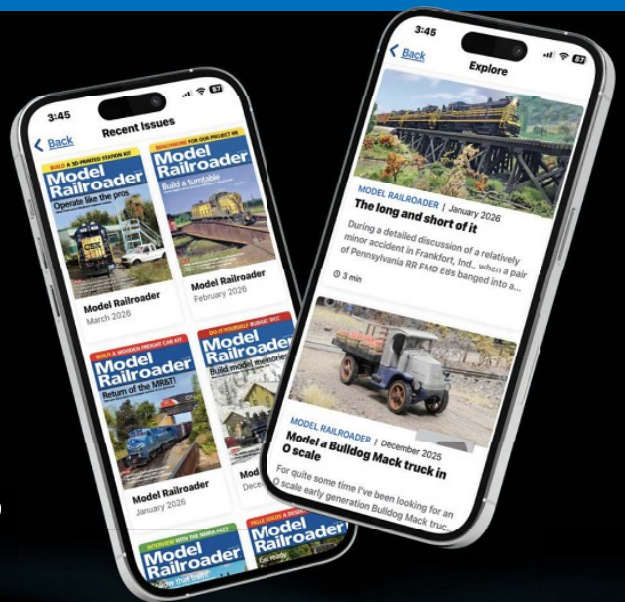
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The local is going back on the main after having picked up a car at a customer. Contributing Editor Pelle Søeborg took this photo on his 2024 Midwest inspired module, which consists of three sections with a total length of 8½ feet. This set of modules can be combined with Pelle's 2022 module set of the same length. The clouds were added to the image with photo-editing software.





Western Maryland Electro-Motive Division BL2 No. 82 is switching the interchange while WM GP9 No. 35 is pulling a freight to Moselburg. Dale Ridgeway took this photo on the new section of his HO scale B&O Ridgley Division layout seen in the February 2026 issue of MR. The locomotives are Proto 2000 models that Dale weathered. He installed extra details on the Geep.





The whistle is blasting as a K-27 Mikado 2-8-2 approaches Dolores station crossing in a scene built by Al Sohl, MMR, on his On30 Western Bay RR. The double-deck layout is set on June 12, 1939, and consists of two divisions, the lower deck being the D&RGW and the upper deck the Rio Grande Southern. Eric Menger photo



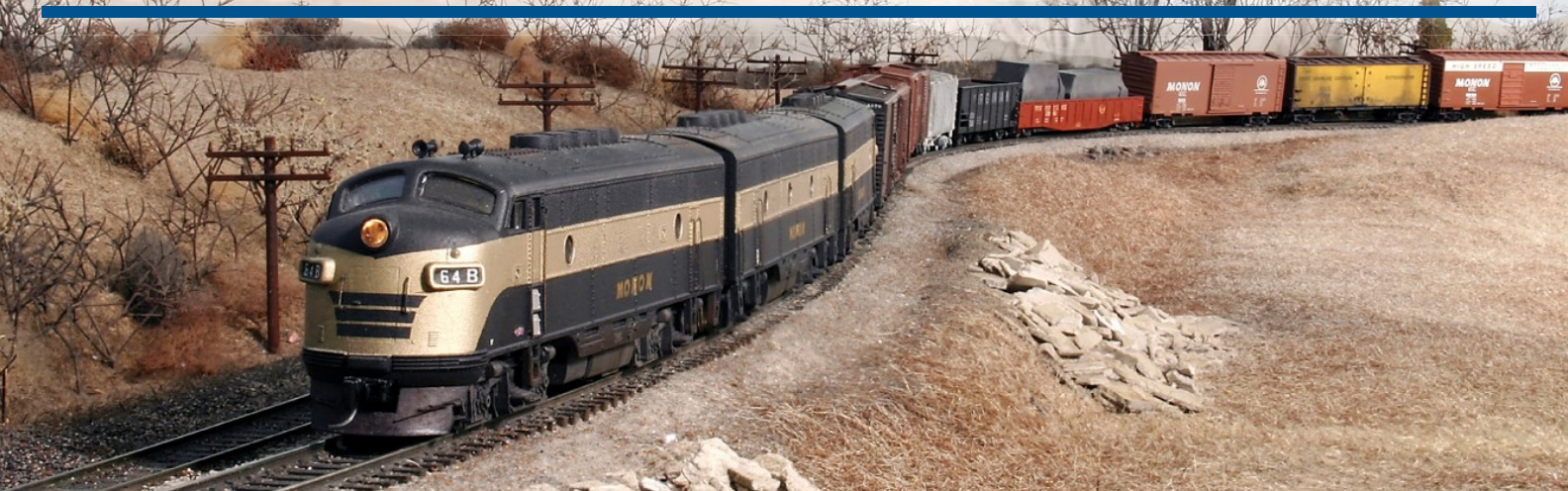
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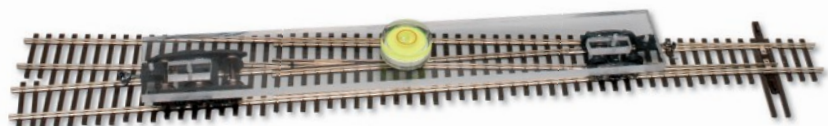
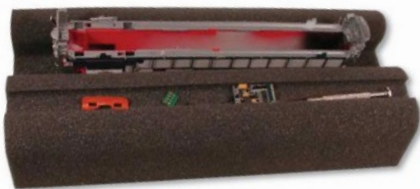
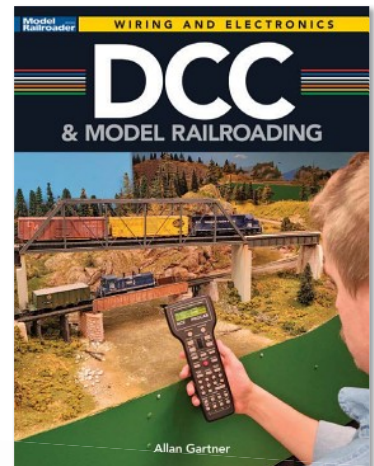
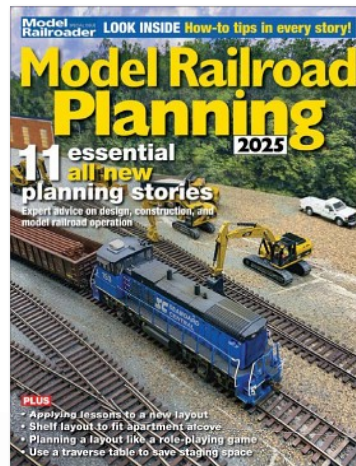
Having traveled 7 miles west from downtown Philadelphia on the Pennsylvania RR's electrified four-track mainline, the late afternoon Paoli Local arrives at Narberth station in this summer 1955 scene on Jay and Brook Qualman's railroad. The commuter consist features "red rattlers," vintage MP54 coaches with "owl eye" round windows at the car ends. The HO scale modeling is by Brook Qualman, MMR, and John Bussard. Jay Qualman took the photo.

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Schedule of Events

CA, SACRAMENTO: International Railroad. November 14-15, 2026. Cal Expo, Building C, 1600 Exposition Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95815. Saturday 10am-5pm and Sunday 10am-4pm. Admission: At Gate- Saturday \$15, Sunday \$12; Online- Saturday \$12, Sunday \$10 (plus fees). 12 and under free. Operating Layouts, Vendors, Kids Activities, on-site food and more! For updates, visit: internationalrailfair.com or contact Tom Campbell: tom.c.irf@gmail.com

CO, LOVELAND: Rocky Mountain Train Show, November 28-29, 2026. The Ranch Events Complex, 5280 Arena Circle, Loveland, CO 80538. Saturday, 9am-5pm, Sunday 9am-3pm. 200+ sales tables, 50+ vendors, operating layouts, model trains of all scales. Admission \$10.00, 12 and under free. Free parking. 303-364-0274 www.RockyMountainTrainShow.com Information@RockyMountainTrainShow.com

IA, IOWA CITY: 6th Annual Iowa City Train Show. Sunday, October 18, 2026. 10am-3pm. 4261 Oakcrest Rd. SE, Iowa City, IA 52246. Buildings B & C. Admission: \$5, children 12 and under free w/adult. All different scales! Displays and layouts to see! Sponsored by the Hawkeye Model Railroad Club! iowacitytrainshow@gmail.com or visit: www.hawkeyemodellrrclub.com

IL, ST. CHARLES: 35th Annual Chicago Railroadiana and Model Train Show. Kane County Fairgrounds, (Front Building), 525 South Randall Rd., St. Charles, IL 60174. Sunday, October 18, 2026, 10:00am-3:00pm. Admission: \$6.00 (includes tax). Children under 12 FREE. Tables starting at \$65.00. For information: 847-358-1185, RussFierce@aol.com or www.RRShows.com

IN, INDIANAPOLIS: Indianapolis Train Show at Garfield Park. Hosted by Naptown White River MRC. Saturday, October 3, 2026. 10am-3pm. \$5 admission. 12 and under Free. All Scales Welcome. Operating layouts, Displays, Memorabilia. Garfield Park Burrello Family Center, 2345 Pagoda Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46203. Morgan Davis, naptownmrr@gmail.com, 317-643-0779, www.naptownmrr.org

KS, TOPEKA: 5th Annual Topeka Model Railroad Show & Swap Meet. October 3-4, 2026. Saturday 9am-4pm; Sunday 9am-3pm. 5720 SW 21st St., Topeka, KS 66604. Helping Hands Humane Society will receive half of all door sales as a direct donation. Admission: \$8, children under 12 FREE with paid adult. Info: Phil Skow (text) 785-221-2174

MA, MARLBOROUGH: Hub Division NER/NMRA. Royal Plaza Trade Center, 181 Boston Post Road West (Rte. 20 West), Marlborough, MA. Saturday December 5, 2026; 10am-4pm, and Sunday December 6, 2026; 10am-4pm. Admission: \$15.00; Children under 12 and Scouts in Uniform FREE. Admission is good both days. Information: Ray, 781-910-9581; e-mail: TE.info@hubdiv.org; website: www.hubdiv.org

MI, BELLEVILLE: Rails on Wheels & Division 6-NMRA's North Central Region, presents the Southeast Michigan Model Railroad Show and Sale. November 22, 2026, 10am-3pm. Early Bird 9am. New Location: Wayne County Community College's Ted Scott Campus; 9555 Haggerty Rd., Zip: 48111. Admission: \$6, Early Bird \$10. Operating Layouts, LEGO layout, Vendors, Clinics. Contact: John Young, 517-449-9063, cdjhyoung@yahoo.com

MI, EAST LANSING: Lansing Model Railroad Club Show and Sale. Farm Bureau Michigan State University Pavilion. Sunday, November 8, 2026, 10:00am-4:00pm. Admission \$8.00, 12 and under free. Michigan's largest train show: layouts, demonstrations and 500+ tables. Free parking. Flyer, table forms and map <http://www.lmrc.org> or call John Hartmann 517-290-8948

MN, ST. CLOUD: GRANITE CITY TRAIN SHOW AND SALE. River's Edge Convention Center, 10 4th Ave S. St. Cloud, MN 56301. Saturday, November 14, 2026. 9:00am-3:00pm. \$6.00, Kids 10 and under FREE. Buy/sell model/toy trains, books, videos, railroad collectibles. Operating model and toy train displays. Win a LIONEL train set! 612-558-6484; GraniteCityTrainShow@gmail.com or visit www.GraniteCityTrainShow.com

MO, ST. LOUIS: 35th Annual Greater St. Louis Metro Area Train Show sponsored by Mississippi Valley N Scales. NEW LOCATION Saturday only! Kirkwood Community Center, 111 S. Geyer Road, Kirkwood, MO 63122. Saturday, October 3, 2026, 10am-4pm. Admission: \$10, kids 12 and under FREE! All scales, swap tables, layouts! Free parking. David Johnson, 636-225-2405, https://mvns.railfan.net

NC, RALEIGH: Neuse River Valley Model RR Club 42nd ANNUAL FALL TRAIN SHOW. DATES: November 7-8, Sat 9-5; Sun 10-4. Graham Building at NC State Fairgrounds. 500+ vendor tables, 16 operating layouts. Display your models at our Craftsman's Showcase. Admission: \$10 covers both days, children 12 and under free with adult. Visit www.nrvclub.net

NJ, EAST RUTHERFORD: METCA/NYSME All Gauge Train Show. October 10, 2026. St. Joseph's School, 120 Hoboken Road, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. 9am-2pm. METCA/NYSME members admitted free at 8am, public at 9am. Admission: \$5.00 per person 16 and up. Layouts, refreshments, and door prizes. For tables and information, contact the NYSME Office at 201-939-9212 or email: contact@modelengineers.org

NJ, TOMS RIVER: ECTP and Collectibles LLC presents the Toms River Toy & Train Show. Elks Lodge, 600 Washington St., Toms River, NJ 08753. Sunday, October 4, 2026, 9:00am-2:00pm. Admission: \$7.00; under 12 free with adult. John LaLima 732-845-5966. Go to www.eastcoasttrainparts.com and click on Toms River Show.

NJ, WAYNE: ECTP and Collectibles LLC presents The Wayne Train Show. P.A.L. Hall, 1 Pal Drive, Wayne, NJ 07470. Sunday, September 27, 2026, 9:00am-2:00pm. Admission: \$7.00; under 12 free with adult. John LaLima 732-845-5966. Go to www.eastcoasttrainparts.com and click on The Wayne Show.

OH, BEREA: The 52nd Annual Great Berea Train Show hosted by the NMRA. Saturday, October 3rd, and Sunday, October 4th. 10:00am to 4:00pm both days. Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds in Berea, Ohio. Admission \$10.00. Under 16 free with an adult purchase. 70,000 square feet of model railroading. Show Contact: David James showmanager@thegreatberetrainshow.org 440-785-9907. Visit: www.thegreatberetrainshow.org

OH, COSHOCTON: Inaugural Coshocton Train Show, Coshocton County Career Center, 23640 Airport Rd., Saturday, October 17, 2026. Hours 10am-3pm. 70+ vendor tables starting at \$15/table. All scales. \$5 Admission; kids 12 and under FREE. Food available by donation. FREE Parking. Proceeds benefit Coshocton Model Railroad Club - Open House at 2pm. Info: 330-473-7466; coshoctontrainshow.com - Sponsored by LANSON TRAINS

OH, DAYTON: 50th Original Dayton Train Show. The New Montgomery County Fairgrounds, 645 Infirmary Road, Dayton, OH 45417. November 7 & 8, 2026. Saturday 11am-5pm and Sunday 11am-4pm. Admission: \$10.00 per adult, children 12 and under free with paid adult. PO Box 341233, Beavercreek, OH 45434, 937-424-6413. Email: NMRA.Div.3@gmail.com or visit: www.DaytonTrainShow.com for updates.

OK, OKLAHOMA CITY: The OKC Train Show, November 14-15, 2026. Saturday, 9:00am-5:00pm, and Sunday, 10:00am-4:00pm. Bennett Center at the State Fairgrounds in Oklahoma City. It's Oklahoma's largest train show and sale with over 120,000 square feet and more than 600 tables of vendors, manufacturers, layouts, clinics and more. Visit www.okctrainshow.com for more information!

TX, HOUSTON: Houston Area Model Train Show, November 14-15, 2026. Saturday 10am-5pm, Sunday 10am-4pm. Adults \$8, 17 and under free. All scales, operating layouts, club/museum displays, table sales and more. Pearlard Knights of Columbus Hall, 2320 Hatfield Rd., Pearland TX 77581. More information at <http://houstonttrak.org> or email info@houstonttrak.org. Sponsored by Houston Area T-TRAK Association, Inc.

TX, TEMPLE: 44th Annual Temple Model Train & RPM Show by CentraMod Inc. Central Texas Area Model Railroaders. Frank W. Mayborn Convention Center, 3303 North 3rd St., Temple, TX 76701. September 19-20, 2026, Saturday 10am-5pm and Sunday 10am-4pm. Admission: \$10, Seniors & Military w/ID \$9, 12 and under free w/adult. FREE Parking! Additional information: 254-760-3761 or www.centramodr.com

WA, BATTLE GROUND: Southwest Washington Model Railroaders, Great Train Swap Meet. Saturday, September 26, 2026. 9:00am, Beat-the-Crowd, \$10 admission. 9:30am-2:30pm, Adults \$5, Students \$3, under 6 FREE w/adult. Battle Ground High School Gymnasium, 300 W. Main St., Battle Ground, WA 98604. Take N. Parkway Avenue to Free Parking. Vendor tables \$25.00. Info: Larry Sprenkel, 360-619-8899, Larry.sprenkel@gmail.com

WA, SPOKANE: River City Modelers Fall Train Show. Spokane Fairgrounds, 404 N. Havana. Sunday, October 11th, 9:30am-3:30pm. Admission: \$8 for adults, 12 & under free. 200+ tables of Railroad-related items for sale, operating layouts, Free-MO, Operation Lifesaver & more. Free Parking. For table rental or general info, contact: Shirley Sample, 509-991-2317 or email: shirley@busnws.com

WI, EAU CLAIRE: West Wisconsin Railroad Club Annual Train Show. YMCA Sports Center, 3456 Craig Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701. October 10-11, 2026. Saturday 10:00am-5:00pm, Sunday 10:00am-3:00pm. Admission: \$8 adults (\$7 w/non-perishable food item), \$3 students ages 6-16, children 5 and under free w/paid adult. Operating Layouts, Vendors, Displays, and Concessions. For additional information email: TrainShow@WestWisconsinRailroad.Club

WI, MONROE: Green County Model Railroaders 48th Annual Model Train Show & Swap Meet. The Stateline Ice and Community Expo, 1632 4th Avenue West, Monroe, WI 53566. September 26-27, 2026. Saturday & Sunday, 10am-4pm. For information contact Kevin Johnson, 608-558-9332, or visit: www.gcmrrinc.org

WI, ONALASKA: The 35th Annual Great Tri-State Rail Sale. Onalaska Omni Center, 255 Riders Club Road. Saturday, October 24, 2026. 9:00am-3:00pm. Admission \$8.00, under 12 free with adult. 300 vendor tables. All Scales; Model, Toy & Antique Trains & Memorabilia. Information: 4000 Foundation, PO Box 3411, La Crosse, WI 54602, 608-498-9522. www.4000foundation.org

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Next Issue

Great Model Railroads comes to MR

Doug Tagsold is a prolific model railroad builder, and we take one last look at his 1:72 scale C&S.

Joe Green gives us a taste of the kinds of model railroads NMRA convention visitors can see in Tacoma.

The Modellbundesbahn took visitors to the German transition era, which was in 1975. The tourist attraction may get another lease on life, so don't cancel your travel plans to Germany yet.

We visit John J. Gray's 57 x 87-foot HO scale Union Pacific Overland Route layout. The model railroad is set in the 1950s between Ogden, Utah, and Green River, Wyo.

Plus more:

- Tony Koester shows you how to plan with forks
- Dave Rickaby explains how he creates a forest floor

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Three guys sit in front of a depot ...

No, this is not the start of a Dad Joke. My kids cured me of those ages ago. Rather, it's, well, a testimonial of sorts to the folks who work behind the scenes to bring you *Model Railroader* and *Trains.com*-branded products that you regularly enjoy. I have known them for what seems a lifetime now, and we're more like close friends than merely journalists who happen to work together.

The accompanying photo is the work of ever-creative David Popp, builder of the On30 Olympia & Sand Creek. When he and Gerry Leone, who works closely with him on *Trains.com*, had Bernard Hellen at *Miniprints* make 3D-printed figures of themselves, David discovered that I had too. David edits my monthly *Trains of Thought* column and we've been good friends for decades, so the creative juices started flowing. The initial result was this photo of three longtime friends (I'll refrain from using the term "old") enjoying a midday lull in front of the Sand Creek depot.

I understand that I will permanently occupy the agent-operator's chair in the depot. So, if your "minime" avatar ever happens to be in Sand Creek, please drop in to say hello. I'm told that Gerry usually supervises logging camp No. 1.

David Popp was new to the MR staff when we first met in 2002. I'm absolutely terrible at remembering such occasions, but my guess is that it was during the annual meeting where we would discuss



O scale Gerry Leone (left), David Popp, and Tony Koester enjoy basking in the warm summer sun at the Sand Creek depot on David's layout. The three were scanned by *Miniprints.com* and have been made into 3D figures in multiple scales, making for a unique way that good friends can share their layouts with each other. David Popp photo

the content for the next issue of *Model Railroad Planning*. David reminded me that along with Andy Sperandio and associate editor Paul Schmidt, the four of us also went to operate at Bill Darnaby's HO scale layout on the same trip.

David went on to become MR's managing editor, but he's also an ace videographer and later moved over to head that department for *Trains.com*. He's usually the designer and co-builder of

in each issue if he'd had the time to write it. His knowledge of 12"-scale railroading resulted in him serving as the interim editor of *Classic Trains* for two issues as well.

When we added the new "Behind the scenes at MR" column to the magazine to ensure that MR readers are aware that staff members have a personal as well as professional interest in the hobby, we showcased David's O&SC in the inaugural September 2026 column.

I met Gerry while he was serving as the National Model Railroad Association's Communications Director and I as the Worldwide At Large Director. The NMRA has been fortunate to have members like Gerry who have the proper mix of modeling and professional expertise to guide its direction. He's a retired advertising professional who played in the big leagues, so I'm never

surprised when some of that talent shows up on his HO Bona Vista model railroad (now in its fifth iteration) or in the videos he does for *Trains.com*.

When our usual traveling companions decided to take a cruise from Buenos Aires, Argentina, to Antarctica and then back up toward Santiago, Chile, we invited Gerry and his equally talented and fun-to-be-with wife, Renay. As expected, he provided no end of merriment, even when he was a bit behind schedule taking his motion-sickness pills. A really nasty storm caught us crossing the several-hundred-mile-wide gap between Antarctica and South America. But next morning as we rode the world's southern-most railway through Tierra del Fuego National Park at Ushuaia, Chile, behind a narrow gauge steam locomotive, Gerry was his usual chipper self. Even rock-solid Renay looked a bit amazed.

Good as Gerry and David are at what they do, and as long as they have been doing it, one of the joys of being good friends is in the sharing of information. It may involve magazine or video work, and it's nice to be able to speak frankly to someone and know you'll get a straight answer. Or it may involve the hobby, such as how did you do this or where did you get that? Learning never stops. What is routine for one of us may be an eye-opener for another, and subsequently to the readers and viewers.

Meanwhile, the three of us will enjoy a quiet interlude on a warm summer day waiting for the train to arrive in Sand Creek before we head back to our various "mini jobs" on the layout. **MR**



WHAT IS ROUTINE
FOR ONE OF US
MAY BE AN
EYE-OPENER FOR
ANOTHER...
—TONY

MR's project railroads, and each of them invariably contains clever bits of track planning and/or layout construction. His articles have also enhanced the pages of MRP from time to time; I would have run a Popp-bylined feature



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