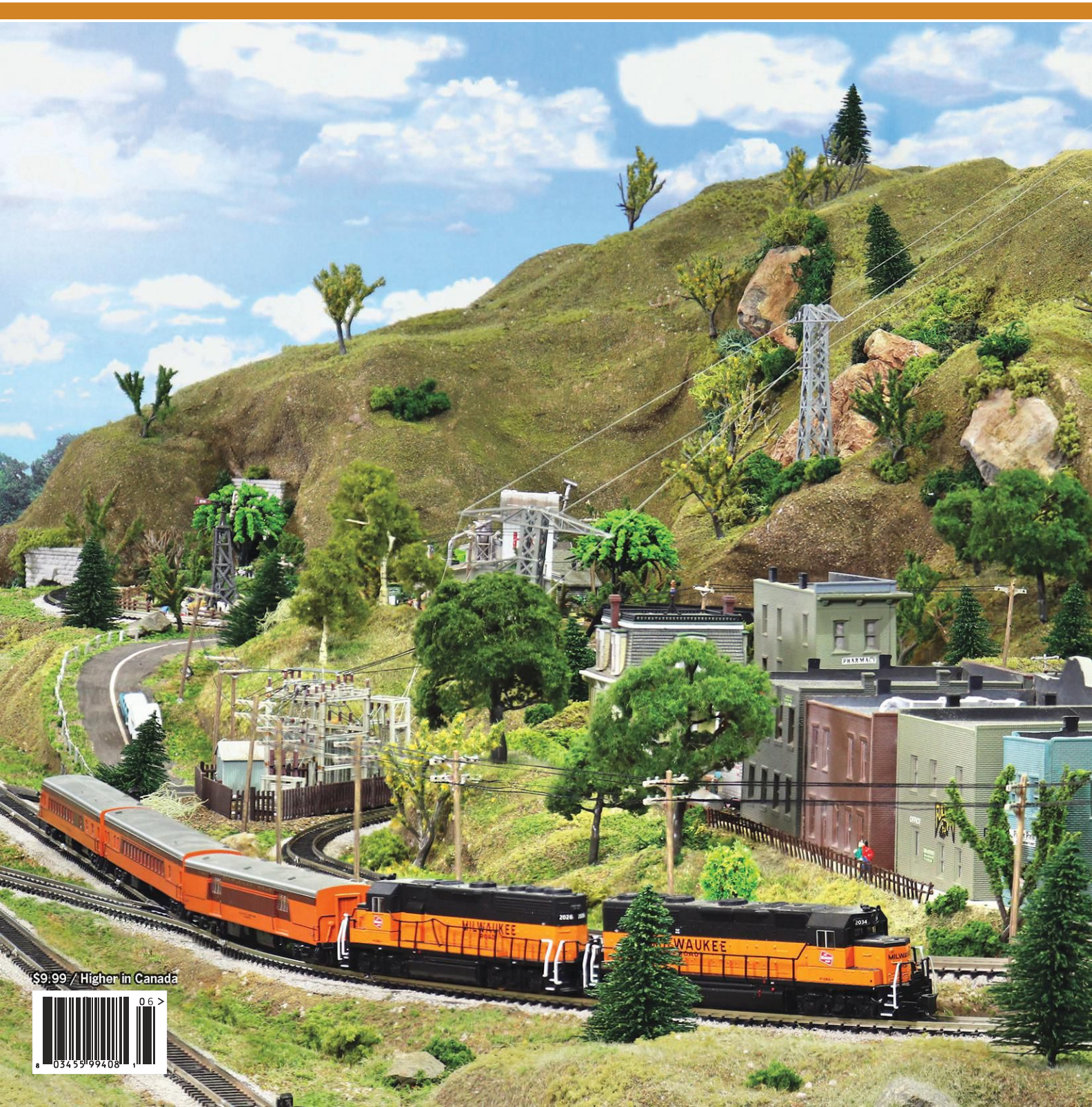
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In 2016 Norfolk Southern decided to convert several SD90MACs to SD70ACUs, the Siemens tech was swapped with Mitsubishi components, and the cab was replaced with the SD70ACe's cab. Canadian Pacific decided to convert their collection of SD90MACs as well; they reached out to Progress Rail for the rebuild project. Each Canadian Pacific model is based on a different branch of the Canadian Military. The Norfolk Southern models feature a unique cab with headlights look accurate to the prototype.

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- CP 7022 - Detailed in a grey, red, and black paint scheme inspired by Canadian and American warships
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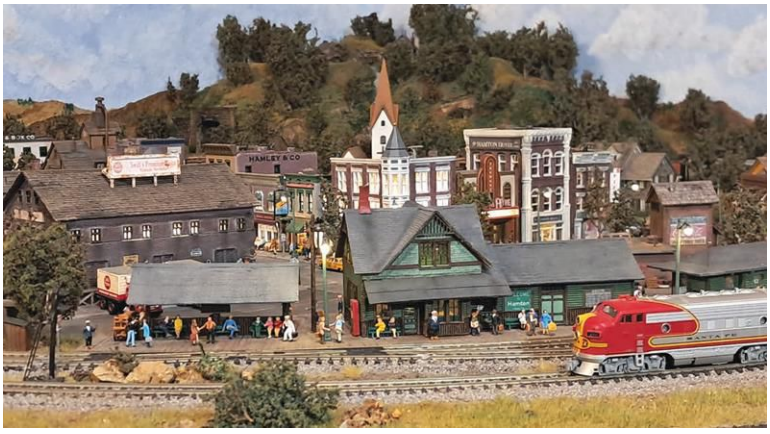
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On the cover: Heading East from the coast, Special #14 creeps through St. Regis, Montana. This is one of the only places along the entire line that these trains have to slow down to what feels like a snails pace. You might be wondering: What's with the power units? Well, there was a flame out of the lead unit #442 in the regular consist. These units will move the train a bit East until a more suitable lash-up can be lined up for the rest of the trip. Such is life on the railroad... At least we are moving! Find more on Part 4 of Dennis Murphy's *Extra Extra! Read All About It!*, starting on page 37.

Want to know more? Wonder what's coming up? Visit us at: www.nscalemagazine.com or contact us at: info@nscalemagazine.com



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EDITORIAL

Another year. Wow, where does the time go. We've enjoyed some train shows, attended clinics, built new layouts and added to existing ones, painted, weathered, modified, bought new products, and the list goes on. We had a lot of fun. It's been a pleasure seeing old friends, meeting new ones, talking, emailing, receiving and sending letters. I hope 2026 will bring more of the same.

This issue features a number of layouts and new authors. It is always a pleasure working with the authors and sharing their work. When they contact us, they wonder if their layout is good enough to be featured in *N-Scale Magazine*. Then I get the chance to see their amazing talent and I ask myself, where have you been all this time? There are so many layouts just waiting to be shared and, if you are one of them, please reach out. I continue to find many of you on the model railroading forums. Ron Hamley is one of the authors that has recently joined us in this issue and, wow, what a beautiful layout he's been working on since 2017. He shares his long journey back to model railroading.

Each of us is in a different place in our journey and enjoy different aspects of model railroading. Putting each issue together is one of my favorite things to do. I find it inspiring when reading each and every word, as their story unfolds. Thank you for giving me your support, your time, and your friendship. It means the world to me.

Dennis Murphy is sharing Part 4 – *Extra, Extra, Read All About It - Structures: Prebuilt and Kits*. He is doing an excellent job. For those of you building along with Dennis, I'd love to see some of your photos. I hope you will share them. Please email your photos to *info@nscalemagazine.com*. These are just of the few articles in this issue and each author is outstanding.

In September, renewals notices were mailed out. Unfortunately, the return envelope that gets mailed back to us, was being returned to you as undeliverable. I found out, when working with USPS, that an additional barcode was being printed on the bottom of the envelope by USPS, so it was just going in circles at USPS, until eventually being returned to you. If this has happened to you, please place the renewal envelope in another envelope and mail it back out. I am working with USPS to correct this problem. New renewal notices were mailed out November 3rd. You should have already received them by the time you read this and hopefully renewed. Renewal notices are sent out early so you don't miss an issue.

Whenever there is a problem, I am contacted by you in the first few days, letting us know what is happening, whether it's a renewal envelope or the magazine. Thank you for always reaching out. We are so thankful to have such loyal subscribers and I appreciate you.

Wishing you all the very best during the holidays and the new year to come. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Pamela

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LETTERS *to the* EDITOR

Hi Pamela: I am enjoying the latest issue of *N-Scale Magazine* – once again, a nice mix of articles. Regarding Dennis Machlica's interesting article on 3D printed structures, with its focus on architectural styles, readers looking for detailed information about that subject just might appreciate my book titled *Main Street Revisited: Time, Space, and Image Building in Small-Town America* (University of Iowa Press (1996). In it, I also discuss and illustrate regional variations across the USA, as well as model railroading's role in "preserving" this rich architectural and design heritage in miniature. Keep up the great work! All the best, Richard Francaviglia

---

Hi Pamela: As always, the content is great. The one thing that seems missing though are bird's eye views of the featured layouts. Very few magazines actually offer it, though. Yours is no exception. Seems like the only magazine that does it, via a colored diagram no less, is *Model Railroader*. I'm assuming this is a specialized service done by their own staff member. Something that other magazines, including yours, most likely does not have. However, I wonder if the authors themselves could submit these on their own, if not artwork, then at least an aerial photograph of the entire layout. It's always interesting to see the track plan in its entirety. All the best, Mike Kaplan

Response from Pamela: I completely agree. A track plan is very important and we do work with our authors in hopes they can provide one. We can only work with what they provide and we are more than happy to work with them once they get us even a sketch. Not all are able to provide one though. We will continue to work with them in hopes that we can feature more track plans when featuring layout articles. Thank you.

Hello Pamela: Just a quick note to let you know that I am also following along with the Scenic Ridge kit and will be building it. I purchased the Scenic Ridge kit, but am waiting on the Atlas Scenic Ridge track kit; they are back ordered. When it comes, I will start and have the magazines handy to follow along. Thanks for running this article for those of us just getting started. Thanks, Bruce

Response from Pamela: Thank you for your support. If you have any questions along the way, please reach out to us. I have been in touch with Woodland Scenics and hope to hear back soon. They did indicate that their distributors are selling also them.

Hello Pamela: I saw a post of yours on Facebook group N Scale Model Railroading and thought I'd reach out to you with the hopes you can direct me on the best procedure to sell my father-in-law's unique 14'×6' N-Scale layout made of mostly natural materials. The mountains are made from different tree barks, oyster/sea shells and dried avocado rinds, and the landscape is made mostly of dried moss and vegetation. There are ceramic houses and scenes, which are placed in their own foundation, but can be removed for cleaning or transport.

I have photos of his layout, but because of how unique it is, it really needs to seen in person to be appreciated. If you can give me any advice on how to proceed, it would be greatly appreciated. You can contact me with any questions, comments or advice.

Sincerely, Christine Hubner

Response from Pamela: Christine, I a more than happy to help. We spoke before about reaching out to your local hobby shop to see if they have an interest or know of someone who might, along with reaching out to the model railroading forums. If there is anyone who might be interested in a layout for sale, please reach out to us at *info@nscalemagazine.com* and I will forward your email to Christine.

Hello Pamela: I saw you included my letter and wanted to update you on my progress. I have completed the text for the article and am working on finishing the new model with step-by-step photos. I expect to have everything completed by the end of September.

Best regards, Dave Dahlstrom

Response from Pamela: Thank you for your support to *N-Scale Magazine* and our entire community concerning the scarcity of high-quality boat and ship models in N scale. I look forward to publishing the article on your sea coast harbor theme, that will provide a step-by-step guide on how to construct a high-quality replica of a Coast Guard lifeboat.

Hello Pamela: I am working on the Flour Mill finally and have a question for Dan Lewis. Was the PVC pipe used thick walled? I have 1½" ID PVC that is thick walled, so a little under 2" OD. Does that sound about right? I know I have to cut ⅜" off of each one, so I think it will come close to the scale 45' width when both sides are put together. BTW, I am making the tallest building dimension 80' vs. 63' that you used, so taller elevator shaft and taller main building. I have four windows in the end wall and am hoping the gable pieces don't cover it up. We will see.

Response from Dan Lewis: Hi, Marc. Yes, I'm happy to address your questions. First, paint manufacturers have diverse names for their colors, and they change them periodically. I'm thinking that Rust-oleum Camouflage Tan paint is more Khaki colored than a light tan, so I agree with you. Whatever you get, be sure it is dead flat. You don't want any sheen.

As to my model being not high enough. Looking at a photo of my model with a photo of the prototype, the vertical spaces between the windows is too short, and especially on the end; it is obvious that the main structure needs to be higher. My second row of windows on the long side of the structure should be approximately level with the middle of the roof of the lower structure, plus I ended up not having enough windows on the end of the larger structure. Some of this height adjustment was due to the size of the Grandt-Line windows, but nonetheless, in retrospect, I could have done a better job with the height.

Finally, about the stick of wood inserted in the PVC pipe. If I remember correctly, I wedged a linear stick of wood into the PVC, actually tapping it in with a hammer, and used this as a sort of handle to guide the pipe on the table saw while cutting off a section of the linear side of the piping. To keep the pipe straight while cutting, I used a guide parallel to the blade, which was affixed to the table saw surface to make sure the cut was straight. And yes, if I had made the main structure higher, I would have needed to make the silos higher as well.

Best wishes on the project! Dan

We look forward to hearing your comments. Please submit them to: N-Scale Magazine • 5811 75th Avenue NE • Marysville, WA 98270
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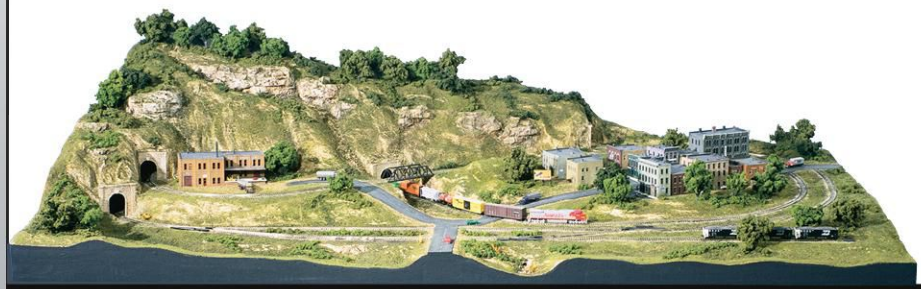
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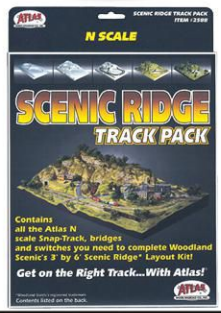
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Norfolk Southern (Cab HL) Road #7300
Item #s 176-8560, 176-8560-DCC, 176-8560-S
Price: $160.00 (Analog/DC), $265.00 (Digital/DCC), $365.00 (Digital/DCC+Sound)



Kato USA, Inc. – SD70ACU Locomotive
Norfolk Southern (Cab HL) Road #7337
Item #s 176-8561, 176-8561-DCC, 176-8561-S
Price: $160.00 (Analog/DC), $265.00 (Digital/DCC), $365.00 (Digital/DCC+Sound)

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I NEEDED A NEW HOBBY



My Long Journey Back to Model Railroading

by **Ron Hamley**

I had just come home after another discouraging round of golf. I walked through the door and told my wife I needed to find another hobby I could enjoy, but I had no idea what that hobby could be. I knew I wanted something I could do with my hands. I have always enjoyed working with my hands.

I was reminded of a hobby I had when I was a boy. My dad and I built a small HO train layout together. It had been over 60 years since then, but I still had some of the locomotives and freight cars from the original layout in a box, stored away in the rafters of the garage. For some reason, I could never throw them away. Maybe this would be my new hobby.

I pulled out the box and opened it up only to realize that I did not have a space large enough to build another HO size layout. The only option was a

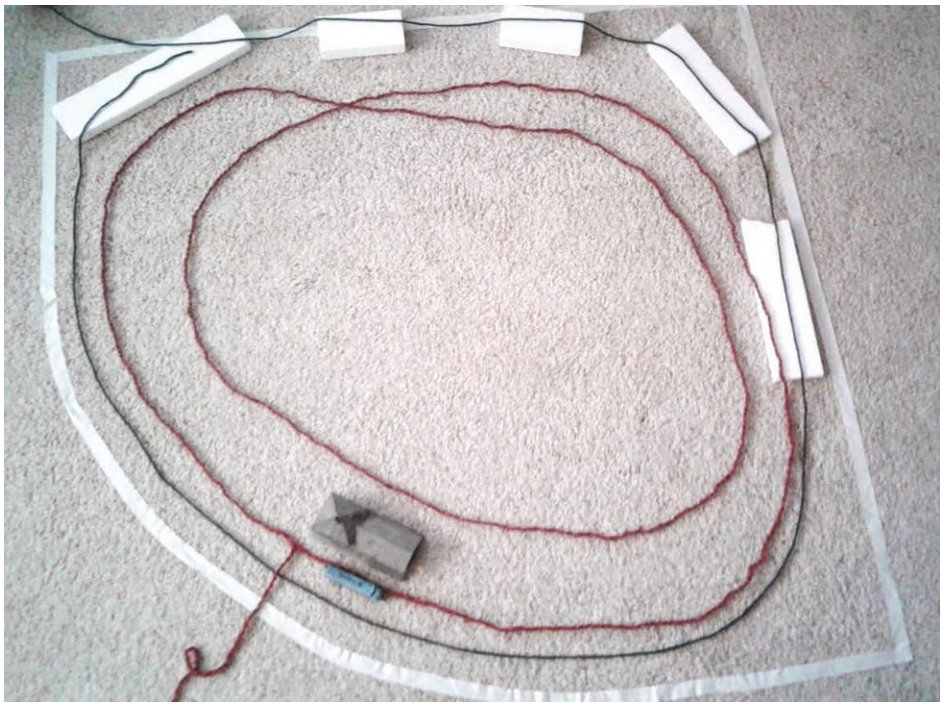


Photo 1: Tape and yarn used to design my layout. Pieces of Styrofoam were used to show elevation changes.

4-foot square corner of my office.

I had heard of N scale, but was not sure if I wanted to try that scale or not. I eventually got to the point when I thought "Why not?" I was ready to start my journey back into model railroading.

My wife suggested that we post on *nextdoor.com* that I was looking for anyone selling N scale trains. We were contacted almost immediately by a man selling off his older layout.

We went to see what he had and he walked out to greet us with boxes in his hands saying "Here you can have this free." The boxes included used buildings and other items such as trees, cars and trucks. I bought several locomotives (DC) including a Kato Southern Pacific 2-8-2 heavy Mikado steam locomotive, Kato Santa Fe SD-40 Diesel, and Southern Pacific EMD SD45 and two older Bachmann EMD F7A diesels. I also purchased a number of freight cars. The price was right. I didn't want to make a large investment at this time. This was a test run to see if this would be a good hobby for me. I didn't know how far I would go with N scale model railroading, but this was a great start.

Now I needed to determine what my layout would look like. A track plan was needed. I began to look at other N scale layouts online and purchased *N-Scale Magazine* to give me more ideas that I could use in designing my layout. Examples I saw made me think "I could do that." This allowed me to become more creative and design something I wanted that would fit in the corner of my office.

In August of 2017, I began to design a layout that would fit my space. I laid tape on the living room floor to mark the layout's dimensions and used yarn (courtesy of my wife's knitting stash) to visualize the track plan. Simple, but effective. It would be two independent loops. One on the outside and a second loop with a crossover on the inside. See ***Photo 1***.

Before buying track, I cut a plywood base and drew lines where I would lay the track. I also started forming the landscape. The track would go over a river and through mountain tunnels. The tops of the mountains could be removed to allow for access to the track for cleaning or for the occasional derailment.



Photo 2: Track and landscape design. Mountains, tunnels and river were taking shape.



Photo 3: The first run using two Bachmann locomotives.

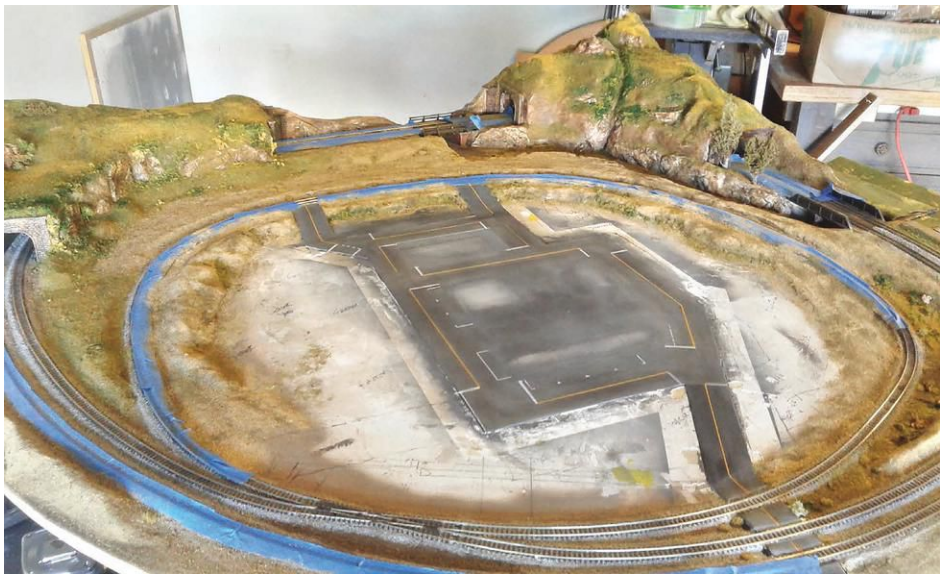


Photo 4: Painting the landscape. Adding static grasses to the scenery. City roads are laid out and painted black with striping and parking spots in front of building locations.

I began forming the landscape. The forms for the landscape and mountains were Styrofoam and plaster cloth. Rocks were made from plaster, formed in aluminum foil. I painted and weathered the rocks and placed them on the





layout. The river water was made with an epoxy resin. See ***Photo 2***.

I purchased Atlas Code 55 flex track and began to work. The track was soldered together. I also soldered bus lines to the track for power. The track was laid on foam track bed and covered with small gray ballast.

I was eager to run my locomotives. I placed one locomotive on each loop and applied power. First run: successful! The engines ran well, no issues. How cool was that! See ***Photo 3***.

Things were coming together and I got more and more excited to see my vision taking shape.

I painted the landscape and the inside of the tunnels a dark brown color and began laying out city streets. Static grasses would be glued over the painted landscape. I built my own static grass generator. A city would be at the center of the layout. Roads were

Photo 5 (*upper left*): Trees and shrubs being added. Rock formations along the river. Waterfalls.

Photo 6 (*left*): Original buildings. These served to design the city. The first model I built was the passenger station seen here under construction.

Photo 7 (*below*): City lights and street lights. Newer models have replaced many of the original buildings.





Photo 8: Welcome to Hamton! The busy passenger station awaits the incoming Santa Fe Super Chief passenger train.

made with plaster and painted black with street lines and parking spaces. The city streets were being laid out inside the two track loops. ***Photo 4.***

I was modeling California central coast (where I now live) and the foothills. This would be oak forests and grasslands. Most of the trees were handmade from small hedge branches, covered with Fine-Leaf Foliage from Woodland Scenics. Various colors of static grasses were used as ground cover. A waterfall would flow down the mountain into the river below. The waterfall is made of DAP Crystal Clear Sealant. See ***Photo 5***.

The models I was given were used to lay out the city in the middle of the two track loops. I used these models to learn how to paint and weather them to make them look more realistic. See ***Photo 6***.

Over time, I began to replace the original buildings with new kits that I built, painted, weathered (weathering powders) and detailed. I also kit-bashed models. This eventually led to making models from scratch. I could build models to fit the layout with a specific purpose in the design and placement. This was what I enjoyed most. The era of the city is late 1950s-early 1960s.

Lighting was added in the buildings



Photo 9: Downtown Hamton. Shoppers strolling down the tree lined sidewalks. Policeman directing traffic. Cars and trucks are located on the streets and around buildings. Several of the cars and trucks are lighted.



Photo 10: Work crews help keep the city properly maintained.



Photo 11: Not everyone has to work. Some people get to enjoy canoeing down the river.



Photo 12: Junk yard and dog.

and street lights on the roadways. I used Just Plug modules. This allowed me to light individual structures and regulate the brightness. I think I overdid it. Looking back, I would probably not use so many individual lights, but I do like the effects. See ***Photo 7***.

I read early on that "it's all in the details" when it comes to modeling your layout. I tried to take that idea to heart. No details were too small. Not only do I like to detail the buildings, but also the landscape. Many figures were placed around the buildings in the city. See ***Photos 8-11***.

Animals (deer and bears) are found in the mountains, while cats and dogs are found in the city. This includes the "junk yard" dog and the proverbial "cat up a tree". Not to worry, the firemen are at the scene to rescue kitty from its dilemma. See ***Photos 12-13***.

Street signs were printed on my computer and attached to 18-gauge nail brads. I was able to make street name signs using my grandkids names. They thought that was very cool. It was fun to share with them some of what I experienced with my dad. See ***Photos 14-15***.

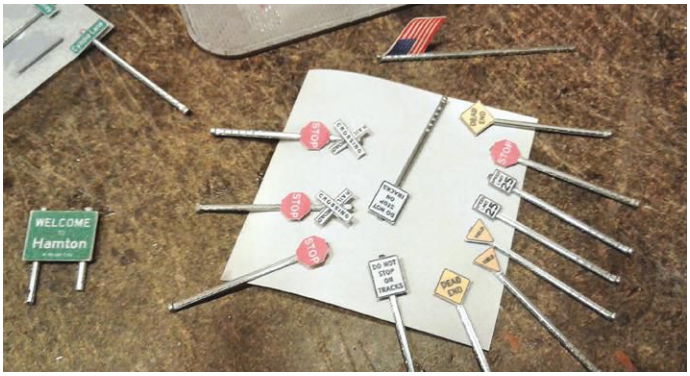
A police car with flashing red lights has pulled over someone racing down the back road towards the sawmill. I try to make the scenes look as realistic as possible. People viewing the layout always say they appreciate the detail work that went into it. These details bring the layout to life. See ***Photo 16***.

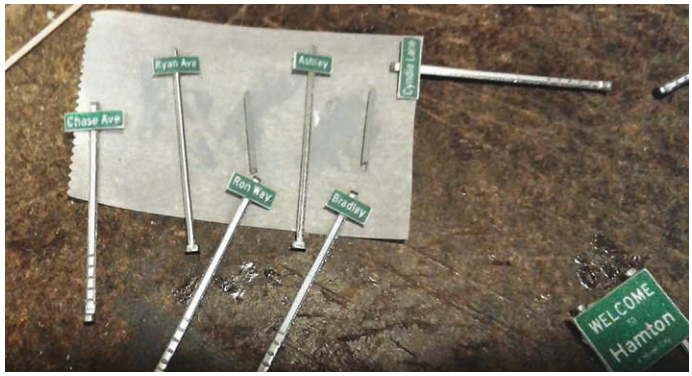
At this point, I realized I wanted to do more, but I had run out of space. I had used every square inch of the space I had available. I had completed this layout. I was now more excited than ever to continue this hobby. But what could I do?

In March of 2019, I decided to relocate my office to the closet and expand my original layout. My built in desk and cabinet now became part of the new expansion. The shelves above the desk now became dioramas that featured my old locomotives and freight cars from my youth. I even added lights and a signal crossing to the diorama. I am glad they are now displayed in my train room instead of sitting up in the garage rafters. The layout went from a 4-foot square corner to become a u-shaped layout, which added another



Photo 13: Cat up a tree.





Photos 14-15: Street signs. Street names.

2'×3' section, connecting with a 3'×7' section. See ***Photo 17***.

Switches were added to the two original loops and they were extended to run through all three sections of the layout. A third independent loop on the 3'×7' section was also added. This again was made with Atlas Code 55 flex track. The new addition was again modeled with Styrofoam, plaster cloth, and rocks made of plaster. The landscape included mountains with tunnels and a river. All the tunnel portals were handmade with ⅛" basswood for the new addition. Three small trestles go over the river. See ***Photo 18***.

This section of the layout became the industrial area for the city. It



Photo 16: Joggers witness the police pull over a driver caught speeding down the back road to the sawmill.



Photo 17: Two new sections added to the original layout.

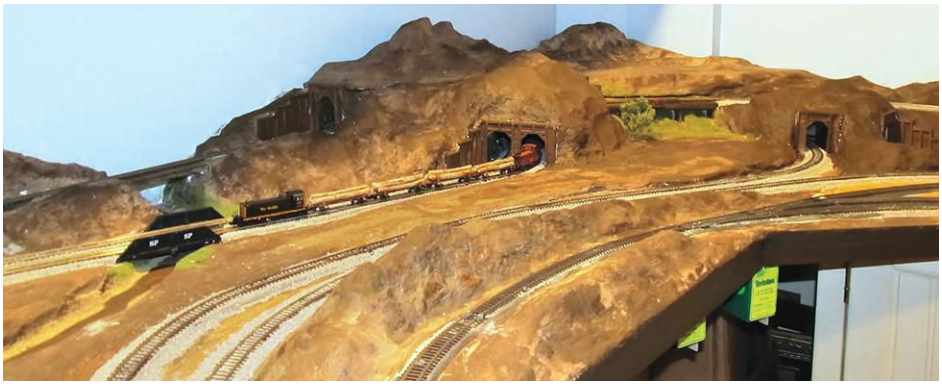


Photo 18: Track laid and ballasted. Landscape painted. Tunnel portals added. The logging train will bring trees to the sawmill.

includes a sawmill and a small railroad yard with freight station and maintenance buildings. A logging train runs to the sawmill. There were also several farms. See ***Photos 19-21***.

The most recent project to my layout was to build a harbor scene. All the structures were scratch built. The structures included a bait shop, gas station, cannery, boat maintenance building and an outboard motor repair shop. Two ships are in the harbor. The ships were kits from Seaport Model Works. The ocean was hand painted with four coats of Mod Podge applied. I used lumber from Northeastern Scale Lumber Co., laser cut brick sheets from Monster Modelworks, wood coffee stirrers, various sizes of basswood, wood skewers and flat toothpicks to build the structures. See ***Photos 22-24***.

The backgrounds were hand painted. Hills and clouds were added to give depth. I glued small shrubs and other landscape materials (grasses, dirt, etc.) to the painted background. This gave them texture and looked as if they were an extension of the actual features of the landscape design. See ***Photo 25***.

All of this is operated from a control panel, which includes two Tech II power transformers, switching functions, and Just Plug lighting units. Toggle switches turn on separated light modules. See ***Photo 26***.

While I was working on my layout, I decided to document my progress by posting short videos on YouTube. You can view these videos on my channel.

This hobby has expanded to include building structures for other N scale modelers. I enjoy building these models and I am encouraged by the

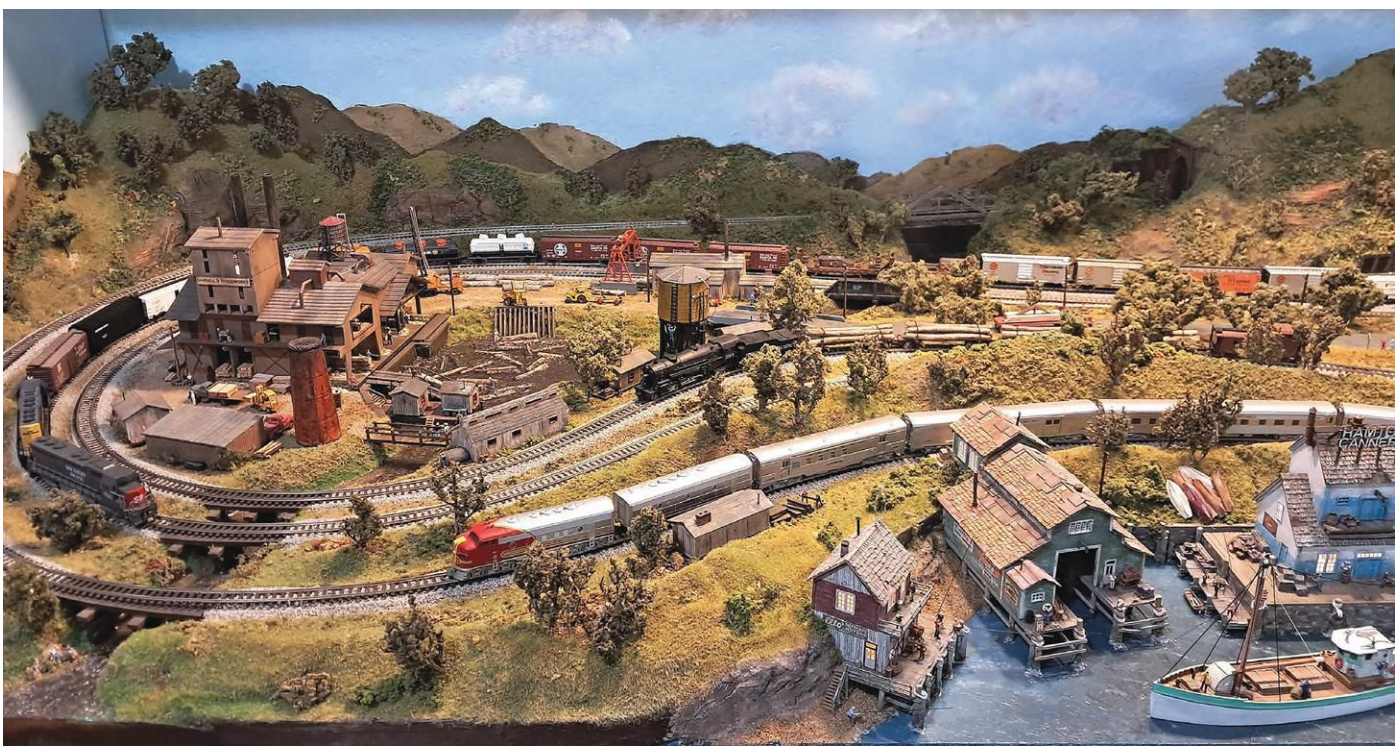


Photo 19: All three loops run around the sawmill. Each train runs over small trestles across the river.

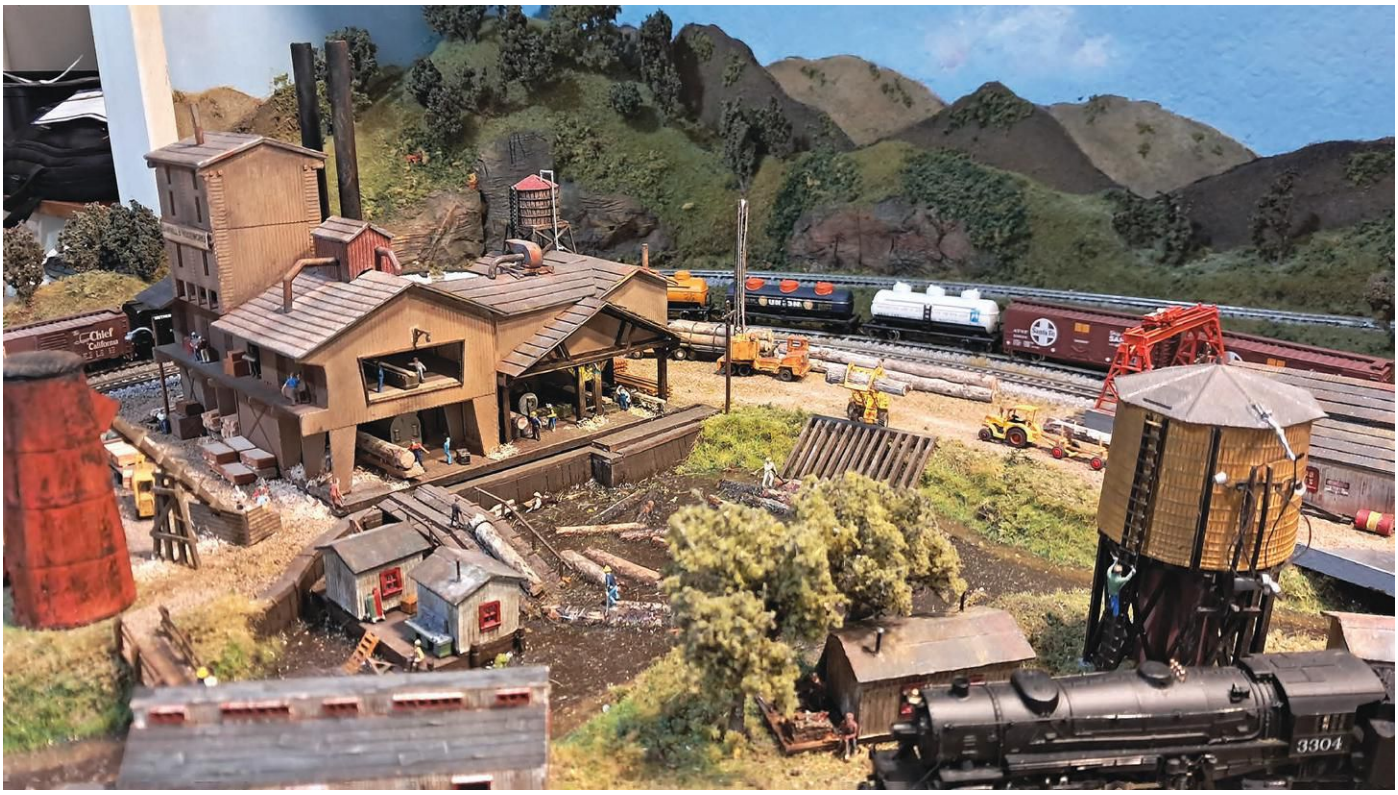


Photo 20: Sawmill. Logs being pilled into the mill from the log lake. Sawmill workers making a variety of lumber products.



Photo 21: Freight Station and train maintenance yard.

positive response I get from those who include models I built on their layouts.

Over the last three years, I have participated in the Central Coast Railroad Festival. My layout has been on the tour for those interested in viewing model railroads. I like giving people the opportunity to see what I have done. Perhaps they walk away thinking "I could do that." The Pacific Coast Region – National Model Railroad Association (PCR-NMRA) was held March 27-30, 2025 in San Luis Obispo. Again, I was happy to share my layout for participants to view. It was a great time to show and tell, as well as hear and see what other model railroad enthusiasts are doing.

All in all, choosing N scale railroading and modeling was a great choice for my newest hobby. I found it to be

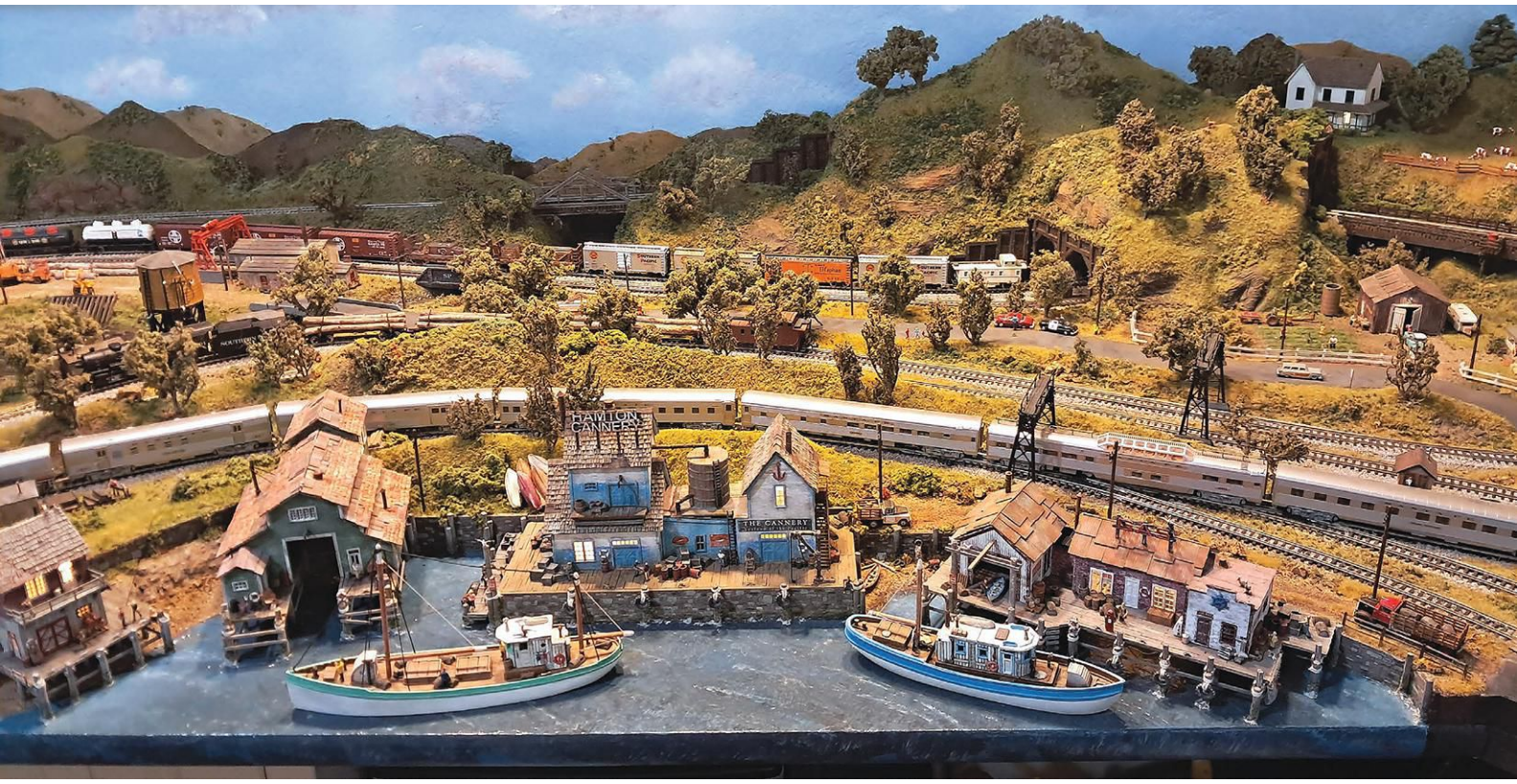


Photo 22: Harbor Scene. Motor repair shop. Boat repair shop. Cannery. Bait and Tackle Shop and Gas station.



Photo 23: Ship model from Seaport Model Works.

a creative outlet for skills I didn't even know I had. Even if you only have a small space, using N scale will allow you to have a nice layout you can enjoy, just as I enjoy mine.

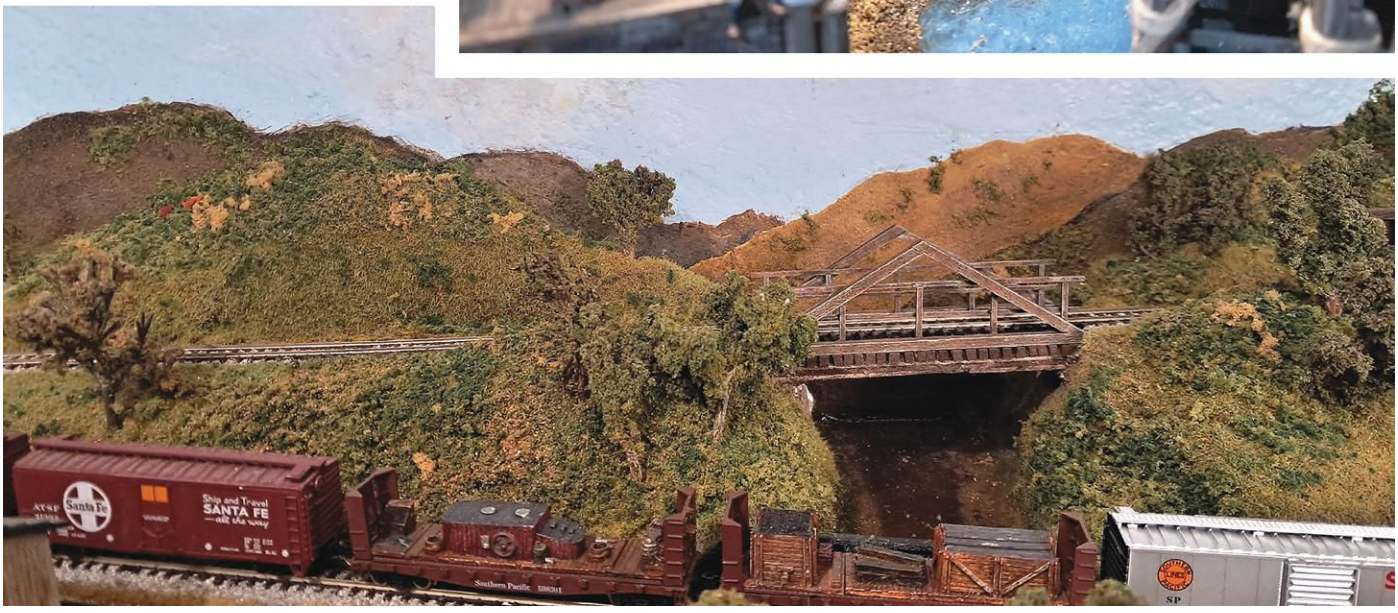
By the way, I do still play golf, but on those times where I come home frustrated, I can go into my office and enjoy my model railroading.

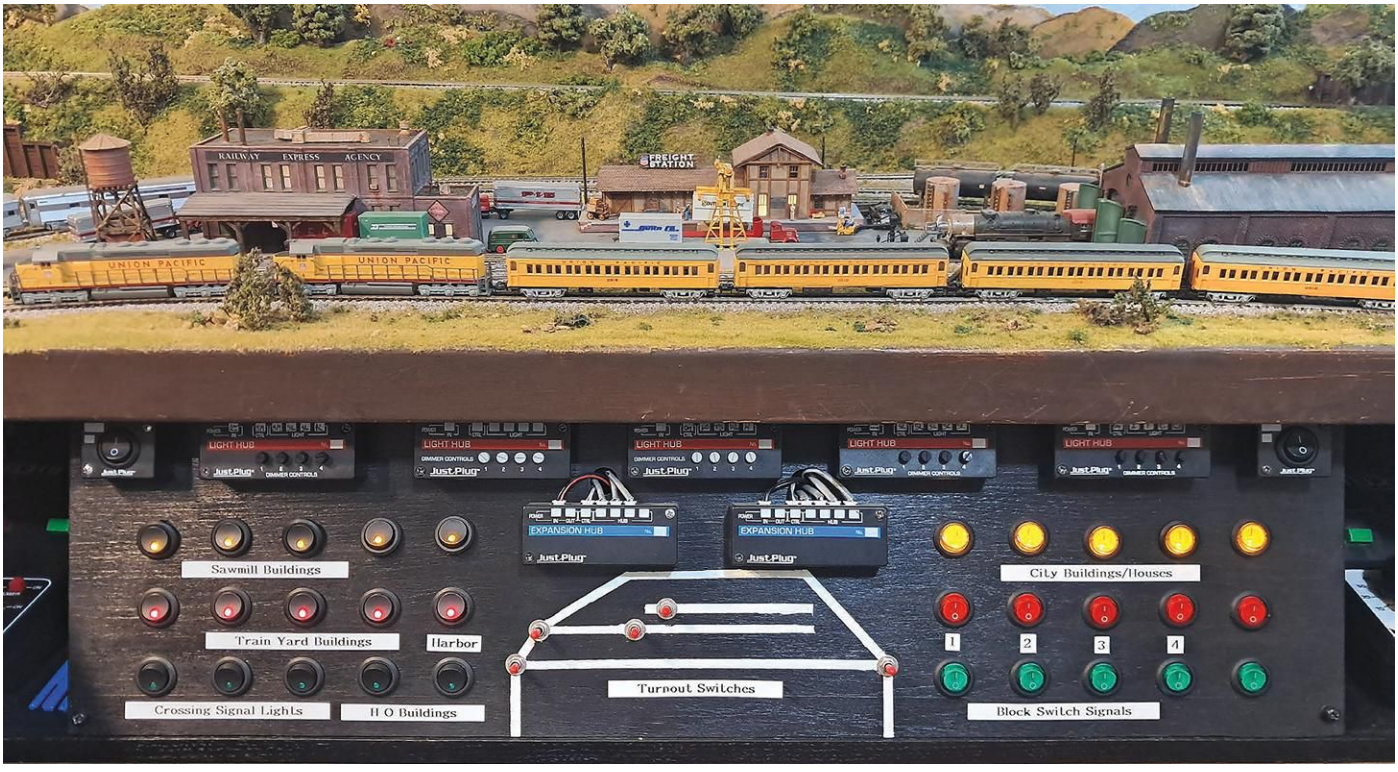
Photo 24 (*left*): Details around the harbor. Junk accumulates near the water drain that empties into the harbor. The water from the pipe was again made with DAP Crystal Clear Sealant. The ocean water is made with Mod Podge.



Photo 25 (*below*): Background hills painted with small shrubs, added for depth.

Photo 26 (*bottom*): Control Panel. Turnout switches using Tortoise Slow Motion Switch Machines. Toggle switches for Lights, Crossing Signals, and Block Signals. Just Plug modules control the lights in each building. Each set of switches control specific scenes – downtown city, sawmill, train yard, and the harbor each have individual controls.





YOU'RE IN THE ARMY NOW



Part 1

by **Roy Cutler**

NTRAK MODULES

This is the story of combining two interests into one; that of N scale model railroading and military modeling. It all began with three, 6-foot long NTRAK military modules that were originally created by Mark Cacciola. Mark spent untold hours collecting, painting and detailing World War II Army soldiers, jeeps, trucks, tanks, artillery and railroad cars. He then created an 18-foot long military diorama (3 ea., 6-foot NTRAK modules) to display his tribute to the "Greatest Generation." Mark enjoyed displaying these modules at various model railroad shows where they were always a hit with the audience.

One day, Mark decided to get out of N scale and pursue larger scale military models. The NTRAK modules were too well done to let them slip away, so Mark sold the modules and much of his N scale Army equipment to Mount Rainier N Scale (MRNS) club members, Diane Powell and Gregg Arndt, who agreed to preserve and display Mark's excellent modeling.

By the time I joined the club, Gregg had inherited the modules and was gracious enough to allow me to assist him in setting up and displaying them at various model railroad shows where the Mount Rainier N Scale Club participated.

MULTIPLE ERAS

Gregg's interest in modeling Army equipment came from his own experience in the Army and his dad's experience in WWII as a combat engineer. As a tribute to his dad's WWII service, Gregg has been collecting WWII Army engineer equipment and plans to add it to the display when completed.





My own interest in modeling Army equipment came from spending a lifetime around the Army. My father was a career soldier, and I followed in his footsteps. My six years of active service was from 1971 to 1977, so of course, I chose to model the era I was most familiar with.

Fortunately, Gregg encouraged me to change the left module – the Motor Pool area, from the 1940s to the 1970s. This allowed me to display the 1970s era equipment I was modeling, next to the excellent modeling of the World War II equipment that Mark and Gregg have done. To not confuse the audience, we added changeable signs to the backdrops of the modules stating, "Circa 1944" and "Circa 1970." These





signs are interchangeable on the left Motor Pool module where the Army equipment is not glued down. In this way, the equipment on display can be changed between WWII and Vietnam eras, allowing Gregg or I to display, depending on our interest at the time.

All the soldiers on these modules are glued down, and luckily for me, there wasn't much difference in uniforms between WWII and the Vietnam eras. The helmets and fatigue colors were the same; only the boots changed from brown to black, a difference that is not very noticeable at a normal N scale viewing distance.

UPGRADES TO MODULES

Gregg had some ideas he wanted to try on the modules as a way of increasing the appeal of the display. These were innovative ideas that have served to update the modules and add special interest to the military display.

The first new addition to the modules was that of working streetlights. These are LED streetlights from Atlas Model Railroad Company and serve to attract attention to the modules wherever they are displayed. The second addition was LED interior lighting inside the Motor Pool building to give it that "in use" look. To provide some action in this area, a third addition was a welder's circuit with sound and a figure welding under a vehicle on a hoist in front of the Motor Pool building. The circuit and sound for the welder was obtained from Ngineering Model Railroad Products. A push button was added to the front of the module for kids and adults to enjoy.



This addition led to other ideas involving the use of sound and LEDs activated by push buttons. There is a cemetery located in the right hand corner of the right module. A push button, which activates the sound of a bugle playing Taps, was added there. Nearby, at the headquarters building, there is a flagpole and push buttons to trigger the bugle playing Reveille and Retreat. The circuit that makes these push buttons work was designed by Ngineering. *www.ngineering.com*

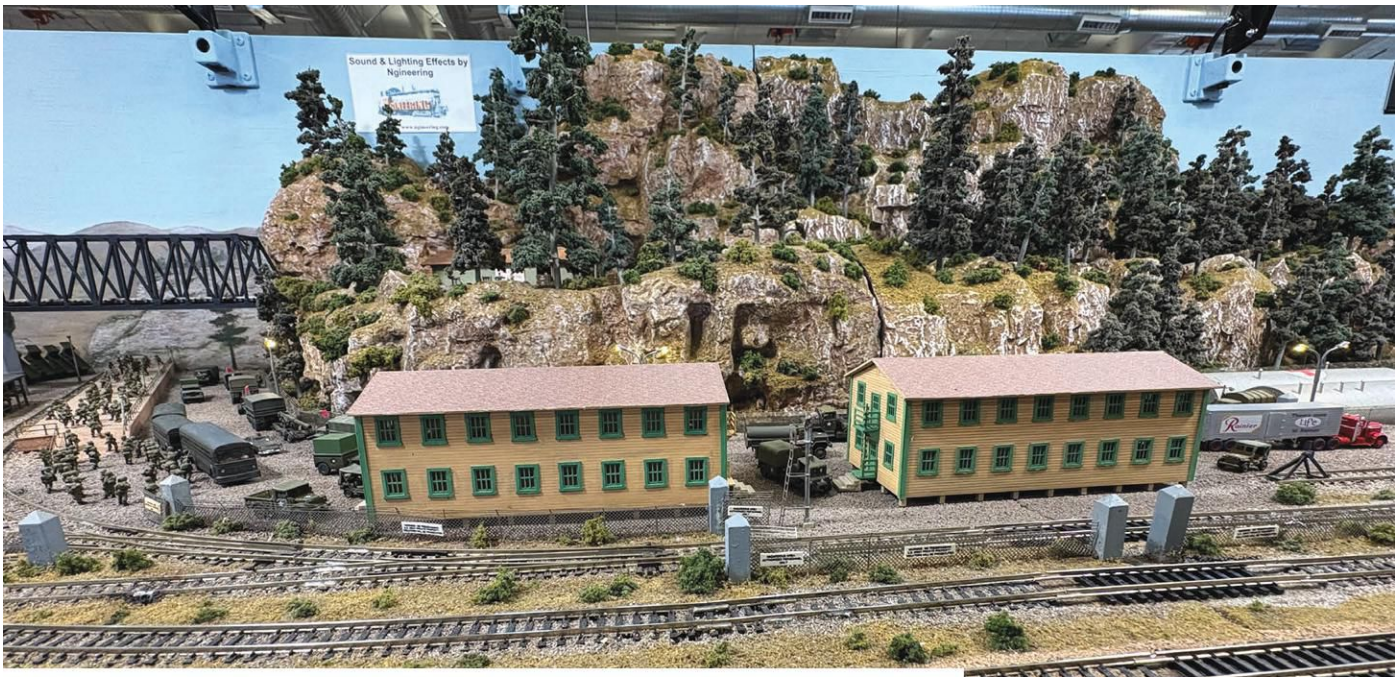
The middle module of the three has over 200 soldiers performing various physical activities at the obstacle course. In this area, we used another Ngineering sound module with push buttons to play the sound of troops marching and counting cadence.

On the left module, in the upper left corner, there's an area where troops are engaged in combat training. An Ngineering sound module with push buttons was added to simulate the sound of machine gun fire, which is coordinated with a flashing LED, timed to match the sound. A second sound module was added to this same area to simulate mortar fire and explosions nearby. These explosions are matched to LEDs that flash with the sound of the explosions.

Our latest addition to the display is a CH-34 helicopter flying over the left hand module above the Motor Pool. The helicopter has LED lights that are activated by a push button. That button turns on lights and plays the











sound of a CH-34 helicopter passing over the Motor Pool area.

MODELING MILITARY EQUIPMENT

One of the things I enjoy is modeling the various types of Army equipment in use in the early 1970s. I wanted to depict this era as accurately as possible, but it was a challenge trying to find military equipment for this era. It seems to be the forgotten era. There's plenty of WWII and modern equipment, but equipment for my era is scarce. Fortunately, at the time I was assembling my military units, Shapeways Marketplace was still in existence, and it had many 3D printed, period correct equipment available, of which I took full advantage. Other sources for N scale period correct military equipment I have used are Artitec, KenRay Models, GHQ, Arnold Rapido, Roco Minitanks and Rasputen (resin cast models).

Once the equipment is collected, the real work begins. No matter whether it is 3D printed, resin cast, metal cast or molded plastic, to look realistic, it will need to be painted and decaled. Some pieces will require more prep work than others. Prep work generally involves removing flash and repairing any defects. Paint won't hide defects. In my experience, the metal cast pieces tend to have more flash and require more prep before painting. Also, you may want to primer coat the metal pieces. I generally don't use primer because it can hide the details, but continuous handling of metal pieces can result in paint wearing off and metal showing through.

For the era I model, once the prep is completed, I use a rattle can of RUST-OLEUM Camouflage-Flat Deep Forest Green to spray paint all the pieces I will be working on. If I were modeling the WWII era, I would use more of an olive color of the RUST-OLEUM Camouflage line.

When the paint is dry, usually overnight, it is time to get out the smaller paint brushes and paint the tires. Since tires don't stay jet black once they are in use on a vehicle, I use weathered black (a very dark gray) to hand paint the tires. I take my time and try not to get tire color on the metal wheel, but when it happens, a little touch up of the metal color works. If you only have that color in a spray can, spray a little in an old bottle cap and use a brush to apply where needed.

If the military equipment to be painted has canvas covering the cab or the bed of the vehicle, it needs to be painted a different shade of green



from the truck. I use #4729 Flat Olive Drab (OD) by Model Master Acryl and #70.924 Russian Uniform WWII by Vallejo to paint the canvas so the canvas appears to be a lighter color than the vehicle itself. In the era I model, the canvas was genuine oil-soaked canvas, complete with tie down grommets, cut and sewn to fit the specific make and model truck it was intended for. The canvas started out dark green, but soon faded to a lighter shade of OD due to exposure to the sun. If you are modeling more modern military equipment, the "canvas" might actually be reinforced plastic and less subject to fading. If modeling WWII, the canvas tended to fade to a light tan color.



CAMOUFLAGE PAINTING

You may have seen and be wondering about camouflage painting. In the early 1970s, the US Army began camouflage painting its equipment. While the paint scheme may look like random splotches of color, it wasn't. Each truck or tracked piece of equipment had its own pattern. These patterns were developed by the US Army Mobility Equipment Research and Development Center (MERDC) and were known as MERDC paint schemes. There were 12 colors of which only four were used per vehicle. These four colors could be changed (selected from the 12 approved) so the camouflage colors could be adjusted to match the environment in which the vehicle was located.

For instance, all 2½ ton trucks had the same pattern, but the colors used in that pattern could be changed. Equipment located in forested areas would be painted differently from equipment





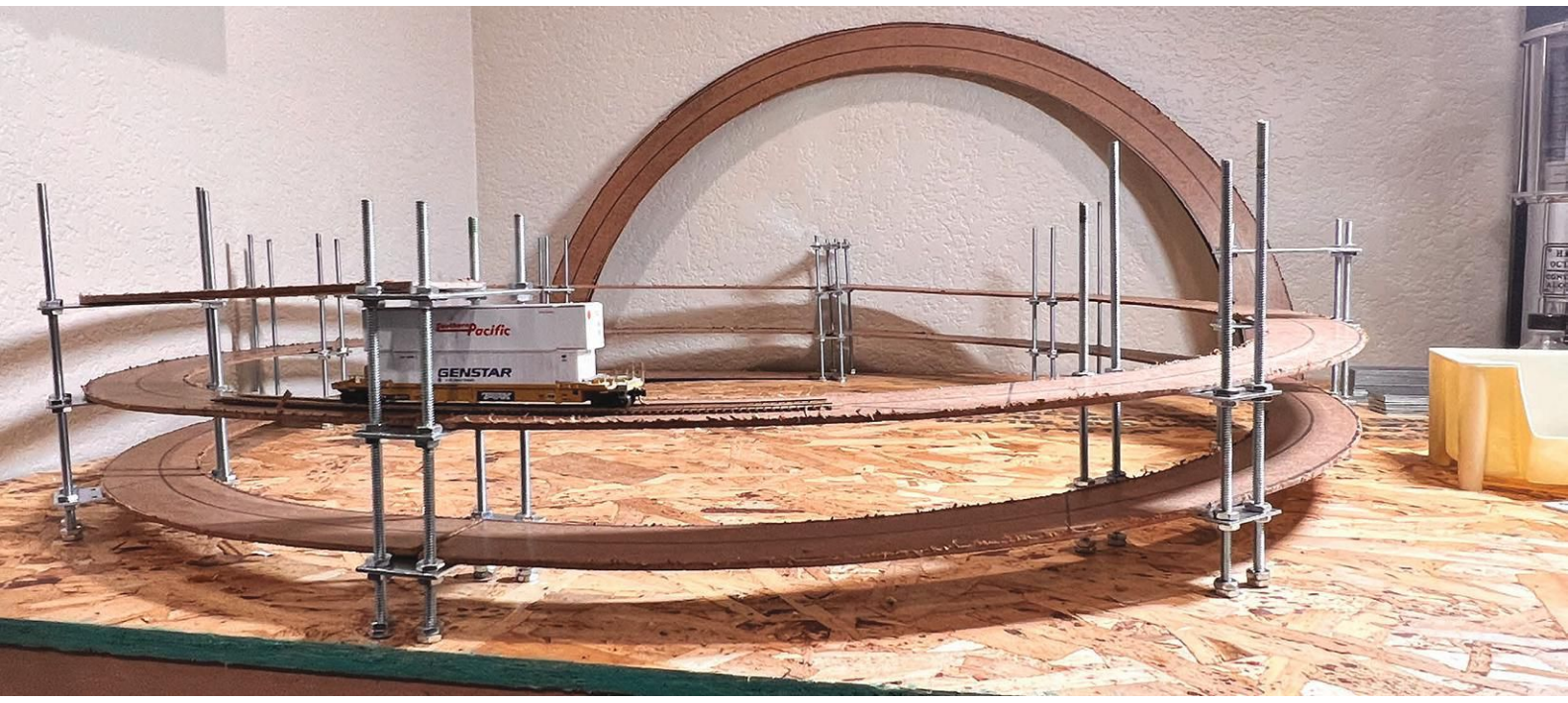
located in desert or artic areas, but the same pattern was used; only the colors varied. These patterns were printed on diagrams and found in the Tech Manuals (TMs) for camouflage painting.

In Europe in 1974, we were directed to camouflage paint our equipment. We were issued pattern diagrams, gallon cans of four different paints and paint brushes. We used chalk to draw the pattern on the truck and paint brushes to apply it. Information on these MERDC patterns and the colors schemes can be found online. Some model paint manufacturers even make MERDC paint kits for military model builders.

COMING UP NEXT

In Part 2, we will talk about military decals and placement on the equipment, how to organize the equipment into believable units using Army Tables of Equipment and Organization and other available information, motor pools and military trains and their movements.

The Sutter Creek Division



Phase One Iron Mountain, Part 1

by **Ward Thorne**

Opening Photo: Helix installation and testing.

Biography

Railroading is truly in my blood! I was born into a railroad family, with my father serving as an Agent for both the Rock Island and the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroads (DRGW) for 44 years. I cherish so many wonderful memories with my father at the north yard of the DRGW, riding the Rio Grande Zephyr and exploring the historic mining districts of the beautiful Colorado Rockies. Right after high school in 1987, I joined a company that refurbished vintage railroad passenger cars, where I had the amazing opportunity to work on the last ski train cars purchased from VIA Rail Canada. In 1989, I even served as a technical advisor and steward for seven Budd passenger cars in the Paramount Pictures film Narrow Margin! Although I didn't stay in the railroad industry, I did discover my passion for computers and information technology. I now proudly serve as the CEO/Owner of Phoenix Technology Group, a Managed IT Services firm based in Denver. My wife and I enjoy living in our mountain home near the stunning Royal Gorge and the historic DRGW Tennessee Pass line.

Overview

My fictional Sutter Creek Division of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad layout is an in-progress labor of love, inspired by the equipment, practices, and landscape of the Tennessee Pass line that passed through the Royal Gorge in South Central Colorado. This division is not just a creative endeavor, but a tribute to the rich history and unique charm of the railroad industry that has been a part of my life since birth. Like many model railroaders who have been in the hobby for many years, I have created several layouts and learned many valuable lessons on construction and especially track work. My original Sutter Creek Division was a bit larger than this version. It was roughly 75 percent complete when a move from Denver to the Mountains caused me to dismantle it and attempt to salvage some of the work I had created. I was able to successfully rescue a large mountain, which I now call Iron Mountain, the ghost town, the Betty Lou Mine, cemetery, and a few other items which will all be blended with the new layout. The goal with the new layout was to capture the essence of rugged Colorado railroading and the majestic and diverse scenery it passes through. This layout is under construction, and I hope to share its development with you as each section is completed.

Main Layout Design

The layout features an 11'×11¾'×7' U-shaped design, with a lower layer that includes staging tracks and a helix at each end of the benchwork. I utilized AnyRail 6.0 to design the track layout and the overall flow of the scenery. All track work is Atlas Code 55, with number 10 switches on the upper mainline and number 7 switches on the lower staging and yard tracks. The upper layer will consist of a single-track mainline with a passing siding track, a bypass line to the passenger station, an industrial spur, and a yard equipped with a maintenance shop. The benchwork comes from the Woodland Scenics Mod-U-Rail System and features a plywood top. I installed ¼" threaded rods, nuts, and couplers attached to steel mending plates to support the



Installation and testing of Staging Yard.



Completion of Helix and bridge mockup.

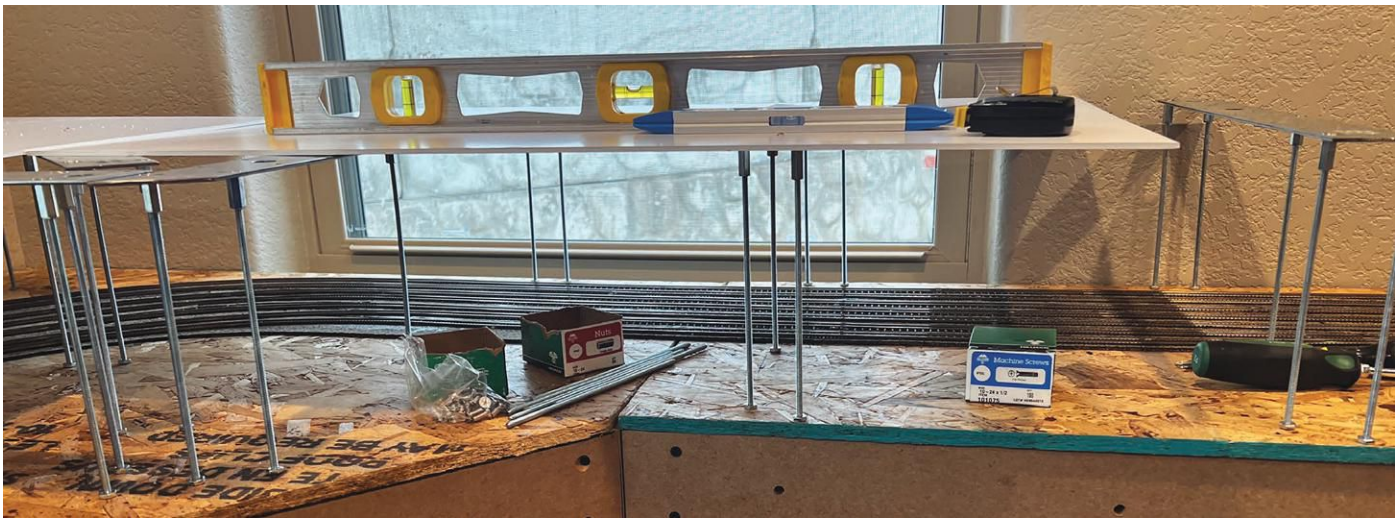
second layer and create supports on the helixes. The threaded rods proved very effective for leveling the second level. I am happy to have this multilevel layout with an illusion of a larger rail system.

Electronics and Power supply

The main train control system consists of a NCE PH5 Power Pro 5-Amp DCC, which is connected to a dedicated personal computer running JMRI, which is a computer enhancement program that adds advanced functionality to the entire DCC system for train operations, decoder programming, lighting control, block control, turnout control and much more. I use an iPad tablet as my throttle control and will add a facia-mounted Viewsonic 24-inch touch screen for turnout control in the near future. I use Tam Valley Octopus III with the DCC add-on board for my switch controllers, utilizing their miniature servos to move the switch points. Additionally, I incorporate Tam Valley DCC Hex Frog Juicers to eliminate connectivity issues with the Atlas switch frogs. Tam Valley offers a well-made and affordable range of DCC control products. Future electronic projects will include the addition of NCE Illuminator lighting decoders and DCC block detection decoders, which I have not yet purchased, that will activate Showcase Miniatures' three-color signals. Power is distributed through 18-gauge bus wires into distribution blocks, with 20-gauge feeder wires connecting to the track every 18-inches. My locomotives run NCE, Digitrax, TCS, and Soundtrax decoders. Moving from DC power to DCC power is allowing me to enjoy a more realistic operating environment and being in the IT industry, I love the computer integration.

Rolling stock

Having been involved in N scale model railroading for nearly half a century, I've built a sizable fleet of rolling stock. Living in Colorado my entire life as a railroad enthusiast, I've had the thrill of seeing some amazing locomotives and rolling stock. My collection includes models from the Denver Rio Grande Western, Southern Pacific, Santa Fe, Union Pacific, Western Pacific, and Burlington Northern. Since my layout is fictional,



Upper Layer Supports.



Construction of the base of Iron Mountain.

I envision an alternate reality where only the Southern Pacific is purchased by the Denver Rio Grande to create a powerful and strategic competitor to the giant, Union Pacific. I added equipment that reflects the Rio Grande's use of modern EMD motive power. Soon, I plan to convert two of my existing GP40s into GP40-3s, based on the CSX square cab rebuild. I acquire or build equipment based on a couple of criteria: Did the railroad operate that specific equipment, and have I personally encountered it during my lifetime? I particularly enjoy modeling prototype equipment, especially passenger cars. I use Union Station Products car sides, Kato undercarriages, and donor car bodies to create most of the cars I've built. My current roster includes equipment from Kato, Atlas, Con-Cor, Athearn, InterMountain, Life-Like, Bachmann, Red Caboose, ExactRail, Centralia Shops, and Trainworx. Annual train shows and new products will continue to spur my interest in acquiring unique models for my layout.

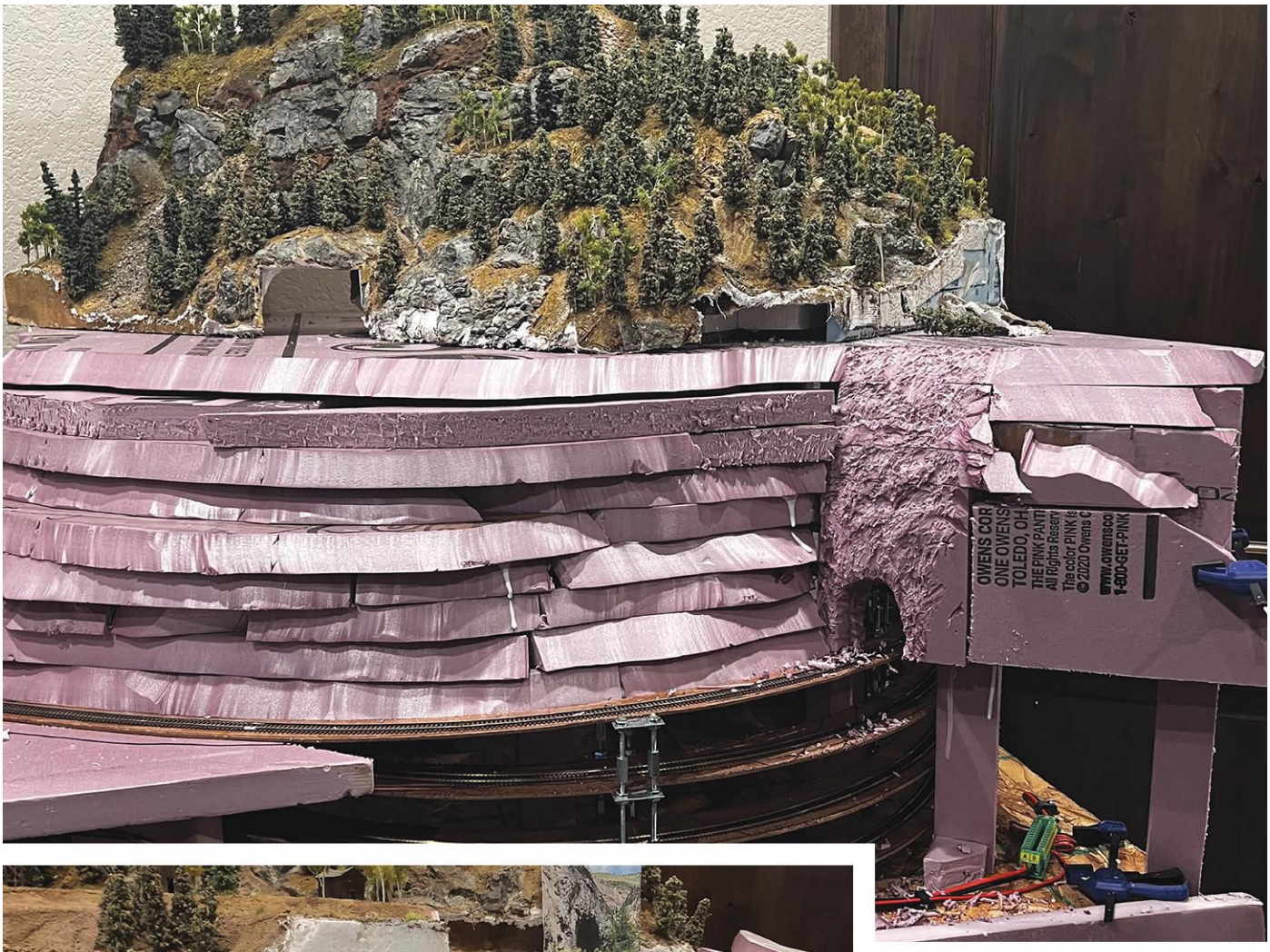
Scenery

This is the one aspect of the hobby I really enjoy and spend a lot of time working out the details.

I live in the mountains near the historic Royal Gorge, and I get the opportunity to see a wide range of geologic features that provide a vast number of landscape ideas. Basic terrain creation is accomplished with one-inch-thick purple foam insulation board from Home Depot, hot foam carving tools, and Aleene's Original Tacky Glue (available at Walmart or craft stores). I also use this material for the base on my upper level, as it is lightweight, yet strong enough to support the scenery and track. Designing the terrain's flow and deciding where to place towns, rivers, canyons, mountains, and other features is key. A few rules of thumb I follow when creating believable landscapes include considering how each feature formed, such as through water, ice, volcanic activity, or tectonic plate shifts, and analyzing the ways railroads have adapted to the terrain, like bridges, tunnels, cuts, and fills. In the Rocky Mountains, the DRGW and other lines often followed rivers to reduce grades; however, where this wasn't feasible, they used switchbacks and tunnels as solutions. Once the base terrain design is finalized, I cover it with plaster cloth, which creates a solid surface for adding rocks, plaster, or other scenery. At this stage, I proceed to rock creation.

Rock Creation

I find it is best to get out and look around my area for inspiration whether hiking my property or going on a scenic drive. Colorado boosts many geological upshifts, fault lines, folds, sedimentary, igneous, and metamorphic rocks, which are all occasionally discovered within



Construction of Iron Mountain base and positioning of original Mountain.



Creating the Rock Cliff on Iron Mountain.

feet of one another. They display red rock and sandstone in the canyons, as well as a significant amount of gray and dark gray granite near or nestled within it. When it comes to creating rocks, there are several ways to achieve great results. There are two methods I prefer for the layout. One is using rubber rock molds for outcroppings and smaller formations. The second method is spreading thick Plaster of Paris on a plaster cloth surface and carving it freely. This is the technique I used to create the large rock face of Iron Mountain and the tunnel portal leading into the helix. I have found that starting the carving process once the plaster has set a bit (stiff, but pliable) works well. I often search for pictures of the types of rocks I want and print them out so I can reference them while I carve. I use clay carving tools for most of the work, and there are several affordable sets available on Amazon. I prefer using Woodland Scenics Pigments for my rock coloring. I start with my darker background color and layer lighter colors to create a more realistic look. Now that the rocks are colored to my liking, I paint the rest of the plaster cloth that I plan to put my layer landscape material on with earth brown acrylic paint, which can be purchased at Walmart or craft stores. The foundation

Full view of Iron Mountain and the Rio Grande Zephyr.



of the mountain is now set to receive the landscape products that will pull it all together in a beautiful scene.



DRGW 5771 Passing by the steep cliff of Iron Mountain.

Layered Ground Cover

I prefer many layers in my ground cover, as the forest floor, fields, deserts, and nearly every type of Earth's surface consists of layers of soil, plants, rocks, and natural debris. I begin with a soil product from Scenic Express (fine natural soil and dirt SE0403) and spread it over Matte Medium glue that I apply with a brush. For the next layers, it depends on what I am modeling. In this article, I will describe the products used for Iron Mountain, the mountain in the pictures. Layer two consists of Woodland Scenics Fine Turf Soil, lightly sprinkled. Layer three includes a mix of Woodland Scenics Fine Turf burnt grass T1344 and green grass T2345, scattered in more random areas. Layer four features Scenic Express Flock & Turf farm pasture blend EX886B under pine tree areas. Layer five consists of rocks and talus, which are arranged based on the location. Under some rock outcroppings or walls, I use similarly colored rocks with a few different types and sizes in heavier concentrations. In open areas, I scatter them more randomly, with small piles here and there. Layer six includes branches and fallen tree debris; I use a variety of dried branches for this one product I really like, which is also great for making trees: Sweet Huck branches, available online at craft stores. Layer seven comprises of weeds, flowers, and bushes. I particularly like the Silflor products from Scenic Express, such as the 2mm prairie tufts for grass patches and small fields. For flowers, I use the Silflor Flowering Tufts 4mm, which comes in a variety of colors. I use red, white, yellow, and purple extensively, as they emulate many of the mountain wildflower colors we see here. All the Silflor tufts are attached to a strip of plastic and can be peeled off with tweezers, dipped in Matte Medium, and then attached to the layout. Combining all these layers really makes the landscape come to life.

Ready for more?

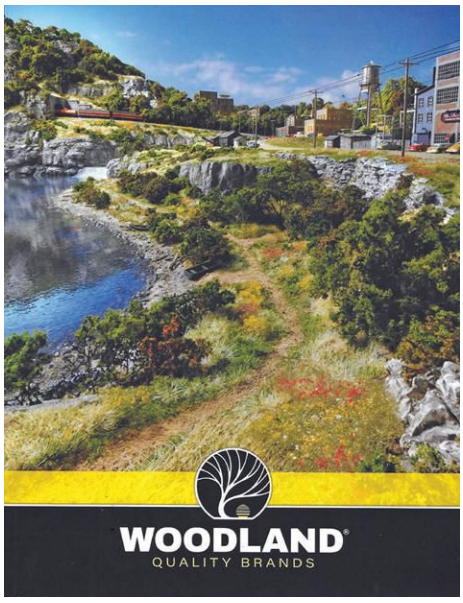
In the next part of our series, we'll explore the creative process behind designing lifelike landscapes — from trees and buildings to vehicles, people, and all the small details that bring a layout to life. If you enjoyed this look at my layout's construction, you'll love what's coming next.

Extra Extra! Read All About It!

Part 4: Structures: Pre-built and Kits.

by **Dennis Murphy**

All right. Who of you out there have heard of the Walthers reference book? Better known as the bible of model railroading. So, have you also ever seen the Woodland Scenics reference book? In the spirit of full disclosure, I have to admit that I didn't even know this reference/catalog existed until I received one. Don't get me wrong, as I have purchased a ton of stuff from Woodland Scenics over the years, but I never knew they produced the bible of scenic details (and other good stuff). If you don't have one of these, you should get one. (Let's see... I want one of those things, and some of that stuff, and... and...)





Well, look at that. Just think how much we have accomplished over the past couple of months. And what a great job you have made of it. Isn't our hobby fun?

Anyway, it's time to get down to business. No more dilly-dallying around. Now that we have the basic layout mostly completed, it's time to start thinking about what we are going to install along the lines of structures and scenery.

Do I want to use items I already have on-hand or do I want to use pre-builts (they are always so nice), do I want to build the kits that were conceived for this project, or do I want to use all of them? (That's it!)

Only time will tell the answer to that last set of questions. In this article installment, we will peruse

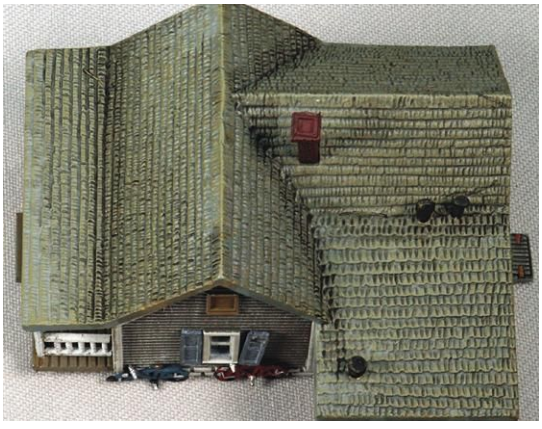
As it worked out, I ended up with a number of buildings in the Woodland Scenics Landmark Structures series. These items are sometimes referred to as pre-built or built-ups. I already had a couple of these wonderful items on my main layout, but I had no idea what a variety they offer. All I can say is: WOW!

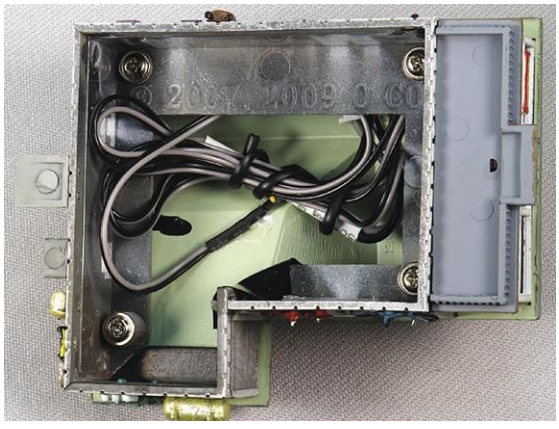
What this article is all about is introducing you to a number of different structures you might choose for your layout project. I will be showing you some of the built-ups, and we also will build some of the kits that are designed for our layout. And, of course, we will do some planning and dreaming. What good fun.

The first structure in the Landmark series we will have a look at is the Old Homestead. (BR4933)









For each of these structures I introduce to you, I will include a grouping of close-up photos so you can have a good look at the amazing detail that is included. A couple of these pre-built also are available in kit form, which I have built in the past. I compared the version that I built and their version, and their version is way better than mine.



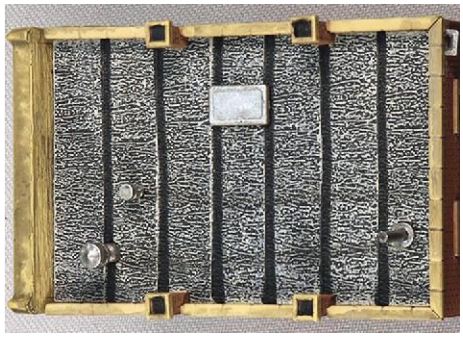
It's time to move along to the next one. Let me introduce you to the Toy & Hobby Junction (BR4960). Keep in mind that you can leave the names of these structures as they come. Or, if you wish, you can change the names at will. Your choice.



Dinner anyone? How about Italian this time? Let's go to Emilio's Italian Restaurant (BR4945). Every small town all across the country has a mix of different ethnic background restaurants. Why not Italian? Yum... Let's go. (Notice that this one also has lights and interior.)









Let's have a close look at the Toy & Hobby Junction structure. What I love about this one is how they added some real-life details that you might see down the street from your own house. Look closely at the signage on the walls. As you look at the bottom, you can tell it has an installed light and an interior.

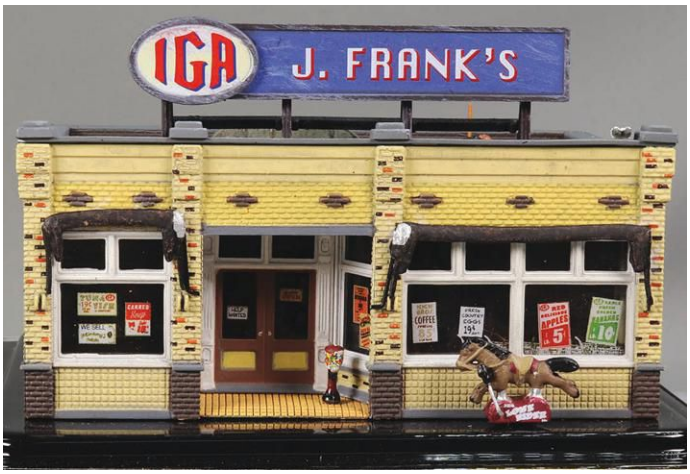






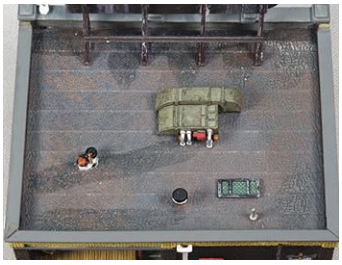


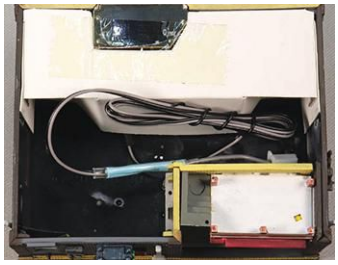
What self-respecting Italian restaurant would be caught without sidewalk tables" Yup... You have them. And how are you going to know what the Special of the Day is without a reader board out front? Such thoughtful details are included. (Notice that this one also has lights and interior.)





On the way to dinner at Emilio's, we best take a moment and pick up some supplies at the local grocery store. Let me introduce you to J. Franks Grocery (BR4941).





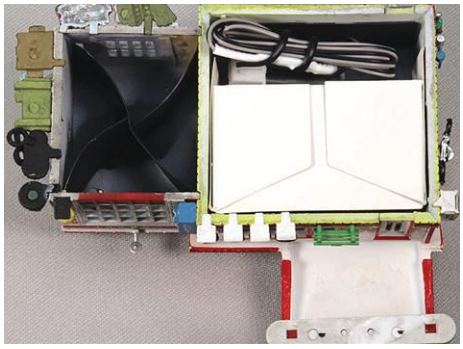


I want you to look very carefully at the details with this structure. Note the prices of the items that are on sale. I could only wish to find prices like that around where I live. How about the rocking horse and the gum ball machine out front? That's what I want to see. And don't forget the loading dock on the back. (Notice that this one also has lights and interior.)









Wow... I would have never thought they could cram that much fine detail into such a small space. Look at all that stuff that is literally on all four sides of the structure. I really like this one, and am rather certain that it will make it onto my final town scene. (Notice that this one also has lights and interior.)

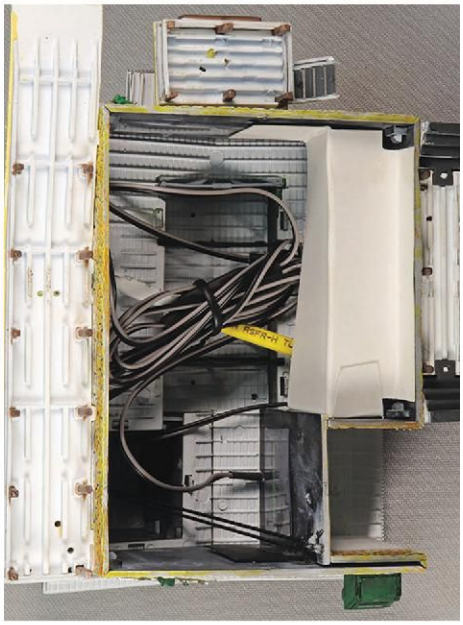


Here is a fun one to have a look at: Fill'er Up & Fix'er Up (BR4922). Where ever you may travel, you will always find a place that sells gas, and also can do minor repairs on your vehicle. Why not have one included with your Train World?



Allow me to introduce you to the: H & H Feed Mill (BR4949). I like this one so much that I have already placed this, and two other small structures into the smaller industrial area on my layout. The three of them made the A-Team right from the very start.







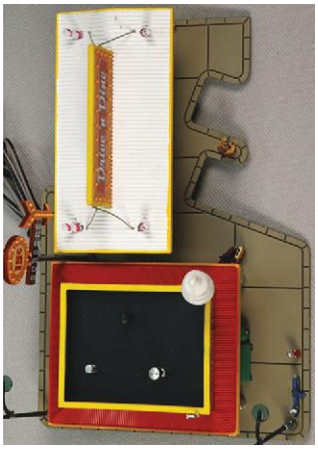


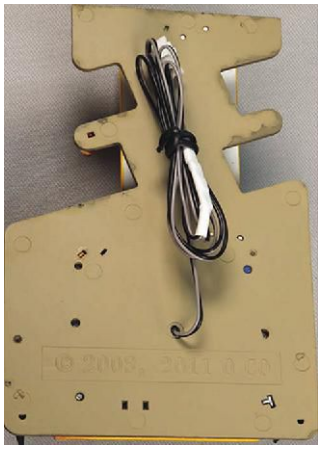
I know... I know... In all of these shots I have been telling you to have a close look, but with this one, you need to take a really close look. See the bird mess on the ridge line of the roof? Did you even see the birds sitting up there? And do you see... You get the idea. (Notice that this one also has lights and interior.)





Are you getting hungry from all of our running around town yet? This time, I will introduce you to: Drive'N Dine (BR4929). Every town has one, and you need one also.







Let's see: Hummmm... Bikes... Fire hydrant... Car with hungry people... An attentive server... And check out the featured items price list. Now that's detail. Burger and fries anyone? (This one has a light, but I'm not certain about an interior.)



Everyone wants a: Home Sweet Home (BR4939). I like to think of this one as a City House, but you could certainly use it in a rural setting also. Can't you just see yourself walking up the path to be home with the family? (I certainly can.)



any number of options, and of course, make some plans as to what we want our town and industry areas to look like. As you might expect, your layout will not look just like mine. That's a good thing. Mix it up. Be creative and have some fun.

I must admit, the track work is my all-time, least favorite aspect of our hobby, but the building of the world, like we are doing right now, is my most favorite part. Let's see, this can go there, and that can go over here, and no, it can't fit there, and... You get the idea.

So, let's get going and play with some



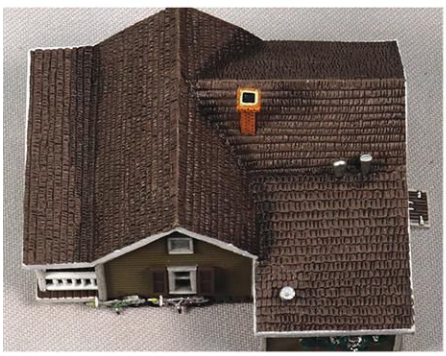


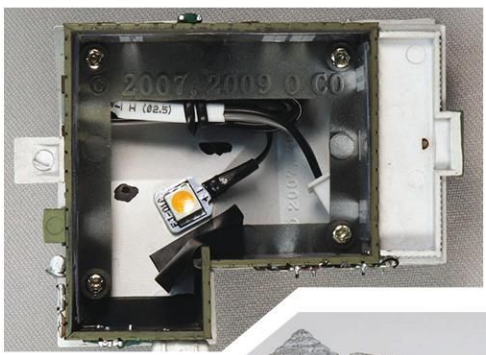


What do you think about that porch? Boy, I can really see myself rocking out there on the porch with my wonderful wife and a liquid libation of my choice (in the shade, of course). Notice the interesting interior. Do you have an idea what that is for? When you turn on the light, only some (not all) of the windows will light up. I like that. Usually, your local house next door will not have every light in every single room turned on at the same time. Just where you are hanging out will the light be on.









If you look closely, the basic house is the same as the Old Homestead, but the more you look, the more differences you will see. To me anyway, they would have been built by the same person at the same time on the same lot. And that's the way I worked them into this "mini-scene" that I used them in.



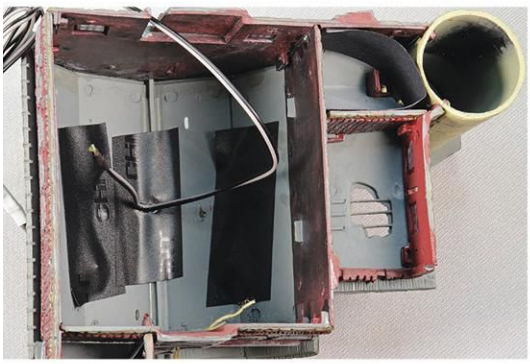
Have a look at the: Granny's Home (BR4926). Does it look familiar? Well, it should, as it's a first cousin of the Old Homestead house. This is one of the three units I have already placed in a scene on my layout. (That's how much I liked them.)



Let me introduce you to the: Old Weathered Barn (BR4932). I believe I just don't have enough room on this layout for a structure this large. But never fear. It will be used sometime.









At first glance, I thought, bummer. They put the wire in for the light, but no light. Until I looked much closer and found a tiny little bulb attached. I look forward to seeing how this one looks with the light on.



Of course, with an Old Barn in your scene, you will also need the: Old Windmill (BR4936). This is a nice small addition to any farm scene.



And finally, allow me to introduce you to the: Cozy Cabin (BR4961). Haven't we all thought about having a little get away place to spend some time? Well, now you can actually have one of your very own. (All be it very small.)









Keep in mind this little jewel is tiny. I like this one so much I didn't wait until it was time for structures to be installed. I installed it the first day I received it. This cabin has two lights. One inside, and one in the chimney. And if you look even closer, it even has a real screen door. Now that's detail.









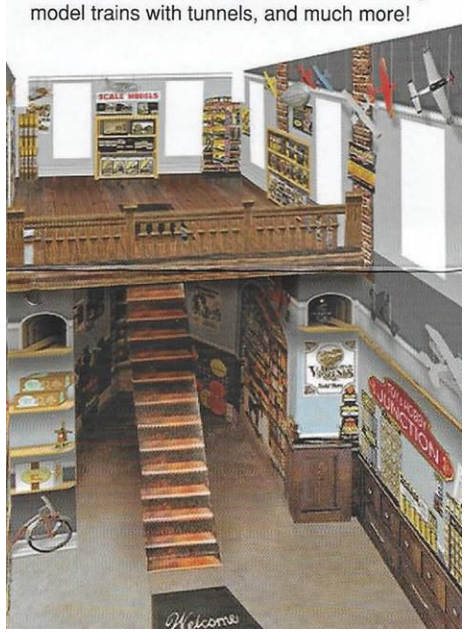


Please keep in mind that there is so much detail in these Landmark Series structures, you are bound to miss things. It seems every time I look at them, I find something I totally missed the last time. And what good fun is that. Yes, these wonderful structures are a bit pricey," but for what you get, and the time you save by not having to build them yourself, they just might be worth it. (I will have more of them for sure.)





Take a Look Inside!
This detailed interior reaches new levels of realism with an intricate staircase and railing, model trains with tunnels, and much more!



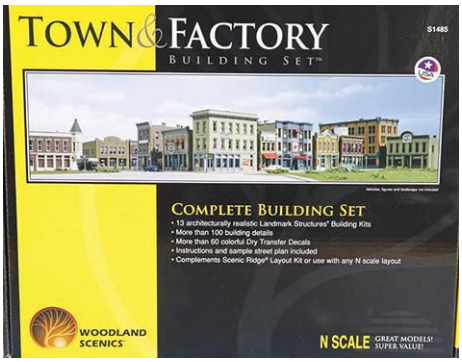






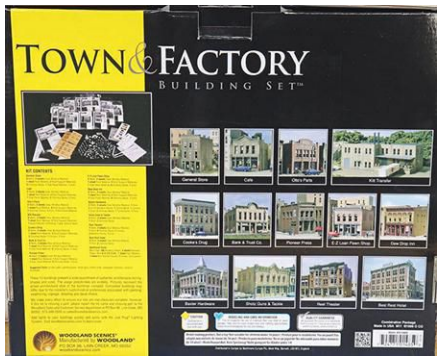


I almost forgot to show you a shot of what some of these structures have inside. Once again, all I can say is WOW. Do you want your Train World to look real?



What if you want to build the structures for your new layout? Why not? All those hours of hobby fun at your fingertips. One way you can build your town structures is with the Town & Factory Building Set (S1485) from the nice folks at the Woodland Scenics Company.

Here you have a bundle of 13 different structure kits that were designed to fit nicely on this new layout of yours.



Let's have a look at all the different buildings included with this bundle of structure kits. Not only do you get the 13 individual kits, but they also include a ton of extra detail bits.



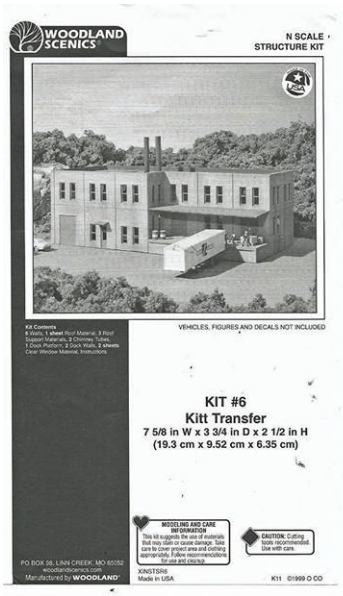
Here you see all the kits laid out for inspection. Most of them have just about the same size packaging, and come with very basic and simple instructions. These look to be easy builds that most anyone can successfully complete.

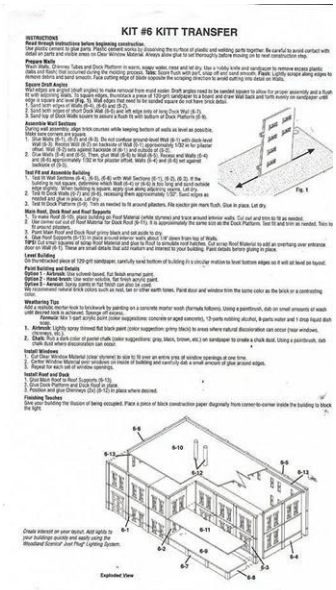


Before I started construction of these kits, I wanted to have an idea of how large of a footprint they would end up with. What's a guy to do? Well, build a bunch of (about) the correct size cardboard boxes. There you have it. My entire city is ready to go. Of course, I will need to actually build these kits before I can make my city.

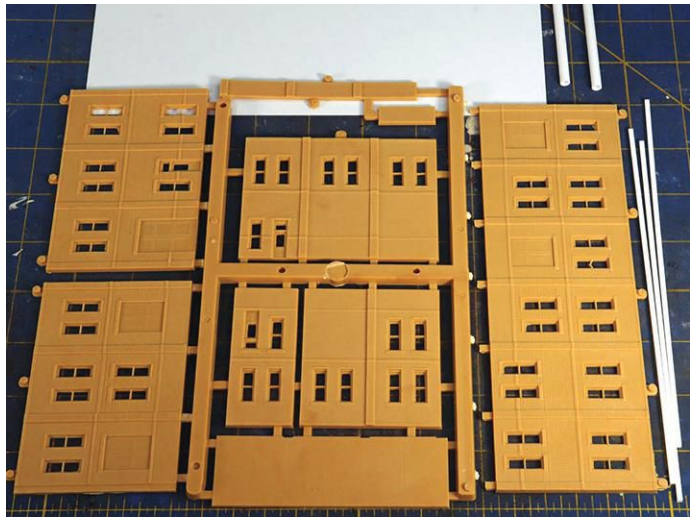


Let's see... This one can go there, and that one can possibly go next to it, and... You get the idea. I made a cardboard cut-out of the real estate foot-print (about) the size allotted on the layout for where things might be going.





Have a look at the directions for one of these structures. Not much to them, is there? These structure kits are easy enough for most any modeler to complete with satisfaction. And they all go together the same way.



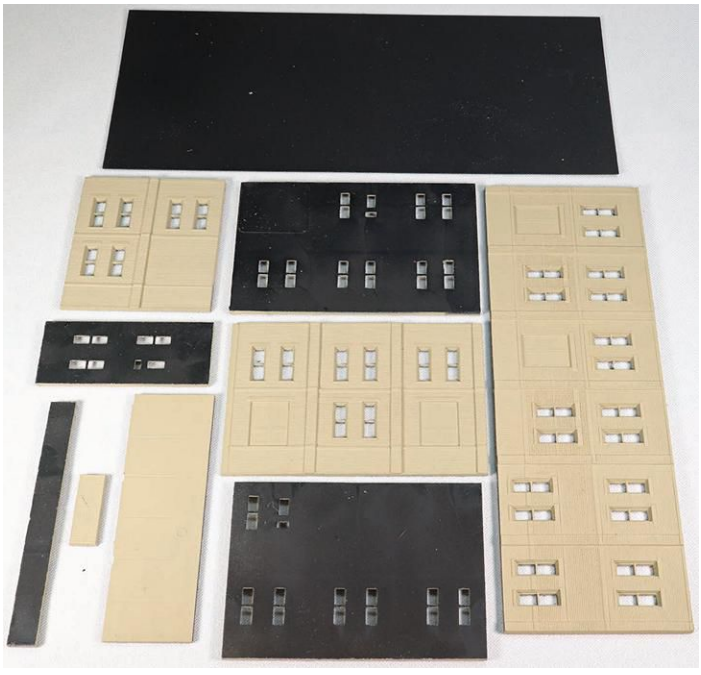
Here are what the parts look like right out of their packaging. All 13 kits are just about the same, with just a variation of theme. Every front side is different, with some differences in the number of floors and arrangement of windows. Construction is your basic box affair, and they all go together just about the same way. When building them, make sure to keep everything square and plumb.



Never ever break the parts off the backing. Always use flush-cut nippers to remove the parts. If you break the parts off the backing, you will damage them.



Of course, take the time to make sure any nubs are removed before you start painting and gluing. This step really does make a difference.



The next decision you will need to make is painting. I have a large assortment of rattle can paint colors that work just fine with these kits. In addition to the color of the outside paint, I also painted the inside of the walls flat black.

You might be wondering why I would take the time and trouble to paint the inside of these structures? Well, you see, I will be adding lighting in them. If you don't paint the inside as well as the outside, often times, the light passes right through the walls and makes your structure look like a Christmas ornament.





It's time to get creative with our kits. I used four different base colors for the walls, then added a number of different accent colors to make them all look different. I must say that painting on the accent colors was more work (and time) than the rest of the entire model build.

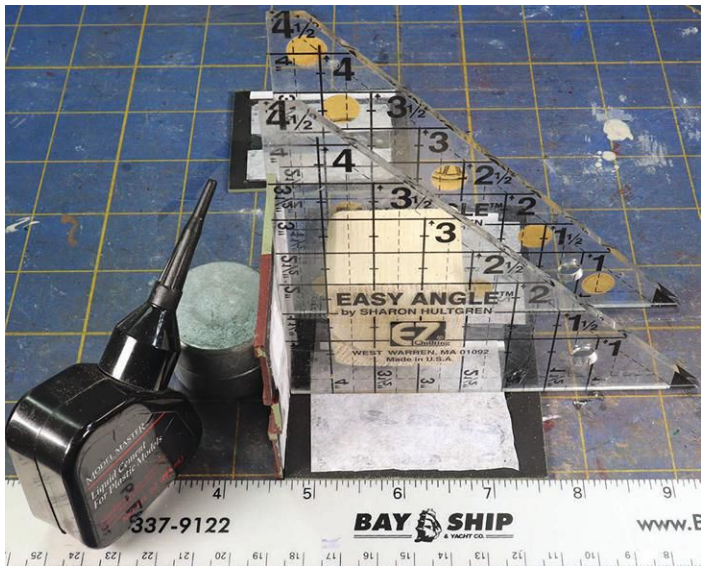
I have to admit that I'm not the best at painting fine detail, but I do all right if I wear my readers and magnifying hood. Really take your time with this if you want it to look good.

planning and building. As you solidify your plans, I would really like to see what you are doing. Send in a photo, or a few for that matter, so all of us can see what is developing in your Train World" Send them to *info@nscalemagazine.com*

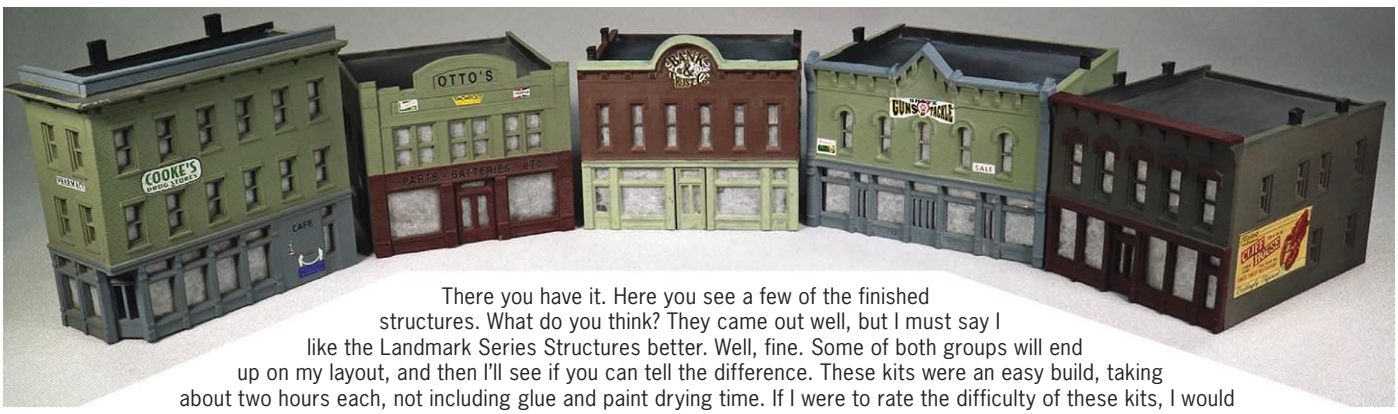
Now, get back to work. (And have some fun doing it.)



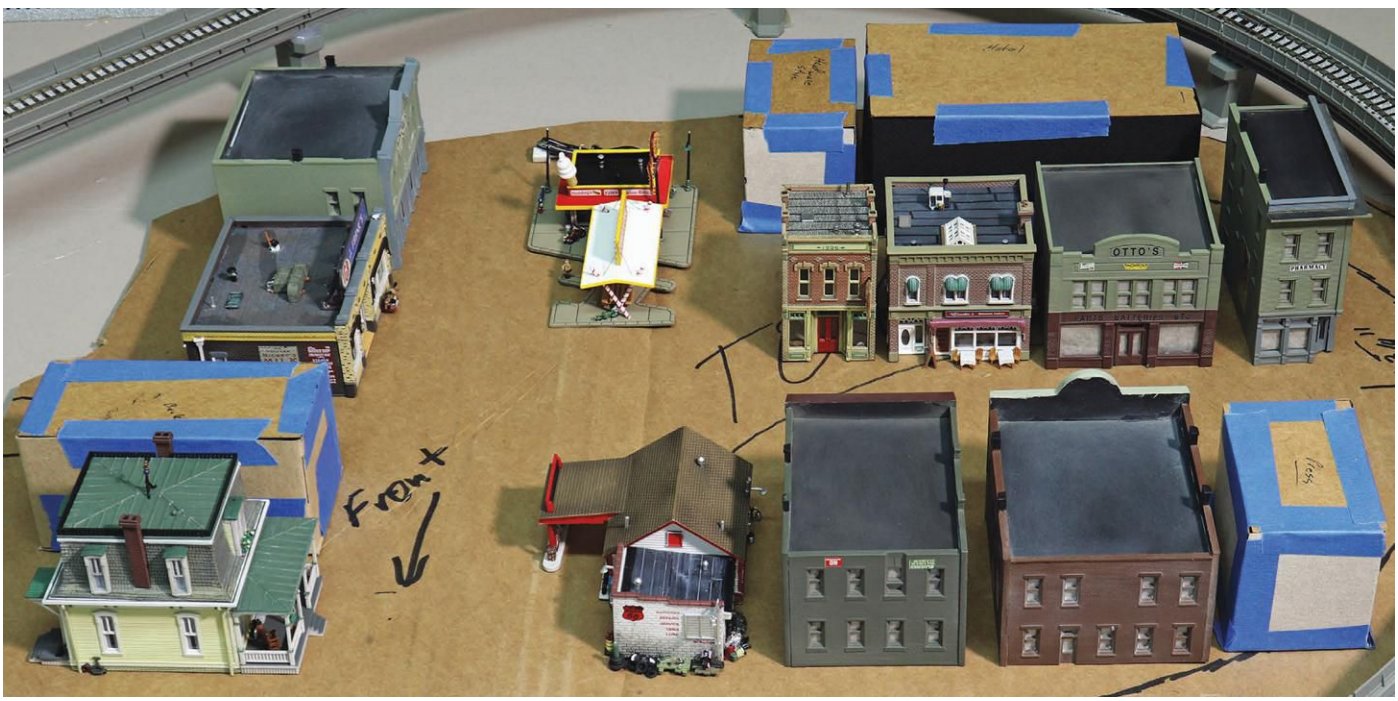
Before we start gluing the walls together, I always like to install the glazing, and also any window shades. It's always easier (for me anyway) while the walls are flat on the work area.



It's time to build the boxes. As you start gluing things together, really take your time and make sure everything is square and true. If the walls are not just right, you will forever see the flaw in the final structure.



There you have it. Here you see a few of the finished structures. What do you think? They came out well, but I must say I like the Landmark Series Structures better. Well, fine. Some of both groups will end up on my layout, and then I'll see if you can tell the difference. These kits were an easy build, taking about two hours each, not including glue and paint drying time. If I were to rate the difficulty of these kits, I would call them at the medium beginner level. Easy enough for almost all, but the brand new modeler. If you don't add the accent colors by hand, then they are even easier. So... What's next? Well, we need to put all this stuff together, and add a bunch of scenic details. To be exact, all kinds of fun stuff. Make sure to join us for the next article installment to find out what we will complete. See you... SOON. Now... Get back to work.



The Short & Nn3arrow

Modelling the Verde Tunnel and Smelter Railroad

by **Preston Sands**



An ore train crosses the bridge in front of the United Verde Copper Company's Jerome smelter. This is an isolated upper loop of the railroad, nicknamed the Mingus Mountain Railroad, for the mountain above Jerome, Arizona.

A brief history of Jerome Arizona

On the floor of an ancient ocean, mineral rich waters, heated by undersea magma had deposited a massive orebody at the site that would become one of the great copper mining locations of Arizona. History books mention that in past centuries, Indigenous people had been collecting the colorful ore here, attracted by the brilliant blue and green appearance of the rocks. Mining claims staked on the great ore body in 1876 were soon consolidated into the "United Verde Mine," which was mined somewhat successfully for a few years by various parties, including an Arizona governor, before the low price of copper shut down the mine in 1884. By this time, a small town had begun to grow below the mine, named "Jerome" for one of the early

A passenger train arrives in Clarkdale (lower left), while an ore train approaches Jerome at right.

mine investors. Both the town and the mine were perched precariously on the side of a mountain.

After a thorough inspection of the United Verde Mine, shrewd businessman William Andrews Clark leased the mine in 1887, with the option to buy. Clark ramped up ore production, making a small fortune, and bought the mine outright, building a smelter directly above the mine on some of the only flat ground available in the area. In the ensuing years, Clark and his team first utilized a rough wagon road to haul copper out and supplies in to the isolated mine, and then an aerial tramway, before building a 26-mile-long narrow-gauge railroad known as the United Verde and Pacific in 1894.

In the early 1910s, due to an unstoppable underground fire in the mine,

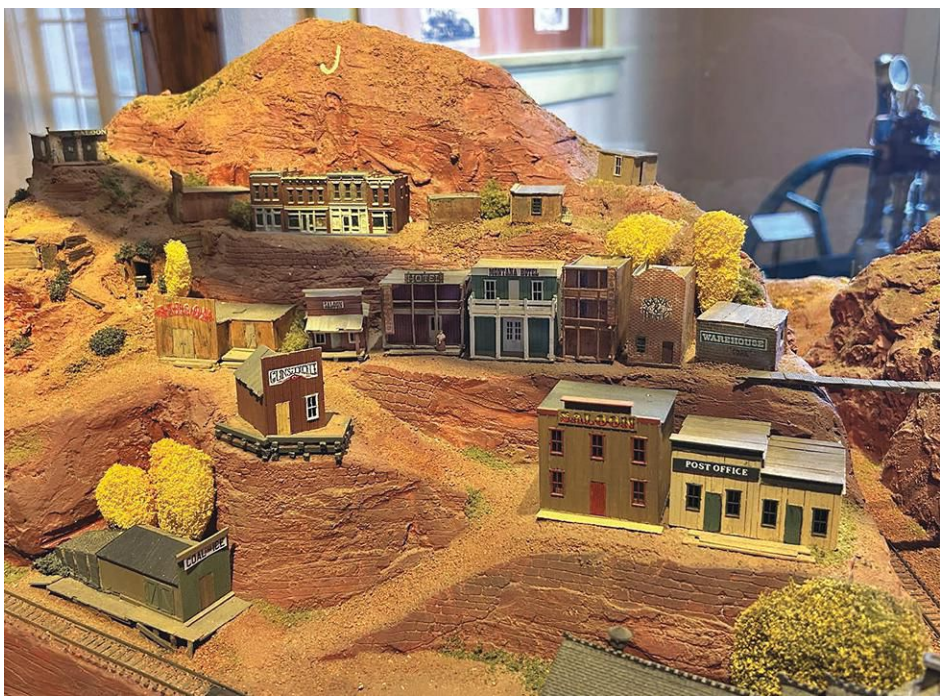
Verde Tunnel & Smelter engine #2 exits the tunnel below the mining camp of Silver King. This locomotive is an old Bachmann 2-6-2 prairie engine that was detailed to resemble a D&RGW K-28.



An ore train travels through the mountainous half of the layout, with the United Verde Mine and smelter at center.

and subsequent cave in issues at the smelter site, the decision was made to convert the United Verde from an underground mine to an open pit. By this time, Clark, a millionaire many times over thanks to the rich United Verde Mine, built a large new smelter and company town in the valley below Jerome, known as Clarkdale, and abandoned the old smelter and narrow-gauge railroad perched atop the mine. As open pit mining began, a standard gauge railroad, the Verde Tunnel & Smelter Railroad, was constructed to connect the new Clarkdale smelter with Jerome, and to haul ore to the smelter by way of an underground haulage tunnel that connected the railroad with the United Verde Mine's open pit.

After six decades of heavy mining activity, the United Verde Mine, nearly exhausted, closed for good in the early 1950s, and the Verde Tunnel & Smelter Railroad was removed. Jerome, that started as an isolated mining camp, had grown into the 4th largest city in Arizona at one point, and nearly became a ghost town once the mine closed. Following the mine closure, tourism slowly became Jerome's lifeblood, as people came to see the "ghost city" on the side of a mountain. Today, Jerome is thriving and is a popular tourist attraction like its more famous neighboring town, Sedona.



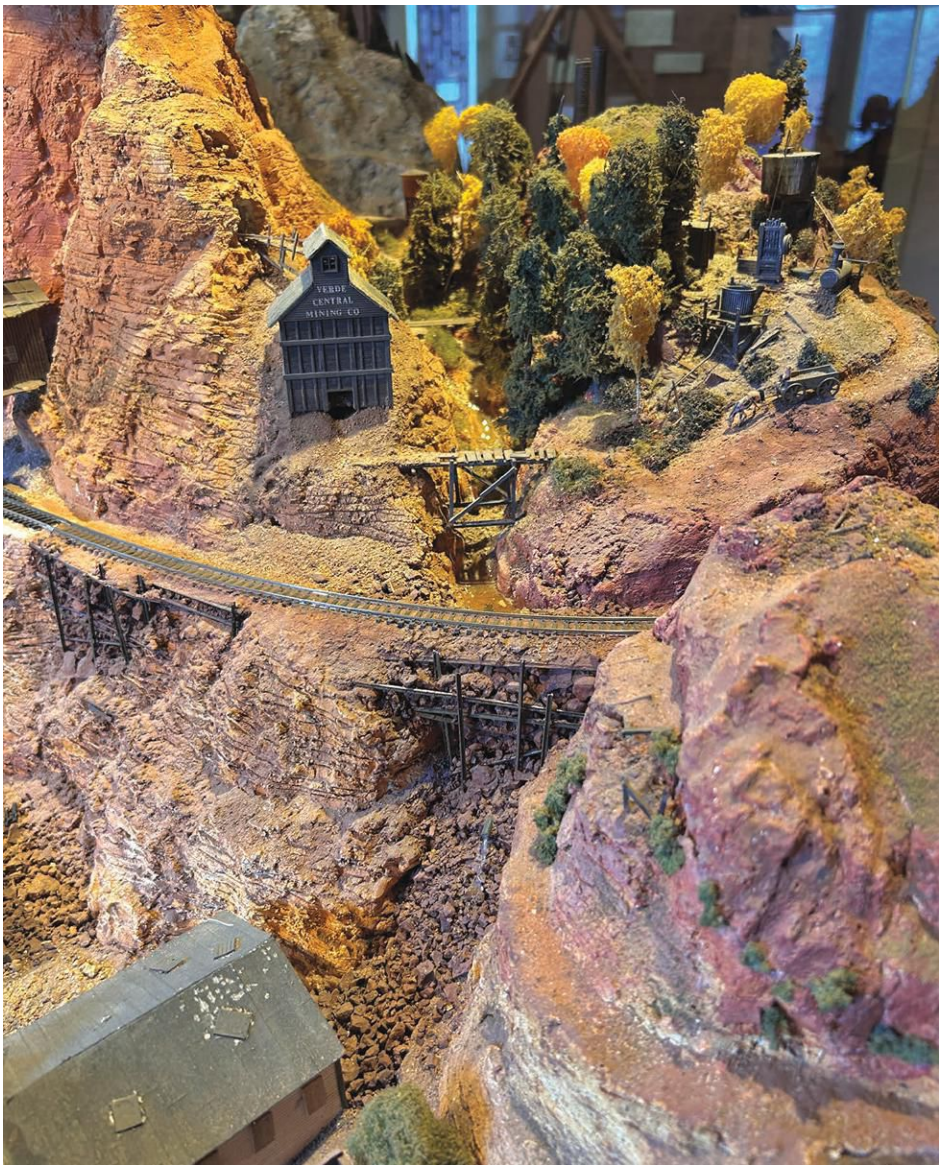
The town of Jerome, located on Cleopatra Hill with its distinctive "J" for the town. Forced perspective is used here, using N scale structures and a row of brick Z scale buildings at top. Most of the structures here are scratch built, but are not based on specific prototypes.

My interest in modeling the area

I had recently begun building my first N scale layout at age 12 when I visited Jerome for the first time with my family in 1989. Jerome and its history immediately captured my attention, with its various railroads, old wood and brick buildings in differing states of repair and disrepair clinging to terraced streets carved into the side of a mountain, old mines everywhere, and rugged topography. I set aside my previous modeling ideas and committed myself to Jerome. My little three foot by seven foot N scale layout would soon be transformed into the Verde Tunnel & Smelter Railroad.

The birth and evolution of the Verde Tunnel & Smelter layout

I had been inspired to make the jump from HO scale toy trains to N



Rock fills, using old rails for support, hold these tracks above Clarkdale in place. The Verde Central Mine clings to the mountain above the tracks, and appears to be abandoned.

scale model railroading after my dad bought me a copy of Russ Larson's N Scale Primer book. This old, tattered and taped Kalmbach book still holds a special place in my memory and on my bookshelf. My dad led the way by building the benchwork for my new N scale layout, and guided me in laying track, wiring, maintaining my locomotives, and many other areas. The benchwork is a simple rectangle frame of 1×4-inch boards, with a plywood top, with risers supporting the roadbed. Atlas code 80 flex track and Peco turnouts were primarily used. Adding the plaster scenery, paint, real dirt from the Jerome area, and copious white glue indoors, resulted in my layout being banished to the garage. I tried to mimic the sedimentary rocks of the Jerome area on my layout by carving strata lines into the plaster and painting them with similar, but slightly more exaggerated colors to make the scenery "pop." All in all, I put into practice everything I had begun to read in model railroading books and magazines, using my V.T.&S. layout as the canvas.

The layout itself saw numerous changes in the early 1990s, with trackwork, scenery, mountains, and towns being modified as my desires dictated. Underneath the current layout's finished scenery is an archaeological site of abandoned towns, covered over tracks, and even a turntable pit. The basic track plan remained a continuous loop though,



A passenger waits at the UV&P Jerome depot.



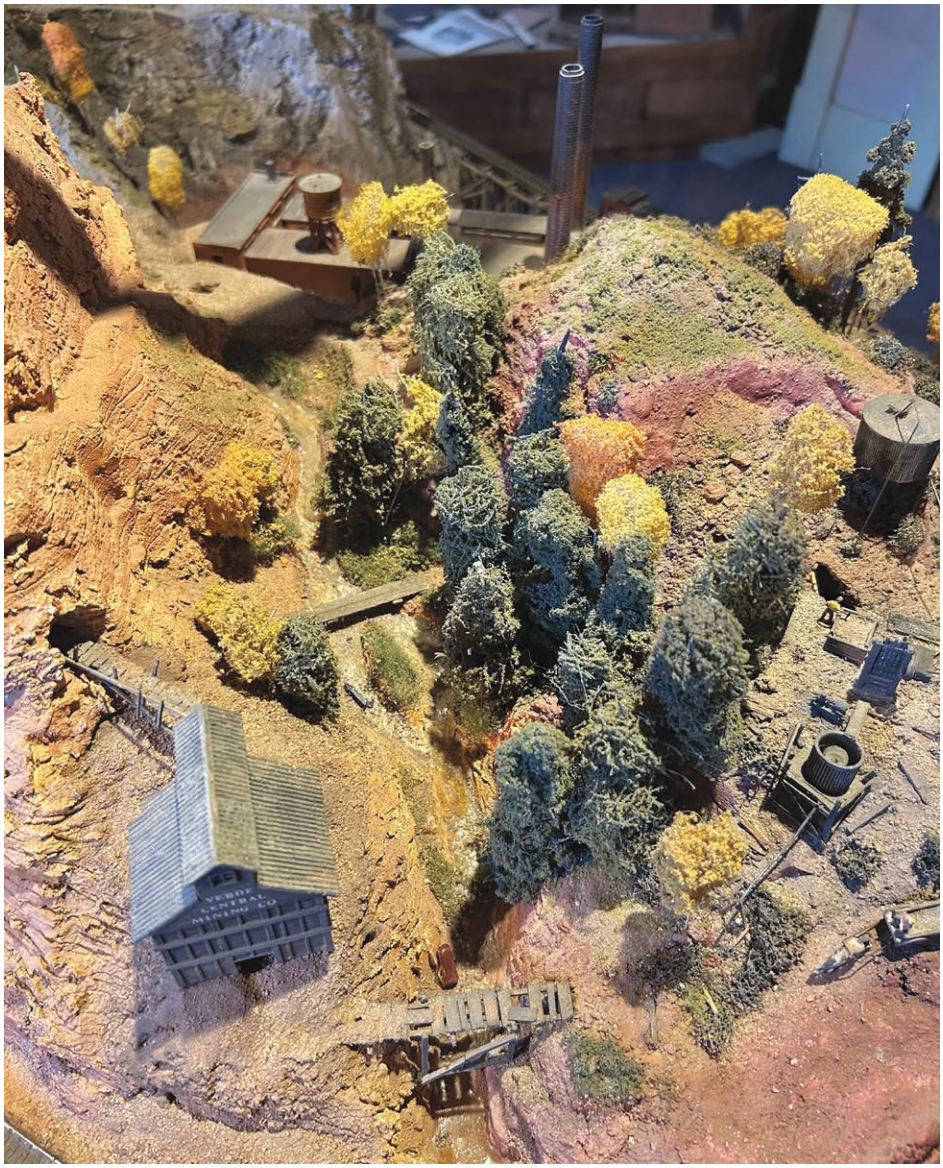
The United Verde & Pacific Railroad's Jerome depot has a frightening bridge connecting it to the town of Jerome. This is based on the second UV&P depot. This section of track, while N standard gauge, is a tribute to the UV&P.

with a spur line accessing the town of Jerome and the United Verde Mine. For a while, I had a section of Nn3 track on the layout and built some crude static Nn3 locomotives and rolling stock representing the United Verde & Pacific (U.V.&P.), but operational Nn3 was a bit over my head and outside my budget as a teenager. An isolated upper loop of N scale standard gauge track eventually took its place, which I called the Mingus Mountain Railroad, sort of an homage to the U.V.&P. Adding little details throughout the layout was an enjoyable process, and included trails connecting the mines and towns, mining operations in hazardous locations, a burned out building shell that I actually burned, and one of my favorites, a standing bear menacing a cabin owner who is frantically trying to open the window to his cabin. While the layout is mostly based on Jerome and Clarkdale, there is some freelance work on it, such as the town of Silver King clinging to the gray cliffs on one end of the layout. I added two small connecting modules to the layout in the early 1990s, depicting the associated mining town of Hopewell, and a fictional canyon with an enormous curved wooden trestle. These additions increased the length of the mainline run. One of the extension modules still exists, but is in storage.

The Great American Train Show was a large train convention that used to travel the United States in the 1990s, and my dad arranged for me to display my layout at one of the Phoenix, Arizona shows in 1991. This exciting experience led us to display the layout regularly for about seven years at the twice annual shows that came to Phoenix and Tucson, with one trip taking us as far as Las Vegas. We would secure the layout in the back of an enclosed U-Haul trailer and off we would go for the weekend. I was lucky enough to win a First-Place ribbon in the layout contests a couple of times, and the prize money helped fund the layout. These train shows with my dad were a lot of fun and are my favorite memories associated with the layout, and model railroading in general. A Great American Train Show advertisement led to a visit by author Russell Wahmann at one of the shows. Russell had written several books on the



A small mine with a locomotive boiler providing power sits atop a mountain in Jerome.

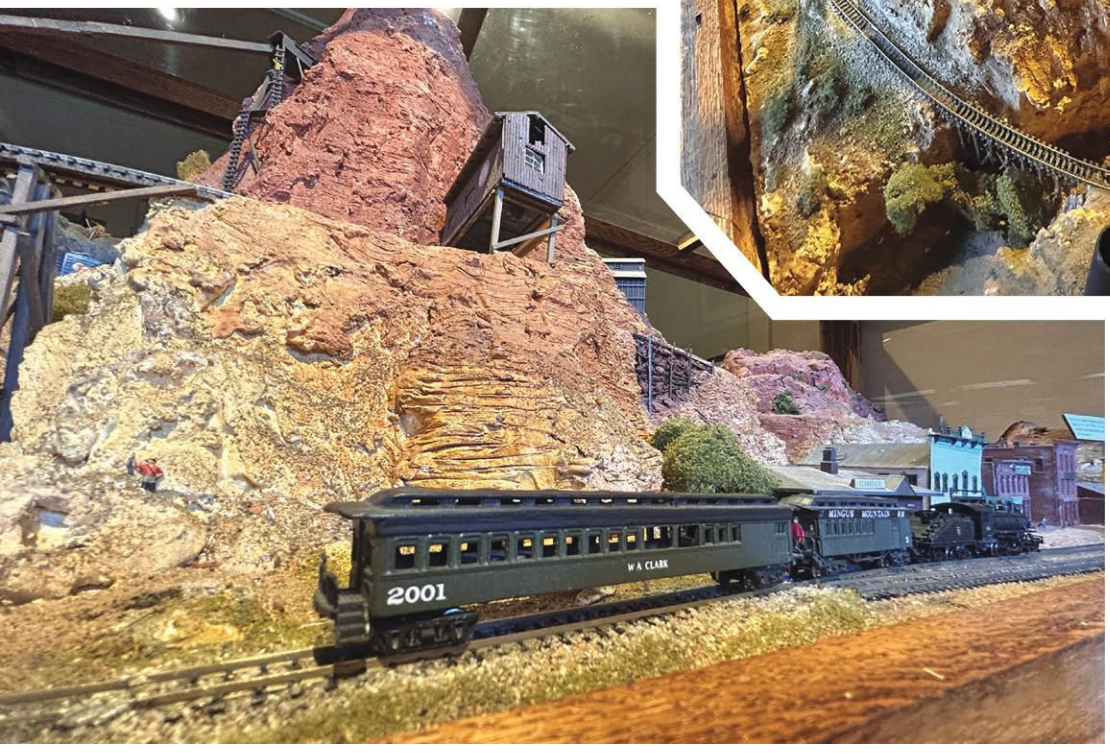


Looking down on the hidden basin with its forest and creek, next to the Verde Central Mine.



The Clarkdale Smelter's black slag rock is spilling down the slope into the canyon below.





(*above*): A view of the layout from the Clarkdale Smelter end.

(*left*): United Verde Mine owner William A. Clark's private coach makes up the rear of this passenger train in Clarkdale. This coach is loosely based on Clark's actual private coach.

(*below left*): Downtown Clarkdale has fallen on hard times.

(*below right*): An abandoned mine hoist house somehow clings to the top of Nugget Hill.







A long ore chute carries copper ore from a dangerous mine location over Cascade Canyon to the Mingus Mountain Railroad tracks at Silver King. Silver King depot at lower left.



An angry bear greets a cabin owner, who is trying to climb into his cabin through a window.



Silver King mining camp, with its various levels and little details. All structures are scratch built. The burned out building at center was actually burned down.



Silver King town and mine.



The Silver King Mine has two entrances into the cliff, and working ore bin. The house at top left has clothes made of aluminum foil, hanging out to dry.



The Gladiator Mill near Silver King in upper Cascade Canyon. This mill is modeled after the prototype Gladiator Mill near Crown King, Arizona.

railroads of Jerome that served as some of my main inspiration and historical guidance. Exploring and researching the Jerome area and its history, traveling its old railroad grades, and finding and mapping its historic sites became a passion of mine during this time, something that continues to the present.

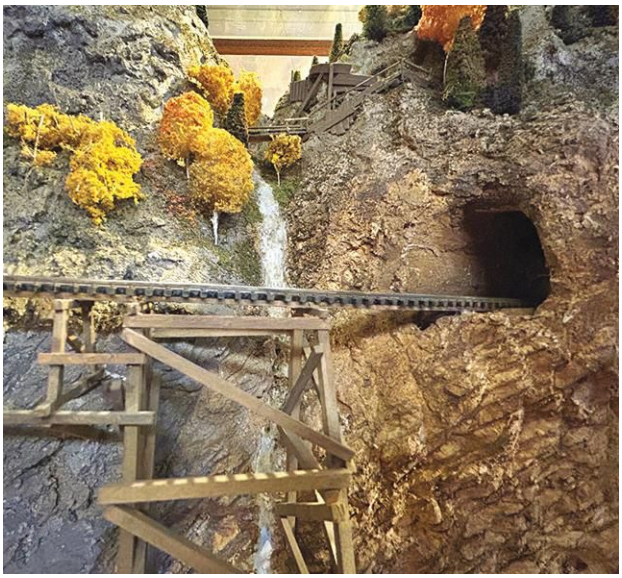
From hidden away to museum display

As early adulthood and all of its life changes arrived for me in the late 1990s, I had to put aside model railroading for a number of years, and the V.T.&S. layout sat idle in my parents' and later grandparents' garage in Tempe for years. Not having the room at my new house for the layout, my dad approached the Arizona State Parks system's Jerome State Historic Park in 2006 to see if they would be interested in a model railroad of the Jerome area. They were, and the Parks staff were somehow able to carry my 200+ pound layout up to the second floor of the museum, build a beautiful, protective wood and plexiglass display case for it, and install a timed push-button operation system for trains that the public could operate. The layout, which is on permanent loan to the museum, has been on continuous display for nearly 20 years, and is said to be a popular exhibit, especially with kids.

The Jerome State Historic Park museum

The Jerome State Historic Park is located in the historic Douglas Mansion on a hill overlooking the town of Jerome. The Douglas family had owned and developed Jerome's second largest mine, the United Verde Extension, or UVX, and built the mansion next to their mine in 1916. The UVX had its own standard gauge railroad, quite similar to the V.T.&S., and hauled copper ore to the company's smelter in Cottonwood, Clarkdale's sister town. In the early 1960s, the Arizona State Parks system negotiated with the Douglas family to obtain the old Douglas Mansion for a museum site and park. After some remodeling to transform it into a museum celebrating the rich history of Jerome, the Douglas Mansion reopened as the Jerome State Historic Park in 1965, Arizona's fifth State Park.

The Jerome State Historic Park held a





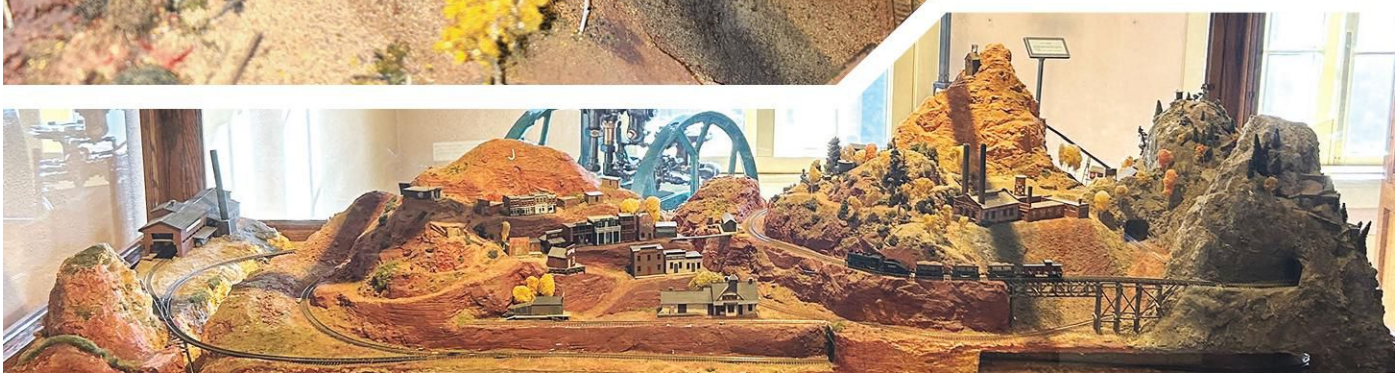


(*above left*): Track exits one cliff, crosses this bridge, and reenters another tunnel in a second cliff. A mountain trail held in place by questionable old boards carries the trail over a waterfall.

(*above right*): Two levels of track go through the cliffs of Mingus Mountain: Mingus Mountain RR at top, VT&S at bottom. Trails cut into the plaster mountainsides connect all the locations on the layout.

(*left*): The United Verde Copper Company's Jerome Smelter, one of the oldest structures on the layout. This smelter was moved from its original location due to a scenery remodel.

(*below*): The Verde Tunnel & Smelter layout in its display case on the second floor of the Jerome State Historic Park museum.





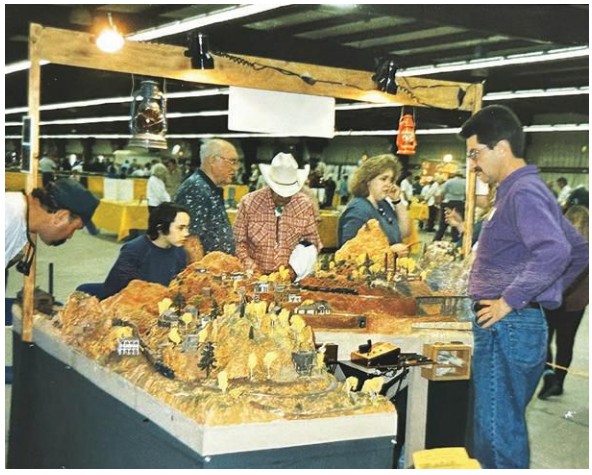




View of the layout from above, with Jerome at lower left, Clarkdale at top, United Verde Jerome smelter at lower right.

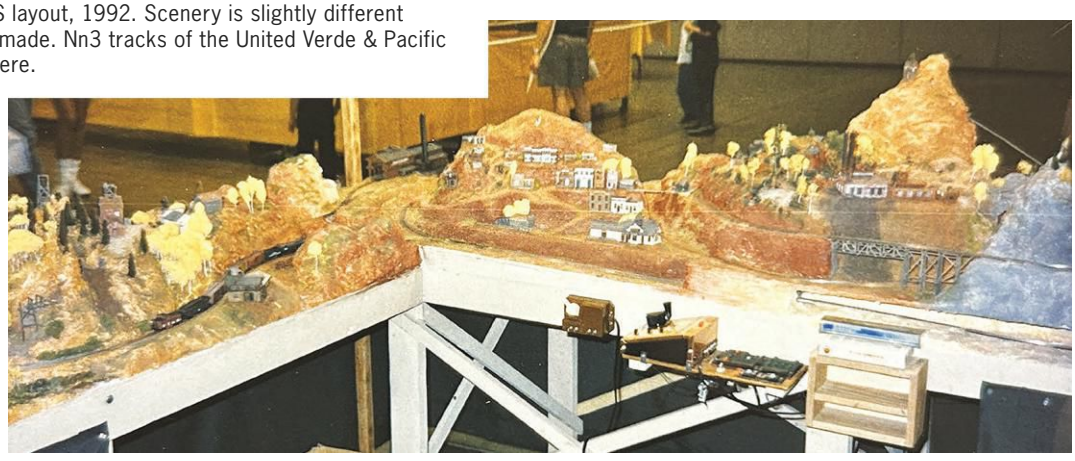


Author at age 14 next to the VT&S layout, 1992. Scenery is slightly different here, before some changes were made. Nn3 tracks of the United Verde & Pacific Railroad are at top left of layout here.



(*above right*): Author's father talking with the public about the VT&S layout at a Tucson, Arizona Great American Train Show, 1995. Note the extension module, which is not on display at the museum.

(*right*): VT&S layout at a Tucson, Arizona Great American Train Show, 1995.



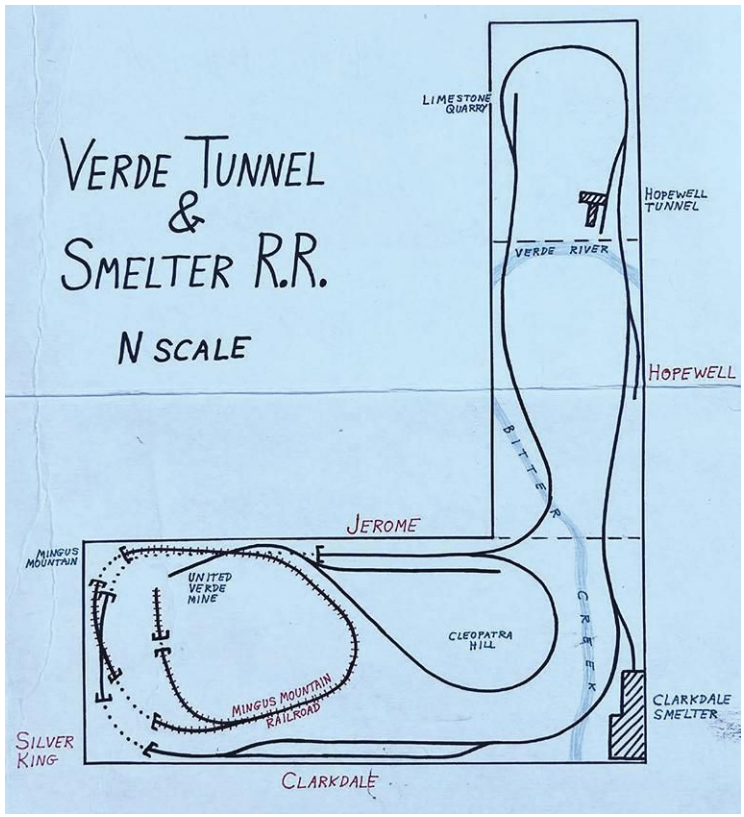
60th anniversary celebration event on October 11, 2025. Artists, community members, historical groups, those who had been involved with and/or contributed to the museum over the years, and others, were invited to be a part of the celebration, which was open to the public. I was very honored to be invited to the event and was asked to set up a table display for some of my models, which I happily did. My parents joined me at the event, and the experience brought back wonderful memories of our time together at train shows.

I'm very happy that the public can continue to see and enjoy the layout. It is in a beautiful, safe location, run by an always friendly and enthusiastic State Parks staff. It is in a much better situation than being hidden away in a garage or shed somewhere, forgotten and neglected.

The Verde Tunnel & Smelter layout has been a special and very enjoyable part of the lives of my family and I and has helped create so many happy memories for us. I hope that it inspires others, especially young people, to consider model railroading.

Today I am still very much into model railroading, with a couple of Nn3 layouts in a dedicated railroad room and plans for an HOn3 shelf layout. I still have the same level of inspiration and unending modeling ideas, limited only by time, money, and space.

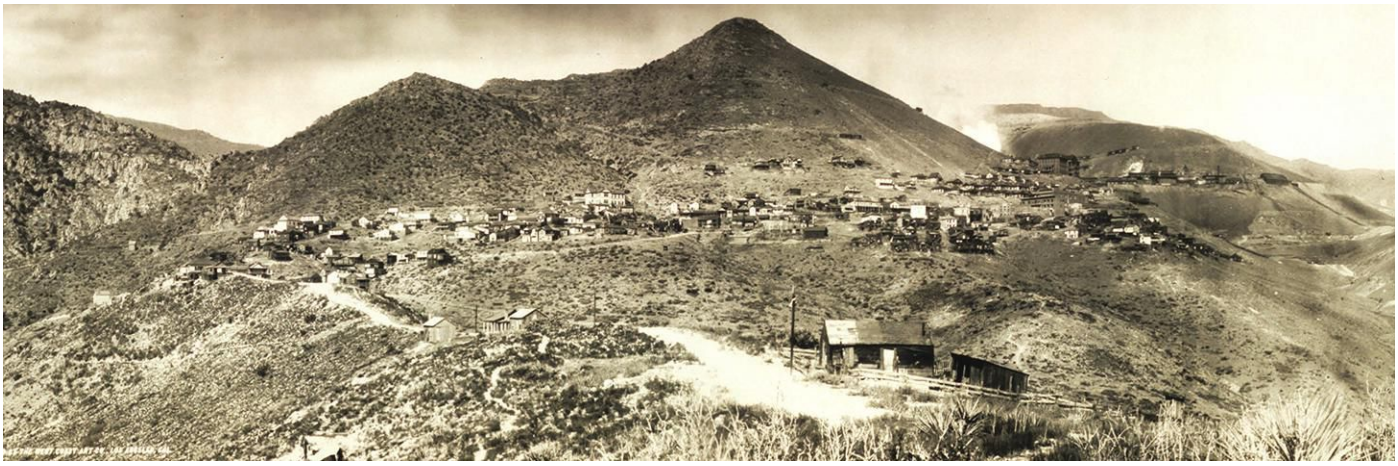
For more information on the Jerome State Historic Park, please visit *azstateparks.com/jerome*.



Track plan for the VT&S at its maximum size, 1997. Only the lower, larger section is on display in Jerome today.



Jerome Arizona, 1909. Town of Jerome clings to the side of Cleopatra Hill at left, with the United Verde Mine's Jerome smelter at top right. Note the absence of vegetation, due to the smelter burning off the high sulfur content of the United Verde Mine ore.



Jerome Arizona, 1909. Photo taken where the old high school is now.



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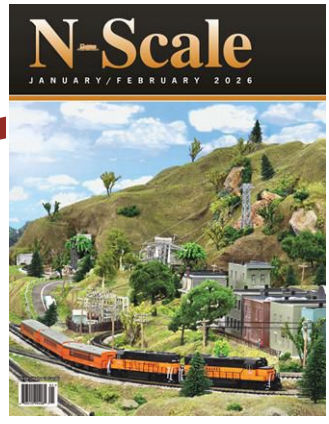
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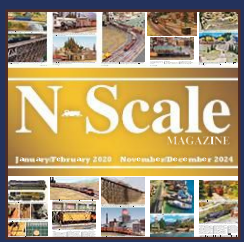
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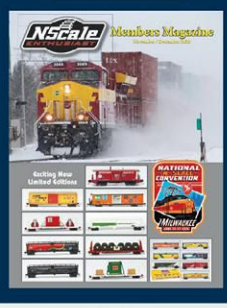
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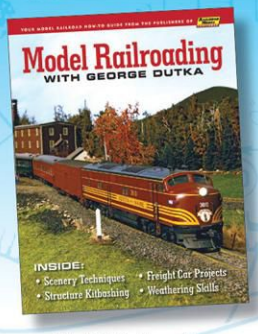
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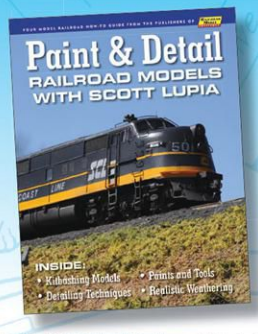
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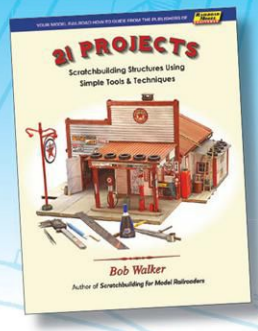
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