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O Scale Influences

A New Feature, and You Are There!

As Scase awoke from his peaceful slumber with a roar, the population of a small New England town bustled about in its normal purposeful way, not realizing that, after the sun went down this day, life would never be the same. Whoops! Wrong magazine!

This issue's column is purposefully short, because we are going to introduce a new feature in OST. We call it, “O Scale Influences.” Now, the name is not original with me, but was coined by a friend of mine, Stan Harper. That is, after all, what the feature is about: friends who have been influential. We'll start this off with three examples. Ron Morse’s piece on his mentor, Willard Jones, fits the mold of “O Scale Influences” quite nicely. The Wednesday Night Railroaders from the Cleveland area have also submitted a fine piece on Gil Stovicek. I've had the pleasure of visiting Gil several times during the New York Central System Historical Society meets, even sitting down with one of his famous cigars for an afternoon of relaxing talk and railroad running.

Appropriately, though, we'll start with John Armstrong as “O Scale Influence #1”, and dedicate this feature to him. He has influenced all of us with his writings, clinics, and wit. After this, we'll settle down to perhaps one per issue. This means that you, gentle reader, have the opportunity (nay, duty) to pen a short piece about the individual who has been a positive influence and mentor in your O Scale world.

Scase’s Snappy Patter will be in full cry in the next issue; meanwhile, here’s John.

O Scale Influences...

John Armstrong

Oh, I could fill the entire issue talking about John. By now, most of you have heard of his passing, just after the O Scale National in Washington. We all know of his prolific pen, having written several books on track planning, from the little green Atlas Snap-Track books to that planner’s bible, Track Planning for Realistic Operation. A quick search also yields reference to some 100 articles over the years in such august journals as Railway Age, Model Railroader, and Trains. I had the great fortune of being a family friend and (for a time) John’s neighbor, as well as being able to count him among my friends in the Capital Area O Scalers.

The Capital Area O Scalers was originally personified by folks like John, Ted Stepek (who did lots of artwork for Max Gray and Atlas Tool), Jim Moser, and Ray Jury. To be thrown in the deep end of the pool with these guys really motivated me (Was it self-preservation?) to learn new skills I never would have tried if I had continued to be a “lone wolf”. One of my favorite stories about this crew happened one Friday when I brought over a boxcar conversion I had just finished. John studied it long and hard. He patiently went over it top-to-bottom. Meanwhile Ted was getting a little impatient for his turn at it. Finally, Ted said, “John, get out of the light! I want to criticize it!”. John never let Ted forget about that line, and it became a staple. By the way, I still have the car, now a treasured memento of both of these fine gentlemen.

For any of you who had the fortune to attend one of John’s clinics, you got a taste of what we enjoyed every Friday night. He, in his uniquely gentle witty way, probably taught me one of the most important lessons a model-builder can learn. He always used the term “sincere” to describe an accurate and well built model (be it a single piece, like a boxcar, or an entire railroad). He also coined a term that I shamelessly use in these pages. There was many a time when he thought I was being a little “neurotic”. The difference between “sincere” and “neurotic” is simple enough. I could become so neurotic that I would never get around to building something that I was too balled up in researching to death. His wisdom? “Stop researching just before you start learning something you didn’t want to know!” John’s shared

Photo by Doug Jones
pronunciation is debatable. You're pretty close pronouncing it as “in-is-a-bull”) Branch run off a center stud system, much like the Maerklin HO system. The railroad occupies an area of 25 x 36 feet, with 226 feet of mainline and a little over 1000 feet of total trackage. There are 82 turnouts and 6 crossings, all hand-laid. Ruling grades on the Mountain Division are 3.5 percent on the Old Line, and just under 3 percent on the New Line.

The operating scheme features through passenger service with several connecting roads. There is a Boston, Syracuse, and Pittsburgh service with NYC and B&A, and a Binghamton, Elmira, and Pittsburgh service with Erie Lackawanna. The CS Pittsburgh legs of both services are combined into a single CS passenger train at Cattaraugus, for operating interest.

Trackage rights are granted to B&O, EL, and PRR at various points along the CS, and B&O, NYC, and EL pool power with the Canandaigua Southern.

Although John had some 80 articles published in the modeling press, there (in typically modest fashion) were only about wisdom, dealt with a modicum of gentle wit, will always stand as his legacy.

Having the great fortune to know John, and the rest of the old guard in the DC area did more to improve my modeling than any other single factor in my O Scale career. Now, it's time for the current DC Area O Scalers to pass that wisdom on to a new generation, who show great promise.

Meanwhile, with the kind permission of the Armstrong family, we reproduce his own artwork describing the features of his monumental Canandaigua Southern, along with some quick shots of some of the more famous landmarks along the mainline, taken just before the layout tours during the 2004 O National. We hope you enjoy them.

Many folks have asked about particulars of John's Canandaigua Southern, so here are a few notes. The railroad is, of course, O Scale. Started in the late 1940s, it retains the outside third rail of that period to this day. Two industrial sections, the Irondale Mine and the Ynysybwl (Like all Welsh names, the
10 or so featuring the Canandaigua Southern. So you can find out more about the railroad as it developed over the years, we’ve listed those we are aware of here. There may be more, but this should get you started.

Canandaigua Southern Bibliography
“CS Trackplan”, Model Railroader, Jan 71
“Control System”, Model Railroader, Mar 71
“Freight Car Routing Board”, Model Railroader, May 77
“Warm River Station”, Railroad Model Craftsman, Jul 78
“Sure-Footing the Atlas F9”, Model Railroader, Jun 76
“Hopper’s ‘Nighthawks’ Revisited”, Model Railroader, Jun 89
“Rotating Head Diesel Engineer”, Model Railroader, Nov 89
Canandaigua Southern photos featured in O Scale News, Issue #101
“Canandaigua Southern Update; 25 Years of Limited Progress” (includes the “vertical turnout”), Model Railroader, Jul, Aug, Sep 96
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All hand-drawn artwork by John Armstrong.
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These ain’t yer Daddy’s trains!
Roger wishes to thank the Wednesday Night Railroaders (and in particular Bob Rothrock) who cooperated in telling stories about Gil, supplying photos of Gil’s layout and helping with the final draft.

While there have been two very good photo features on the American Central in other model railroad magazines, this article offers previously unpublished background information on the startup of the A.C.R.R., some biographical data on Gil Stovicek, and a look at the railroad in its final state.

Gil started way back in the 1930s, and the following is a quote from an article he wrote but never submitted for publication:

“The American Central started as Standard Gauge with three locomotives, two American Flyer 4-4-2’s and a Lionel #8. The operation was quite noisy and had a center third rail. When Standard phased out, I went to O Gauge. I purchased an American Flyer 0-6-0 and operated on a 4 x 8 plywood table, still 3-Rail. Later came a Hudson 700E and the layout became too small. Therefore, I made the big decision and built a track plan that ran around a 20 x 20 foot basement. Material came from Walthers, still in 3-Rail.”

During World War II, Gil was in the army in Italy during the disastrous attack on Monte Cassino. He was captured by the Germans and transferred as a POW to Stalag IIB near Danzig (Gdansk), Poland. He said that he was not badly treated by the Germans. Gil reported that he emptied many coal cars while outside the camp in a working detachment. He then could negotiate with the Germans, exchanging articles received in the Red Cross packages for food. Toward the end of the war, the guards fled the camp, telling the prisoners in which direction the American Army was, and Gil reported he was able to walk right into the arms of the US forces.

After the war, he attended college in Dayton, Ohio. At a hobby shop in Dayton, the owner mentioned to Gil that an O Gauge club was starting in the waiting room of the Union Station, and that the club was 2-Rail. The following is a quote from the same article:

“Dave Reichert, one of the club members, taught me everything about converting to 2-Rail, so I tore down my old layout. The club was DC, so selenium rectifiers were put on the AC motors. Dave also suggested that I should try building a locomotive from scratch. It was a 2-10-2 using Adams and Sons castings, Lobaugh wheels and gear, and a K & D #2 motor. It looked great and is still running well. Once I started building locomotives, I built about two a year, each one a little better than the one before. I entered a 2-10-0 Russian Decapod in the NMRA contest in Montreal and took third place. I ultimately won a Best in Show with an N&W 2-6-6-2 Z1 Articulated.”
In 1968, he moved into a house in Lyndhurst, Ohio with a 66 x 30 foot basement, and it was there that the present American Central Railroad was built. The layout has curves of 10 foot radius (120°). The grades are a maximum of 3⁄4 percent. There is a two-level double-track mainline and a single branch. For many years, power came from banks of 12 volt automotive batteries connected in series to deliver 24 volts. This worked well until the trains got more numerous and longer. On open house days for NMRA events, for example, it was often necessary to shut operations down after three hours of continuous running to recharge the batteries for an hour. Since 1993, the power source has been a lab-quality regulated DC supply, two 24 volt sections (with 15 amps per section) feeding Powerstats at the control panels. The power source is regulated DC. Five long trains can be operated simultaneously, and the train lengths are enormous, topped by a 103 hopper coal drag. He accumulated about 100 locomotives and about 400 cars.

The scenery is Styrofoam and some plaster. The vegetation comes from the garden. The cityscape backdrops were created by the late Chuck Mills, a commercial artist and fellow model railroader. Chuck's use of light and shading in his renderings gave a markedly realistic illusion of depth to these one-dimensional flats. The more you looked at them, the more you felt you were standing in downtown Cleveland 40 to 50 years ago.

Gil also has a simple signal system that changed indications when trains occupied a block, but did not provide automatic train control.

Gil was famous (and sometimes notorious because of his heavy cigar smoking) in the Cleveland area. He was the driving force behind a group of about 20 regulars (including some who modeled in other than O Scale) who came to his basement twice a month on a Wednesday evening to immerse themselves into the ambience of real model railroading. Gil did not follow a particular prototype nor brand. CSX, Santa Fe, Pennsylvania and SP passed each other without shame, though he himself was a NYC fan. He didn't discriminate between expensive or cheaper manufacturers. To him, a train was a train, on condition that it ran well, and usually he had the skill to make everything perform.

Frank “Gil” Stovicek, a pioneer modeler, tireless advocate of O Scale and owner of the American Central Railroad, passed away after a long battle against diabetes and kidney disease on
November 26, 2003 (see the letter “A Fallen Warrior” in OST #13). The O Scalers of the Cleveland, Ohio area already miss him, not only for his generous spirit in sharing his layout, but for his expertise as a 2-Railer, and his friendship to all who visited his basement. He particularly enjoyed having youngsters come (for instance, the Boy Scouts), and encouraged them to join in the hobby as well. Gil was a contemporary of such early pioneers as Mel Thornburgh (who scratchbuilt a lot of models on display in the B & O museum), Leonard Blum (Of Blum’s “Hobby House”, for many years a mecca for Cleveland area modelers), Mack Lowry (creator of the O Scale “Railways of America” empire formerly in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio), Henry Pearce, the Michigan craftsman whose gearboxes were, in Gil’s opinion, simply “the best”, and many others.

To the end, he was excited by recent developments in the industry, acquiring products from, for example, AtlasO, which he saw as long-overdue alternatives to brass rolling stock, combining excellence with affordability, now also reflected in offerings from K-Line, Weaver, MTH, and Lionel. Being around him afforded the luxury of knowledge from that long sweep of time. He could just as easily tell you what to look for when picking up an old Westbrook kit from a flea market as he could advise you where to go for the best deal on wheel sets when converting MTH 3-Rail items to scale.

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All know people who do fantastic modeling and never get the attention that they deserve. Willard Jones is one of them. I have known Willard for more years than either of us wants to admit. We met while members of a small group in the San Diego area called the Foothills Model Railroaders.

I have admired his work and he has always been there to offer help to all of us in the area. His track work is beautiful, and he scratchbuilds or kitbashes nearly everything he has done on his layout.

Willard is one of those who has been able to build an O Scale standard gauge layout in the same space as his former HO layout. Ask him how he did it and the answer will be very simple and low key with the impression that “Well... you dummy, you just draw it out and do it!” Now, he would never say that to you but he makes it sound so simple that you feel that way after he tells you how it was done!

He started modeling HO in March of 1947 (how many of you remember the month and year you started model railroading?). His switch to O Scale was January 1991.

I think that most of us try too hard to do things that are rather simple. If we take the time to think it out, things will go together much easier. Building O Scale layouts in HO Scale space is not that hard to do. The biggest thing to remember is that you need to use smaller locomotives and cars. The same is true of the buildings that you choose. If you are like me, and need to run New York Central Hudsons and the like, then a small O Scale layout may be out of the question. Some years ago Willard built a beautiful circus train in O Scale. The train is made up of seven 72’ flats with wagonloads, one empty flat, four passenger cars (60’ to 80’ long) and two 72’ stock cars. The cars were no match for the 34” radius curves on his layout and the train is now for sale. He also has built up and sold a similar train in HO.

The La Mesa and Western is an “L” shape “dogbone” design

Scratchbuilt engine house and turntable with the USH UP 2-8-0 #6225.
that is about 6’ x 24’ x 16’ and has more detail packed into it than meets the eye. Minimum radius is 34” with one curve that is 42” and another that is 50 inches. Switches are built to fit the area needed. Power is supplied by a PH Hobbies 16-volt model PS6. The control panel is a work of art by itself.

Unlike most of us, Willard gets by with a minimum of equipment. His roster includes a US Hobbies UP 2-8-0, #6225, a Williams Jersey Central Camelback 4-6-0, #631, an Overland UP SD60, one Atlas six-wheel Diesel switcher (reworked and lettered for the La Mesa Western) and a Walthers gas electric with a Northwest Short Line double motor and detailed interior. Rolling stock consists of six boxcars, nine flats, three hoppers, five reefers, four tanks, three stock cars, four gondolas and seven cabooses. Six passenger cars round out the roster of equipment.

The layout and rolling stock are neat and not overly weathered. Most of the buildings are lit and some have interior details. Most of the business are named for friends; mine is the “Morse Cabinet Company” (made from extra building pieces I gave him some years ago). I, in turn, named one my scratch-built buildings for him, “W. Jones Really Good Stuff”.

He built a beautiful covered bridge for me using photos of one I took in Oregon a few years ago. While I was also in On3 he built an O/On3 crossing for me, as well as a standard gauge double crossing. Building faultless trackwork is his “thing”.

On top of his modeling ability he is a very devout family and church member and was the maintenance man for his church for many years before health issues sidelined him from Some of the finely built kit, kitbashed and scratch built buildings of the village.

The control panel of the La Mesa Western is a piece of art in itself.

The layout artwork by Carey Hinch.
that duty. Willard is retired from General Dynamics in San Diego. If all that is not enough, he spends hundreds of hours building fantastic, plank-by-plank wooden ship models for his family and himself. He also built a large 3-story dollhouse for a close friend. Willard doesn’t let the grass grow under his feet (or on his well-maintained lawn), and has been a great influence on me and on my modeling.

Most of the cars and trucks are inexpensive ones from such places as the local hobby shops and discount toy stores.

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Auctioneer’s Note: Very large auction with something for everyone! The late Mr. Stovicek started building his large scale train layout over 35 years ago and continually updated and improved it. All engines are in great shape as he ran his trains and maintained them. The trains and toys are somewhat dusty, but for the most part are in great shape. Due to the amount of items to sell in one day, we plan on running two auction circles throughout the day, so bring a friend in case you would want to bid on something in each circle.

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35 ton Wharf Crane

As regular readers would know, my layout (Bay Ridge Harbor Railroad) is based on a fictitious railroad in New York’s harbor area. When I decided it needed a large open pier (see OST #14) I felt it also needed a crane to add to the atmosphere.

The crane that I am describing this issue is based on an actual 35 ton crane that was once on an open pier owned by the Pennsylvania Railroad in New Jersey. It is purely a non-operating scenic item although it could be made to work without too much trouble should you decide to build one. Due to lack of space I have not described the building of it step-by-step but rather by more a basic description of the construction.

The crane has five major components consisting of the following:
1. Tower
2. Roller bearing
3. Machinery housing
4. Jib
5. Jib or pulley tower

The entire crane is built out of styrene except for the cables and pulleys. These are from a Meccano (Erector) set.

I started with the main tower using a square made from HO Atlas bridge sides. To this four legs were added suitably braced with various styrene shapes. A stairway was also added to one side.

For the roller bearing I cut two circles of 1/8” styrene which I joined to a band of styrene and added imitation rollers.

The machinery housing was made of plain styrene sheet which I then covered with Wills HO “Corrugated Asbestos” (from England) to simulate corrugated metal in O Scale. You could also use other types of material like metal foil. Grandt Line window frames were used. Originally, I decided to have a curved roof but changed it to a peaked one for looks and simplicity. A small control cab was added along with a platform.

The jib and tower were built using Plas-tract shapes. I used a jig for making sure the sides were even.

The crane was painted with grey primer, then a matte grey, then a light coat of rust, and weathered with an India ink/alcohol wash. A seated figure was placed in the control cab along with a row of levers.

The ideas I have used in this model could be applied to just about any scenic model for your railroad.
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Being a former professional show business entertainer and photographer, I have always tried to make a model railroad into a theater of magic and fantasy. Lighting always played a very important role when featuring a stage performance and the same should really apply to model railroading. Before I tell you how I did my nighttime photographs, I would first of all like to explain how my layout room is lit for normal photography and as a theatrical stage.

You know what a theater stage is like when you sit down in your seat to watch a performance and the lights go out. The stage is lit with floodlights and colored foot lights, the entertainer is brightly lit for all to see, and your eyes are focused on the subject. The same should really apply to a model railroad inasmuch as person’s eyes should be drawn into the railroad. Nothing outside the railroad should really detract from viewing the scenery of a model railroad.
Lighting in the Railroad Room

For most model railroad enthusiasts, lighting a model railroad room means simply flicking on the main switch and either a 100 watt or 150 watt light bulb springs to life. To my mind, the layout at this stage looks dull and lifeless. Why not think about the railroad layout as a theatrical stage which, when lit up properly, comes to life? There are two ways of going about lighting a layout room. For the first case, let’s say you just want to light the layout for viewing only, with no thoughts about possible photographs at a later date (other than using black & white film). In this case, placing 60 watt spotlights at various intervals around the room, and disregarding the main light overhead, works very well.

Spotlights for Effect

Try placing one spotlight in each corner of the room where the layout is housed, and a further one in the middle of each wall. Once the lights are switched on, you will notice that the focus of attention has shifted to the layout and not the surrounding areas. Make sure also that you put each spotlight on a separate switch. To create a nighttime effect, replace two of the corner bulbs with blue bulbs.

Now let us consider the second case. Here, we are lighting the layout simulating a natural light source and are also able to photograph the layout in color, without the need for any studio lighting whatsoever.

Fluorescent Daylight Tubes

I found what I was looking for in the form of fluorescent daylight tubes. I use Philips TLD 58 watt 950 tubes, which are rated at 5500 degrees Kelvin and are perfect match for color photography, when using daylight type slide or print film. These tubes come in four, five, and six-foot lengths, and are only a little bit more expensive than normal household fluorescent tubes. A little explanation on color temperature verses color prints (or for that matter color slides) is due. Light is measured in degrees Kelvin. Midday outdoors is roughly 5500 degrees Kelvin, for example. Because these tubes are a good match for daylight temperature, no filters (i.e. 80A or 80B) are required.

Anyway, I purchased one to try it out using daylight slide film. I rigged it up in the railroad room, using just the one daylight tube with all the other lights switched off. I used a full 24-exposure roll,
Little critter #7 crawls into the shed for the night. The small hamlet of Tumbleweed is still a busy place even though night has approached.
trying out various combinations of exposure times and also using a mirror to reflect the light. When the slide film came back to me, I was amazed at the colors, they were almost the exact colors on the layout. During this test, I kept a record of the exposure times and the shots I took. I found that the best result with just the one tube was f5.6. Since an aperture of f22 or better was what I wanted, all I needed were more tubes. Off I went and purchased seven more five-foot daylight tubes, and fitted the lot to my ceiling at 18” intervals.

The next day I bought two more rolls of film, one print and the other slide. On getting home, I loaded up the print film, as I develop and print my own color. I switched on all eight tubes and photographed all aspects of the layout at f22 - f32. When the prints were finally out of the bleach-fix, washed and dried, I must say I was very pleased with the results.

The slide film was then used and sent off. On return, the results were also very good. Oh yes, I still use the spotlights for normal running of trains as the visual effects are great, but, off they go when I need some photographs. These daylight fluorescent tubes are also kinder to the eyes for working on the layout. Most of the time I have just the one five-foot tube switched on while I am working on the layout. Apart from anything else, it is a natural light and the colors on the layout look right. Even if you use the spotlights, they give off a yellowish light and, although your eyes get used to it, you cannot take any photographs with them on without filters. You would have a color cast.

There is one point about the fluorescent tubes. You’ll have to keep them clean, as they collect dust. When dust collects on the tubes, the color temperature shifts a little. Although you might not notice this, the camera will. I tend to clean mine just before a photo session, to make sure all will be well.

Nighttime Photographs

As I wanted to create evening or nighttime photographs and still retain the image quality and depth of field, I had to resort to time exposures. Some were as long as 12 seconds using my digital Fuji Finepix S7000 on manual settings. I set the camera for tungsten lighting. I used an aperture setting of f8 on all my photographs, which is the best this camera can do. I took some photos with just the lights inside the structures, streetlights, &c, on. These results using this setup were not really adequate for any publication, so I sat and thought for a while on just what could be done. After much experimenting and many hours, I came up with a workable solution.

Here’s how I did it. With the camera on a tripod, settings to manual, an aperture of f8, the tungsten setting and a shutter speed at eight seconds, I left the main light on in the room while composing and focusing the shot. With the camera on a 10-second delay mode, I pressed the shutter and waited until the shutter opened. Once opened, I immediately shut off the room lights and waited the rest of the eight seconds for the camera to do its job. The result was excellent. What this had done was to highlight the overall picture for a split second with the room lights on, then the rest of the eight seconds was spent burning in the lights inside structures and streetlights. Sometimes you just have to fool the camera into thinking that all the lights are still on. On a number of photographs, the time exposure was increased to 12 seconds to obtain the result I was looking for. I spent many days experimenting with various other ways of lighting use, such as a flash unit facing towards the ceiling. However, flashguns are daylight spectrum, not tungsten light, and the result was not very satisfactory. So the best way, for me anyway, was as described above.

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These P&D Twin Tower Drive kits can also be used to repower existing Red Caboose GPs. Two kits are offered: #PDP2200K has plastic Blomberg trucks, while #PDP2201K features the P&D brass Blomberg trucks, which are truly some of the finest trucks on the market. Each kit also includes a powerful Pittman motor and all the necessary parts to complete the installation. Detailed instructions are included.
Visitors to the Granville Island Model Train Museum in Vancouver, B.C. Canada will be surprised and amazed. They’ll be surprised to find what is thought to be the largest international collection of toy and model trains on display in the world and amazed to find what is one of the largest and most detailed layouts in the world—all under the same roof. The great collection, as museum curator, John Keith-King says, “consists of toy trains for kids, fine scale trains for big kids, and 7½" gauge live
steam models for engineer kids.” Hornby, Lionel, Marx, Trix, Dorrin, American Flyer, HO, and fine scale brass models are all displayed. Truly this collection of toy and model trains is very impressive.

However, the gem of the museum is the 80’ layout that can best be described in the words of a young visitor, “The best thing I have ever seen in my whole life!” It is a very large and detailed O Scale layout with four independent two-rail standard gauge routes. Additionally, there is a three-rail circuit and a point-to-point trolley line. But it is more than a large layout. Many have said that the attention to detail borders on the obsessive. John Keith-King considers that to be a compliment! Everything is placed in an exact and precise natural location. As John states: “This is really an environmental sculpture with trains on it. Most layouts highlight the trains. Hobbyists traditionally tend to overpopulate their layouts by adding too many buildings and structures. Then they tend to clutter their layouts with a large train collection.” Herein lies the difference.

This operating layout is a tribute to the engineering of the railroads. It honors the people who mastered the physical barriers of the land by cutting the grades, boring the tunnels, and bridging the canyons.
The natural environment challenged their skills. That environment shares its space with the machines. As a few model trains make their way along steep cliffs, through long tunnels, and across high trestles, the super-layout portrays the rugged terrain of the Western Rockies. It features the physical elements of the Fraser Valley in a scale modeling of its majesty and grandeur.

There are a few buildings on the layout, but the most spectacular things are the trees (Not just trees—6000 trees!). Trees are everywhere and feature Western old growth cedar, Douglas fir, and hemlock. These trees are scale and intricately detailed. Each is a model in itself. Some of the larger ones took two days to make. They are magnificent right down to the branches and individual needles. The trees are blended together to help create the environment, while the trains run behind, below, and among them. As Keith-King says, “The trains are important, but the environment is just as important.” This balance between trains and the environment is what really stands out with the layout. The natural layout is on one side of the room. On the other side is the wall of trains—displayed in man-made cabinets.

Construction of the layout took a talented crew of 12 an entire year to complete. As an architect, railroad historian, and director, John Keith-King worked with his crew to produce a real masterpiece. The layout is composed of a wooden substructure with foam sheets added for the scenery base. Eight miles of Johnson & Johnson orthopedic bandages with plaster were used to create the hardshell scenery forms. Master builder, Warren Jones, made several trees and built several spectacular wooden trestles. Huge rock facings, retaining walls, tunnel cuts, and deep canyons complement the rugged and wonderful terrain. As John states, “The layout was designed specifically for the public. It is about the building and caring of models—trees and trains.” It is about his passion.

Before I left the museum I found myself going back to have another look at the layout—twice. I have to agree with that young visitor that this really is “one of the best things I have seen in my whole life!” My life and layout will never be the same. I came away determined and inspired. I hope this story and photos inspire you to do the same. Details do make the difference!

Photos by Kathryn Hatashita-Lee, Granville Island Museums
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Operations At National?

At your [National] clinic, I raised the question: “Why can’t I operate O Scale at an O Scale National Convention?” [Brian Scace] said I should remind you of that in an email, so here it is.

My point was that the NMRA has an Operations SIG where one can sign up to operate on some very famous layouts, some of which are O Scale. I operated at the Toronto Club last year at that convention and really enjoyed it. I would consider it Nirvana to have operated on John Armstrong’s layout, but I’m afraid that will never come to be. I did get to switch a car on Ken Nesper’s layout on Sunday while they were operating and I enjoyed it. So did the friends who were travelling with me. Operation is not everyone’s cup of tea, but for those of us who enjoy it, a chance to operate O Scale is a treat to be relished! By the way, I really enjoyed the clinic!

Russ Kress, New Jersey

Layout Design w/Age In Mind

I am 66 with some arthritis and other health problems that make me wonder if it is wise to try to build a 12’ x 24’ PRR Middle Division segment with a branch line with 48” radius curves. Or is it better to build a module layout utilizing hollow-core doors and foam that could be stored under the bed and limited to GE 44 tonners on tight, substandard curves. Given my age and health the likelihood of being able to do the upkeep on the house probably means we will have to move to a senior condo where space would be at a premium. While I hate to give up the dream layout for a module, it probably is more realistic. So if there are other readers out there facing similar choices, it might be worthwhile to do an article on downsizing. After all, lots of the real railroads have had to do the same thing to survive.

Sarah Flynn, Vermont

Joe sez: Sarah, I don’t have an article “in the pile” specifically on the choices leading to “downsizing” one’s living quarters and the effects on one’s modeling. Maybe someone out there who has gone through this will share with us. Sarah had also asked me about estate planning and we will have an article next issue dealing with how to prepare for the disposition of your model railroad equipment through your estate.

Express Trucks Now Available

Several issues back, you ran an article on converting Lionel scale milk cars to operate on 2-Rail without totally trashng the beautifully detailed trucks (OST#7, Mar ’03). I called Lionel at that time and was told they were “thinking about making [the trucks] available” in quantity rather than just as replacement parts.

I’m going to let the secret out. Lionel now has their milk car express trucks available as a separate part. At first they were limited. Initially I ordered 40 sets but they would only send 12. My recent order in August for 12 more was quickly filled so I assume they are re-stocking. The trucks are a beautiful and inexpensive quality replacement upgrade for many older express and milk cars which is what I will use them for. Of course, they do require reworking to re-gauge them from 3-Rail to 2-Rail as outlined in your article, however, they are well worth the effort. Thanks very much for running that article.

The trucks cannot be ordered online, only by phone (586-949-4100), fax (586-949-5429) or mail at LIONEL, P.O. Box 748, New Baltimore, MI 48047-0748.

The trucks are sold individually at $7.85 each, two are required to re-truck one car ($15.70 per car). The trucks come with the Lionel operating coupler attached and the sideframes are not lettered as they are on the production milk cars. The trucks are part number 6107331050 “Operating Truck w/o P-U/No stencil”. If you use a credit card, you must supply the CVV number on the back of the card with the rest of your info.

Bill Kozel, New York

Sunset K4 Redux

[Joe sez: I mentioned in my PRR K4s review last issue that you could reduce the gap between locomotive and tender by drilling another hole in the drawbar. Woody Matthews had some input on that note.]

I drilled a hole for the tender drawbar pin ½” (two scale feet) forward of the factory hole. The spacing between the loco and tender looks much better, but the [connecting cable] is so long and stiff that it binds on the front of the tender under the firing deck (There is no recess there like the tenders on many other/older brass imports). Another problem that surfaces sometimes in adding new holes to the factory drawbar is that the end of the drawbar then interferes with the first axle of the front tender truck. It becomes difficult, if not impossible, to get the pin into the new hole or to separate the loco and tender if one does manage to get the tender pin inserted. Assuming everything else is okay (cab apron and wiring function without binding, etc.), this problem is solved by cutting off the end of the drawbar. The Sunset K4s will need this treatment, but I won’t do it until I change the wiring between the loco and tender.

Woody Matthews, California

More On The Sunset K4s

I enjoyed your article in the last issue of O Scale Trains commenting on the Sunset High Iron PRR K4. Aside from the space between the engine and tender (on which you commented), the only other feature I do not like is the length of the tender. The spacing between the truck centers is 6” (or 24’ full scale) which is like the PRR used for the prewar M1 and the K5 tenders. The K4 had a tender with 20’ spacing or 5” in O Scale. The Max Gray, US Hobbies and Westside models agree with this.

For the postwar era when the PRR equipped the M1 with the long distance 210F75a tender, a number of 130P75 tenders were surplus and possibly were used on the M’s. This could have been as many as 201 since that was the number of M1’s originally in service. I understand there were 525 M’s built.

I don’t mean to be a “rivet counter” but I rather liked the shorter tender on the K4 and on some of the M1’s.

Please let me hear your comments on this.

Thanks, Bob Retallack, Ohio

Joe sez: Bob, I’m no Pennsy expert. I rely on the info in the publications I have in my personal library. According to Pennsy Power by Al Stauffer, the K4’s ran with as many as eight different tender styles. The 130P75 tender was part of a 1930’s modernization scheme and many were given to K4’s. I can also tell you the K4s sitting outside the Pennsylvania State Railroad Museum at Strasburg, Pa., in post-war fittings has a 110P75 tender behind it. The Sunset tender makes for a nice variation, however.
Another Great Issue

Many thanks for your continued, high quality efforts. Seeing Herrn Botzow’s Buckeye RR again made be a bit homesick even though I have a new home now. I always had a great time operating with the Buckeye when I lived in upstate NY.

Jace Kahn’s column and the Rail Craft coverage was interesting to me. I have one of those panel side RC hoppers which I re-did in P&E paint, taking the car number from a prototype I spotted in a NY Central video.

Another big hit for me was Brian Sace’s article on finding dimensions from photos to help with scratchbuilding, something I have done for quite a while but never got to write up anything for it.

I hope you got a shot of Joe Ferrioli’s B&O W-1 from the O Scale National model contest! It was an infamous B&O loco that never was. It would be great to see how he did it. Oh yes, B&O laid out plans for a W-1; a streamlined, 16 cylinder, steam-motored 4-2-2-2-2-4 with no rods connecting the drivers, otherwise, a 4-8-4. A diagram for it appears in Edson’s book on B&O steam locomotives. B&O tested a 4 cylinder steam motor for it (one was to power each driver axle) for many months at Mount Clare without reaching any conclusions. Their “George Emerson” N-1 class 4-4-4-4 experimental of the mid-to-late 1930’s was already on the rails, along with a small zoo of Colonel Emerson’s other experimental steam locos of which the W-1 was to be a part. A four star issue for sure!

Ed Bommer, Oklahoma
Joe replies: Ed, see the Modeler’s Shelf in this issue for a photo of Joe Ferrioli’s W1 model.

Do We Really Need A Separate O Scale National?

After reading your Observations commentary in OST#16, I am in complete agreement that Nationals should become a thing of the past, or passed, as you put it. I put out a newsletter/list every three or four months and I have always said that if attendance didn’t pick up, we all should support the O Scale National show. As for keeping out the 3-Railers, I think that mentality has changed in the past few years. I see more and more O Scale shows open to both 2- and 3-Rail modelers. The lines between what we used to call O Scale and HiRail are so blurry now, it doesn’t make much sense to exclude one for the other. As for a convention in Philadelphia, we have limited venues here large enough to host a National and because it is a large metropolitan area, costs are on the high side. I’m not prepared to subsidize a convention just yet. See my “Observations” in this issue for my decision about the 2007 National.

Mystery Loco Builder Identified, Maybe

My, my how time flies huh? Issue #16 came today and another year is nearly gone.

On page 55 Ron Morse presented a photo of an engine asking who dunnit? Maybe someone else will come forward and say they did it, but there’s a slim possibility it may be one I did quite a few years ago.

I used to build locos for Bill Eldridge who lived in Texas. He was maybe 75 then and died several years ago. A fellow that lived in Texas, his name and city escape me, sold off or helped dispose of Bill’s collection for Bill’s widow. Perhaps that person could shed some light on who made it, if it indeed belonged to Bill at some point in time?

The reason why I write this is Bill was getting along in years and wanted to build some locos of particular types. He had gobs of stuff bought, sold, and traded from long ago, like Lionel, All Nation, USH/KTM, Lobaugh, etc. You name it. He had it, literally.

So when he wanted a loco “made” it was exactly that. He’d send me parts from several different makers, usually new or little used along with instructions, how-to’s, etc. I’d “breed” them all together to come up with what he had in mind.

Some turned out OK, some were close approximations and some were “just close”. But that’s what he wanted. He wasn’t fussy as he wanted to “run this damn stuff” as he put it.

I used to keep photos of cars, locos, etc., but had to give that up long ago as it cost a lot of money for film and took up storage space plus took funds away from railroading!

I cannot call to mind the name of the person who sold off Bill’s collection nor where he lived, though he did offer it to me first to store the photos of cars, locos, etc., but had to give that up long ago as it cost a lot of money for film and took up storage space plus took funds away from railroading!

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That fellow might be able to say how that engine on page 55 came to be as he was the last to see that collection intact before it was disposed of here and there across the USA.

It may also be I’m wrong as memory, time and so many models I’ve made in over 50 years now, even I can’t say “Yep that’s something I did”.

Sincerely,
Carl Phillips, Oregon

Looking For Other O Scalers

We received a note from a gentleman down in Tennessee who is looking for other 2-Rail O Scale modelers in his area, with the idea of forming a club. If you’re interested contact Eddie Toombs, 104 Peachtree Lane, Bell Buckle, TN 37020. Tell him you saw this note in OST.
This is an ore car and caboose lettered for the Canandaigua Southern, in tribute to the great John Armstrong. The decals were produced using Micro-Mark technology. The cars appear in the Northumberland yard on my Philadelphia & Erie RR.

This photo (inset) of Mr. Armstrong and yours truly, was taken in his living room, after operating the Canandaigua Southern on April 13, 2002. I gave Mr. Armstrong one of my custom Canandaigua Southern cabooses, after he had written to me, commenting favorably on my Philadelphia & Erie.

—Pete Trunk

(Above left) The 50’ ATSF #64791 is a distinctive door-and-a-half boxcar. It is built from a urethane cast body. (Above right) On the service track, SP Cab Forward #4294 waits for its next mission. It is a Sunset brass model. Detailing, painting and weathering on both models was done by Juerg Luetscher of Switzerland. Juerg writes: “I’m building models matching the operation of California in the early 50’s. They are built to operate on my layout, ‘The Orange Empire’ (under construction). Most of my models are based on prototypes from SP and ATSF. I’m working with all kind of materials, brass, wood and styrene. For me it is fascinating to see the results using the different techniques to build O Scale models. By the way, I changed from HO to O Scale 24 years ago. I never would change back. O Scale gives such a realistic feeling.”
This B&O SW1 took Second Place in the Diesel category for Joe Ferraloli.

We gave you a peek at this last issue. Mike Miller’s Dig-Rite Shovel Company (The Ace of Spades!) diorama took First Place (Structures & Dioramas) and Best In Show.
A Bachmann On30 Shay was the basis for this super-detailed model.

At right: A pair of nicely detailed milk cars.

Below: B&M reefer #13271 took First Place (Freight Cars) for John Young.

At right: A trio of passenger cars. The GN dome car in the middle took Third Place for Bob Hoffman.

Below: This NYC H10b is a custom built Ed Alexander model, circa 1937.
Joe Ferraloli was smokin’ the competition. At left is his freelance railbus that took First Place in the Electric & Other category. Below is his freelance critter that took First Place in the Diesel category.

At left: Jim Hartgraves won Third Place (Structures & Dioramas) for his Texas-style old time gas station.

Below left: Doug Kirkpatrick won Second Place (Structures & Dioramas) for his Evergreen Hill gas station.

This Nevada Northern caboose took First Place (Cabooses) for Brion Boyes & David Sellers.

CN U4a 4-8-4 took Third Place (Steam) for Charles Bard & Doug Sheldrick

A G&W MP15 won Third Place (Diesels) for Ben Brown.

At left: Joe Ferraloli’s version of the B&O steamer that never was, the W1 4-2-2-2-2-4, took Second Place (Steam).

Below left: Louis Bartig’s MoPac 2-8-4 garnered First Place (Steam). It’s mostly made of nickel silver.
In this issue, I’d like to appeal to readers to contact me at the mail or email address below and let me know what you might like to see covered in future “Narrow Minded” columns. If you have photos of O Scale narrow gauge equipment to share, I invite you to send them to me. If your photos are used in OST, you will be credited. I’d especially love to see some photos of dual gauge track or O Scale railroads including standard gauge and narrow gauge together.

If you would like to submit some information and have it included in this column, please send it and I may wind up suggesting that you submit it to the publisher and that will make you an official OST writer. It’s not difficult and it is quite rewarding, personally and financially, to see your article in print.

As I compose this, we’re well into September and autumn is just around the corner. That means that Model Railroad Month (November) will soon be upon us. I wonder how many readers have ever created a simple diorama to display some of your O Scale modeling interests? A diorama is “a scene reproduced in three dimensions by placing objects, figures, etc in front of a painted background”. Dioramas can provide a lot of pleasure as they’re quick and easy to create and they can be transported to shows or meets or just shown to your friends.

Dioramas are a perfect way to provide a finished scene for photos of your trains, structures, figures or scenery. They can be taken outside for natural light or placed on an indoor table for special lighting effects. With a diorama, you can actually complete a detailed scene while you continue to work on your major layout and you can modify or improve it any time you wish. Some people have built scenes just long enough to hold the model they wish to display and others have created larger scenes.

My idea of a dream diorama incorporates a round base no more than 36” in diameter. A background of trees, hills and sky wraps around the base in a semi-circle and is fixed to the base. The pink or blue foam diorama is four inches thick, round and can rotate on the base, permitting photos against the background from any angle and lighting possibilities from dawn to high noon to dusk to dark. There is some handlaid track, a few trees, a couple of detailed structures, a fence, a culvert, a ditch, a bridge, a road or a parking area and lots of tiny details. Vehicles and figures can be moved around as necessary. The placement of the details tells a short story of some everyday event. Lighting, sound, smoke and some special effect could be incorporated.

I’ll try to build my dream diorama and share some photos in the next issue. Anyone care to join me? If you do, I’ll gladly post photos of your diorama, large or small, whether your trains are narrow gauge, standard gauge or both. This might be a good chance for some armchair modelers to get up and get a small project started and finished. Who knows, a dream diorama might motivate you to get started on that dream layout.

Happy trains to you until we meet again.

Bobber Gibbs
1944 River Road West
Wasaga Beach ON
Canada LOL2P0
<bobber@oscalemag.com>
<bobber@sympatico.ca>
Scratchbuilding

Our publisher, Joe Giannovario, announced a while back that he is busy scratchbuilding an N&W caboose that will be featured in a future issue. This coming year would be a great time to try your hand at scratchbuilding. I have read a number of emails on the OTrains Yahoo Group that described how the individual was afraid to try or had tried and didn’t get it right the first time. Scratchbuilding is like any other skill; it is acquired. You learn by practice and observing others.

Basic Skills

Scratchbuilding is using basic skills to visualize the finished model, to lay out the individual parts, to fabricate these items and to assemble them. It is like doing a kit without reading the instructions. In fact, kit building is the best place to start. I started by building structures from scratch when I was in HO. In those days, I used wood as a basic construction material. Wood is easy to cut and glue together. It is a good material to start with. There are lots of structure kits available today that offer a learning experience without getting into the complexities of something that actually has to run on track.

Once you have mastered a few kits, you should select a scratchbuilding article from one of the magazines as your first step. Generally, the articles in the major magazines and OST have adequate information and drawings to guide you through the various phases of construction. Remember that there is a learning curve involved in any new skill you try. Scratchbuilding is no different in that it takes time and practice to make perfect. I wish that I could show you all the mistakes and disasters that were thrown out in my quest. I still end up junking models when a mistake is made or the results don’t look right.

Your next step in the learning process is to build a model from prototype information. It takes additional effort to figure out the basic design and what the parts should look like. I usually sketch the model first to help visualize it. It allows me to apply the prototype dimensions and see what thickness material is needed to represent the prototype. I have even done scale drawings to aid in construction.

Prototype Information

Building accurate models depends upon getting good information to work with. You will find that having good photos and drawings even helps with a kit project. I have found more than one model incorrectly lettered either in style or in the type of car. It is a common practice in the hobby for manufacturers to do this. Intermountain started out with a serious attempt to accurately model the 1937 AAR boxcar. For the most part, they achieved their goal. The early cars were offered with lettering developed from new artwork, mostly done by Rick Leach.

A number of their later cars were not so accurately done. Many of their cars were produced with totally incorrect lettering schemes such as the Western Pacific silver with orange feather. This scheme was only applied to Pullman PS-1 boxcars, not the modified z1937 AAR cars in the WP fleet. The application of incorrect but colorful schemes is widely practiced in all scales, not just O. Most buyers seem to be happy with the car so there is no real harm. You can always strip the incorrect paint and do a prototypical scheme instead.

Prototype modeling requires more attention to detail. My column in issue #15 pointed out the fact that there is a wide diversity of brake wheels used by the prototype. O Scale has a reasonably good selection of brake parts to work with.

You can become more knowledgeable about prototype modeling by reading and doing research on the Internet. The research can be part of the enjoyment of modeling a specific project. Finding the right picture or plan always brings a smile to my face.

I have found the following resources useful in doing research for a project:

- Historical societies for roads that interest you. Most publish periodicals that contain useful information on the roads equipment and facilities. I currently hold memberships in seven different groups. A number of the historical groups maintain websites that provide information on resources for prototype data. Many societies have achieves with prototype drawings and photos available to members. Some of the groups publish books as well.
- Yahoo Groups has specific discussion groups that cover prototype railroads and modeling. A favorite of mine is the Steam Era Freight Car Group on Yahoo
- Steam Era Freight Cars website, run by Ted Culotta, is an excellent source of material on exactly what the title states. Most of the modeling is about HO but the prototype photos and data are worthwhile. Ted has several useful PDF files available containing detailed data on 1932 ARA, 1937 AAR and modified 1937 AAR boxcars. The files show what brake wheels, roof walks and door styles were used in a specific run of cars. Go to the site to see what is available. http://www.steamfreightcars.com/
- Mainline Modeler and lately Railroad Model Craftsman have been good sources of information. Railroad Modeler and Model Railroading will periodically have information on specific prototypes. Most model railroad magazines tend to treat prototype information as filler and limit the amount presented in an article. One small photo of a car is really not adequate to do an accurate model.
- Books like those published by Morning Sun and Signature Press are useful for specific railroads. Signature Press has done an exceptional job of researching Pacific Fruit Express reefers and Southern Pacific freight cars. They are publishing a series of large hardbound books on SP freight cars. The first two volumes cover cabooses, gondolas and stock cars in great detail. http://www.signaturepress.com/
- Railway Prototype Cyclopedia periodicals are published by Ed Hawkins and Pat Wider. They have put out ten volumes to date. Each one has been a real treasure chest full of useful data and superb photos of prototype equipment. This periodical focuses on steam era railroading. They have a website that can provide information on what is available and where to purchase these books. http://www.geocities.com/rcyc/
- Museums like the California State Railway Museum in Sacramento are a significant resource of prototype information.
Obtaining information from museums does require some effort to research the specific documents needed. CSRM has an online search engine to help with the process. http://www.csrmf.org/

**Proto48 News:**

Chooch Enterprises is releasing a new urethane boxcar kit patterned after the Soo Line Haskell & Barker 1915 build of single sheathed boxcars. The kit will be offered in a “flat” format, meaning you will have to assemble the body yourself. The car will come with the usual selection of custom plastic parts and metal for hardware. Chooch will also offer a special set of exquisite decals with artwork obtained from Des Plaines Hobbies. The kit number is #669 and will retail for $100 with an additional $10 for the decals.

Norm Buckhart, Protocraft owner, has been busy shipping Proto48 wheel sets lately. He will not be doing any more Proto48 drivers for a while given the slow sales. Conversion services are available and you can generally order extra driver sets from an importer if you order the model in advance of production.

Accurate O Scale has a couple of very nice freight car trucks available in Proto48. They are available direct or through local hobby shops. The trucks are plastic with steel wheels.

American Switch and Signal is busy working on patterns for Code 100 turnout parts. They will be releasing a #7 and #9 frog along with points. Their new Code 125 16’ 6” points are now available.

San Juan Car Company sent me a sample of their On3 plastic switch and tie strip. The design of the tie strip is rather unique in the way it holds all of the ties together yet remains very flexible. John Parker, San Juan’s owner, and Jerry Kitts developed the tie strip concept. It is designed to accept Code 100 rail, which is a good size for late Rio Grande narrow gauge. The only real shortcoming is that it isn’t Proto48 standard gauge.

### For Sale

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<td>USH, SP MT-3 mint Eagles Nest prepped</td>
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<td>Sunset, SP F-3 #3654, 2-10-2, new/sealed</td>
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<td>Micro Eng. Unweatherd 148 flex, $5.95 ea, 6-pack</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lou Cross Right 0’ Way LH &amp; RH #8 turnouts</td>
<td>$70</td>
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**1016.1** SP Class S-12 0-6-0 Locomotive #1277 (blue) with Class 70C9 tender. Special Southern Pacific trim as it served the Southern Pacific facility at Third and Townsend Streets including blue/green boiler, heralds on both cab sides. Oxide red cab roof. Tender lettered "Southern Pacific."

**1017.1** SP Class S-12 0-6-0 Locomotive #1278 (blue) with Class 70C9 tender. Decorated for passenger terminal service. Blue/green boiler. Raised lettering - both locomotive and tender. SP herald on cab side. Post-war locomotive but, with "Lines" appearing on tender.

**1018.1** SP Class S-12 0-6-0 Locomotive #1284 (black) with Class 70C10 tender. Forward cab side windows not covered. Black painted. Regular service. Tender lettered "Southern Pacific."

**1019.1** SP Class S-14 0-6-0 Locomotive #1294 (black) with Class 70C10 tender. Another example of the class in working trim. Lettered "Southern Pacific" as in 1947 with forward cab side window.

**1020.1** SP Class S-12 0-6-0 Locomotive #1270 (green) with Class 52C1 tender. A pre-war version with a green boiler. Plated cylinder covers. Lettered "Southern Pacific Lines." Late pre-war appearance.

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Model features accurate interior details, interior lights, platform lights along with beautiful paint and lettering. Contact your friendly Overland dealer today to place your order.

[Left and Below]
Ferdinand Magellan U.S. No. 1 Presidential Private Car Factory painted, completely lettered with detailed interior including interior and platform lights, circa 1984 — OMI #048010001.2

[Not Pictured]
Ferdinand Magellan U.S. No. 1 Presidential Private Car Factory painted, completely lettered with detailed interior including interior and platform lights, circa 1940’s — OMI #048010001.1
I like the “Big Six”. In my old neck of the woods, 2-10-2’s were ugly and had such complimentary names as “mudsuckers”, if they even lasted through the 1930s before such things as Lima Berks consigned them to the scrap heap or the auction block. Not so, the Big Six. They looked good, with a nice balanced appearance. They looked powerful, as well, and served the B&O well into the 1950s. I think they were among the best looking engines Baldwin ever had anything to do with (though Lima built some of them, too).

After unpacking mine, here’s what I saw. The fit and finish continues to impress on Sunset’s latest offerings, and this engine is no exception. The paint is smoothly applied, lettering straight, and assembly appears tight. There is a nicely detailed backhead present, sliding roof vents and the detail castings are up to today’s standards. I like the reflector in the headlight, making it look good when it’s off. The Capitol Dome plate is nice enough to where the B&O type should get a dozen just to change out all the lousy ones made in years past. The Vanderbilt tender has always appealed to me. This one is as nice as the locomotive, tracks well, and exhibits no bad behavioral tendencies.

I am impressed also with something that doesn’t get mentioned in reviews very often. The packaging of Sunset’s latest offerings is quite ingenious. The trucks are padded with foam inserts so they don’t flop around and ding up the paint on surrounding surfaces. Rather than styrofoam inserts, soft foam is used to cushion the locomotive, making it ever so much easier to get this puppy out of the box without doing the detail a mischief. Finally, the locomotive and tender are lashed down on individual boards, captured by the foam and the box in such a way as to allow your new treasure to survive the very best that the shipper can throw at it.

If I have any gripes with the visual impact of this model, it’s what I would call “over-lighting”. I’d love to see two small slide switches, say, under the water hatch. One would turn off the red tender markers, and the other would turn off the class lights on the smokebox front. Then, the owner could flick ‘em on as appropriate, and leave them off during the majority of the time while the situation doesn’t warrant their use.

Coinings are used for the truck sideframes and several other major assemblies. While not as deep in relief as lost wax castings, their use is in keeping with the fact that there is not a $3000 price tag. What results is an extremely robust model that runs “de-detailing” beforehand.

Meanwhile, I submitted the engine to my usual rigorous and totally subjective tests. As most of you know by now, my railroad has 54” minimum radii on the main, 2% grades, and an “S” curve that really should be re-engineered. The results are that the Big Six stomped around with a 20-car oil train quite nicely. Not shabby for a big ten-coupled! Starts and stops were believably smooth. It goes. It stops. That’s what it should do.

The result is a very nice model. It runs straight out of the box, has plenty of eye food, good proportions, all for less than $1100 retail.

**Notes for the Neurotic**

Most of us can stop reading this review at this point, and make our choices with confidence. I’ve included a couple of notes for those of us who worry about such things:

- **The Tender Markers**—The tender marker lights are tucked up under the slope sheet of the coal bunker. I found in most photos I looked at that there were none present on the tender at all. Other photos show them rigged out on the rear of the tank itself. It looks like, if they upset you, you have the option of making them go away or moving them to the rear. Be careful, though. Many of the photos with markers on the rear also show a completely different tender that was used late in life. A B&O guy can answer this one for sure, but these late tenders look for all the world like they may have come from retired Mikes.

- **The Cab Roof**—This is a fun one. On the model, the roof curvature is compound (the radius is sharper at the edges than in the middle of the roof). Most photos I’ve been able to lay my mitts on show a simple radius roof, quite distinctly a B&O common design. Many B&O guys swear that this is the only correct roof.

A couple of photos show a roofline that I would swear is a compound radius roof, myself. Perhaps the Lima built ones had a different roofline than the Baldwin built ones, or there was a change in cab configuration when the ruling (was that the late 40’s?) was issued that required the installation of a third seat for the head-end brakeman. Anyway, that’s all conjecture. Be aware, though, that most photos of Big Sixes were taken in the mid-50s, when these long-lived engines became somewhat the celebrity. In the photos from this time period, the roofs look universally simple in radius, and predominant tenders are not the originals that Sunset chose to model. Earlier photos show the original tenders, and several are debatable regarding the possibility of two cab designs. I’ll leave it up to you B&O guys to fight this one out. Meanwhile, the rest of us will be obliviously running the stuffing out of what is, in my not-so-humble opinion, a workhorse.
REVIEW: M.T.H. Scale 2-Rail N&W J #608, $1099.95
M.T.H Electric Trains
7020 Columbia Gateway Drive
Columbia, MD
www.mthtrains.com
Reviewed by K. Jeb Kriigel

It was with great anticipation that I received the carton from UPS containing a new M.T.H. locomotive for review. M.T.H. had produced an N&W J in 3-Rail back in 1997, but this model promised to be a totally new J featuring their new Proto-Scale 3-2 system with the capability of operating on 2- or 3-Rail track.

The Prototype

The Norfolk & Western Railroad produced fourteen class J’s 4-8-4’s between 1941 and 1950. Their sleek, streamlined appearance, powerful performance, and classy paint scheme made them famous. These were among the most powerful 4-8-4’s ever built and are considered by many to be the finest steam passenger locomotives in the world. They set many records providing excellence, powerful performance, and classy paint scheme made them famous. These were among the most powerful 4-8-4’s ever built and are considered by many to be the finest steam passenger locomotives in the world. They set many records providing excellent service to the passenger fleet of the N&W.

The last remaining locomotive, #611, became the symbol of steam operations for the Norfolk Southern steam program in the 1980’s and rekindled the passion of railroad fans from all over the world. Locomotive #611 is preserved in Roanoke, Va., and has parts from all of her sisters.

I used the drawings in The Locomotive Cyclopedia, Vol. 1, Hundman Publishing, 1998, as reference material. The model reviewed is a pre-production sample but is about 99% finalized.

The Model

The people at M.T.H. were right. This J is different. A quick examination reveals over a dozen improvements to the loco’s appearance from the previous model. Most noticeable is the fact this is a 2-Rail scale version, a scale pilot, scale drivers with scale flanges, and a correct trailing truck. (3-Rail pick-up rollers are included in the box in the event you want to operate on 3-Rail track). An easy-to-follow Owner’s Manual explains how easy it is to switch from 2-Rail to 3-Rail and back.

The cab is dressed out with cab curtains, opening windows with frames that are painted the correct Cadmium Orange color, an engineer and fireman, and new style roof hatches that open. The boiler backhead features lots of detail with painted dials and gauges. New rear piping at the cab base is a nice addition. The double side rods between the 2nd and 3rd drivers are correct. A lubrication linkage has been added to both sides of the locomotive that really adds to the valve gear detail. An improved walkway looks very realistic. The drivers measure in at a very, very close-to-scale correct 70 inches.

The tender sports a beefed-up real coal load. Handrails and grab irons are much more to scale than in previous versions. The ladders are correctly scaled and the tender trucks are a new style that is prototypically correct. M.T.H. will also include the correct trucks on their scale model of #611 which are a different style from those on this model, #608. Opening water hatches allow for access to adjustment switches for smoke, sound, and a battery charger port.

Paint color is always a tough call. The M.T.H. product development crew solicited the support of N&W historian and author, Kenneth L. Miller. Working with original paint color chips and photographs, they came up with a very good simulation for this model. Overall the matte black finish is smooth and well applied. The Tuscan Red stripping trimmed in imitation gold is representative of how the locomotive left the N&W shops. (One of the problems is that many people were able to see #611 in steam excursion service in the 1980’s where it had some unique characteristics that were not on the original J’s).

On The Track

The moment this loco was powered up the excitement started and never gave up. She came alive! To exercise all of the locomotive’s features I used the M.T.H. DCS (Digital Command System) with 2-rail track. This enabled activation of the digital sound system with speed control and synchronized puffing smoke. The engine sounds were very prototypical. Escaping steam sounds emit for the first 5-6 revolutions of the drivers as smoke blasts from the stack. The J responded to the smallest increase in power as it crept along at a scale 5 miles per hour. Operation was very smooth throughout the speed range. The whistle and bell sounds were recorded from a real N&W J so that is sure to please even the most serious N&W fan.

After a short test of running forward and back, I attached a Kadee coupler to the rear of the tender using the screws and holes provided. Once attached, the Kadee lined up perfectly with my other cars. I backed the loco up to a 30 car consist and pulled away. I experienced no traction problems. These scale locos do not have rubber tires like their 3-Rail counterparts. Once again, the J responded to every command and slight speed adjustment. I ran the loco for over an hour without any problems whatsoever.

Conclusions:

My overall evaluation of the new J is that it passes the test as a scale model. The manufacturer has done a great job turning out a locomotive that, in appearance, rivals models costing significantly more. In my opinion the operating features with sounds are unrivaled in the market. Some may say that they don’t need all the bells and whistles. That’s fine. The loco will operate in conventional mode without the sounds. However, one has only to experience the digital sound features to realize that this concept has tremendous appeal.

I did note a few minor items that missed the mark. The pilot wheels are not the correct size. My measurements indicate they are a scale 30” in diameter. The prototype had 36” diameter pilot wheels. However, there is plenty of room to install correct 36” wheels if one desires although it may affect minimum radius operation.

This model comes with spoked pilot wheels which would be fine if the sheet metal above the pilot did not have air vents. Initially, all J’s were built without...
these vents. They were added much later in life, along with solid center pilot wheels. The M.T.H. #611 will feature solid pilot wheels making it a bit more correct than this version of #608.

The top rear of #608’s tender was actually rounded while that of #611’s was square. M.T.H., for obvious economic reasons, has produced but one tender for both #608 and #611 with the square top.

I did find the loco numbers along each side of the boiler to be a bit large and slightly out of scale, in my opinion. And, the model still has the bulky wire harness connecting the tender with the loco. A vast improvement in appearance would result if this could be modified or hidden. The addition of the lubricator linkage is cool and really adds a lot. However, the screw that holds it in place is a bit bulky. The handrails look great, but the stanchions along the boiler are painted black which is incorrect. They should be chrome plated. This can be easily corrected with a paint brush and some silver paint. Finally, the test sample had the number boards on the nose upside down on one side resulting in locomotive #809!

M.T.H. is re-entering the scale market with a very impressive model. It looks very good, is loaded with detail, and is fun to operate. Attention all of you HiRailers who have been waiting to convert to 2-rail because you love the features of Proto 2: this makes it very easy to have the best of both worlds.

---

**REVIEW: ACF 70-Ton Covered Hopper, $62.95 for 2-Rail**

AtlasO, LLC
378 Florence Avenue
Hillside, New Jersey 07205
http://www.atlaso.com/welcome.htm
reviewed by Gene Deimling

Atlas has just released a ready-to-run model of an American Car & Foundry 70-ton covered hopper. The prototype spanned from the steam era well into the modern diesel era. The first cars were built in 1939 for the Lehigh & New England and the Nickel Plate Road. Many railroads opted for this particular design for hauling cement, dry chemicals and food products. Over the years, the design was built by Pullman, General American and some railroad shops. The AC&F car differs from the post-war Pullman PS-2 covered hopper in many areas. Pullman used round hatches and all welded construction for the most part. AC&F still riveted some portions of the car but did use a fair amount of welding. Shippers Car Line had a large fleet of lease cars that were marked with the lessee name. The AC&F style 70-ton car was built in two general styles: one with a triangular cutout in the side and one without. Atlas is producing models of both.

The model is made from injection molded ABS plastic with metal details added for such things as grab irons, stirrups, cut levers and running boards. The trucks are metal and feature plated metal wheels. While the details are oversized to make them more durable and less prone to breakage, they are a big improvement over cast-on or thick plastic parts seen on previous O plastic cars. Like all of recent AtlasO models, this one is made in China.

I compared the model to AC&F general arrangement drawings and found most dimensions to be close. The principle deviations relate to a shortened wheelbase by roughly three scale inches and the roof hatch size. The wheelbase modification also affects the spacing of the two vertical channels on the side. They are positioned over the bolsters and were moved in when the wheelbase was compressed. The error is not really noticeable to me. The roof hatches and running board are another matter. They are the most visible part of the car and one that is least accurate. The roof hatches are 5 inches too narrow. I have included a picture of a Precision Scale Models plastic roof hatch along side the model’s undersized rendering. The size difference is quite noticeable. The running board is supposed to represent an Apex metal walk but Atlas failed to capture the look of the prototype. The grid pattern is grossly oversized. A benchmark of this type of running board is the Kadee HO PS-1 or PS-2 cars.

My review model is decorated in Southern Pacific scheme with specific lettering for the H-
The number series chosen by Atlas is for a lot of 175 cars built in August 1951 by AC&F. The car as-built was delivered with Miner brake wheel and gearbox, Transco diamond grid running boards and ASF A-3 Ride Control trucks. The H-70-8 class carried the numbers 165000 through 165174. The Atlas model is configured with an Apex running board and Ajax brake gear which more accurately represents the H-70-6 class built in 1949 and numbered 90602 through 90801. The lettering appears to be accurate and the finish is very smooth. The SP also owned the H-70-10 70-ton covered hopper with a cutout side.

The car comes equipped with free-rolling metal trucks with the proper 5’8” wheelbase found on most 70-ton trucks. The couplers are of Atlas design and appear to be similar to Kadee. The car is rather heavy at nearly 20 ounces.

The car is representative of the current trend in O of trying to make a product that is rugged enough for 3-Rail use while having detail for the 2-Rail modeler. Had Atlas paid a little more attention to the roof hatches and running board, they would have had a much better model without any compromise.

REVIEW: Replacement Underframe for Red Caboose GP-9, ~$20
Des Plaines Hobbies
1486 Lee Street
Des Plaines, IL 60018
http://www.desplaineshobbies.com/
dphobbies@earthlink.net
reviewed by Gene Deimling

Ron Sebastian, owner of Des Plaines Hobbies, continues to come up with innovative products to offer hobbyists. A perfect example of this is the replacement frame for the Red Caboose GP-9 body kit. It is intended for use with the P&D Diesel drive kits, not with the original ROCO drive. The heavy brass frame solves a couple of basic problems when it comes to replacing or upgrading the drive in the Red Caboose GP-9. It gets rid of the weak plastic frame and replaces it with a 3⁄32” thick brass plate that adds rigidity and much needed weight (10.5 ounces) to the model. Pat Mitchell makes the underframes for Des Plaines. The plate is accurately machined to fit the P&D bolster plates and Red Caboose body and motor mounts. The drive and body parts literally drop in place. When was the last time you saw that happen?

The last run of replacement underframes sold for $20 plus postage. Ron told me that the price will likely be higher when he reordered.

I have included pictures of the basic frame in front of the retrofitted Red Caboose model. A second shot shows the old Red Caboose plastic frame along with the lower body mounted on the brass frame. The trucks are from P&D and are the finest available in any scale.
Product News & Reviews

REVIEW: 1947 Ford Sedan
Diecast Direct
1009 Twilight Trail
Frankfort, KY 40601
800-718-1866 • www.diecastdirect.com
review by Joe Giannovario

I knew this guy in high school, Vinnie, who had a 47 Ford Coupe. I thought his car was very cool. Diecast Direct is now offering a 1:43 1947 Ford Sedan in beige. I checked the model against photos I have in Automobile magazine (my standard reference for autos) and it looks very good. At $20, it’s a good value compared to what you pay for collector cars from the various “mint” companies. There are no operating features like opening doors or hoods, but the overall detailing is fine enough to make this a foreground model rather than a background model. The 1947 Ford Sedan is model number #IX035TN and costs $19.95 + s/h. To order call Diecast Direct Inc. Monday thru Friday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET at 1-800-718-1866 or (502) 227-8697 or by mail Dept. OS0412, 1009 Twilight Trail, Frankfort, KY 40601 or visit them on the web at http://www.diecastdirect.com/osm/.

REVIEW: JAK Tool & Model Dynamic Running Base, Price Varies
JAK Tool & Model Company
PO Box 291
Matawan, New Jersey 07747
732-610-5787
www.jaktool.com
Product Review by K. Jeb Kriigel

Static displays are not exciting. Model trains are made to run. If you have been keeping that great model train in a glass case just daydreaming about what it might look like operating, this product is for you. Operate in your arm chair no more!

JAK Tool & Model has produced a 2-Rail operating base for scale locomotives. They have a proven track record in HO and the 3-Rail market with their stationary roller bases and now they have developed this product for 2-Rail scale models.

The base consists of an oak finished plank with scale Atlas track mounted on top. A cut-out in the base holds a series of rollers. How many rollers depends on how large your locomotive is. You place your locomotive and tender on the track with the drive wheels of the locomotive over the rollers. Connect the wires from your power source to the quick connect power terminal, turn on the power, and watch the locomotive “run in place.”

I thoroughly tested the unit. It performed flawlessly right out of the box. Since the locomotive runs in a stationary mode, you needn’t worry about clearances or radii. Everything is right there in front of you. It is great for cleaning, detailing, and working on the side rods and drive. You can adjust the power and control the speed of the loco from a creep to a scale sprint. It is also a great product for testing a new locomotive right out of the box.

JAK Tool & Model custom manufactures each unit. The dynamic running base is available in a variety of sizes and configurations depending on the exact specifications of your loco. Consult with them for a base that best meets your needs. See their ad elsewhere in this issue. Mention that you saw their ad in OST and receive free shipping on your order.

NEWS: Atlas Model Railroad Co.
378 Florence Avenue
Hillside, NJ 07205
908-687-0880 x7125

AtlasO has announced the arrival of the O FM Erie-built locomotive. Features on this popular engine include true 1⁄4” dimensions and details, solid die-cast chassis, fuel tank, trucks and pilots.

Pennsylvania “A” units are equipped with PRR style radio antenna, railroad specific details, operating Mars light as appropriate by railroad, FM RailSounds™ by Lionel®, TMCC control in all 3-Rail and 2-Rail TMCC powered units, accurate painting and lettering and more. 3-Rail “A” units include alternate full-scale pilot for great scale look on curves. The FM Erie-built locomotives also incorporate speed control technology for more prototypical operation. Estimated Delivery: January 2005, 2-Rail DC/DCC Ready MSRP: $399.95, 2-Rail TMCC MSRP: $429.95.

AtlasO also announced the release of the former Red Caboose/InterMountain GP-9 Diesel locomotive. The Geep has been retooled and features a highly detailed body, a die-cast metal chassis/sill unit, a die-cast metal fuel tank, die-cast metal pilots, detailed die-cast trucks, all metal handrails, stanchions & grab irons, twin flywheel-equipped motors, directional golden-white LED lighting and accurate painting and lettering. Estimated Delivery: January 2005, 2-Rail DC/DCC Ready MSRP: $379.95, 2-Rail TMCC MSRP: $439.95.

Atlas has also announced the following items: 45’ trailer with refrigeration unit, 40’ steel reefers with new paint schemes, and 70 ton covered hoppers with new road names and numbers (see the ACF hopper review in this issue).
Last Run on the Canandaigua Southern: these two photos were taken by Marv Weber of John Armstrong’s layout while it was open for viewing during the 2004 O Scale National Convention.

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**Jim Hackworth**

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As I have suggested before, the period immediately after WWII was a time of considerable growth in model railroading, with all the pent-up demand caused by wartime scarcities encouraging a number of new manufacturers to introduce products they had been planning during the war years. Publications proliferated, too, representing more specialized interests than the existing magazines offered. HO Monthly (later HO Model Trains, then finally simply Model Trains after it was bought by Kalmbach and moved to Milwaukee) began in Philadelphia around 1948, in some ways a response to the perceived O Scale bias of MR and Model Craftsman, but the reality, that HO, far from being the neglected waif, was becoming the hairy adolescent outgrowing his clothing too rapidly, led to the first explicitly O Scale publication, the subject of this month’s column.

In making that statement, I am aware that the owner of General Models tried to get an O Scale magazine (The O-Gager) out on a regular basis, probably on the Lionel in-house pattern, but I just don’t know enough about it to be sure it was more than a vehicle for GMC products, and in any event it did not last long, being caught in the GMC debacle. I would be glad to hear more from anyone who can provide more information about The O-Gager.

Into the vacuum created by the death of O Scale material moved a young Cincinnatian named C. Charles Lang, with a small format (even smaller than the older pre-1947 Kalmbach MR and Trains issues) periodical titled The Whistle Stop, which boldly proclaimed on the masthead “Strictly, Solidly, Exclusively O Gauge Model Railroading”—although that motto quietly disappeared by April 1952. And don’t assume I am more eccentric than I actually am: there is a big and bold dot between the words. It apparently started in June 1950; I say apparently, because my collection starts with Volume 2, Number 1 (January 1952), and for reasons not entirely clear, Volume 1 comprised all the monthly issues from June 1950 through December 1951. The index for Volume 1 (included in the April 1952 issue) shows pretty thin material before September 1950 with a gradual increase in content as 1951 began.

Lang is listed on the masthead as Editor and Publisher, with Clyde Bristow as Associate Editor, later joined by James A Eberhart, also as Associate Editor; judging from the issues I have, it appears one of the responsibilities of the associate editor was to write regular articles. Rich Wagner, another local, is the “Traction Advisor” and Bill Hoffmann listed as “Feature Writer.” Some of the titles change during the run I have, and I probably do not recognize some significant personalities involved, although Bill Walthers contributed an article to the very first issue in 1950 and a multi-part series, “The Gadgeteer” to the issues from October 1950 to January 1951, although it is interesting that the Walthers concern doesn’t begin advertising until August 1952. Eric Brunger contributed one article in January 1952 issue but no others I could find, and probably a very young Dave Waddington published his drawings of the GE 16T steeplecab (later imported by Ken Kidder and offered as a kit by Scale Rail Equipment) in the July-August 1953 issue.

All-Nation was a consistent and generous advertiser, perhaps seeing the publication as a channel for promoting O Scale, which in turn would create a larger market for their attempts to revive and upgrade the General Models line, which they had bought from the ruins of GMC bankruptcy only a year or so before. Lobaugh was also a regular, although at a slightly lower level. It is particularly interesting to see the first brass imports from Japan in the International ads, first small power and traction, then the larger models, all the way up to a UP Challenger (built to order only). As I have suggested in a previous column, the distinctions between 3-Rail and 2-Rail were still not clearly drawn in the early 1950’s, and many articles deal with construction articles suitable for the more serious three-rail modeler and with conversions from one to the other. It was still all O Gauge rather than the later emphasis on O Scale (i.e., 2-Rail only, all others keep out).

What makes it useful other than an artifact, however, is the considerable traction content, which may reflect the interests of the publisher. Starting in October 1951, “The Junction” appears; whether this was ever a separate publication I cannot tell, but if so it was shortly folded in with The Whistle Stop, as it is a section, although a very major section (sometimes over a third of each issue) of the combined publication by January 1952. Charles Mischke becomes involved from Wisconsin early in 1952, and toward the end is listed as editor of “The Junction.” There are regular drawings, although the Lang company (such as it is) offered a “plan of the month” of traction equipment as a distinct enterprise, and a series on surviving electric railroads, “Interurban Americana.”

By January 1953 the title had changed to O Gauge Modeller, with different graphic design—perhaps an indication that things were not going well, as changes in nomenclature and décor often are. The magazine sold originally for twenty-five cents, although the price increased to thirty-five cents in April 1952, with subscription rates accordingly—this at a time when RMC, a larger and thicker publication with considerably more content, was also selling for thirty-five cents, and MR had only recently increased its cover price to fifty cents. The difference, of course, was made up by advertising, and although most of the established O Scale manufacturers (and a few major dealers) supported the publication, there were never enough of them to subsidize the costs. I suspect that many contributors supplied their articles and photos gratis (and perhaps some without realizing they were doing so) as a gesture of support for O Scale. I am not sure how long it actually lasted, but there are signs of desperation in the last few issues I own (the latest, October 1953): the combined July-August 1953, which is thinner than last year, had only recently increased its cover price to fifty cents. The difference, of course, was made up by advertising, and although most of the established O Scale manufacturers (and a few major dealers) supported the publication, there were never enough of them to subsidize the costs. I suspect that many contributors supplied their articles and photos gratis (and perhaps some without realizing they were doing so) as a gesture of support for O Scale. I am not sure how long it actually lasted, but there are signs of desperation in the last few issues I own (the latest, October 1953): the combined July-August 1953, which is thinner than usual, despite the combination (ostensibly to improve the publication cycle), and an offer of lifetime subscriptions (“to expand and improve the magazine”) for...
$50. I should like to know how much longer it limped on; my guess is it probably didn’t make it to 1954.

And the year 1954 is an interesting coincidence, as that is when the Wagners started Trolley Talk, that labor of love for traction modelers that still survives under other loving hands; perhaps without Rich’s early involvement with the Whistle • Stop/O Gauge Modeller, they might not have thought of a publication. I have no information on C. Charles Lang, although from the views of him in the periodical he seems in his early 30’s; where he came from or what happened to him afterward, it would be interesting to learn, but the one other thing that seems sure is that he was a dedicated O Scaler.

I have considerable further information from Woody Matthews on the Lionel Model Builder lineage treated a few columns ago, but no room to pass it on this column. What I would really like from Woody to share with the readers is an account of his experience with King Models. What? You say you’ve never heard of that line? In the early 1960’s Woody, a resident of the Seattle area (which is to say, King County, although the allusion may also be to the Max Gray slogan, “O gauge, the king of scales”), imported a modest quantity of USRA 0-6-0’s—I think manufactured by Toby—which were very much state-of-the-art for the time. I once had one and liked it very much. I can speculate about the background for these, but with Woody still among us and active, I’d prefer to hear it from the horse’s mouth.

The other thought in closing is that I see one more column on O Scale periodicals: the Vane & Corey Jones-era O Scale Railroading. I have held off, not only for chronology, but also because there are still many around who knew Vane and Corey Jones well (including their daughter and sister), and by all accounts they were both distinctive personalities. I never met either and know them only from their writings and at second-hand from those who were acquainted with them. To do them justice, I invite any reader with memories of them to write me before I have to turn in copy next time.

◆

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Thinking Outside the Box

I was pleased to find several fellow Hi-Railers attending the O Scale National Convention in Washington last month. Indeed it was fun rubbing shoulders with the O Scale knowns and nobility, and I also enjoyed talking with the knights of the extra rail—my fellow Hi-Railers. You see, I truly am a hobo. I enjoy jumping on different trains of thought and hitching rides with various topics and destinations up and down the tracks of this hobby.

The club members who sponsored the event did a great job by including serious modelers from both sides of the hobby, 2- and 3-Rail. This is significant, especially when you consider that as the scale side of the hobby grows it allows for new ideas. Also significant is the incorporation of those who may not be “in” as yet, but who were certainly observed behaving like children in old Lionel ads with their noses pressed tightly against the glass looking in at all of the O Scale products available today. O Scale is alive and thriving!

I thought it was great to have the regular O Scale manufacturers present, including Kohs, Weaver, and Atlas. But more noteworthy was the presence of several traditional 3-Rail manufacturers displaying products geared for the hobbyist just entering the O Scale market. M.T.H. and K-Line both displayed scale 2-Rail locomotives on scale track. M.T.H. went as far as designating the outside loop of their operating layout to their new scale locomotives running and operating on 2-rail track with their DCS operating system. These certainly are exciting times and we have only scratched the surface of what is still to come rolling down the mainline of the future.

Yes, I am indeed a Hi-Railer in transition. I started out several years ago trying to purchase one of everything that was made in a particular year. Since there was only one major manufacturer for 3-Rail trains, that was pretty easy to accomplish even with a limited budget. A lot of that stuff got put away with the belief that one day it was going to be worth something. As I now try to thin my collection, I realize that things and times have changed. As I matured and the market widened with several manufacturers, the choices became varied. I tried to focus on two or three railroads that I liked to model. Even that became a problem. Hi-Railers tend to purchase and collect more than they need. They often joke, “He who dies with the most trains wins!” They also like their trains ready-to-run right out of the box.

I have learned to appreciate my scale friends and realize that they probably spend much less each year on their trains than my friends with the extra rail. Scale modelers really focus on particular interests and tend to limit their choices to one or two railroads. They expect to tinker with the model as it comes out of the box. These are craftsman/hobbyists who exercise control. This really adds fidelity to their modeling. Just think about it. If you started only purchasing the very best models and limited your purchases to just a few road names you might find that you are actually saving money. Is more really better?

Just allow yourself to think outside of the box. We tend to model in degrees. None of us here are traditional “tinplate” people, although some of us may have started in the hobby in that venue.

We managed to hang on through MPC and some other very interesting times. I have come to the realization that the “good ole days” were not quite that good. It used to be very tough getting into O Scale. You basically had to own a lathe and machine your loco from a block of brass. Now, manufacturers and importers are making it extremely easy. The best years are yet ahead. As a Hi-Railer who is seriously considering going pure scale this is both exciting and frightening. But, I have decided to take my time, keep myself informed, and continue to learn as much as I can about O Scale. That is truly thinking outside of the box.
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PSC SP AC-9 2-8-8-4 Coal 222 R-1 Tender F/P - Black Boiler New ... $3195
OMI UP FEF-3, F/P, Road# 844, new, never run ................. $2550
PSC C&O T1 2-10-4, CP, like new condition, REDUCED .......... $1600
OMI UP DD40X F/P Road# 6931, like new w/Cockerham drive ... $2950
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PSC NP Z5 2-8-8-4, F/P Rd# 5006 ........................................ $3295
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PSC NYC F12e 4-6-0, 5000 gal. tender, F/P, new, never run ...... $1195
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FOR SALE: All Nation locos, custom NYC Mohawk, cars, kits, etc., all 2 rail. SASE for list. Richard Ryan, 59 Simme Rd, Lancaster, NY 14086-9610.

WANTED: Unpainted Sunset tender for PRR II (short) with 4-wheel 2-Rail O Scale trucks. Phone: 614-459-4974, email: bobretallack@aol.com. Bob Retallack, 2224 Adner Ct, Columbus, OH 43220-5426.

WANTED: Father with two young boys is looking for moderately priced rolling stock, structure, and trackwork kits to introduce the boys to O Scale. Call Dave at 805-685-9257.

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Construct a Yard Tower, part 2 - Dave Stewart
Design A Layout Contest
Build A PRR E-1 - John Sauers
MetroWest O Scale Modluar RR, Part 1 - Jimi Smith
Just A Plain Switcher (K-Line conversion) - Roland Marx
Day 2, 2003 O Scale National - John Smith
Styrofoam Viaduct - John Kathman
Build a Rock Island Fowler Clone Box Car - Charles Morrill

OST#9: Design-A-Layout Contest Winners
Scratch Build A Pickle Car - Tom Houle
The Secrets of Lost Wax Casting - Roland Marx
Scale Command, Part 2 - Don Woodwell
Casting Your Own Parts - Gary Woodard
Converting an MTH Schnabel Car
Modeler's Tricks - Bill Becker & Stuart Ramsey

OST#14: Yards, Part 1 - Herm Botzow
Second Life - Reworking of a KTM GP-35 - Roland Marx
The Berlin Branch of the B&M - Jim Tavenna
Modeler's Tricks, A Handy HO Part for O Scaleers - Ron Grubber
Hand Laying Switches - Ed Reutting
Modeler's Tricks, Painted Wheels with Shiny Treads - Ron Grubber
March Meet Photos - Brian Scace
Easeemt Graph
Hall of Fame - Bob O'Neill

OST#15: Tall Pines Timber Co. - Bob Dupont
Installing Kadee Couplers on a Weaver Gon - Ron Grubber
The Acme Steel Fabricating Co. - Mike Culham
Scratchbuild a Roundhouse - Charlie Flichmann
A Brief Conversation with M.T.H.'s Andy Edelman - Jeb Kriigel
Yards, Part 2 - Herm Botzow
Bob's Carry Box - Bob O'Neill
Building Railers - Ted Byrne

OST#16: Cherel Valley Railroad
Layout in a Small Space: 11'x19'
Yards, Part 3 - Division Point Yard
Red Caboose Reefer Kit Bash
Building the Depot at Early Winters
An Old Atlas Caboose Revisited
Some Thoughts for Scratchbuilders on Finding Dimensions
How large is that sand box?
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- N&W Z1b 2-6-6-2, PSC, New, Road No. 1462, Factory Paint ............... $2875
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- P&LE A-2 Berkshire, OMI, New, Assembled, F/P w/decals .................. $1350
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Events

November 2004

6: Wind Gap, Pennsylvania
Eastern O Scalers Swap Meet – Plainfield Fire Hall, 6480 Sullivan Trail – 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. Admission: $5; (spouses & children under 14 are free), $10.00 for the first table (includes one admission) and $12.00 for each additional table. Information SASE PO Box 1781, Bensalem PA 19020; (215) 639-3864. Bring an index card with your name, address etc., for a $1.00 off your admission. Contact eostrains@att.net

6-7: Syracuse, New York
CNY-NRHS 30th Annual Train Fair. Write to PO Box 229, Marcellus, NY 13108-0229. Contact: CNYNRHS@aol.com

13: Jacksonville, Florida
Florida O Scalers 5th Annual Meet held at Baymeadows Holiday Inn on Baymeadows Road just off I-95. Swap Meet from 9 AM to Noon, clinics start at 1:30 PM. Registration is $20 advance, $25 at the door. Call 904-269-2445 for details, or mail registration to R. W. Dettmer, 2756 Connie Circle, Orange Park, FL 32065. Contact roscaler@cs.com

26-28: North Haledon, New Jersey
Model Engineers Railroad Club of North Jersey - Annual Open House Fridays 7:00 - 10:00 P.M., Saturdays & Sundays 2:00 - 5:00 P.M.; $4.00, children free with adult. Club located at 569 High Mountain Road, North Haledon, New Jersey 07508. Contact pharbord@optonline.net

26-28: Carlstadt, New Jersey
NYSME Annual Holiday Exhibition. The New York Society of Model Engineers will be holding its Annual Holiday Exhibition at the Society's headquarters, 341 Hoboken Rd. in Carlstadt. Show times: Fri, 7 - 10 PM, Sat & Sun, 1 - 6 PM. Admission: adults - $5, children - $1. Featuring 5000 sq. ft. of operating scale layouts, railroad memorabilia, and railroad related exhibits. Contact: Andrew Brusgard, 908-686-4856. Contact ajb1102@comcast.net

27-thru Feb 26, 2005: St Paul, Minnesota
Twin City Model RR Museum/Night Trains Admission $3 (under 5 free). 1021 Bandana Blvd. E, Ste 222, St Paul, MN 55108, 651-647-9628. Contact paulgruetzman@usfamily.net

January 2005

8-9: Albany, Georgia

December 2004

3-5: North Haledon, New Jersey
Model Engineers Railroad Club of North Jersey - Annual Open House Fridays 7:00 - 10:00 P.M., Saturdays & Sundays 2:00 - 5:00 P.M.; $4.00, children free with adult. Club located at 569 High Mountain Road, North Haledon, New Jersey 07508. Contact pharbord@optonline.net

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12: St Paul, Minnesota
Twin City Model RR Museum/Circus Train Admission $3 (under 5 free). 1021 Bandana Blvd. E, Ste 222, St Paul, MN 55108, 651-647-9628. Contact paulgruetzman@usfamily.net

20-23: St Paul, Minnesota
Twin City Model RR Museum/Holiday Express Admission $3 (under 5 free). TCMRM, 1021 Bandana Blvd. E, Ste 222, St Paul, MN 55108, 651-647-9628. Contact paulgruetzman@usfamily.net

27-30: St Paul, Minnesota
Twin City Model RR Museum/Holiday Express Admission $3 (under 5 free). TCMRM, 1021 Bandana Blvd. E, Ste 222, St Paul, MN 55108, 651-647-9628. Contact paulgruetzman@usfamily.net

The Cape Fear Model Railroad Club's 8th Annual Model Railroad Show will be held at the American Legion Post 10 building, 720 Pine Grove Drive, Wilmington NC 28409. Saturday hours are 10 AM to 5 PM and Sunday hours are 10 PM to 4 PM. Admission is $4.00 for adults, $2.00 for children and children 5 and under are free. Show will include 43 vendor tables, “HO”, “O”, and “N” modular layouts and free clinics. For more information, please call Ben Jackson at (910) 270-2696. Contact info@capefearmodelrailroadclub.org

A current list of events is now available at our website [http://www.oscalemag.com]. If you have an event you’d like listed, we have a submission form at the website (the preferred method), or you can mail the info to our office address given on page 3.
(Left to right) Pat Mitchell, Jenny Conrad (rep’ing the St Louis venue for SONC 2005) Steve Canter (Jim’s brother) and Jim Canter promoting O Scale through tee shirts and coffe mugs available from Jim direct at 1203 Rotherham Dr, Indianapolis, IN 46107, or on eBay.

Second place in the model contest was taken by Andy Sunderland for his East Gary RR four-truck freight motor.

Tom Kabele waits patiently to serve customers at the OST table.

Jim Zwernemann took Third place in the model contest with this scratchbuilt Mather boxcar.

Johnnie Reid’s “Second Childhood” roundhouse diorama won First place.
Let’s get the important stuff outta the way first — the 2007 O Scale National Convention. Jaini and I talked it over a lot. We investigated the available venues based on inputs from many people who have hosted the National in the past, including the 2004 event. We concluded that it would be best if the National were held somewhere else in 2007. The metropolitan Philadelphia area is just too expensive at this time.

We then looked at all the events that are currently on the calendar and asked ourselves which of these were the best attended. That came down to three: O Scale West, the Chicago March Meet and the September Indianapolis meet. Of these three, we felt the Indy meet would be the best fit for a National. It’s got a lot going for it: low room prices, large exhibition area, and close enough to a large group of dedicated O Scalers.

So, I called Jim Canter and made my proposal, i.e., that he and OST co-sponsor the 2007 National convention in his location in September. Jim agreed and that’s what we’re going to do. In a way, it’s fitting because the National started in Indy. There you have it from the horse’s mouth.

Changes

Roger Jenkin’s “Traction Action” column is gone. I’d like to take this opportunity to thank Roger for his contributions to the magazine throughout its early days. It has been getting more and more difficult for Roger to produce the column and we agreed it was time to give it up.

In its place we will be adding a column about modern-era O Scale modeling. If you have ideas for specific topics you’d like to see discussed, send ‘em in and we’ll get working on it. I believe we’ll be able to debut the column next issue.

You may have noticed the increase in ads in this and the previous issue. We welcome our new advertisers to our pages and urge you to patronize them. Let them know you saw their ad in OST when you contact them and/or place an order. More ads, however, means slightly less content. I’d like to hear your feelings about the ad to content balance. Is it too many ads, not enough ads, or just right? Should we add eight more pages? If we do that means more postage and that means a subscription price increase. Also, what kind of content do you want to see: more layouts, more how-to, scratchbuilding, kitbashing, what? So, lemme know. Oh yeah, if you have an article idea, lemme know that, too. We’re always looking for articles.

Influences

In this issue you see the first (we hope) of many articles about people who were influential in O Scale. I’d been going through some old papers and came across some sketches done by an old friend, long deceased now. Delwyn “Jack” Amerine was the first person I ever met who was serious about model railroading. I’d just joined the NMRA at a train show in 1970. As soon as I received the member listing I looked up who lived in my area. That’s how I met Jack. I remember calling on a Sunday morning. Jack answered. I told him I’d just joined the NMRA and that I lived nearby. I then asked if I might come over to discuss trains. To my great disappointment, Jack said that he was just on his way out. Then he added, “We’re going to the York Model Railroad Club’s 25th Anniversary Show. Would you like to come along?”

“Well, yeah,” says I and that was the start of a beautiful friendship that lasted until Jack died of a heart attack.

Jack was probably the most intense model railroader I’ve ever met and I don’t mean that in any negative way. He had an encyclopedic knowledge about real railroads and he modeled in all scales. If you asked him he’d say he was in S Scale, but he had O, HO and N as well. Jack was a Pennsy fan and a New York Central fan, but he knew a lot about other railroads, too. I swear he must have read the Official Guide for recreation. Once we quizzed him on reporting marks. We just could not stump him. He’d tell you the name of the railroad, where its home office was, how many miles of track it had and its nickname. I recall his favorite was the Wobbly, Bobbly, Turnover & Stop (the Waco, Beaumont, Trinity & Sabine RR).

Jack could do the most amazing things with wood. Jack built a layout once in his apartment’s second bedroom. It started about five and a half feet off the floor and went up toward the ceiling. The lower level was O Scale and just a simple loop. The second and more complex level was S Scale. Above that was HO and above that was N. When you looked up at the levels, you really didn’t notice the change in scales so much as got the feeling that the trains just got farther away from you. And, here’s the really cool part, there wasn’t a single fastener holding the layout to the walls, yet it was rock solid.

Jack was employed in an architect’s office as a draftsman and, boy, could he draw. I think that was what fascinated me the most about him. I have a folder full of his sketches. Below is a sketch he did one day at my kitchen table. It’s a design for a small station on my first layout, the Bryn Mawr Public Railway which was an HO Scale shelf layout in an apartment.

Well, it was through Jack that I met a really great bunch of model railroad guys, one who got me hooked on the N&W and another who got me hooked on O Scale. Those guys are still around and I still communicate with them now and then. But Jack is gone and there are times when I really miss talking to him about the hobby.

So, I’ll bet there are a lot of you out there who were introduced to the hobby by a special person. Honor that person by writing up an article about them and how they influenced you. Also, keep in mind that all newcomers need mentors.

Meanwhile, keep high ballin’!
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