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62 Observations – Joe Giannovario
On November 1st, 2003, the final spike was driven on the last stretch of mainline on the O Scale layout at the Golden State Model Railroad Museum, home of the East Bay Model Engineers Society. This marked the completion of the Third Division of one of the largest O Scale layouts in the U.S. The layout measures 175 feet long by an average of 30 feet wide with the three divisions extending from 36" to over 9 feet above the floor. More than 3000 feet of handlaid mainline provides a pretty respectable run allowing even the biggest of the Big Boys and Alleghenies a chance to stretch their legs.

**History**

The East Bay Model Engineers Society was founded in 1933 and is one of the oldest model railroad clubs in the nation. The club started its first layout, in O Scale, in 1934 in the basement of Hardy’s bookstore in Oakland. EBMES expanded in 1936 and moved to the baggage room of the Western Pacific depot. After a brief move in 1939 to the Key System offices, the club moved in April, 1940, to what would become its longtime home, a Santa Fe warehouse at 4075 Halleck Street in Oakland. For the next 40 years the club built layouts in O, HO, and N Scales.

The O Scale layout was roughly 63x100 feet and consisted of several separate divisions. The Santa Fe Western was the standard gauge railroad, the Oakland, Antioch and Eastern ran traction equipment, and there were two narrow gauge railroads, the On3 Denver and South Park and the On30 Poterville Western.

In 1985 we relocated to our current building, located in Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline in Point Richmond, California. The building was very large, but needed substantial renova-
tions. We needed to clean and renovate the interior as well as put on a new roof. Construction of the layouts you see today began in 1989. We opened our doors to the public in 1991.

**O Scale Today**

Today the O Scale layout is about 70% complete. The completion of the Third Division marks the last of the major track-laying phase, although some siding and industrial tracks await completion. The track plan is basically a point-to-point schematic, with return loops at each end. A train covers more than 27 scale miles of railroad running from one end to the other. In typical operating sessions, with normal time “waiting in the hole” for oncoming trains, it will take a train two hours or more to go from the Departure Yard through all three divisions and back to the Arrival Yard, without ever going over the same piece of track. That’s a respectable size layout, particularly in O Scale! Yard tracks and sidings are about 55 feet long, allowing us to run some pretty impressive trains.

In addition to the standard gauge railroad, we also have a large area devoted to narrow gauge (On3). Currently about 25% complete, the narrow gauge will eventually have about 250 feet of mainline. Naturally, mining and logging operations will predominate. This area features a large mine structure salvaged from the home layout of Charlie Trombly, a former member of the club, as well as a hydraulic gold mine, something not often modeled.

Construction is also progressing on an extensive traction layout. Roadbed and most of the track is down. Temporary wiring allows limited operation at this time. Eventually the entire traction layout will be wired for both two-rail and overhead operation.

**Construction**

The benchwork is built in the traditional open grid style. The track is built over ¼” x 1” spline sub-roadbed, nine laminations wide, with Homasote roadbed. Virtually all trackage is hand-laid on ties we cut ourselves. Rail is about 35% steel and 65% nickel silver, code 148. Standard radius is ten feet, minimum radius in a few areas is about eight feet. Yards are on a plywood base with Homasote sheet. Turnouts are a combination of Old Pullman kits and scratchbuilt. Some flextrack was used in the passenger terminal. Apparently, no one had a great desire to handlay track while lying prone on their stomach. Switchmaster switch machines are used to throw all turnouts.

**Scenery**

Mountain scenery dominates most of the layout. Some of the tallest peaks will tower 16 feet above the floor. Traditional hardshell built over a cardboard lattice forms the foundation. To this, we add hundreds of rock castings made from commercial rubber molds. Some are pre-cast and affixed with a “batter” of Hydrocal, many others are cast in place. You quickly discover that you don’t want to get an itch while holding rock molds in place waiting for the plaster to set!
Color for the rock castings is generally water soluble dyes of various colors applied with spray bottles. The two-fisted gunslinger approach can color a large area in a short time. Larger areas of soil are painted with a concoction of Latex earth colored paints found on the reject shelf at the local hardware store. Soil and rock are collected from natural sources. The mining districts of California and Nevada provide most of the material. We fill coffee cans with actual mine tailings of various colors and textures, screen them and finally attach them to the scenery using Borden’s Concrete Fortifier. This product looks a lot like the glue/water mixture traditionally used, but sets more quickly and is very strong. Loose dirt bonded with this stuff is almost like rock once set, but can be chipped away if necessary.

Hundreds of trees have been planted so far. As with most layouts, many more are needed. Trees are a variety of out-of-the box and scratchbuilt types. A type of dried flower grows all around the park where the club is located, providing a great starting point for homemade trees. In the fall we gather the flower stems, which already look like a tree trunk with branches, then use 3M Spray Adhesive to add ground foam. There is even a burned-out area where a forest fire swept through, taking out a trestle on the narrow gauge.

Power and Control

Our layout is divided into four divisions, Arrival, Departure, Midway and Zenith. Each division consists of four or more mainline blocks, plus yard tracks and sidings. Each division’s control panel has two cabs, each of which can select power from two local DC power supplies or four global radio controlled (RC) power supplies. Each division block can be assigned to either cab. Our panels are designed to easily allow alternate power systems to be added. Two divisions now have DCC (North Coast Engineering) in addition to local DC and RC power. We are currently investigating TMCC as an additional control choice. All power supplies are rated at ten amps to allow operation of long trains with multi-unit locomotive consists.

The layout is equipped with signals over the entire mainline. Currently the signals show turnout routing. Once the wiring upgrade is complete, signals will show block occupancy, allowing engineers to drive their trains according to signal aspect. LEDs on the control panels indicate route selection, and optical detectors in a couple of key areas prevent an operator from inadvertently throwing a switch under a train, a lesson we’ve learned the hard way.

Structures

Structures on the layout are a mix of kibashed, kit, and scratchbuilt. We were, fortunately, able to save many structures from the old layout; some are more than 60 years old. It is fun
to recognize a building on the layout in a photograph from an old issue of *Model Railroader*. Many bridges were also saved and we have been able to incorporate most of them into the new layout. One addition is a massive steel arch bridge that we had custom built of welded steel. This bridge will easily support the weight of a couple of our members.

A large city scene dominates the entrance to the layout building. Many structures are highly detailed and weathered. Over 50 scale vehicles fill the streets, from rundown old trucks to 1970-era muscle cars. Most are from the late fifties to the mid-sixties. A loop of trolley track runs throughout the city. Eventually this will become part of an urban switching railroad servicing numerous industrial spurs. A large stub ended passenger terminal dominates the center of the city.

**Operation**

With the panel options we have, several operating modes are possible depending on crew numbers and available equipment. The two main operating modes are Engineer mode, and Dispatcher mode. In Engineer mode, engineers are assigned trains to drive with RC handheld controls from division to division, with the division dispatchers controlling train movements and setting routes within divisions. In Dispatcher mode, the division Dispatcher handles both dispatcher and engineer roles. Both modes can also function together.

Operation is primarily geared toward our visitors. We try to keep as much action going as possible. Since most of the trains are owned by the members, they tend to stay together with little or no switching of cars. The Departure and Arrival Yards are the two terminals. Basic operation is to dispatch trains from Departure, where they can either run laps of the Departure loop, or be sent up to Midway. As the Midway Yard fills with trains, the Midway operator will begin turning them on the reverse loop and sending them back down to the Arrival Yard. Another loop connecting Arrival and Departure allows trains to return to their original starting position. The Third Division extends from Mid-
more trains than motive power, occasional engine swaps and light movements add variety. Although very large, the layout can actually be run by one (very busy) person. Once routes have been set up on the control panels, it is possible to stand on the upper balcony with an Aristocraft throttle in each hand and loop two trains in opposite directions. Just don’t try to chew gum! There are, however, positions for as many as seven operators. Communications are by radio since the layout is 175 feet long. The building can also get somewhat loud when several trains are running and the viewing aisle is full of visitors.

Members
We currently have about ten active members in O Scale. We work on the layout every Friday evening, as well as an occasional Saturday. During the winter months, when the museum is closed, we have more frequent work parties. Memberships are available to anyone with an interest in trains; no experience is necessary. We’re here to have fun! If you are interested in giving O Scale a try, or have some O Scale equipment that needs a little exercise, stop by or give us a call.

Information on visiting our museum is available on our website at: http://www.gsmrm.org

Top (l to r): Jim Ambrose, President, with daughter Katie, Dave Johnson, Andy Olson, kid below him - Thomas Ambrose, Marty Campbell, Ed Martinez, Jim Trenkle, Jeff Heller
Just Below Bridge (l to r): Mike Leahy, Jeff Rowe
Bottom (l to r): Gene Chamberlin, Fred Sill

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When many of you folks have asked me about my railroad, I usually dig my toe in the dirt and admitted that I was "between layouts". My 20'x30' Boston & Albany can be categorized as "stored serviceable". Being at my parents' house, it gets run on the boy's occasional visit to Grandma's House (often geared to a trunk full of locomotive reviews I need to get done) and otherwise lies pretty dormant. This is hardly optimal.

Now, over at the Snappy Patter Ranch things are a little different. I often used the fact that there was only about 12x20 feet of space available as an excuse not to build. Upon reflection, however, I found time, not space, to be my most uncommon commodity. I've listed some of the major time issues, because this may start sounding very familiar to many of you:

• A toddler. I love this kid and feel strongly about spending time playing with him. It's the Doting Daddy Duty! Add to that some Mommy time (if possible) and you get the idea.

• Maintenance time. This category is more insidious than you might think. Family maintenance chores, maintenance of the estate, honey-do, warehouse store safari, bathe-the-boy (Son! The cat is not a washcloth!), &c.

• A time intensive career. Mine is also somewhat bizarre and unpredictable. Add to it a couple of classes a year to teach and some scholarly writing here and there, and the bi-monthly editing drill for this august publication along with the six-times-a-year swirl I pump, a sample of which you are reading now.

• My career is somewhat transient. I expect to move (yet again) in two years.

So why would anyone in their right mind even think about a railroad under these circumstances? To borrow from the toddler lexicon, "I wanna, I wanna, I wanna!" Let's look at my "wanna" list, which may be similar to your's:

I like highly detailed locomotives and rolling stock. I have a pretty nice string of ponies, if I do say so myself, and I want to ride them.

I like mainline standard gauge 1940's era New England railroading.

I like operation. I also like operating sessions with a crew who has similar interest. This means switchlists, schedules, trainsheets, and all that stuff in a setting large enough to accommodate several folks who have similar interest.

When I'm by myself and can steal a half-hour, I also like to be the "guy at the grade crossing" and just sit and watch a J2 with the "New England States" meet a Berk with an oil train. My boy likes that, too.

If you haven't noticed, this exercise is starting to look suspiciously like a slightly convoluted version of John Armstrong's "Givens and Druthers" list, where the givens are our time constraints, and the druthers are our desires.

For quite a while now, I've been a proponent of several solutions to this time-versus-wanna dilemma. You can build and detail various components of your future dream, such as locomotives, rolling stock, structures, and the like. Modules or dioramas may come next, also with an eye to that wonderful day when you can hook them together into that dream layout after you've moved for the last time. Scaling back the overall size of the railroad by choosing a shortline, narrow gauge, or traction theme can get you running in a shorter time. Contracting out the actual layout construction or the club venue may get you there, too. I'm still a proponent of all these options.

These are all good solutions for many of you, given what your druthers list pans out to be, compared to your givens. As for me, I've built enough rolling stock and structures for the time being. I want to put it all to work. I've tried modules and dioramas, and they don't hold my interest for long, simply because they don't support my "continuous running" bullet or my desire to operate with friends on my pre-dicted schedule. Shortlines, traction, and narrow gauge just aren't my mainline New England thing. I'm not going to pay someone to build it for me just to tear it down in two years. The club venue in my area is strong, but the number of serious operation nuts is pretty weak, and the opportunities for operating sessions are rare.

I'm done whining, now, because there is an epiphany from what is actually a pretty heretical (for the more traditional craftsman-type O Scaler) concept. In the 2004 issue of Model Railroad Planning, David Barrow has an article explaining his (and others in the NMRA Operations Special Interest Group) "minimalist" concept. Like most detail-hound O Scalers, my first reaction was to consign the idea to some lunatic fringe and move on to the other stuff about designing interchanges, signaling, and the other cool stuff that had details and other forms of sex and violence. Meanwhile, I tore out yet another diorama that had ceased to interest.

While finding solace in strong drink, I had occasion to re-read the issue (it was in the bathroom). It occurred to me that, though my reasons were different than David's, the givens and druthers list was pushing me in a similar direction, so I decided to give this a whirl. Here was an approach that would tax my time the least, yet accomplish almost everything on the druthers side of my list for the two years or so that remained before moving again. I thought about the approach, and came up with my list of traditional things I could live without:

Complex land forms. Accepting tablework rather than open benchwork means that scenery forms would be difficult. The advantage in reduced time of construction, though, is massive. A series of 3'x 8' tables (an O Scale version of David's "tile" concept) could be hustled about, joined together, and modified with impunity. A whole new configuration can be had with a very minimal investment in time. Boredom can be replaced with flexibility.

Scenery and details. The blasphemy of this deletion will probably send the torchlit lynch mob my way again. However, detailed scenery is a real time-eater that could easily consume my two-year window without ever turning a wheel. It had to go.

Non-essential structures. Structures are neatly positioned to define industry locations with things like vehicles and figures placed to help define era and function. None are fixed permanently in location, and all must have a purpose in either the operating scheme, era definition, or as viewblocks.

Really sincere trackwork. Another time eater, easily replaced with flex-track and my existing stock of Roco #6 switches. Roadbed and ballast went by the boards, too. The stuff is robust, nailed down directly to the tabletop, and soldered together.

Complex wiring. The rail is the bus, being all soldered. Leads are dropped only to control blocks. All turnouts have groundthrows or mechanical lever controls.

Complex control systems. A conscious choice here, DCC, DCS, TMCC, and all the other stuff in the alphabet could have been useful here, but I didn't want to invest precious time in locomotive instal-
lation, fussing with “speed curves” and other control option minutia, or the maintenance issues involved.

I chose, as a tacit nod to the prototype world, to represent a portion of the Boston and Maine’s Portland line that shared roadbed with the B&A’s Grand Junction branch to East Boston. This allows me mainline B&M, to satisfy the continuous running provision. The B&A line is mostly industrial switching, swapping cars with B&M in interchange, and allows for an interesting operations scenario in tight quarters. To get to several industries, the B&A must interlock across the B&M main. The coordination issues add operational interest (read play value).

So what have I gained, here? I started construction in September, 2004. By the time you read this, I hope to have had several folks over for operating sessions. While I had to negotiate for a couple uninterrupted Saturdays to get it started, most of the construction has been done by stealing a half-hour here and an hour there. Time invested in maintenance is minimal, because robustness has taken precedence over finesse. Neatness and simplicity replaced scenery and detail. The tabletop “tiles” were all built with masonite skirting and pine facia, so the effect is still visually pleasing. Best of all, I’m up and running in a short time with all the things on my drummers list and about 20 months of enjoyment still to be had.

So what happens after 20 months? I plan to move the “stored serviceable” railroad to my new digs, and finish it with all the scenery and details that we love. You see, I’ll (hopefully!) be retired.

Let’s go Exploring!

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Bridge Basics: Modern Spans

Welcome to the premier of the newest OST column. As the name implies, the scope of this column will involve the modeling of modern era O Scale subjects. We will take a look at what modeling modern era O Scale can involve and how to make an O Scale railroad every bit as realistic and factual as modern life. I hope to show you how your railroad can duplicate as genuine a scene as you can imagine.

For the column opener I want to look at examples of two bridge designs that can be used to bring your trains into the modern era. The first bridge span is clean and simple. However, it does owe its creation to the steam era. In Figure 1, I show a large river inlet that had to be crossed with a double track mainline and still allow for water traffic underneath. In the real world this bridge could not hold the tonnage of even a single train, much less two trains, on its unsupported curved double span. This type of ballasted deck bridge should require several supports along the curved span. The wide spacing of supports was needed to allow for barge traffic to pass under the track into the dock area below.

In the model world, physics can be stretched. The bridge actually supports many times the weight that would be possible in the real world thanks to its model construction materials. A real arch bridge can be designed so that no part of it has to withstand any tension forces. The span of these piers is far greater than would be designed in the real world. Concrete construction is well suited to the arched bridge design. When reinforced concrete is used, a more elegant and sometimes less costly arch can be constructed. What you create with such a project is a feeling of modern mainline railroading brought forth from an earlier era. Whether it’s a 2-8-4 thundering across or the latest AC4400 is up to you. This bridge retains a look of simplicity while expressing the feel of industry and engineering.

The next example (Figure 2) is a design element for straight spans. Actually it is the bridge pier, constructed as a poured-in-place concrete support that makes this bridge’s design current. Its slender straight lines reflect its high strength materials and modern engineering. It is a representation of what a modern railroad would choose for the money, economical, quick, and functional. Combine this pier with wooden abutments to show how a railroad would be modernizing the mainline. A support such as this would work well with the new Atlas (www.atlaso.com) O Scale deck girder bridge.

The concrete pier and curved span bridge construction can be as simple as dimensional lumber, balsa wood or even foam board. For the span bridge, match the same track radius centerline, then add one and one-half inches inside and outside to the radius for cutting. Use Figure 3 as a reference for cutting a curved wood deck. Keep the bridge thickness at no less than two inches with foam construction. For bridge supports, use white pine or foam cut to length and width as required. Using foam, shape and attach the arches from the pier to the underside of the bridge. Finish the materials by sanding to final shape. A bridge built in the steam era and latter revitalized will not need to show its true age. Applying straight concrete color can represent the facade. A light India ink wash (50/50 mix of India ink and alcohol) can be used as a weathering effect. A thinned mixture of Floquil Rust can be ran down the sides to show where internal reinforcing steel corrosion may be happening (You’d better get a bridge crew on that!).

Envisioning a particular bridge fitting a given space is easy. Designing and building that bridge to fit a given space is the challenge. Commercial kits do not always fit, especially on a curve. It is your railroad, and there is no law to follow in the semi-prototype realm. Just because you like running steam engines doesn’t mean you can’t run a high horsepower Dash 8 around the line when you see fit. Updating your layout to reflect current practices and construction is modeling. There are no limits to the imagination; it’s all based on your experience. Your railroad is your creation and whatever you say goes. That’s what model railroading means.

Next issue we will leave the mainlines for the engine service facility, as we look at a modern BNSF turntable for ideas on how a Class 1 railroad has modernized its service equipment.

Illustrations by the author
A Guide To Modern O Scale

by Brian Scace

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These ain’t yer Daddy’s trains!
Hopefully some of you, by now, have built a wooden kit after reading my last article (OST#12, Jan/Feb ’04). This time, we’ll look at plastic as a modeling material. Plastic is probably even easier to work with than wood. If, as a child, you ever built a plastic model airplane you already have some idea of how to proceed. Building kits is the easiest way to develop the skills, not only produce beautiful models, but also to learn to scratchbuild. By observing how the kit manufacturer puts his kit together you get an idea of how to make and attach pieces by scratch, and you gain familiarity with the material and tools.

There are several manufacturers who offer plastic kits for both structures and rolling stock. Also, the availability of plastic detail parts is phenomenal. Grandt line, Back Shop, Precision Scale, Tichy, and Keil Line are among the manufacturers. Plastic structural shapes and sheets are available from Evergreen Styrene and Plastruct, for example. Basically, the same tools are used for plastic as for wood construction: hobby knife, hobby saw, pin vise and drills, needle files/sand paper, squares, plastic nippers, and plastic glue. Obviously, the last two are plastic-specific tools.

The first thing to do after opening the kit box is to count all of the pieces to be certain that all of them are there. Next read the instructions. As you gain experience you may decide to depart from the sequence utilized in the instructions. This is usually done to complete sub-assemblies and to paint some parts prior to attaching them. For your first few kits, I suggest you follow the order of the instructions. Next, arrange a workspace that will not be disturbed, and gather your tools, kit, and other materials together. You’ll know what other materials are needed, because you’ve already read the instructions, didn’t you! The InterMountain gondola kit, for instance, advises that a weight be obtained prior to construction. As an inveterate scrounger I had a sheet of heating duct available. This was obtained for free from some construction scraps. It is serenity producing to have everything available before you start.

It is best to lightly wash all the parts in warm water with a small amount of dish detergent prior to assembly. Mold release agents frequently are still on the plastic, and these agents will ruin a paint job. Paint will not adhere to them. I use an old soft toothbrush to scrub lightly. Then rinse the parts well (since paint will not adhere to soap, either) and let dry.

Years ago, I used a hobby knife or the “bend the joint back and forth” method to remove plastic parts from their casting sprue (the “trees” that the actual parts come attached to). Since obtaining my first pair of sprue nippers, I can’t believe that I ever worked without them. Fine nosed scissors (like nail scissors) or toenail nippers might work at a pinch. Remove only those parts from the sprue that you plan to use right away; this not only prevents loss but also minimizes breakage. Once removed, use a needle file to remove flash and the little nibs or tabs left behind by the cutters. If you will not be assembling immediately, I have found plastic zip-close sandwich bags to be a reasonable way to keep parts properly sorted and to avoid loss. Before assembling, check fit the parts. This step saves putting the wrong parts together, and also lets you know if minor adjustments need
to be made. Adjustments can be things like a couple of passes with your file or perhaps enlarging a pre-drilled hole.

Personally, I have all three of the common types of plastic cement; brush-on liquid, syringe liquid, and tube cement. Each of the three types of plastic cement has its own virtues. I think that you will have to try all three and see which you prefer. Occasionally I still use tube cement, but generally I prefer the liquid type in a bottle with a hypodermic metal spout. I find this enables me to get the right amount into the joint in the easiest manner. Tube cement works well for me in attaching pieces with large contact areas. With the brush-on type, use an old fine tipped (“0”) brush for application. The brush in the bottle is too coarse for most applications. Since plastic cement will eat away and mar any surface it comes into contact with, the goal is to use as little as possible in just the right place. Once dry, very fine sandpaper is used to remove any spills or excess. Sometimes the cement will form a weld-like bead between two pieces. A needle file or an emery board can be used to remove this.

Just like working with wood, it is best to let major glue jobs dry overnight. Rubber bands, clothespins, and wooden blocks can be used to hold parts together and form jigs to ensure square comers. Something as simple as blocks of two-by-four can be utilized. While one section is drying, you can move ahead to complete another section. That way you can have several sub-sections drying overnight.

Patience is vital, and I have learned not to work on models when I begin to feel rushed. The objective is to enjoy yourself, and not feel any pressure to complete something right now. One virtue of plastic is that, if you do glue the wrong pieces together, you can disassemble the parts and try again. Just add some liquid plastic cement to the joint, wait a few moments until it has softened the joint again, and then pull it apart to do over. But, it is better to do it right the first time since cleaning up an error can be difficult; invariably the joint does not separate cleanly, and you will have to dress the edges and surrounding plastic with knife, files, and sand paper. Generally this is better than having to throw a mistake away, however.

Many of the smaller parts of plastic kits are now made in something generically called “engineering plastic”. These types of plastic are not as brittle as styrene, and thus are superior for steps, brake lines, and other small parts that are likely to be broken if the model is roughly handled. These types of plastic are not soluble by ordinary styrene plastic cement, though. CA glue, Epoxy, or Super Glue is needed to attach these bits. I rarely have trouble with the brake rigging since it usually has pins which plug into pre-drilled holes. Use a toothpick, or several tooth picks, to get the CA glue into the hole for the brake rigging, grab irons, and other parts made with this material. Sometimes you will need to use a fine drill in a pin vise to drill out or enlarge the hole to readily accept the part. Usually, if the grab irons are styrene I will bend brass wire into grab iron shape and use it instead of the fragile plastic. Since fragile bits in styrene are readily broken when the finished model is handled, I suggest replacing those you can with brass or engineering plastic.

Plastic cars are light and need added weight. Lead stick-on tire weights work well (Avoid used tire weights, as the brake dust on them is a health hazard- Ed.). They should be placed as low as possible. The floor of a boxcar is good. Sometimes they can be attached under the car and remain hidden by the sills. If you decide to put them inside anything, plan ahead and do so before you close up the model. Another way of adding weight where it does the most good is to replace any plastic axles and wheels with metal. Northwest Short Line makes wheels on axles to replace any sets on the market.

There are several types of paint made especially for plastic. Personally, I have never had any trouble with Floquil, but use your favorite. On your initial reading of the instructions note any areas which you believe would be easier to paint prior to assembly. If possible paint them while still on the casting sprue. The sprue makes a good handle, and by turning it around all surfaces can be reached. If you over-paint any areas to be glued, gently scrape the paint off with the side of a knife blade. Cement will not join painted pieces. Frequently, with things like grab irons or roofwalks, a slip of paper can be placed under the part on the model so that you will not run over while you’re touching up after assembly. Decals are best attached on a gloss finish. Once they are properly attached and dry, a matte clear finish can be applied to give a more realistic appearance.

The models in the photos are a boxcar by San Juan Car Co. and the Intermountain gondola. Both were built following the kit instructions. Excluding drying time, they took about five nights (perhaps ten hours) of work in all. Squares and jigs were used to get square comers. I painted the interior of the boxcar a wood color prior to attaching the roof. That was a whole lot easier than trying to paint the interior of an assembled box. Even the really detailed ready-to-run cars made these days have nothing on these kits. I believe anyone can build one, and you will gain immense pleasure from knowing that you built it yourself.

Hopefully, I have given you a hint at how easy it is to work with plastic. With the above tips, you really should have no problem in building a first-rate model. Beyond kits, plastic sheets and structural forms are available in hobby shops and via mail. You can use them to add personality to your own car. Also, they can be used make kit joints stronger. I find extra bracing is especially useful with structure models. Plastic sheet is easily cut with a razor saw, or by scoring and bending. Once you have built a couple of kits, I am certain that you will be tempted to scratchbuild your own rolling stock, structures, and scenic items. With care, and a little experience, building in plastic is easy.
The C&O J series were named after Virginian Statesmen, Thomas Jefferson (#600), Patrick Henry(#601), Benjamin Harrison(#602), James Madison(#603) and Edmund Randolph (#604), these powerful Northern Locomotives were used for 1st class passenger trains such as the “George Washington” or the “Sportsman”.

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Power or Repower Kits for Red Caboose GPs

The P&D TWIN TOWER DRIVE for the Red Caboose GP body kit is functionally equivalent to the P&D power units already available for the P&D F units, GPs, RSDs, and the Weaver FAs, FBs, RS-3s and GP-38s.

The Red Caboose power kits provide only the necessary power related parts to supplement the Red Caboose GP body kit. These power kits fully utilize the underframe (platform), deck, air tanks, fuel tanks, motor mounts and screws that are furnished in the Red Caboose body kit.

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.
In 1918 the United States Railway Administration (USRA) took control of America’s railroads as part of the nation’s participation in World War 1. The USRA designed some 18 “standardized” steam locomotives from 0-6-0 switchers up to 2-8-8-2 Mallet articulateds. The New York Central purchased several USRA 0-8-0’s (NYC class U3) from Alco and Lima.

After the war was over and steel became readily available again, the NYC, like many other railroads, rebuilt their USRA equipment to better meet company needs. For the Central, that included reconfiguring the tenders on their switchers, including the U3, to what was called a “clear-vision” design. This allowed for slightly higher coal capacity and permitted better rear vision needed for switching duties.

Many USRA models have been imported with the as-built stock USRA tender. I started with a Precision Scale Co. USRA 0-8-0 kit, but you could do this with a U.S. Hobbies, Westside, or Sunset USRA tender as well.

I’m modeling a NYC U3c 0-8-0 with a 27-foot tank and the clear-vision bunker. After studying photos and plans, I concluded that the entire deck would need to be rebuilt, the sides cut down and the new bunker made from scratch. Also, the front of the water legs had to changed from round to flat.

I made all the new parts from 0.016” half-hard brass. As there was not quite enough original material to flatten the rounded water legs, I had to make two extra pieces to finish off this part of the tender. A new deck, slope sheet, and new side sheets were made for the narrower coal bunker. While I used the stock tender floor, I made side sills from K&S 3⁄16” U channel. I used a second ¼” channel as the center sill and fitted it with brake rigging. I also used the Andrews trucks from the stock kit.

The rest of the locomotive kit was built using the PSC supplied kit parts unless I found a part that I thought was better detailed, such as the stack from Central Locomotive Works. The locomotive has complete cab detail and sliding window sashes. The interior of the cab is lined with Evergreen plastic tongue-and-groove siding to simulate the real wood interior of the prototype. The kit had no tail beam, so I had to make one complete with hex bolts to mount it. I also added ash pan hatch covers. The power train consists of a Pittman 9432 can motor connected to a KTM 25:1 U100 gear box. It runs like a fine watch.

So, all this work for a lowly 0-8-0 switcher? Well, I couldn’t put the thing down once I’d started! Besides, there is the satisfaction of completion once the project is done.

◆
Modeler’s Shelf

Right and below: Ron Gribler sent this photo of a scratchbuilt hamburger stand with a full interior.

Below: Carl Cornish built this wonderful O Scale factory from scratch. Carl is offering his kit and custom building services (Timeless Structures) to the general O Scale public. He can be contacted by email [carl9005@msn.com], or at 1203-C Erin Way Myrtle Beach, SC 29577.
The layout was recently displayed at the local model train show here in Perth, where it won “The Best Model Railroad Layout”. John intends to add more modules to Thomson in the future.

**LAYOUT NAME:** Walhalla Goldfields Railway.  
**SCALE:** On30  
**PROTOTYPE:** Victorian Railways narrow gauge (Australia)  
**PERIOD:** 1940  
**STYLE:** Enclosed “shadow box” with fiddle yard.  
**GRADES:** None

**THE PROTOTYPE:**
Thomson is on the 30” gauge railroad, which ran 26 1/4 miles between the towns of Moe and Walhalla in the mountainous southeastern section in the state of Victoria on the East Coast of Australia. This was one of four narrow gauge lines run by the Government of Victoria in Australia. The line was originally opened to support the gold mining in Walhalla, but, by the time the railroad reached the town, the mining had all but ceased. The transportation of timber became the line's principle outbound traffic, with stores and supplies the major inbound traffic. Many timber tramways connected with the railroad, providing raw logs and sawn timber.

**THE MODEL:**
So far, John has modeled only one section of the line, the station (depot) of Thomson. The layout is freelance in design, but follows typical Victorian Railways narrow gauge practices.
Poly-Fiber foliage.
BACKDROP: Custom painted ¾"- Masonite
LOCOMOTIVES:
NA Class 2-6-2 (Etched brass and white metal kit from Broad Gauge Models, Australia.
2-6-0 (Kitbashed Bachmann On30 Loco)
R-T-R Bachmann On30 T-boiler Shays
ROLLING STOCK: Australian, Ian Lindsay Models resin kits
CONTROLS: Digitrax DCC, with Soundtraxx decoders in all locomotives.

BENCHWORK HEIGHT: 48" to track level
ROADBED: ½” Masonite glued to a Styrofoam base.
TRACK: PECO code 75 HO flextrack (hidden with ballast)
TURNOUTS: PECO code 75 HO “medium radius” (Ties have been replaced where visible), controlled by Caboose Industries manual switchstands.
SCENERY:
Carved Styrofoam, covered with plaster for texture.
Woodland Scenics ground foam and real dirt.
Australian gum trees (eucalyptus) created using a twisted wire frame, covered in “No More Gaps” with Woodland Scenics

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Every so often, something comes along which causes us to make big changes in our lives. This happened to my wife and I at the beginning of 2004. As a result we had to sell our house and move into an apartment. The Great Central had to be dismantled, but part of it was saved and sold to a fellow O Scale modeler. He will be using it as part of a new layout that he is building.

This then left me without a layout and with only a ten foot by ten foot second bedroom in the apartment. The thought of having another O Scale layout seemed to be impossible. I started thinking of going back to HO, but gave myself a great big shake. (What was I thinking, Duh!) The old saying “If there’s a will, there’s a way.” came to mind and I started working out what type of layout I could build in the area I would have.

I had a couple of choices. I could model the end of a branch line or an industrial switching area. After mulling it over for a while and taking a look around the old industrial area near the apartment, the decision was made. An industrial switching layout was for me; it had the type of operation that I liked, local switching.

How was I going to build a layout in this small space? After coming across some British layouts on the Web, I took a closer look at some of the concepts that the British modelers were doing with their layouts in small areas. I read Ian Rice’s book, Small, Smart & Practical Track Plans, from front-to-back and back-to-front several times and decided he had some great ideas that I could use. One of the things discussed was a “cassette” unit as a staging area. This would work for me, as I did not have the space for a yard. We will discuss this, and how I built it, in Part Three of this article.

After lots of doodling and bouncing ideas off the O Scale modelers group and a friend in British Columbia (Thank you, guys, for all your help!), I came up with a
plan for the new layout. It would be U-shaped along three walls of the room. With this in mind I drew up a full scale drawing of the layout with all the track work and buildings marked out. With the drawing in hand I was then ready to build my new layout. Because this will be an O Scale layout built in an area of only 38 square feet that I had to work in, I thought it would be good to share my experience building this layout with you. So over the next year I will, step-by-step, show you how I am building the new Great Central Railway. I hope that it will be helpful to any new comers to this, the “King of Scales”, showing them that you do not need a warehouse to build an O Scale layout. Maybe I will show some of you seasoned modelers out there some new tricks that can be used on your layouts.

All great layouts start from the ground and work up, and the GCR is no exception, so this month we will start with the bench work. Now keeping in mind that we were moving to an apartment; sawing, drilling and stuff like that would be out of the question. Bench work would have to be built, somehow, if I wanted a layout. Why not build it before I moved and just move it as well? I could build it as a sectional layout and then take it apart, move it, and reassemble it at the apartment. With only three weeks before moving day, I had to get busy. Luckily I have a great wife who let me spend a couple of days during each of those weeks building my bench work.

I forgot to mention, as well as my layout going into this small room, there would be my computer and its desk, my modeling desk, a filing cabinet, a book shelf and a display case, all this in an area of one hundred square feet. I can hear the laughter now. “No way!” you say!

Well guess what? I did it and I have space to move around in. I could not swing a cat around but two to three people will be able to operate the layout with lots of elbow room and breathing space. Now lets get started.

**Building the Bench Work**

As I explained, the layout had to share the room with a lot of other items, so I decided that the computer desk, computer and work desk would go under the layout. This would mean that the bottom of the layout had to be at least 50” off the floor. Therefore, I decided that the top of the bench work would be 54” high, with the backdrop going another 30” above that. This would give me a 1½” clearance from the lowest point on the ceiling.

Next I worked out on the plan for the layout where the break points would be for the sections. Once this was done, I could go ahead and build the benchwork sections.

The benchwork is built in the standard box frame made of 1x4 clear pine with a ⅛” plywood top (Fig. 1), and then a ⅛” foam layer on top as my track base. I like using the foam on my layout as it is easy to work with; you can cut and carve it with a sharp knife to make ditches and ponds. However, it will not be added to the layout until after it is set up in the apartment, so it will not get damaged in the move.

**The Legs**

Next I made the legs out of 2x2 and 1x6 for the spacer plates (Fig. 2). Once the legs are made, they are inserted into pockets on the bottom of the benchwork (Photo 1). The pockets were made of pieces of 2x2 and 1x4 (Fig. 3). These are
screwed into the four corners of one section of the benchwork. Only two legs are required for each subsequent section. The leg-less end is secured to the previous sections using $\frac{3}{8}$” dowel guide pins and $\frac{1}{4}$” carriage bolts (Photo 2). 1x2 braces are added, running from the legs to the table frame for stability. The resulting structure is free-standing (I can’t fasten it to the walls in the apartment).

Once the frames and legs were made, I assembled them in the back yard of my old house (Photo 3). This got some of my neighbors curious as to what I was doing, and trying to guess what the strange object was that I was building three weeks before moving.

**The Backdrop**

Now that the benchwork was done, I could start building the framing for the backdrop. First, I made uprights out of 1x3. These were screwed to the back of the benchwork so that, when needed, the backdrops could be removed. I then made cross members out of 1x2 (Photos 4&5 and Fig. 4). One thing to remember is that each section of the benchwork will need its own backdrop frame. In my case, four frames had to be made.

With the backdrop frames all made, a surface of $\frac{1}{8}$” hardboard was cut to fit each section and screwed onto the framing (Photo 6). I then painted the backdrop a sky blue.

Bear in mind that this whole layout was being built in my back yard. At the end of each work session, the layout section had to be disassembled and stored in the garage to be reassembled the next time I worked on it. This added to the mystery of the strange thing being built in my yard.

**The Lighting Valance and Fascia**

Now that the structure, legs and backdrop are built, all that is left is the lighting valance and fascia board on the front of the benchwork. The fascia is made of $\frac{1}{8}$” hardboard cut in strips six inches wide. These are then screwed to the bench work (Photo 7). With this done I started to make the lighting valance.

The valance frame (Fig. 5) is made of 1x2 with a $\frac{1}{8}$” hardboard face on it. These were also made in three sections, two sides and one center section, so they could be removed. I secured the side sections to the backdrop with shelf hangers. The front section also used shelf hangers to secure it to the side sections. With all the lighting valance and fascia done, it was
time to paint them, and the legs, in a green matching my computer desk (Photo 8). With that, the benchwork was considered finished and ready for the apartment. It was disassembled and readied for the move (Photo 9). Layout kit, any one?

The Layout Move

Well, the big day came to move the layout. My friend Trevor and I loaded it into the truck and headed over to the apartment. The assembly of the layout was done in less than one hour. (Photos 10a-c). It fit like a glove.

It was an interesting experience, building the layout benchwork in a different location from where it was going to be used. I was quite pleased with the outcome. Now that we have moved into the apartment and settled in, I have installed the foam and started the trackwork. This will be the topic of Part Two in this series.

So until next time, Happy Modeling.
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Last weekend, I had to choose between two significant O Scale events that were scheduled for the same day. One required a ten-hour drive from my home in Canada, and the other meant a six-hour drive. I’m now satisfied that I made the best choice for me, for now, and I’ll tell you why after some preamble.

After I reviewed an article in Issue #14 of O Scale Trains Magazine, I decided to order a Proto48 version for a dual-gauge modular project I intended to build. Over the next few weeks, however, I began to question my own reasoning. Since my own Northway Railroad is built to NMRA O standards, I began to waffle on the order because I knew that the Proto48 version would be used only occasionally on the modular display and I would not be able to operate it on my home layout. I changed my mind back and forth several times while I pondered the situation.

I have often said that if I was just getting into O Scale model railroading, I’d probably build to Proto48 standards. However, I now accept that I have neither the desire nor the energy to make all the necessary changes to my medium-size layout for the sake of an expensive modification that most people would never know about or appreciate. I also accept that I don’t need to be the world’s greatest modeler to enjoy playing with trains. What I enjoyed most about our hobby when I lived in Niagara Falls was the social interaction; getting together with one or more friends and operating trains according to the seemingly impossible orders of a demented dispatcher. I enjoyed the challenges, the problem solving, and the working together as a group to complete the shift, and the comments and joking about it afterwards while enjoying some refreshments and discussing trains.

Since I moved four years ago to my new home, about an hour and a half north of Toronto, I have not heard of any other O Scalers anywhere near my home, but I have considered scheduling a once-a-month open house to try to attract and develop some new enthusiasts. Finally, early last week, I made my decision and ordered a regular O, rather than the Proto48 version, 45-tonner via the Internet. Rich Yoder replied immediately to tell me he could bring it with him to the Cleveland show on Saturday if I was intending to attend. That was when things started to get really complicated.

You see, as much as I enjoy operating my standard-gauge trains, I really love my narrow-gauge trains and I had just rescheduled some events and found that I might be able to attend the 2004 Mid-Hudson On30 Maxi-Meet in New Paltz, NY, on Saturday. I began to make some hurried inquiries on the Otrains and On30Conspiracy mailing lists to see if anyone from the Toronto area was planning to attend either the Cleveland Show or the Mid-Hudson Meet and I was pleased with the immediate response. As founder, owner and moderator of both Yahoo groups on the Internet, I am always amazed at the power, speed and convenience of the home computer.

Within hours, I was offered the opportunity to drive for four hours to Churchville, NY, and then ride for another six hours with a fellow conspirator in his vehicle to New Paltz. On the Otrains list, I learned that an old friend from the Niagara area was planning to drive to the Cleveland Show with room for one passenger, but the most interesting news came from Rich Yoder. He advised that a longtime O Scaler from Ontario was planning to attend and I might want to get in touch with him. Rich told me that this fellow lived in Collingwood, ON, but had no idea where that was. To make a long story short, when I drive three miles to the west and cross the Wasaga Beach town line, I enter the Town of Collingwood. After a couple of phone calls, I found myself in this fellow’s large train room, watching his long CP and TH&B trains operating flawlessly around his superb folded dogbone layout.

I was invited to accompany him to Cleveland and if it had been on any other date, I would have jumped at the opportunity. Instead, he agreed to take delivery of my 45-tonner from Rich Yoder and bring it back with him.
In this month’s Workshop, I would like to write about my experiences at the Model Railway Show that was held here in Perth, West Australia. I am not going into details about how I built the layout, but give readers an idea of what is involved in setting up a layout at a show and maybe encourage those who haven’t tried to give it a go.

The show is an annual event, and runs for three days over a long weekend that includes Saturday, Sunday and Monday. There is a day allowed for setting up on the Friday before the event.

This year I entered a layout called the Brooklyn Terminal Railroad (BTR). The BTR is a two-rail modular switching layout consisting of seven modules, giving a total of fifty four feet. It is loosely based on one of the many terminal railroads that were once plentiful around New York Harbor.

To move a layout of this size required two autos and two trailers. The trailers are covered, fairly high (we call them furniture moving trailers here in Australia) and can be hired out on a daily basis from your local service station.

On the Thursday night before the show we loaded the trailers, and drove down early on Friday morning to the Perth show grounds. The floor of the pavilion was already marked out for our space and we proceeded to unload the layout, which took no more than an hour. By midday we had the layout connected and running. The afternoon was spent tidying up and touching up any areas that were missed during construction as, due to the size of the layout, it had never been previously completely assembled.

The layout can be controlled with two operators, each having a cab with half the layout under their control. We found that, after a while, we could turn trains around at each end very quickly so that the public always had something to watch. I think that, with a switching layout where trains are not continuously racing pass the public, you need to have lots of details to amuse them while they are waiting for a train. This is where the BTR excelled, with all its numerous highly detailed scenes.

Some of the important points for a successful large switching layout at a show are:

- Have lots of details and small scenes to amuse the public.
- Make the track plan interesting, but not too difficult, and have plenty of industries to switch so the operators don’t get bored.
- Recruit plenty of operators and helpers; you can never have enough.
- Check all your rolling stock and locos before the show, especially the couplers. It’s nice to have all Kadees, but I found that Weaver and Atlas couplers were not a great problem.
- I used hand uncouplers (McDonalds’ coffee stirrers), but now I use the new O Scale hand uncouplers from Micro Mark.
- Try to have someone out front talking to the public (I was given that job most of the time!)
- Have some kind of communication between the operators. That way they are not shouting at each other. We used hand telephones and spoke to each other quite regularly throughout the sessions. Next year we will use headsets.
- Every morning, I would be at the pavilion early and clean the track with a Centreline track cleaner using solvent on the rollers. The loco wheels were also cleaned every morning using the cradle that was in my article in OST #4 Sept, 2002.
- Try and have all turnouts controlled electrically from control panels that are located in front of the operators, as well as many isolated sections for the locos. Disregard this point if you are using DCC.

What makes a person want to do this for three days a year?

It’s a great chance to share a large layout with your friends that you normally couldn’t set up at home. I really enjoyed the experience and, hopefully, will be back next year.
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Sometimes, you just get lucky! Like many model railroaders, I have a wish list for locomotives I am looking for. From time to time, I take a look at the webpages of several brass dealers, always in search of my personal “most wanted” model. On one such list I found a KTM SD45, described as in excellent condition, never assembled or run, unpainted and stored for more than thirty years in the original box. For their age, these old KTM/USH locomotives are very well detailed and scale sized. In my opinion, they are always a worthwhile buy for an advanced modeler as an excellent starting point for a little “upgrade”.

Four days after my order was taken, I got the parcel, the fastest delivery from the U.S. I've ever experienced. When I opened it, I saw that the description was accurate. Unbelievable! The parts were still wrapped in the original paper from the Japanese manufacturer! The kit, just two major groups with the shell and the frame, was assembled quickly with eight little screws, and the first test run ever for this locomotive was completed. It ran like a sewing machine, fresh out of the box, although with a little gear noise from a lack of lubrication.

Now, it was time for some thoughts about how to do some upgrades. A few modifications to the shell, plus some “add-on” parts, would be necessary to get a nice prototypically correct model. My choice for the paint scheme, of course, was a lease unit, as I wanted to model a prototype currently in service. While studying countless pictures in the Internet, I found what I was looking for – a lease unit, still in service, wearing a colorful paint scheme. Thankfully, the type and position of the hand brake matched the configuration on the model. Most of the SD45s still in service have a brake wheel located on the rear of the long hood, rather than in the short hood position of the KTM model.

The prototype of choice turned out to be CEFX SD40M-2, #2805. An SD40M-2 is really an SD45, rebuilt to SD40-2 standards. Many of the SD45s you find in existence today are rebuilds of this sort. The prototype conversion entails the replacement of the old 20-cylinder 645-series prime mover with a new 16-cylinder engine, and the addition of some electronics. These modifications are not visible from the outside; just the stack position is few inches different from the as-built SD45, because the original prime mover was longer than the replacement. The fuel consumption and maintainability of the old engine was the main reason for the rebuilding.

At one point this locomotive was on a long-term leasing contract to, and wore the paint scheme of, the Union Pacific. After the lease ran out, the locomotive was returned to the lessor. The former UP lettering was merely painted over, instead of a complete repainting. Usually the CIT units wear a blue scheme, except their SD90's which are maroon and silver.

Now I will tell you which parts were replaced and about the “add-ons” to upgrade the model. The model comprises three major assemblies, the shell, the walkway with the front and rear pilot and the frame with fuel tank, air tanks and trucks. Let's begin with the shell. The modifications are:

- Blanking off the rear number boards, because the CEFX didn't have them.
- Replacement of the fan housings and exhaust stack with better castings
- The addition of sunshades, a cab mounted air conditioner
The air conditioner is a story onto itself. Unfortunately the correct type for the prototype, a “Vapor” type, isn’t available in O Scale. Only the “Prime” type is offered. The differences between them are significant, so I had to make my own lost wax casting. I started by making a styrene pattern. An HO Scale super-detailing part was very helpful to find the right dimensions, because of the lack of prototype drawings. Good pictures are rare, too. After some hours of effort, I was able to produce a nice pattern. A couple of days later, I had the castings (with a few extras for future projects).

The antenna board is of soldered construction, made from little brass nails and a thin brass plate. I found the needed pictures and measurements in an older modeler magazine.

Next came the walkway assembly. The front and rear footboards were removed and, at the front pilot, a “handmade” plow was installed. The plow was mocked up from cardstock to determine the correct size and shape. The resulting pattern was used as a template for the final version. It is interesting to note how many different styles of plows the UP used on the front of their locomotives. The plow itself was then built up from sheet brass and formed to its final shape using a small saw, files, and a lot of heat from a blow torch to soften the brass. Heating the brass to a glow makes it soft like lead for a limited time. As it cools, you can form it into the correct shape. HO modelers are lucky; all types of plows are commercial available.

The frame assembly was where the major work was waiting. I wanted a new one, with better relief, that looked more prototypical. The new frame was built using sheet brass and milled L profiles. All parts were soldered together. The resulting frame, with the structural members of the prototype simulated, is much stiffer. That becomes important in positioning the new motor (my usual Faulhaber, in this case the new Type 3257) and the toothbelt driven center tower. The speed is limited to 55 mph by the choice of gear ratio. It is the first belt driven tower of this design that I have used, and I am very satisfied with the construction, durability, and noiseless performance. I intend to use the design for two other locomotives that are still in progress. The motor and slow gearing makes for an overpowered locomotive, but the high torque of the motor allows smooth, powerful slow speeds without a flywheel.

The old frame, made of bent sheet metal, was used as a template for drilling the numerous holes to allow attachment of the fuel tank and shell without any modification. The KTM tank was re-used, but it needed a large “add on” part, the retention tank, which was built from a thick sheet of brass and placed at the rear of the original. The original insulation plate for the truck mountings was re-used, as well. Of course, the KTM builder’s plate with the number was re-attached.

Now we turn our attention to the truck side frames. I removed the cast-on lower brake cylinders, which are poorly shaped by today’s standards, and replaced them with Precision Scale castings placed in the later (upper position) configuration. The lower brake cylinder position represents the original configuration found on the prototype in the early years.

Lastly, I changed out the wheels and the axles. The KTM wheels have a tread of 0.172”, and I want a more accurate looking tread of 0.145”. Therefore, it was necessary to install new turned axles in the gearboxes that fit the KTM gears and replacement wheels from Northwest Short Line. This is not a real challenge if you have a small lathe, and the KTM components are made to metric dimensions, which makes it easier for me. By the way, in Europe, double insulated wheels are the norm, so a new all-wheel electrical pick up for smooth operation was installed, too.

But, what is a nicely detailed model without the perfect paint job? To get good results takes some effort and patience. Start with a careful and thorough cleaning of the model. In this case, a little detergent and a lot of hot water were used. I always use a primer on my models, as paints sometimes don’t adhere well to brass. My tried-and-true primer over the years is Revell’s Basic Color. You can find it in a good hobby shop catering to plastic modelers. It is available in spray cans or ready-to-use for airbrushes. I can get a smoother surface and a thinner coat using an airbrush. After curing, it is an excellent base coat for my favorite water-based acrylic colors. I started by spraying the shell and the side panels of the walkway assembly with Badger’s UP Yellow. Now comes the rather time consuming task of carefully masking the shell and walkways to prepare them for the next color, UP Grey. I also used UP Grey to paint the fuel tank and the trucks. A good masking tape is necessary, used with a lot of care and thoroughness, as the overspray will find every gap. After the grey is applied, carefully remove all the masking tape. When the grey is cured, start masking again, this time for the red nose. This is an easy task. A
little more of a challenge is the masking for the anti-glare panel on top of the short hood; it took thirty minutes of masking just for a twenty-second shot of Light Grey. Finally, the entire model was covered in a clear gloss. Once cured, that glossy surface gives you the best surface for decals.

Now it’s time to letter the model. In this case, there is a mix of waterslide decals and dry transfers. I always apply the dry transfers to Microscale’s clear Trimfilm. That way, you can get the correct spacing between letters working on a flat surface, rather than on the complex surface of the model itself. This is much easier than trying to letter a number board on the end of the hood, one transfer at a time! This method allows you to get the spacing right, then handle the transfers like a waterslide decal.

Next step, after allowing the decals to dry, wash the model with water to remove the remnants of the decal glue. After letting it dry again, apply a couple of thin coats of clear; my choice was Badger’s Clear Satin, on all the parts.

Assembling the model is always the final step in the project. Two blocks of lead came with the unassembled locomotive. In my opinion, that much weight just isn’t needed for a six-axle locomotive, especially with all axles powered. I split them and installed just half the weight. The test runs confirmed the wisdom of this decision.

Though, here and there, I made a few little compromises (I never did change the exhaust stack position) the result is a solid, smooth-running SD40M-2 which looks quite elegant in front of a train of modern freight cars.

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Powering Up
Ted Byrne

The DCC column has been appearing in O Scale Trains for two years now and it is time to broaden the focus. So we have renamed it “Powering Up”. One reason is that Digital Command Control (DCC) is not the only game in town. If you came to O Scale from HO or N, you are familiar with DCC and may even have control equipment that you can reuse for your O Scale layout.

But, if you came from 3-Rail, you are familiar with Lionel’s TrainMaster Command Control (TMCC) and, after reading the series by Don Woodwell in O Scale Trains last year (Issues # 8, 9 and 10), you know it can be converted to 2-Rail using equipment from Train America Studios. If this is your situation, maybe you’ll choose to reuse your Lionel controller.

And now, MTH Electric Trains (aka Mike’s Train House) has entered the O Scale 2-Rail arena. Their new Proto-Scale 3/2 capability allows locomotives to switch from three-rail to two-rail operation, by means of wheel replacements and power redirection. Their Digital Command System (DCS) thus carries over to 2-Rail. It is newer and so has more features than TMCC and it partly overlaps TMCC.

This is not all good news! Three incompatible control systems cause confusion in the O Scale 2-Rail world and can prevent any one of them from thriving enough to provide all the new capabilities that we might want. So we need to talk more about the controller wars. But leave that for another day.

A second reason to broaden the focus is that there is much more electronic activity going on that is of interest to O Scalers. We have talked about the realistic sound that is available now and track detection that fits nicely with command control, and there is more to say on both those subjects.

Light Emitting Diodes

But, in this issue, I want to go back to the subject that I have mentioned before, Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs). LEDs are taking over the world. You’ve seen those trailer truck tail lights and the traffic stoplights that are a bunch of dots rather than one big light. You’ve seen the LED flashlights that are super bright and run all night. At the panel discussion at the recent O Scale National Convention in Washington, I gave out a red LED to everyone attending; that’s how inexpensive they are. The typical reaction was, “What are these things and what am I supposed to do with them?” So I want to gather the information on LEDs into one place.

First, the good news: LEDs are offshoots from the semiconductor (i.e. transistor) industry. An LED is a little plastic blob with light coming out one end and two wires coming out the other end.

The first ones were red, but now green, white, yellow and blue are available. Red is the least expensive, but all are fairly cheap. The plastic itself can be colored or clear. LEDs can have a plastic lens on the front to focus the light or it can just emit diffused light. The common diameters are 3 mm (called T-1 and about 5.7” in O Scale) and 5 mm (called T-1½ and about 9.5” in O Scale) but other diameters and some square units also exist. So they are almost the perfect size for O Scale signals and lights. LEDs take very little electric power and last almost forever. A typical LED requires about 20 ma. (0.02 ampere) at 1 to 2 volts, but some go down to 2 ma. So you can light all your passenger cars with a small amount of power.

Now, the other news (not bad news really, but needing some care): LEDs are powered by direct current, not AC or DC voltage, so if you connect an LED directly to a battery or train supply, it will be destroyed. Recall, AC voltage reverses polarity, such as a transformer output or the track power when using command control. DC voltage has one polarity as from a battery or DC train speed controller. Refer to the OST book, A Guide To Modern O Scale, for more electrical background.

A simple LED circuit is a DC voltage source in series with a resistor, to limit the current, and the LED. In fact, you can make an LED tester this way with a 9-volt battery in series with a resistor to limit the current.

If you do this you will see that the longer wire on the LED is always the + wire and the shorter wire is the - wire. It will not light if reversed. Choose the resistor value by using Ohm’s law: resistance equals voltage divided by current. In this case we supply 9 volts and the LED uses about 2 volts, so 7 volts appears across the resistor. For a current of 20 ma. (0.02 amp), the resistance is (9 - 2) / .02 or 350 ohms (actually 330 or 360 are the closest standard values). Often another regular diode is placed backwards in parallel with the LED to protect it in case the voltage polarity gets accidentally reversed.

Command control locomotive decoders typically have special outputs to produce DC for lights, so this calculation would apply there, but check the decoder instructions. Now how do we get the power for the LED on a train layout?

Well we steal a little bit from some other source of power on the layout. Often a convenient source is voltage across the track rails. Then we need to use one or both of two special circuits.

1. A bridge rectifier turns AC voltage into pulsating DC voltage. Then, a filter capacitor smooths it out to relatively smooth DC. The lead marked + is the positive output and the opposite lead is the negative output. The other two leads are the inputs in either order.

Four diodes can also be connected
together to make a bridge rectifier, as shown in Figure 4, but be sure to get the white bands oriented correctly.

2. A constant current limiter accepts DC voltage and does it out at a controlled rate of current. It works using a resistor placed in series with it and the load (in this case the LED). The limiter measures the voltage across this resistor and does not let it exceed 1.2 volts. So, if the resistor is 60 ohms, then the current will not exceed 0.02 amps, again calculated by Ohm's law. In other words, the resistor value determines the current. The circuit is as shown.

The most incompatible situation is that we want to power the LED from a variable AC voltage such as a Lionel-type train controller. This would also occur with DC train control, which is DC of either polarity depending on the direction of train travel. First we need the bridge rectifier to convert the track voltage from AC to DC. Then, if we do not want the LED to get brighter and dimmer, we need to use a constant current controller. That sounds complicated but both these devices are small and inexpensive. Moreover, several LEDs can be connected in series.

If the AC voltage level is constant, as it would be with track power from command control power, then we can use the same circuit, but it is simpler to replace the current limiter with a resistor. For example, assume the track voltage was 18 volts AC, the bridge rectifier would use up about 1.5 volts, and an LED would use about 2 volts, leaving 14.5 volts across the resistor. For 20 ma., and using Ohm’s law as above, the resistor would be (18 - 1.5 - 2) / .02 or 720 ohms. If we are lighting an old-time passenger car with four yellow or amber lights (in series of course), then they would take 4 times 2 volts and the resistor would drop about 8 volts and be 8 / .02 or 400 ohms, for which 420 is the closest standard size. If we have variable DC, then the rectifier is omitted and the current control above is unchanged.

Typical bridge rectifiers should have 0.05 amp current capacity and 50 volt reverse voltage capability or more. Examples are Radio Shack 276-1152A or Digi-Key W005GG1 or RB1151MS. Current regulators should also have at least 0.05 amp current capacity. Examples are Digi-Key LM317LZNS or the slightly larger Radio Shack 276-1778. Any filter capacitor of at least 50 volt capability and 50 or more microfarads will work. Radio Shack also sells individual diodes, 276-1101 and LED assortments, 276-1622.

Here are some other experiments:

To see how an LED block signal would look, extend the LED tester circuit above to have two LEDs in series, one red and one green. Then connect a switch across them, simulating the extra contacts on a turnout controller. Switching the electrical switch will switch the LEDs. You can drop small washers over the lights to look more like a block signal.

Two-color LEDs are available. For example, one LED can produce red or green light. Lighting both colors at the same time will produce a yellow light. This could be used to make a single signal block control. Blinking LEDs are also available. They could be used to make crossing gate lights.

Have fun.
When The Time Comes...

Sooner or later (hopefully later than sooner!) we're all going to be operating that "great model railroad in the sky" where no maintenance is required, wiring never has shorts, no derailments and turnouts always work right (or left). So, what will happen to all that "stuff" you have squirreled away in your basement?

I'm no lawyer, but I've been in serious model railroading since 1948. During the past 15 years, I've been involved in disposing of several O Scaler friends' equipment and "stuff". Here are a couple of things I've learned in the process:

First - Make a Will! An attorney can do this for you. In it you will be issuing instructions as to the disposition of your estate. Don't forget that all your railroad stuff is part of your estate, so your will should include instructions as to what to do with it all.

Here's an example of what can happen if there is no will. In Pennsylvania if there is no will, the estate goes to the nearest surviving relative, or, if there are no survivors, the State. (It doesn't matter whether or not you like your surviving relative. It could be cousin or someone even more distant.) In our area there was an active O Scaler (and a great friend) who died very suddenly of cardiac arrest. Unmarried, he had no will. The estate went to a sister with whom he had little or no contact and who certainly had no interest in trains. Her attorney, who also knew nothing of model railroading, suggested they break all his stuff into three lots, engines, cars, and everything else, and auction it off. I became aware of this situation, called, and said this type of business card size advertisement. That inventory made it easy. We had to do the inventory in the above situation, but that list proved to be invaluable. The list became the record we used to record each item, its sales price, what was sold, and, it was a reference for advertising. That inventory made it easy.

Second - Select a friend, or someone you know is an experienced model railroader, to be in charge of disposing all your stuff. (If possible, note their name in your will). Preferably this person should be younger than you and be knowledgeable about your scale. (Probably, if you're in O Scale, that person should be an O Scaler), [By the way, make sure that person knows about this and agrees to it! - Ed]

Third - Have a good inventory, particularly of locomotives, rolling stock, buildings, books and other major items. This inventory should include a description of the item, the date you acquired the item, and, if possible, an estimated value (you may be way off base on that one, but take a guess anyway). An inventory will be a major benefit for the person in charge of the disposition. If you don't do it, he'll have to.

About twenty years ago a local hobby shop owner said to me, "Do you remember Johnny So&so?" I did, and the shop owner stated that his daughter had called and wanted to know if he could recommend someone to dispose of Johnny's stuff. I called the daughter, found out where she lived, and went to visit her. She had moved everything to her basement. Everything was in boxes, neatly organized, but no inventory. Johnny had been an old time O Scaler, from the 1920's.

A friend and I spent two weeks of evenings opening every box and inventorying their contents. OH MY! - Parts! - Parts! - Parts! We were like kids in a candy shop! We found several freight cars built by Paul Egolf and hand lettered by George Stock (I wish I could decal that good!), two PRR K4's built by Egolf in 1929 with wooden boilers, a Hines Mikado, Walther's Poly-Drives, you name it, it was there. And, oh yes, a complete set of Model Railroader (He was an original subscriber), a complete set of Model Craftsman/RMC, plus Railroad magazines dating from the teens until the subscriptions ran out following his death. The upside of this was that we disposed of everything and turned nearly $20,000 to his daughter (and this was twenty years ago).

We had to do the inventory in the above situation, but that list proved to be invaluable. The list became the record we used to record each item, its sales price, what was sold, and, it was a reference for advertising. That inventory made it easy.

If you ever get the chance to dispose of someone's stuff it can be rewarding. If you're doing it for remuneration, play it square, keep good records, and negotiate your terms, in writing, on the front end.

George Eschbach, Penna.

Brian writes:

This is, on the one hand, a very sensitive subject to many of us. For all of us, however, the proper disposition of our "stuff", as George calls it, is a responsibility we have to our loved ones. We, at OST, would love to hear from folks in the legal profession, whose specialty is in this field, who can expand on this subject for the benefit of us all.

Small Spaces Wanted

I took up model railroading a few years ago when I retired and, while N Scale is fine in some ways, O Scale is where I want to eventually go. Your magazine is a great source of information and inspiration. The articles of most interest to me, and perhaps to other would-be O Scalers, are the "layout in a small space" type, such as in the current issue. I appreciate that the creativity required to design these does not grow on trees, but I hope you can keep them coming because they open one's eyes to the possibilities for O Scale in modest sized rooms.

Ted Horvath, Canada

Joe says:

Ted, we aim to please. Starting in this issue is a multi-part article on building a layout in a small space by fellow countryman Mike Culham.

Mix Makes Magic

I know this is a little late, but I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed the Tom Mix article about building locomotive drivers (OST#13). It answered three questions I have had for some time: (1) Can I make my own locomotive wheels?, (2) What do I make them out of and where do I get it?, and (3) How do you make spoked wheels?

The article really fired up my curiosity. Now I feel confident about building models of early diesels with strange driver sizes and spoked wheels. Thanks! Tom Mix obviously has a lot of talent, and I would love to see more articles like this in the future.

Marty Ifody, Canada

We Asked For It

You solicited comments in your latest Observations column (OST#17). Here is my 2 1/2 cents worth. I would support an increased number of pages with the associated rise in subscription rate. As for advertisement - never enough. Have you considered a page of business card size ads for the smaller guys? Would for the
time being consider slightly less content and more ads. I would like to see more how-to articles. A number of these have appeared in the Yahoo group page, such as wiring for the Atlas turnouts, installing Kadees on various manufacturers’ cars, 3-Rail to 2-Rail conversions, etc., but OST would be a great place for these types of how-tos.

Norm Delucchi, Ariz.

**Mystery Loco Still Mystery**

Just received Issue 17 and saw Carl Phillips’ letter about the “Mystery Locomotive”. No, I am not the builder. I am the fella from Texas who sold the Bill Eldridge estate. I say “sold” cause the last of his steam and Diesel engines were sold at the Southwest O Scale meet in Oklahoma City this past October. I did not see this engine in the estate. As Carl stated, Bill was his own man and did things his way. Carl may have built the engine, but Bill would have lettered it for his own road, The Dakota Texas Gulf.

I had found a lot of correspondence in Bill’s collection that was signed “Carl” and for some time I never knew Carl was. When I advertised the collection for sale, Carl called and asked about the various engines he built or modified for Bill. One of the selling points to all the engines I sold was they ran very well. As Carl said Bill wanted to “run ‘em”.

Now how’s that for throwing more fat in the fire? Aside from the above, this issue had a lot of us here in Houston reminiscing about old times. Seems two of my O Scale friends here were school mates of Jack Amerine who was a reporter for the local newspaper here for a good while. You will probably be contacted by one or more of them. We had a good time telling tales, and, yes, he was definitely an influence.

David Ray, Houston, Texas

**More Construction Wanted**

You asked what we would like to see in the mag. I enjoy late night relaxation reading about well-known personalities and their pikes or models. Also enjoy the historical perspectives about the development of the hobby in the same way. However, the incentive to buy the magazine is construction articles and modeling tips. Loco construction is pretty well covered by your competitor (although the detailing is not). Again, it’s the modeling that is the incentive.

Each magazine has to find it’s niche to survive and those of us that have been around a while know what the niches are. The topic disappearing from the mags (with probably the exception of Mainline Modeler) is the construction articles. Have to be a little bit careful about that since all of the mags would say they carry construction articles. I make a distinction among those articles - some talk about doing it and show some (sometimes beautiful) photographs. However, there is a difference between “talking about how to do it” and “doing it”. It’s the latter that is appealing. (No slurs upon our Aussie friend since the photos did show pretty much how to do it in the current issue.)

I’ve enjoyed the modeling tips, i.e., the opening box car door on the IM car - but would like to see more of this. I wouldn’t mind seeing some expanded writing from Gene Deimling, prototype modeling and how to do it (not where to get the info - I know that for things I’m interested in).

Sure I like to operate, but I like building a lot more.

Bill Becker, Wisconsin

Joe Replies:

Finding good construction articles is one of our priorities, Bill. We’d like to see a lot more ourselves. We’ll be running a “how-to” scratchbuild a steam-era caboose in upcoming issues and also an article on building some steam servicing facilities. If anyone out there is building a project now, take photos and keep notes so you can write it up and share it with the rest of us.

**Trolleys Anyone?**

I want to compliment you and your staff on your publication, which I have been picking up locally. It is nice to see an O-Scale publication that appears on time and on schedule, and contains a broad spectrum of topics.

I am finally doing some planning and building for my traction system. I was fortunate to have the late Arthur Ford of Middleboro, MA, build a lot of trolleys for me, which will soon be running.

If you are interested, I would be willing to contribute a short topic about Arthur and his model building. Arthur was a true gentleman. It always amazed me how realistic his trolleys sounded going on O-scale switch points, just like the real thing.

Roger C. Parker

Joe Replies:

Roger, YES, definitely write this up and send it in. And for the rest of you traction guys, we’d like to see your work, too!

**More On Jack Amerine**

I was running trains with David Ray yesterday when he showed me the item in the current issue of O Scale Trains (#17) regarding Delwyn “Jack” Amerine. Delwyn and I went back many years beginning with the Boy Scout period of our lives when we bicycled all over Houston to view the railroad scene. We built small switching layouts and had other HO projects together, and when older took a number of trips in search of steam shortlines and other railroads.

I remember his Corvette period as well as the hand drawn checks he used prior to the time the banks required machine readable numbers. So I know that you captured his spirit very well.

Since I knew him back when I was still allowed to call him Delwyn, which was even then not his correct name as his birth certificate spelled it Delwin. He simply got tired of dotting the “i.”

Once he moved East we didn’t see much of each other. I would drop by on an occasional business trip and every few years he would return to Texas to see his mother. When he died his ex-wife called a mutual friend to inform us of his passing. However, this friend failed to get any of the “where, when, and why” type of information and he had no idea of how to get hold of his ex. The information in your article told us more than any of us knew previously.

Given that, I’d appreciate any additional information you may have regarding Jack’s death such as date, place of burial, copy of the obit (if any), etc. There are still a number of active modelers in Houston who remember him who would also appreciate the information.

Thanks in advance for any help you can give.

George C. Werner, Houston, Texas

Joe Replies:

George, here’s Jack’s obit from the August 11, 1998, Philadelphia Inquirer — Delwyn Roger “Jack” Amerine, 63, a draftsman, died last Tuesday at his Cherry Hill home of a heart attack. Born in Houston, he had lived in Cherry Hill for 20 years. Mr. Amerine was a draftsman for Hubbard Engineering in Haddonfield, an author and a designer. He was a model-railroad collector and historian. He was active as a Republican. He was a graduate of Southern Methodist University with degrees in economics and journalism.

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Building Ladders

When I first started building models in HO, freight car ladders were mostly made from punched brass. They looked better than the printed-on variety found on cardboard sides or the cast-on variety. I started modeling in O when I saw my first All-Nation or Athearn kit with steel punched ladders. They seemed to have some definition to them, not just a flat shape. I realized that the look of O and its detailing potential was huge. In a few years, I started to see differences in prototype designs; all boxcars weren’t the same height or with identical details. This created a dilemma, since you can only get a limited selection of ladders in O. I’ve tried various methods of making ladders until I came upon the technique described below.

The technique involves the fabrication of a simple jig/fixture that permits you to solder together brass wire and square stock. There is nothing revolutionary in my discovery. In fact, I may have seen it described before by someone else, but don’t remember where.

To start with, you will need to get some sheet styrene or ABS around 0.030” thick, several short lengths of wood and block of pine or similar wood. I make my ladders out of 0.015” diameter brass wire and 1/16” square brass bar stock. This will make a ladder that has scale sized rungs of 3/16” in diameter, which is what the prototype measured. I chose to use square stock for runners, but you could use milled brass angle stock of a similar size. The angle stock requires a little more care in building the fixture, however. I don’t find the square stock to be objectionable when the completed jig to the same height as the top of the brass bars. This avoids any problems with the wire lifting from the jig while you are soldering.

The brass bars may require some minor shaping before you solder them into the final ladder. Some ladders have rounded ends, so look at prototype photos to determine if this is required. It is a minor touch but one that adds realism.

Before you start soldering, you’ll need to clean the brass wire and square stock using emery paper or sandpaper so the solder will flow properly. I use a water-soluble flux and a small soldering iron. Tin the bars before inserting them in the jig. Tape the wire in the plastic jig and place it over the bars. Apply the liquid flux and tin the soldering iron tip. Try not to get too much solder onto the tip. The trick in soldering is to move quickly and use the tip of a screwdriver as a heat sink. Press down on the brass strip with the blade as it enters the plastic jig.

You need to move the soldering iron on and off the joint quickly, or it will start melting things and burning the wood. If the brass parts are clean and fluxed, the solder will flow nicely, forming a small fillet around the wire. Once the joints are complete, you can remove the wire from the tape and plastic jig. Trim the wires flush the bars. The next step is to use an abrasive wheel to grind a taper on the wire end. This will give the appearance of the prototype. The assembled ladder in lacquer thinner. As a final step, I like to drop the completed ladders into a chemical blackener to provide a primer base for paint.

It sounds like a lot of work but it really isn’t. Once the jig is fabricated, the assembly process goes fairly quickly. You can get scale looking ladders that have the right number of rungs and spacing for your next car project. The ladders can take some amount of handling without
fear of breakage. Try this on your next car project. I think you will like it.

Proto48 News

I haven’t mentioned our Proto48 website lately. Check out the site at http://www.proto48.org to find a lot of useful bits of information in our gauge. There are modeling techniques and tips, as well as lots of pictures of equipment and layouts. We carry previous versions of the news section on the website, as well as a complete set of standards and sources for products and services.

As a reminder, The O Scale West (February 24 & 25) and Chicago O Meet (March 18 to the 20th) are coming up. These meets are excellent places to meet others interested in Proto48 and finescale modeling. Both meets normally have side meetings on Proto48. Go to the meet websites to find out more details. In the fall, you can go to the Indy show that is hosted by James Canter, an avid Proto48 modeler. Yahoo Groups also offers a Proto48 forum hosted by Bobber Gibbs, OST Columnist. You can join the group, learn more about the gauge and possibly be entertained by the mail traffic. Go to http://www.yahoo groups.

Finescale Modeling

I would like to showcase a fine modeler and his work. The individual is Stan Schwedler of Phoenix, Arizona. He is the co-owner of Coronado Scale Models. Stan and his brother have been building fine models for many years. In the past, their work has appeared in the Narrow Gauge and Shortline Gazette and Finelines. Stan has been doing some very nice Proto48 standard gauge models in recent years. Two such examples are included in this column. The first is a scratchbuilt model of an early 1900s Illinois River Packet boxcar, and the second is a Southern Railway SU class boxcar. Both cars were done in styrene with San Juan couplers, trucks and brake parts. The models were painted and weathered, then subjected to a fiberglass brush to wear down the paint. This technique can be used to represent chipped or worn paint. Lee Gustafson took the photos, during the 2004 Narrow Gauge Convention.  

O SCALE WEST

15th Annual Meet

Thur. - Sun. February 24-27, 2005

Westin Hotel Santa Clara
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Santa Clara, CA 95054
408-986-0700

Thursday Feb. 24: videos, layout visits, clinics
Fri.-Sat Feb. 25-26: sales/exhibits, contests, layout visits, etc.
Sunday Feb. 27: layout visits

Registration: $25 individual or family, $30 after December 31
Table Rentals: $35 each, $45 each after December 31

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Palo Alto, CA 94301-3003

See www.oscalewest.com for the latest on the meet, and to download the newsletter and the registration form.
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BEGINNING IN 1942 the President of the United States of America traveled by train on the luxurious and massive private Pullman car Ferdinand Magellan. Overland Models has brought this car to life in O Scale brass for your enjoyment. The variation shown is as the late President Ronald Reagan used the car during his “1984 Whistle Stop Tour” and as the car remains at the Gold Coast Museum in Miami, Florida. OMI will also produce the original version that was used by Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman. Exquisitely handcrafted in brass by Ajin Precision of Korea, this car is truly museum quality and production will be limited to approximately 100 cars total. 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.
Highlands Station, Inc., publishers of Model Railroading magazine, has announced the release of Trackside on the Pennsylvania Vol. 2 - Structures of the Standard Railroad of the World. Printed on 80# paper and 100# cover stock, this horizontal-format (10.875” w x 8.375” h) saddle-stitched soft-cover book by Jeff Scherb features newly redrawn PRR plans of trackside structures such as signal & switch buildings, passenger stations, combination stations, yard & shop buildings and freight houses. A “must own” for PRR enthusiasts and modelers this book is also a great resource for any modeler interested in scratchbuilding or detailing structures. This new volume is the companion to Trackside on the Pennsylvania - Standard Plans of the Standard Railroad of the World: Structures, Bridges, Signals, and Signs. Published in 2002, that volume featured redrawn PRR standard plans of trackside structures, bridges & culverts, signals, and signs. This new 96 page book is available now at hobby shops or can be ordered direct by calling toll free 1-888-338-1700.

Wilbur Epperly sent word that he has more etched brass plates in stock now, mostly for N&W and C&O steam, but more are coming soon including ALCO-GE, Baldwin, Lima-Hamilton Diesel builder plates and Baldwin, ALCO and Lima steam locomotive builder plates. Contact him at the address.
Sunset/3rd Rail has announced a number of new models and projects. First up is the NP/SPS Challengers. The NP Z-6 has great detail and is available in three engine numbers: 5100, 5116 and 5120. Only 20 of each number will be made in 3-Rail and ten of each in 2-Rail, coming in late 2004 for around $1600.

Sunset also announced the following projects. If they interest you, please put in your reservation or call your dealer. Production is based on reservations.

- N&W K-2a Streamlined 4-8-2: The cousin to the famous N&W J. It is often mistaken for the classic lines of the J.
- PRR E-44 Electric Locomotive. An important locomotive to the electrification of the Pennsylvania Railroad.
- Heinz Vinegar and Pickle Car: a fun and traditional freight pair.
- CB&Q S-4 Hudsons.

**REVIEW: Milwaukee Road S-3 4-8-4, MSRP $995.00**

**Weaver Models**

PO Box 231
Northumberland PA 17857
570-473-9434 • www.weavermodels.com
reviewed by Brian Scace

Weaver Models is offering a CMSt&P Northern, in both two-rail and three-rail configurations. This is a brass model of a prototype familiar to those of us who keep an eye on the preserved steam world, and represents one of a family of similar medium-sized Northerns built by the American Locomotive Company during the late '30s and early '40s. Close relatives of these engines were built for D&H and Rock Island. Here's what I saw when I opened the box.

This model is neatly constructed. Major components are built using the techniques we are familiar with, formed sheet brass, coinings, and castings, all assembled into the finished whole in a straight, true, and robust fashion. I must admit that I like the robust feel of modern brass built for the operator segment of the market. Remember the old days when you opened the box and the first thing you did was carefully go through the packing material in search of all the little castings that had fallen off?

Paint is applied very neatly, with crisp graphics and masking. I, personally, like the idea of rods that aren't as shiny as the bumpers on a '57 Chevy. The rodwork here is shiny, but not that obnoxious chrome color I've come to love and paint over as soon as possible. Works for me!

That does bring up a point. I am of the school that says, “If you don't like something, fix it rather than complain about it.” This is the case with the pilot wheels on my sample. They are undersized by quite a bit. The good folks at Weaver are dealing with that on future models, and changing them out on this one is an easy exercise. This also applies to the pilot height. To get the clearances required for three-rail flanges, the pilot deck is set high. Although changing the pilot wheels goes a long way toward visually mitigating this, some of us 2-Rail folk will choose to lower the pilot, as well.

That said, it was time to subject our Northern to Scace's testing methods. I admit, I was approaching this one with some trepidation, as I had found some of their earlier brass engines somewhat buzzy in the gearbox. Not the case here! This one took off smooth and quiet, capably horsing around a respectable string of freight cars ranging from those that rolled like a dream to those that rolled like a sled. The speed range was quite controllable, using my Controlmaster-20 power supplies. A tip of the fedora is hereby rendered to Joe Hayter, and the cast of thousands at Weaver, for this welcome improvement over earlier efforts.

The lighting functions appropriately, with (thankfully) no red markers on the tender. Like other ready-to-run steam, I still recommend a slide switch hidden somewhere to turn off the class lights up front when not needed, which in the “Scale World” is most of the time. There is, also present, a flashing light up front simulating the oscillating warning light found on the prototype. Although it doesn't really oscillate (which would be a difficult engineering task for a production model), it does look neat enough to make the kid in me turn off the room lights and let 'er rip.

Most of you can now stop reading and make your choices with some confidence.

**Notes for the Neurotic:**

There is room, of course, for the more neurotic among us to noodle this model up with various details and such. First on my hit list are the afore-mentioned undersized pilot truck wheels. I did this conversion on my Weaver New Haven 15 Hudson; it took me about an hour to do, and the effect was striking.

Lowering the pilot may take a little more effort, but it is do-able. Also, some additional details on the all-weather cab/tender area should yield closure of that gap with the accompanying “I did that” satisfaction.

All in all, this is a model intended for the operators among us, with good running characteristics, a nice finish and presentation straight out of the box. However, for the craftsman and inveterate tinker, the model represents a good base for detailing up to the level of the $3000 world, for the MSRP of $995, a handful of castings, and a little sweat equity.
REVIEW: Lionel 0-6-0 saddle tank
Lionel LLC
50625 Richard W Blvd
Chesterfield MI 48051
www.lionel.com
reviewed by Brian Scace

Here’s a somewhat bizarre review, I must admit, but stick
with me here. What we have here is an inexpensive way to
get a pretty nice 0-6-0T for that industrial switching layout
or port diorama. Let’s look at the locomotive, first.

Lionel is producing the li’l guy shown in the photo.
The prototype is an Alco 0-6-0T built for the Leetonia and
Cherry Valley Railroad Company in 1910. Drawings for this
engine are found in Kalmbach’s MR Cyclopedia, Volume
One, Steam on page 32. This is a pretty typical industrial
sized steam locomotive, which is why it attracted my eye.

For a paltry $99 retail, you can get one of these for your
very own. The model itself is quite nice, well built and solid,
and follows the drawings admirably for such an inexpensive
locomotive. The rodwork is stamped and simplistic, pur-
posely loose and a little over-sized to accommodate 3-Rail
operating characteristics. It is all there, however, so you can
either replace it with castings (that idea is mentioned further
along in this review) or darken, weather, and ignore the existing
rodwork. They are only available in 3-Rail, however, so a little
more subterfuge is called for.

I sent the locomotive to Bob Stevenson (Stevenson Preserva-

The next issue was pick-ups, formed with spring-brass wire,
a couple of dimpled brass discs soldered on the ends for the
wheels to wear against, all stuck on the bottom with some
epoxy. This works, but is inelegant, so I intend to revisit the
mounting using circuit board material screwed to the bottom
plate, with the pickups soldered in place. I also couldn’t resist
retaining the smoke unit so I can play with it a little later, too.

Bear in mind that my switches (Oh, yeah, turnouts.) are old
Roco #6. I had no problem with stalling over this size, but you
will have to experiment with any sizes that have longer insu-
lated frogs.

What’s left is to mount couplers (plenty of room under this
thing to do it!) and put some steps on the beams (a little heavy
for my tastes on the front beam, and non-existing on the rear).
Updating the headlights and playing with some of the other
details will get it up to snuff and ready for a little paint.

As you can imagine, the vertical can motor drive is a little
frisky on the high end, but I found the locomotive quite control-
latable with my standard MRC Controlmaster 20. There is enough
room to control at switching speeds without changing the gear
ratios, using modern power supplies.

For something like $200 total, and a little sweat equity that
really is a lot of fun, you can have a nice industrial steam loco-
motive that isn’t yet another B&O “Little Joe”. Works for me!
Hey, Neville, this sounds like the perfect thing for your Brook-
lyn Docks, too!
The Prototype
In 1938 the Baldwin Locomotive Works delivered six new 4-6-4’s to the Santa Fe. The first of this new class, 3460, became known as the now-famous Blue Goose, and is the only one of the six to be streamlined. The new M.T.H. 3460 class offering is typical of the remaining five locomotives.

The Santa Fe used these engines in heavy fast passenger service on the main line between La Junta, Colorado and Chicago, Illinois. Smaller 3450 class 4-6-4’s traveled the Santa Fe rails from Colorado into California.

In size, weight and power, these 3460 class engines were among the largest of the 4-6-4 wheel arrangement ever built. Their boilers worked at 300 psi and the engine exerted 49,300 lbs. of tractive force.

The drivers were the distinctive Baldwin disc-type at a staggering 84 inches in diameter. Tender trucks were distinctive, too, looking somewhat more like Commonwealth six-wheel passenger trucks than typical tender trucks.

Drawings of the Blue Goose appeared in the May 1939 issue of Model Railroader, while more general drawings of the 3460 class were published in the June 1948 MR and in the MR Cyclopaedia, Volume 1, Steam Locomotives.

The Model
We started by comparing the dimensions of the model against the MR Cyclopaedia drawings. We found minor and major differences in wheelbases and diameters. For example, all the truck wheels on the model are 35 inches in diameter. That’s correct only for the pilot truck. However, you can’t really see the wheels inside the trailing truck nor the tender trucks, so this doesn’t make a whole lot of difference visually and saves a bit-o-money in manufacturing costs. The big “uh-oh” is the driver diameter. The model’s drivers scale out to only 77 inches and it is visually noticeable. The rear driver should come up behind the power reverse on the engineer’s side and on this model it’s a good bit below that. Sometimes, it’s okay to use smaller-than-prototypical diameter drivers to give an engine a more massive look, but 7 inches is too big a difference. You notice it right away.

At first, based on the drawings and photos in the MR Cyclopaedia, we concluded that several of the details on this model (ATSF #3463) were incorrect, such as whistle placement, boiler check valve location and crosshead guides. We went digging online and found several photos of #3463 taken in Topeka, Kansas. We can say that M.T.H. got most all the details right. The crosshead guides are incorrect but whistle, check valves and the other details appear correct.

The model is beautifully detailed and finished. From a foot away it looks like a brass model with piping, piping and more piping. None of the detail is cast into the boiler; it’s all added separately. The bell and whistle cords are especially nice. The window frames in the cab slide as do the roof hinges, just like we expect of our brass imports. The stack smoke-lifter operates. The pilot is nicely detailed with appropriate hoses. The paint is flawless and the lettering excellent.

On the down-side, the cable connecting the engine and tender is bulky and the gap between the engine and tender is typical of 3-Rail/2-Rail combo locomotives, i.e., too large. The hinges on the smokebox front seem overly large.

Performance
This loco came to us brand new and had not been run previously. Since it was the two rail scale version, we placed it on two rail Atlas track, powered her up with M.T.H. DCS and she responded immediately. The loco was run in forward and then reverse at a scale 3 mph on the DCS display. There was no binding or tightness in the running gear. After increasing the power slowly we put her through the paces by running up to 30 mph. No problem at all. Very smooth operation. We added smoke fluid and turned on the smoke unit. Big puffs of smoke synchronized to the chuffs and driver revolutions. Way Cool! The bell was nice and clear but the whistle was basic generic M.T.H. (which is a bit disappointing). The Santa Fe Hudsons probably had a distinctive whistle, as most steam locos do, but we could be wrong.

After running for a few minutes it was time to put the loco to work so we attached a Kadee coupler to the back of the tender (holes and screws are provided). We then backed #3463 up to a mixed freight consist of 32 scale cars and increased the power. The locomotive’s drivers slipped. We could actually slip the drivers. So, in prototypical fashion, we started her out very slowly, pulled out the slack in the train, and increased power until she dug in and took off. Once she got going there was no problem. Great sounds. Great smoke. Great action. We ran the locomotive up to a scale 50 mph and it ran great through the whole test run. It was just pure fun to operate.

Overall Impression
If you are an aficionado of ATSF steam, you’ll be very disappointed by the too-small drivers. Then you’re stuck with hunting down a Max Gray version of this massive Hudson, if you can find one. On the other hand, if you’re looking for a finely built model of a Santa Fe 4-6-4 that’s pretty close to scale, runs like a Swiss watch, has all the bells and whistles (literally), and costs less than a thousand bucks, this one is for you.
REVIEW: Atlas-O '37 AAR Box Car and 17,000 gal. Tank Car
Atlas-O
378 Florence Ave
Hillside NJ 07205
908-687-0880 • www.atlaso.com
reviewed by Brian Scace

The good folks at Atlas-O sent me a couple of their newest freight cars to review the other day, the new 17,360 gallon modern-era tank car, and a sample of their re-issue of the Intermountain '37 boxcar.

Let's have a quick look at the tank first. Now, I'm a steam-era guy, so don't expect a long exhaustive treatise on dimensions. These kinds of cars could get me interested in doing a second era, though. The variety of freight equipment today does hold a fascination for me, and chemical traffic is one of the last bastions of traditional carload freight today. Besides, I like tank cars as much as you Pennsy and N&W folk like hoppers.

This tank is quite nice. The walkways are of see-through design, and the appliances, such as grabs and stirrups, are robust without being clunky. The wheels are of appropriate size for the tonnage rating of these cars, and I like the rotating bearing caps on the trucks, while retaining nice free-rolling qualities. That is an accomplishment.

Our car is painted for ACF. The paint and striping is neatly applied with good masking and coverage. Weight is appropriate, and the center of gravity is low, where it belongs. Atlas' couplers are installed, and the car behaved very well in a train on my less-than-stellar trackwork. Pushing it through reversed turnouts at far-too-frisky speeds didn't produce anti-social behavior, either. All in all, a neatly constructed, clean, well-behaved, era-typical modern tank car.

The increase in variety of decent and typical modern cars makes me wonder. Let's see… CSX spins off the old B&A, a couple of C-425s (Atlas is going to do them!) painted for the resulting new regional road, some power-by-the-hour stuff added in the mix, the current new freight equipment, hmmmm.

Meanwhile, back to reality. As most of you know by now, Atlas-O has acquired the molds for the former Intermountain line of O Scale steam-era freight cars. The line included a USRA two-pocket hopper, a composite gondola, a steel PFE-prototype refrigerator, and an 8000-gallon riveted tank car. Arguably the granddaddy of the prototype-neurotic plastic freight car movement in O Scale was the Intermountain 1937 AAR steel boxcar. Initially offered in kit form with prototype-appropriate paint schemes and details, these cars were, and are, the benchmark against which plastic freight cars were judged. Some later cars may be “better”, but the Intermountain box has held up to scrutiny surprisingly well over the last fifteen years or so. My only real issues with them were the delicacy of the details (the price you paid for styrene ladders and stirrups with appropriately thin cross-sections) and the lack of cut levers.

I knew, as many of us “feared”, that Atlas was going to re-engineer these cars to deal with some of the robustness issues previously mentioned, and I have to admit that I have been somewhat concerned that these cars’ fidelity would take a hit as a result. Still, I couldn't resist a head-to-head comparison between the sample and one of my own Intermountain kits that I had built years ago. At first blush, my optimism was on the rise. The new version didn't look clunky at all! Let's take a closer look with some calipers in hand.

The ladders are comparable; there was not enough difference in cross-section of the rungs to say one was any thicker than the other. I had to make some allowance for the fact that the new car was painted in the orange New Haven scheme, and orange is a notoriously difficult color to shoot thin and get good coverage (The coverage on our sample is very nice, by the way). The grabs are a tad thicker, not enough to be obnoxious, and certainly not enough to be sure that paint coat differences aren't the cause, either.

The brake rigging is just as nice as the old kit. The end detail, brake wheel, retainer, all that good stuff is still just as nice. So, with a sigh of relief that comes with the realization that the car hasn't suffered (I should have known!), my inquisitive mind quickly asked, “So, what's new?”. What is new is that this car is handle-able. All those things that we used to be so careful of have been replaced with metal. The stirrups, just as thin as the old ones, are metal. They're nice and solid. The ladders and grabs are, too. Weight is appropriately placed for a nice low center of gravity. The car is as solid as any other Atlas-O car, without loss of fidelity. The robustness issues of the Intermountain car seem to be most successfully dealt with.

There's more. The metal roofwalk on this car is a marked improvement over the Intermountain model, as it is better designed and more robust. The rivets are metal, and the roofwalk is a marked improvement over the Intermountain model, as it is better designed and more robust. The rivets are metal, and the roofwalk is a marked improvement over the Intermountain model, as it is better designed and more robust. The rivets are metal, and the roofwalk is a marked improvement over the Intermountain model, as it is better designed and more robust. The rivets are metal, and the roofwalk is a marked improvement over the Intermountain model, as it is better designed and more robust. The rivets are metal, and the roofwalk is a marked improvement over the Intermountain model, as it is better designed and more robust. The rivets are metal, and the roofwalk is a marked improvement over the Intermountain model, as it is better designed and more robust. The rivets are metal, and the roofwalk is a marked improvement over the Intermountain model, as it is better designed and more robust. The rivets are metal, and the roofwalk is a marked improvement over the Intermountain model, as it is better designed and more robust.
improvement over the plastic Intermountain one. It is thinner, with a very fine “see-through” grid, and is better than many brass imports, let alone mainstream plastic cars. It is a real improvement.

Atlas’ standard trucks and couplers are installed. The paint and lettering are well done. Assembly is clean and tight. With little or no sacrifice, the handle-ability of these cars is much improved. There are improvements, such as the roofwalk, as well. I would love to see more plain red ‘40s-era schemes in addition to the colorful stuff, myself, much like the original Intermountain schemes.

So now, my issues have been reduced to one. Still, no cut-levers!
Left: Dave Larson’s military train took Second Place (Favorite Train) at the 2004 O Scale West meet.

Middle: John Morely sent this photo from his layout. He must have known our publisher is a Corvette fan. That’s an auto rack full of 1957 Vettes.

Below: Dover Station, by Walter Olevsky, was scratch built to ¼" scale from Evergreen plastic and commercial castings. The roof shingles are from Model Tech of Ohio and look and feel very real. The model is freelanced to represent a small suburban passenger station that may have been constructed in the mid 1870s to the latter part of the 1880s. The upper electrical connections (3 separate wires) and the advertising signs date the in-use era to about the 1920's or 30's.
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kjkriigel@aol.com

Two examples of David Wingrove’s work. (see Narrow Minded, page 29)
When Joe G. invited me to manage a column on O Scale history, my goal was to afford a space for the exchange of information, and Ron Morse has stepped up to the plate with material on his favorite locomotive prototype, one which has enjoyed a major role in O Scale modeling almost from the beginning. In fact, O Scale as we know it dates from the same period as the introduction of the NYC 4-6-4 Hudson, although, sadly for the prototype, it has survived much longer. If other readers would like to take a turn as guest columnist, perhaps to offer comparable pieces on the PRR K4s or GG-1 or what have you, that is one of ways I see the column’s serving its constituency.

Models of New York Central’s Hudsons
by Ron Morse

Breaths there a man with soul so dead that he hasn’t at least once yearned for the chance to see a New York Central Hudson roll down the right of way... anywhere! Well, maybe. At least for me, that would be the dream come true. Although I used to see them on a daily basis (well, I could have) when I was a kid, I still never got/get tired of looking at NYC Hudsons. At one time I had over 20 models in nearly every scale: N, HO, OO, S and O, plus many non-operating “desk” models.

Perhaps the most famous model ever done was the Lionel 700E. The 700E is still the one to compare to when talking about “non-scale” models. Although the past few years have seen excellent models done by other toy train manufacturers, the 700E still sets the heart of the toy train collectors beating faster.

Many years ago I did some research on the Hudsons that had been built in O Scale and never did send it anywhere to be published. I thought it was time to update my information and get it out for all to see. A chart is enclosed to do some comparisons of the older die-cast locomotives. Although there have been several versions of O Scale Hudsons imported in brass since the 1960’s, the old diecast ones are what we are dealing with here.

The Lionel 700E: The first really scale mass-produced locomotive in O Scale, was the Lionel 700E. Thousands of these 1⁄4” Scale models were built in various configurations, including some with finer flanges for use on the Lionel “T” rail and scale rail. A semi-scale version was also offered (the 763E). The 763E could be had in several versions as well, and the most sought after version of that is the black with scale tender. The most common one was gray with a “Vanderbilt” tender. These were produced in the late 1930s and nothing came close to them until the Hudson Products diecast copy of the 700E came out in the 1960s.

Scale Craft, Chicago, Illinois (known as “Scale Models” until mid-1941): This 1⁄4” scale locomotive seems to have had the least amount of advertising, as I could only find three ads for it in Model Railroader! It appeared in an ad in October, 1934, no photo, no price; November, 1936, no photo or price; and March, 1939, no photo, but a price of $49.50. I do not have a complete set of the 1935 or 1937 MRs so there may have been other ads in that time frame.

Mi-Loco (Lee B Green), Cleveland, Ohio: There were eight ads for this 1½⁄₆₄” scale loco in MR between January, 1935 and December, 1935. I could find no other ads for Mi-Loco. The November ad showed a price of $69.50, ready-to-run.
just in O Scale. Lionel also offered it in OO, while American Flyer offered Hudsons in both S and in their HO line. I think the first steam locomotive imported by Pacific Fast Mail was the Tenshodo model in HO, just as the prototypes were going to scrap in the mid-1950’s. It is one of the great sorrow of all US railfans that not a one was preserved.

Perhaps the number of early Hudsons still available second-hand in the early 1950’s deterred its being offered in the International line, but Max Gray chose the J-3 as one of his early Japanese imports, offering it with the twelve-wheel short tender and a choice of Boxpok or Scullin drivers. Later he imported the Dreyfus streamlined version with centipede tender (as used on the Twenty-th-Century), and a still-later option of it as de-streamlined. Afterward, US Hobbies also offered the J-1, and still more imports of both of these classes of the Hudson in O Scale have been produced, right up into the present day. It has been and continues to be an enormously popular prototype, even for those who never saw one first-hand.

I might add that I checked my Max Gray Pocket Spotters Guide for the above information; I have found it an enormously useful reference work. It was originally produced by Model Graphics of Waukegan IL in 1973 as a three-volume set, and may still be found for sale at shows, often quite reasonably (I own at least two sets). It is very helpful in the identification of most of the Katsumi production as imported by Max Gray, and then US Hobbies. I wish I knew more about them, but I do know they also reprinted all of the known Max Gray catalog sheets and bound them together (I own one of those) and advertised photoetched brass kits for O Scale freight cars. I doubt the latter were big sellers, as their prices for the time were on the stiff side.

The literature on NYC Hudsons is considerable, although a good starting point might be Al Stauffer’s Thoroughbreds (and if you buy one, you will benefit a fellow O Scaler).

Ron Morse’s Hudson: Top model is a Mi-Loco. The bottom model is a Mini Scale.

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Jan/Feb ’05 - O Scale Trains • 55
A great scale movement is underway...

York: Just the mention of that place generates emotion beyond words. As a Hi-Railer I have come to appreciate what many train collectors call “the greatest show on earth”, for it truly is just that. With attendance at 17,000 to 31,000 per event, it is definitely the place to be if you are looking to buy or sell model trains. York is more than just a big train show. It is a mecca that pulls at the hearts and souls of boys and men twice a year.

As a Hi-Railer in transition, York is where I first met people who modeled like me, scale and near-scale locomotives operating in a scale environment and running on three-rail track. That is also where I first encountered 2-Rail and heard members whisper, “Yea, those are two-rail scale” in sort of a reverent tone to the master modelers.

By now, you know I believe that all serious modelers tend to model in degrees. New products and new information give us cause to rebuild, remake, tweak, and redo a lot of our projects. What we once considered to be good modeling a few years back, we now call mediocre. We are constantly pursuing perfection, not satisfied with the way things are and driven to improve. That is what true scale modeling is whether it is 3-Rail or 2-Rail. That very pursuit will be the driving force that will lead some of us to choose scale.

It is quite simply a matter of personal taste. Some very serious modelers are quite content with scale layouts operating on three-rail track. Others prefer to pursue scale fidelity with both a two-rail layout and scale equipment. Beware, nit-pickers and rivet counters, there is no right or wrong in this. You model to the degree with which you are comfortable.

York is a place for ideas. Tom Peters wrote a management book a while back called In Search of Excellence. In his book he describes a leadership style that portrays effective managers who manage by wandering around asking questions. In my search for modeling excellence I enjoy wandering around train shows observing new products and ideas, and asking questions. York is a great place to search and learn.

As I was looking around in the halls at York this fall I noticed several friends from both the Hi-Rail and Scale sides of the hobby, pursuing their individual search for new ideas. York is not just for tinplate or 3-Rail modelers; (although, at this show most of my 2-Rail friends were traveling incognito, much like my 3-Rail friends were when they attended the O Scale National). We were all modelers who were there to learn.

Some have mentioned that the hobby is dying; others remark that it is in a state of remission (not getting better, not getting worse, just staying the same). But, I believe that the hobby is very much alive, just evolving and changing. A great scale movement is underway that will benefit all serious modelers. Just like we don’t model like we used to, we don’t collect like we used to. This whole thing of a hobby is just becoming something different from what it was. Like one ad says, “These ain’t yer Daddy’s trains”. It is hard to accept change as we get older, and the average TCA York attendee is definitely getting older and wiser (we hope.)

My point is this: York is a great show, with thousands of dealers, thousands of attendees and thousand of ideas. Don’t resist change; go with the flow. Keep an open mind to new methods and products. York is an event like no other. Just the very size of the show generates interest with attendees and thousand of ideas. Don’t resist change; go with the flow. Keep an open mind to new methods and products.

As I was looking around in the halls at York this fall I noticed several friends from both the Hi-Rail and Scale sides of the hobby, pursuing their individual search for new ideas. York is a great place to search and learn.

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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.

January 2005

8-9: Albany, Georgia

15: St. Paul, Minnesota
Twin City Model Railroad Museum Hobby Sale at Bandana Square. Sale is 9 am to 3 pm, $3 admission, under 5 yo FREE. TCMRM, 1021 Bandana Blvd. E, Ste 222, St Paul, MN 55108, 651-647-9628. Contact tcmrm@mn.org

29-30: Wilmington NC 28409
Cape Fear Model Railroad Club’s 8th Annual Model Railroad Show and Sale Wilmington, NC, 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

February 2005

13: Parma, Ohio
Parma High School Railroad Show at the Parma Senior High School, 6285 W 54th St, from 10 am to 2:30 pm. Admission is $4. Contact Bob Frieden, 9695 Chillicothe Rd. Kirtland, OH 44094, 440-256-8141.

24-26: Santa Clara, California
O Scale West is designed to provide a spectrum of fun and interesting activities for the O Scale model railroader, including a swap meet, contests, clinics, movies, and layout visits. Approximately 200 tables are rented by O Scale modelers, O Scale collectors, O Scale hobbyshops and brass dealers, and manufacturers of O Scale products. Every year approximately 25 home and club O Scale layouts are opened by their owners/members for visiting by O Scale West attendees. Contact: Rod Miller rod@rodmiller.com

27: Eastlake, Ohio
Eastlake North High School RR Show at the Eastlake North High School, 34041 Stevens Blvd., from 10 am to 2:30 pm. Admission is $4. Contact Bob Frieden, 9695 Chillicothe Rd. Kirtland, OH 44094, 440-256-8141.

March 2005

5: Wind Gap, Pennsylvania
Eastern “O” Scalers Swap Meet At the Plainfield Fire Hall, 6480 Sullivan Trail – 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Admission $5; (spouses & children under 14 are free), $16.00 for the first table (includes one admission) and $12.00 for each additional table. Dealer’s set-up Friday evening 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm and Saturday morning 7:00 am to 9:00 am. Info/reservations, SASE – EOS, 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

May 2005

7: Merchantville, New Jersey
Cherry Valley Model RR Club Swap Meet Held at the Grace Episcopal Church, 7 E. Maple Ave. Merchantville, NJ. Admission $4.00 (spouses & children under 14 are free), tables are $16.00 for the first table (includes one admission) and $12.00 for each additional table. Info/reservations, SASE – CVMRC PO Box 192, Maple Shade, NJ 08052, Harry Hieke (856) 625-5506 between 6 & 9 pm or Dave Richter (215) 639-3864. Contact harrystrains@verizon.net

June 2005

15-18: Collinsville, Illinois
[Near St Louis] 2005 O Scale National Convention - The Trail of the Frisco Flyer, hosted by the Big Bend Railroad Club at the Gateway Center. Registration: $45, single-day pass $25. Contact Forest Trent, 304 Christopher Place, Union, MO 63084. Email: bbrc2005oscale@swbell.net, www.geocities.com/bbrrclub

August 2005

6: Denver, Pennsylvania
Eastern “O” Scalers Swap meet At the Denver Fire Hall, 4th & Locust Sts. - 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. Admission $5; (spouses & children under 14 are free), tables are $16.00 for the first table (includes one admission) and $12.00 for each additional table. Dealer’s set-up Friday evening 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm and Saturday morning 7:00 am to 9:00 am. Info/reservations, SASE – EOS, 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

September 2005

3: Merchantville, New Jersey
Cherry Valley Model RR Club Swap Meet Held at the Grace Episcopal Church, 7 E. Maple Ave. Merchantville, NJ. Admission $4.00 (spouses & children under 14 are free), tables are $16.00 for the first table (includes one admission) and $12.00 for each additional table. Info/reservations, SASE – CVMRC PO Box 192, Maple Shade, NJ 08052, Harry Hieke (856) 625-5506 between 6 & 9 pm or Dave Richter (215) 639-3864. Contact harrystrains@verizon.net

November 2005

5: Wind Gap, Pennsylvania
Eastern “O” Scalers Swap meet At the Plainfield Fire Hall, 6480 Sullivan Trail – 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Admission $5; (spouses & children under 14 are free), $16.00 for the first table (includes one admission) and $12.00 for each additional table. Dealer’s set-up Friday evening 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm and Saturday morning 7:00 am to 9:00 am. Info/reservations, SASE – EOS, 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
Happy New Year!

Wow, another year has passed and, as they say, time flies when you’re having fun. Brother (and sister), lemme tell ya, we’ve been having some fun at the magazine!

This past year has been a time for growth and maturation. We have close to 1500 subscribers now. We’re in about 250 hobby shops as opposed to just over 70 a year ago, and we’re pushing over 6000 to 7000 magazines out the door every issue, and that number is growing steadily. The number of advertisers went from 30+ to over 50. Through all these growing pains we have not missed a ship date for the magazine.

What all of the above means is that we’re in for the long-haul. My deepest appreciation goes out to everyone who makes OST the best O Scale magazine on the rack.

We’re gettin’ respect, too. We’re now receiving samples for review from every major O Scale manufacturer. This issue we have Lionel, MTH and Weaver products. Next issue we’ll have some K-Line 2-Rail to talk about, Atlas and probably more Sunset, too. One vendor told us recently that OST is “it” when it comes to advertising to the 2-Rail marketplace. We like that feeling! It also means we’re doing a good job representing the O Scale market. Some manufacturers are even asking for our input on new products and we’re glad to oblige.

Welcome to the Modern Age

This issue we welcome on board Carey Hinch as our new Modern Image column contributor. Carey’s been on the masthead for a while as our “resident” graphic artist, but he’s also an accomplished modeler who likes the modern Diesel era. So, we ask him to wear two hats and contribute some modern-era articles. Brian, myself and Jeb are all dyed-in-the-wool steam-freaks (although I have caught Brian leering at Diesels now and again), so Carey brings some balance to the mag.

Ted Byrne is back this issue and he has expanded the scope of his writing from strictly DCC to all electronics. This issue in Powering Up, his new column, Ted talks about LEDs. Ted is also working on a side-by-side feature comparison of DCC vs MTH’s DCS vs Lionel’s TMCC for later in the year. The modern O Scaler certainly has a lot of choices for control systems now.

One place we’re still deficient is traction. I have just not been able to attract another traction contributor. I can’t even dredge up a traction-themed article. I know you’re out there because you write me letters asking for traction content. Well, you ain’t gonna git it if one of you don’t write it! I wish we had the resources where I could say to the staff, “Whip up a traction article.” It just doesn’t happen that way. So, if you, or someone you know is traction modeling, send me some great stuff to share with the other traction lovers out there.

Last issue I asked for feedback on ads versus content and page count. I wasn’t overwhelmed by the myriad responses but many of you replied that you wouldn’t mind more ads and a bit less content. So, for the time being, we will hold the line at 64 pages and try to give you both more ads and more content.

Legalities

I have noticed in recent months that some other magazine publishers have taken stands on certain hobby-related legal issues. Bob Hundman, publisher of Mainline Modeler, wrote two pages about the Union Pacific licensing fracas. Mr. Hundman feels the UP is way out of line and is dangerously close to causing a major economic crisis in the model railroad hobby. As it turns out, I agree with Mr. Hundman, and the efforts of UP, CSX and NS to license their fallen-flags to the model railroad hobby has far reaching implications.

What I don’t get are the articles and the editorializing about the MTH – Lionel lawsuit. Guys, we’re hobby magazines, not law journals. We’re not investigative reporters. I just don’t see what is to be gained by devoting precious content space to the details of this lawsuit. For the few that want to gloat over Lionel’s misfortunes and misdeeds, or rail at MTH’s Mike Wolf for attacking the venerable, 100 year-old firm, let them search the Web or get the appropriate Michigan newspapers. Naming names and quoting emails isn’t helping the O Scale modeler get more enjoyment out of this hobby.

We at OST had made a conscious decision to not take a position, voice our personal opinions, nor even mention the lawsuit up to this point because, in the long run, regardless of how the suit is settled, we’ll still have an O Scale hobby. It won’t really much matter to the hobby who wins or loses, so why get your shorts in a twist over it?

Let’s end on a more positive note — I predict by the end of 2005 AtlasO will produce a small steam locomotive.

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