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Contributors: O Scale Trains Magazine and online editors contribute feature articles, photos, and drawings. Material should be sent to the above address for possible publication. If we accept, you will be notified immediately. For more information concerning article preparation guidelines, send an SASE to the above address and request our “Guide For Authors.”

Case: A PRR PLA Modified, originally a 3-rail rostering, passes in front of Electric Indicators in John Sethian’s Nassau Division on the PRR’s Joint Line in this unique view.

Contact: An MTH PLA Modified leads two MTH PLAs to scale pulling a mixed freight as it leaves New Union on John Sethian’s Nassau Division. All of the PLAs were converted from 3-rail models.
The Nassau Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad

John Settino

February 1, 1968: The Pennsylvania and New York Central railroads merged. The aftermath was not pretty. Nine and one half months later I was headed home to Washington DC for Thanksgiving break. The latest excuse for a passenger train pulled into Trenton station, some four hours late. The GG1, a faithful replica of GG1s roaring through southeast Jersey.

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buildings in the background to force the perspective. For example, the New Lyon Bank in the centerspread is made from nineteen HO Scale City Classic Art Deco Buildings. The modified MTH corner store and the building to its left in the foreground of Photo 7 are other examples of kitbashed buildings I used. A trick I learned from Dennis Brennan is to leave a 6" or so gap between the backs of the buildings and the sky, and to light the sky with hidden 20W fluorescent lamps. This really enhances the effect of distance. The other nearly finished scene is the array of tracks leaving the city under the shadow of towering factories. Again all the buildings are either scratch-built or kitbashed. Most have photos of offices or industrial machinery inside the windows.

All of my buildings are lit. I mount the bulbs on the back of the front wall where they can't be seen. I vary the color of the illumination between buildings, and even within a building. To accomplish this I use different bulbs and vary the voltage by adding resistors in some of the circuits. Having dimmer lights in the buildings towards the back enhances the illusion of distance.

I make foreground roads by gluing thin black foam sheets to 0.040" thick styrene, and then covering the foam with Durham's water putty that has been tinted dark gray with acrylic craft paints. After the putty dries, I let the sheets bend and flex a little. This causes the putty to crack, and sometimes come off the foam in small chunks. The resulting cracks look incredibly real, because, well, they are real. The sidewalks are cast from spackling compound, and the stripes are automotive pin striping.

Artful Modeling

I admire the works of Edward Hopper, the American artist who often depicted railroads in his paintings. His painting “Approaching a City” inspired the scene in Photo 8. Sharp-eyed readers will also note the seeds for a few other Hopper works, including “Early Sunday Morning,” “New York Office,” and “Drugstore.” In addition to emulating Hopper, I am trying to evoke images from famous PRR calendars such as Grif Teller’s “Dynamic Progress” for the 1956 calendar.

Anyone who has driven on US 1 or taken the train has seen the Lower Trenton Bridge, also known as the “Trenton Makes, the World Takes” bridge. My
version was created by kitbashing two MTH arch bridges, so much so that I had to embed square aluminum tubes in the base to provide the structural support. The letters, which light up just as on the prototype, are cut from Miller Engineering Electro-Luminescent sheets. (I know the real bridge is a highway bridge, but remember we are not “beholding” here.)

**More Scenery Details**

Automobiles are models of US cars built from 1950 to 1956. Anything older does not help define the era, even though they might be historically accurate. Anything newer is an anachronism. I try to find the dullest cars I can because there were not that many decked out convertibles or two-tone coupes in the mid 1950s. I have had luck repainting police cars or taxis in muted tones of gray, green, tan, or white. I do the same thing to turn a Chevy Bel-Air or Ford Victoria into their more pedestrian siblings like a 210 or Club Sedan. Like many of us, I have thrown in the towel and use 1/87 scale cars. That’s just a concession to practicality. They don’t look that bad if they are confined to foreground scenes, but at least I want to make sure they are 1/87 scale. The “Classic Car Data Base” will give you dimensions of virtually every car ever made. If my models are more than 2% off, particularly in width and length, they go on to eBay. That 2% can make a real difference in cars parked side by side. For the record, every Franklin Mint, Vitesse, and Solido car I have purchased has been spot on. Solido and White Rose models are very easy to take apart and paint.

Right now my layout is a work in progress on virtually all fronts. The most glaring omission is the lack of overhead catenary. I hope to make good progress on that front and many others in 2011.

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**Photo 4:** Superelevated curves are a hallmark of the PRR main. The signal bridge is made from two MTH bridges. The signals indicate the alignment of the turnouts ahead. The lack of overhead catenary is obvious in this scene and others. I hope to begin work on it in 2011.

**Photo 5:** Two P5a Box cabs converted from MTH 3-rail models. Modifications included adding a full length fixed frame, filling the gaping coupler holes, adding extra steps, and extending the handrails to the bottom of the steps.

**Photo 6:** "The New Lyon Takes, The World Makes" bridge. This is designed after the Lower Trenton Bridge that carries US Business 1 over the Delaware River.

**Photo 7:** Part of the city of New Lyon. The background buildings are HO Scale.

**Photo 8:** The author’s rendition of “Approaching A City” by Edward Hopper, 1946, oil on Canvas.

**Photo 9:** An Aerotrain passes a TrucTrain. Per the prototype, the TrucTrain has only Pennsylvania flats but a wide variety of trailers. Someday those flats will be modified to be closer examples of an F30. The Aerotrain is an MTH model converted to 2 rail.

**Photo 10:** The layout has a long way to go for completion.
The Unthinkable: Trees Are Models Too

No two trees are alike. Even among the same species of tree, growing conditions such as sun exposure, soil type, and accessibility to water and nutrients, the proximity of other trees and objects, fire, disease, and a host of other factors I'm unaware of all impact how a particular tree will grow and what shape it will take on.

Look at the two photos. Photo 1 shows a specimen tree, one that has grown to maturity unencumbered by competition from other trees. This lack of competition allowed it to reach its full natural shape. Photo 2 shows trees growing in a crowded forest setting. Because of the number and proximity of other trees, each one had to fight for sunlight. Therefore the lower branch structure is much less developed than the tree in Photo 1. You seldom see this difference modeled accurately on a layout.

So what? Most modelers couldn't care less. Way before I was born, Frank Ellison likened model railroading to a stage production. He contended the trains were actors, the operation was the script, and the layout setting equaled the stage props or scenery. Most stage productions I've attended are enhanced by even the simplest of scenery whether it is crudely painted flats or something else. Such props help establish the setting and mood of the production. It is a rare actor that can hold an audience simply by his presence on a bare stage without any props whatsoever. Yet, model railroads consisting of nothing but empty plywood are more the rule than the exception, in spite of a wealth of easy to use scenery products.

A long time ago someone suggested that track was a model too. No one listened for decades. Now we're finally getting it. It's going to be the same with trees.

Many would consider this whole discussion a waste of time. There's enough to do with modeling trains, building a large layout, maintaining it, and so on. Others simply won't care at all. And still others will find the artistic skills required to model any type of scenery too intimidating. The mere mention of anything artistic will send shivers down the spine. Somebody will exclaim about the sheer number of trees needed to adequately represent a small scene. Multiply that times the size of a large layout and you'll need several lifetimines to do it as they think I'm implying you should.

I'm not saying that every tree needs to be of contest quality. Mine certainly aren't. I'm also not saying that every one needs to model leafless trees as I've done. Foliage can cover a multitude of empty space when done right.

What I am suggesting is that modelers spend more time looking at real trees. Many would consider this whole discussion a waste of time. There's enough to do with modeling trains, building a large layout, maintaining it, and so on. Others simply won't care at all. And still others will find the artistic skills required to model any type of scenery too intimidating. The mere mention of anything artistic will send shivers down the spine. Somebody will exclaim about the sheer number of trees needed to adequately represent a small scene. Multiply that times the size of a large layout and you'll need several lifetimines to do it as they think I'm implying you should.

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When A Good Trip Turns Into A Bad Day

What could be better than to be called for 8:30 a.m. on a daylight run from Memphis to Birmingham? You may get to see the sunset, but you will not have to be concerned about seeing it rise through the same windshield. The train is a cross country inter-modal, or stack train as we call them, which is well known to be a “Hot-Shot” or “Silver Bullet.”

You arrive at the crew lobby a little early to look over the paperwork. The temporary slow orders on your G.T.Bs (General Track Bulletins) will not cause too much delay today. Making some notes from the Wheel Report, you find the train is all loads and less than 100 tons per operative brake which means, Maximum Authorized Speed. For power you have three 6-axle 4400 horsepower E.E.S., a great power to tons ratio for this train. Last, but all important, you log into the railroad computer system and run a copy of the “Meet-Sheet.” This shows the current location of all the opposing traffic you will meet today. While you’re at it, you also run the crew board sheets showing who is on the different inbound and outbound trains. Experience has shown it’s smart to know who is behind the throttle of trains that you will be meeting.

Now you wait. This train is a run-through, which means a crew swap. The only necessary function to perform will be checking the fuel reading on each locomotive and calling that information in prior to departure. The telephone in the crew lobby rings. The yardmaster advises that the train is coming down the Shelby Main, crew supplies are good and the inspection cards on the engines are marked up. You load up in the van for the short trip to the crew change point on the Shelby Main. A quick conversation with the inbound crew, a check of the fuel readings, calling them in to the yardmaster via radio and it’s time to get comfortable and call for a signal to leave on.

The “A” signal changes from red to green and you whistle to back off the dynamic brake as you roll into the curve. For twenty miles it’s a matter of working the throttle over and then the train brakes. You go to #1 throttle and ease the slack out of the train, slowly increasing the throttle as the train begins to move and pick up speed. Blowing the horn for the public road crossings as you go, within a half-mile you’re up to the maximum speed of 40 MPH for the first couple of miles through the outskirts of Memphis. You push your counter as you see an unexpected kink in the track just ahead. In a spontaneous reaction you put the train into emergency. Your world suddenly becomes chaotic and uncontrolled. The noise is incredible and you feel like you’re riding a bucking bronco. You have a death grip on the automatic brake handle with one hand and the armrest with the other when, “oh $%*#,” a bridge is coming up.

You’re stopped mere feet short of the bridge looking down into the ravine below. It’s eerily quiet and all you can hear is the soft idle of the locomotive. As the dust cloud you’re covered in begins to settle, you start taking inventory of the situation. All body parts appear to be in their proper location and you’re not experiencing any severe pain, which is good. You look over at the conductor who’s still maintaining his grip on the conductor’s desk, white as a sheet and looks like he’s seen a ghost. A quick look in the west coast mirror on the engineer’s side reveals that you don’t look any better than he does, but the scene in the mirror shocks you back into reality.

To be continued.
Building A CERA Box Trailer - Part 5

Well, it’s been a long time coming, but we’re starting to get to where an end to this build can be seen - applying details to these “naked” cars! From here on, I’m effectively abandoning the LaBelle instructions and looking exclusively at The Model Railroader set of plans to get something that looks acceptable without encountering excess neuroses. The horizontal grabs must be cut to length after the car is assembled.

We're going to have to stop here since how the truss rod system was assembled exceeds both allotted space & time (and possibly tests one’s level of excessive); so that’s a tale for when we return. Stay tuned and keep those cards & letters coming!


camouflage or desert tan

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Building A CERA Box Trailer - Part 5

Well, it’s been a long time coming, but we’re starting to get to where an end to this build can be seen - applying details to these “naked” cars! From here on, I’m effectively abandoning the LaBelle instructions and looking exclusively at The Model Railroader set of plans to get something that looks acceptable without encountering excess neuroses. The LaBelle kit supplies track splices for door hardware; we can do a bit better. Camel door hardware is available from Chooch (#215) and you’ll need at least two sets per car (four doors per car). I applied door supports, two close to the bottom corners of each door and then two more 4’ and 5’ out, respectively, to support opening the two different width doors. A bit of CA on these parts with some weight secures them and the doors as well. At the top of each door there needs to be a hanger in each corner. I removed the tops of these parts (scapel) to simulate their being up under the door trim on their runners and secured them with CA. The little end stop castings that go at the ends of those HO 1x4 strips that run behind the door were added at the end of the prior column. Another little detail to add are the bulb heads for securing those same HO 1x4 strips. I used Grandt Line #101 NBW castings, drilling holes on 1’ spacing between each door and stop, and inserted them with a little CA. Then I went back and added strips of O scale 1x3 to the doors just above and below the door supports and hangers (Photo 1). Also in the Chooch parts are door handles to the doors just above and below the door supports and hangers (Photo 1). Also in the Chooch parts are door handles that were secured with a very small dab of CA. One could add more parts, but let’s reach a representational stopping point. On to stirrup steps and grab irons!

Apply stirrup steps at each corner on the sides used up a set (Precision Scale #40532) from my parts bin. You could also just make your own from some flat brass stock (Detail Associates). There are two on each side that are 2’ long with the one curved geometry of the ends. They are 2’ up from the top of the underbody and are centered between the end doorframe and the corner of the car. The bottoms of the vertical grabs are just above the horizontal grabs. These were applied just like the ones on the sides and dressed up with the Grandt Line #23 NBW castings; too. One last detail to apply is the anticlimbers on those curved ends! These are soft white metal castings from Q-Car (CS314) and are easily shaped to the contour. They are a tad long and need to be trammed (nipped) to length. I secure them with a film of Goo on the end grain surface of the wood and CA on the metal surface. This is pretty close to contact cement, so get this right the first time! With the exception of one detail area, that pretty much addresses the topside details; let’s get started on the underbody!

So, bolsters, supports for queen posts, and a “K” brake casting, and then truss rods and hambules are what get put under these cars. I use my own resin cast bolsters cut down to the proper width, drilled and tapered for a 4-40 screw. These were centered 4½’ in from the square end of the underbody. I use a bit of Goo on the wood and some CA on the resin. You can get car bolsters from Q-Car, or cut down some from Precision Scale, or make your own from wood, or you can nag me for some. The supports for the queen posts in The Model Railroader plans show “I” beams, so styrene “I” beams (S3/12, Evergreen) were cut to width and centered 17¼’ in from the square end of the underbody and secured with CA. We’re going to have to stop here since how the truss rod system was assembled exceeds both allotted space & time (and possibly tests one’s level of excessive); so that’s a tale for when we return. Stay tuned and keep those cards & letters coming!
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It was in my early days as a kid that the die was cast for me to model Conrail in my hometown of Kalamazoo, Michigan. I have been an avid fan since watching the railroad switch out Allied Paper in the '80s. Every day in the summer was a treat as the crew waved me up to ride along for the few hours it took to spot cars and pull loads of paper out of the mill. They would show up with a variety of power: GP38s, GP40s, the rare GP50 and the GP10. I had been an HO modeler for years but a move to a new town and a new house with my wife Liz and boy, Damian, two years ago gave me an opportunity to start a new Proto 48 O Scale layout. My layout will be based on Conrail in Kalamazoo during the '80s. I chose to model a Conrail GP10 for three reasons. The first was that I had yet to find a suitable GP18 or GP40 in O Scale. The second was that I had an excellent starting point if I used a Red Caboose GP9. The third was that I had pictures of Conrail GP10s in Kalamazoo during my modeling time frame. This was all I needed to get motivated for what I thought at the time was going to be a major rebuild. In actuality, the transformation went very quickly since I only had about two weeks into this entire project from start to finish. Before I get started, let me tell you a little about the Conrail GP10s.

According to the Conrail Historical Society [www.thecrhs.org], Conrail’s first order in 1976 was given to the Illinois Central Gulf RR’s Paducah Locomotive Shops to construct GP10s out of aging and worn out GP9s. I won’t get heavy into detail about the Illinois Central Gulf rebuild program, but the GP10s were an answer for reliable power using what Conrail had sitting in the dead line: a lot of GP9s. At the same time, the ICG also was rebuilding GP7s into GP8s for Conrail. I chose to model Conrail GP10s out of aging and worn out GP9s. I won’t get heavy into detail about the Illinois Central Gulf rebuild program, but the GP10s were an answer for reliable power using what Conrail had sitting in the dead line: a lot of GP9s. At the same time, the ICG was also rebuilding GP7s into GP8s for Conrail. I chose to model Conrail GP10s built by the ICG. I chose to use the top half section from so a lot of my work was done with many pictures of similar GP10s built by the ICG.

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Getting Started
Before I start any model, I like to get the motor and the running gear tuned as best as I can. The P&D Hobbies upgrade kit for the Red Caboose GP9 included horizontal drive Pittman motor and brass trucks. I added flywheels to each side of the motor. This did take a bit of work to make sure the flywheels where balanced but in the end it was worth it. Adding the flywheels also added much needed weight to the unit (Photo 1). This model can creep along with a cut of cars just like the prototype. The P&D Hobbies brass trucks are second to none and look beautiful when painted. They also add a little more weight down low where it’s needed. To do this I scribed a line with my scale ruler as a reference mark and went to town with my handy razor saw. Make sure you have a solid workbench or something similar to work from so you don’t cut or scratch the model while you are hacking away. I should note that I didn’t have any measurements to go from so a lot of my work was done with pictures of similar GP10s built by the ICG. I chose to use the top half section...
as my new short hood (Photo 3). Doing this I had to putty in the number boards and headlight openings. Use scrap styrene on the inside of the nose as a backer for the putty. I filled in these areas with MMD white putty since it shrinks very little and provides a good finish for paint after it has been sanded (Photo 4). Give the nose a quick dry fit to see if it looks right. To finish the nose off, I mounted the class lights without lenses, which will be installed after painting. The nose grabs came next along with a hand bent 0.024” brass handrail in the shape of an “L” for the conductor’s side of the nose. Note that all my glue joints are made with CA.

The Cab
With the nose out of the way for now, let’s head to the cab. I needed to build myself a new set of center windows and ended up casting my own from the center windows of an Atlas GP15-1 cab. I set up a mold from the GP15-1 cab using masking tape on the inside to act as a backer for the RTV silicone and boxed in the center two windows with some clay and then poured the silicone to make the mold. After that cured overnight, I removed the mold from the cab and poured Alumalite into it. A few minutes for the resin to cure and viola! A new window section. The best thing about casting these windows was that I could order a set of center windows for an Atlas GP15-1 and they’d fit perfectly. A little cleaning of some flash on the new window section with a hobby knife and I was able to install it on the Red Caboose cab with some CA (Photo 5). My modeling world has been opened up since I discovered the lovely world of Alumalite Resin casting agents. Everything from doorknobs on my cabinets to parts for my freight cars have been made and I must say I love working with it.

The Frame
The most noticeable things about the frame are the notches made just above the fuel tank (Photo 9). I removed the material using a sharp knife until it matched my photos. Again, work slowly and always cut away from your body. I researched many of the GP10’s and this part seems to be different on all the locomotives. On the engineer’s side front walkway, I had to extend the battery boxes. I had to buy another Red Caboose sprue set I found online so I’d have the correct louvers and latches on the battery box cover. I also had to cut back the conductors’ side boxes and rebuild the tread area with styrene bits (Photos 10 & 11). The pilots need to be extended with...
The handrails are pretty standard from the cab back along the long hood. Both front handrails had to be hand bent to accommodate the longer engineer's side and shorter conductor's side walkways (Photo 13). The stanchions were reused and I bent the new handrail from 0.012" steel music wire. I did drill out where I needed the wire to pass thru the stanchion. Take your time with this step. It's very easy to ruin a perfectly good stanchion! That about sums up all the bashing work on the model; so let's move on to paint.

**Painting & Finishing**

The paint scheme I chose was as delivered from the ICG. The 7566 did receive another paint job later in its life. At this point I washed all the parts in soapy warm water and let them air dry. Conrail has one of the easiest paint jobs to apply. I used Scalecoat II Conrail Blue spray paint for the body and sills. This gives you a great shiny finish for decals. Make sure once again that you follow prototype photos since some of these paint jobs on the rebuilds were a little different. On the 7566 in particular, the step wells are painted blue instead of the normal black. Black was applied to the pilots, trucks, fuel tank and most anything underneath the walkways using a brush (Photo 14). I also hit the walkway tread and the top of the short nose with black paint to represent antiskid paint. After giving the paint a few days to dry, apply the lettering and logos using a decal setting solution to soften the decals so they conform to the hinges and door handles. The decal set I used was Champ Decals E-268, Conrail switchers and small hood logos using a decal setting solution to soften the decals so they can be installed into the new center cab windows. Assemble all the parts and place on the frame and screw it all back together. Give the model a good look and touch up any paint. This was my first shot at kit bashing a locomotive in O Scale. I am pretty happy with the results and my best advice to anyone is just make sure you know the locomotive through and through. Always go by photos if you can. It makes the build so much easier. By now, your unit should be ready to earn its keep switching out industries!

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FOR THE TOUGHEST JOBS ON PLANET EARTH®
As I dug deeper into the details of the Abingdon Branch, I developed an intense interest in both the Damascus and Whitetop depots, primarily because there was so little information on either of them. I resolved to find enough information that I could build (or have built as you will see) credible models of each. You judge if I succeeded.

**Damascus**

The first photo I had seen of the depot at Damascus was published in the September 1975 issue of Railroad Model Craftsman. In 1974 Tony Koester and Jim Boyd had taken a fan trip down to Abingdon and followed the branch all the way to West Jefferson, NC. At Damascus, Boyd took two photos of the depot from opposite (north and south) ends. The two photos were taken at an oblique angle and, because of magazine photo printing technology at the time, details are difficult to determine. Photo 1 shown above is similar to the Boyd photo but has much better detail. However, I did not acquire this photo until very late in the project.

There are two online repositories of N&W historical photos: one at Virginia Tech [imagebase.lib.vt.edu](http://imagebase.lib.vt.edu) and the other at the N&W Historical Society [www.nwhs.org](http://www.nwhs.org). Early on in my research at the Virginia Tech archive I found a 1948 photo of the north end of the depot taken almost head-on (Photo 2). Using the magic of Photoshop, I squared up the image and then, assuming the battens were 12 inches apart, I figured the depot was 25 feet wide. From that I made a sketch and calculated many other dimensions, like window sizes, roof height, and the like. Using the Sanborn maps I mentioned earlier, I determined the footprint of the depot was 25 by 100 feet. Now I was getting somewhere!

Another online resource I tapped was the discussion list hosted by the N&W Historical Society. I posted a note to the list that I was interested in any and all information about the Damascus and Whitetop depots. Several people responded about Damascus. One person, Kenneth Miller, provided me with real data from the N&W and I could redraw the sketch and possibly make a floorplan. Sadly, no one on the list had photos of Damascus depot.

About this time, I decided I needed expert help. I contacted Harold Russell. Harold has been offering prototype drawings of structures for some time now and I figured if anyone could create a drawing of Damascus depot it would be Harold. He accepted my challenge.

Armed with the sketch I made and copies of the many photos I had collected, Harold used his extensive knowledge of railroad structures to create a CAD drawing of the depot. We had no idea what the back side of the depot looked like so he left it blank. Another question Harold asked me was about the windows on either side of the freight doors. He said it was quite unusual to have windows next to freight doors as they would not be secure. A trip to the O. Winston Link museum website solved that mystery. Link took lots of photos of steam engines and people on the Abingdon Branch in the 1950s but not many of the buildings. However, several close-up photos of people standing on the platform at Damascus reveals that there are bars behind the windows on the freight end. Another Link photo taken from the south end of the depot shows a siding that runs behind the depot so there may well have been freight doors on the backside. However, since I did not plan on a similar siding and the backside of the depot would face the wall, Harold and I decided not to speculate.

One final detail came to light just as I was preparing to write this article. In May of 2010 the N&W Historical came into possession of additional photos of Damascus depot, one of which was taken in 1964. It looks almost identical to Photo 1 with some notable exceptions. First, there is a Railway Express Agency sign hanging from the platform roof just like in Photo 2. However, the telephone pole is gone. But, more interestingly, the freight platform in the 1964 photo extends the entire length of the building and ends with a ramp to ground level. Harold adjusted the drawing accordingly and I have shown it with the longer platform grayed in place (Fig 1). Fig. 2 shows the ends and the redrawn longer platform with ramp.

Armed with Harold’s CAD drawing, I contacted Glenn Guerra of Mullett River Model Works. Glenn produces laser-cut rolling stock and structure kits in O Scale. I asked him if he could cut me a “kit” of Damascus depot and he did. Well, sort of. Glenn liked the structure line so much he pretty much assembled most of it. I had to cover the roofs and insert a few windows. The resulting structure is shown in Photo 3. Glenn painted the depot with Floquil Antique White and Dark Green. I over-painted it with Apple Barrell craft paint Antique White and Dark Green to give it a worn look. There is an additional photo on page 42 and more photos at the blog (see below).

**Acknowledgements**

I’d like to thank way too many people to name individually from the NWHS mailing list for their assistance with this project. Another “thank you” goes to Rhonda Broom of the Norfolk Southern Corporation for allowing their photo to be reproduced here. The 1967 photo of Damascus depot at the top of the article is reproduced here by permission of Bob’s Photos, PO Box 52, Wallingford KY 40193. And a huge thank you to both Harold Russell and Glenn Guerra who made Damascus depot a reality on the OST layout.

A full-size O Scale drawing is available for download from the OST blog [www.oscalemag.com/wordpress/](http://www.oscalemag.com/wordpress/). Look under Joe’s Projects: ‘We’ve Been Workin’ on the Railroad.'
Damascus Depot on the N&W Abingdon Branch at Damascus, Virginia.
Circa 1948 to 1964. Drawn by Harold Russell for O Scale Trains Magazine © 2011
Half-size for O Scale

Roof peak is 27' 4" at this end and 26' 0" at the far end.
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A New Look At O Scale Layout Design
Brian Scace

Part 3: Salvation for the Operator; the Nodal Design

In the previous two installments, we first discussed the limitations of the average space (a scale-independent constant) on O Scale track design. We've pretty well established why that space really falls in a limbo between the minimum space requirement for satisfactory linear design (as practiced in the smaller scales) and the maximum required for a good single-scene switching design. Horizontally, the average basement doesn't have the room to turn O Scale trackage back on itself forming the classic Armstrong blob, a key feature in mainstream linear trackplanning. Vertically, we often run into a case where double decking, either for hidden staging or for extending the visible portion of the railroad, mechanically doesn't work. Even if we're mechanically clever or fortunate, double decking in O is not nearly so visually effective as in the smaller scales. Remember than O Scale occupies some eight times the volume of HO.

Rather than throw our hands up in despair and put up a bunch of display cases with a single loop around the wall, we then sidled on over to a G & D trackage back, on itself forming the classic Armstrong blob, a key feature in mainstream linear trackplanning. Here we'll look at some eight times the volume of HO.

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A small corner of my On30 layout models a heavy industry, one that handles palletized material. For years I have searched for a 1940s vintage forklift in O Scale to no avail. Then about a year ago I found a modern 1:43 forklift at a show and thought it had enough "vintage" features that I could backdate it. The model in question is a Welly diecast forklift Model# 9797 as seen in Photo 1. (These sell on eBay for around $5 to $7 - Ed.)

I did not work from plans but, after forty years of working in heavy industry, I had a vision of what my finished forklift would look like.

First I disassembled the model completely and began work on the body. I cut two pieces of 0.030" thick styrene, one 1'0" x 4'3" and the other 2'0" x 4'3". When glued together they form the firewall between the engine compartment and the operator, and a platform for the engine (See Photo 2). I trimmed and sanded the engine platform to match the sides of the forklift body using a small machinist square to check my progress. Once it was shaped properly, I glued a shim under the platform to keep it level and then cemented the unit in place.

Next I cut a piece of 0.010" thick styrene to the shape shown in Figure 1 and Photo 2. This is a wrapper that will form the back of the new forklift body. I set the body flat on the work surface and placed the wrapper against it. I wrapped the styrene around the body, cementing as I went and glued the top of the wrapper to the engine platform/firewall. For added definition I glued a 0.010" x 0.060" styrene strip around the top of the engine compartment and another 0.010" x 0.1875" strip at the belt line. These can be seen in Photo 3.

A new dashboard was needed and I started with a piece of 0.020" styrene sheet cut 2'0" x 3'3" and framed it with 0.020" x 0.100" strip. I added another 0.010" x 0.060" strip around the base (See Photo 4). The steering column is a 0.062" dia. styrene rod drilled to accept a common straight pin and glued to the dashboard. Flanking the column are two 0.125" dia. disks punched from 0.030" styrene to represent the gauges.

The original steering wheel was too small. I made a new wheel by removing half the spokes from an O Scale brake wheel and drilled it to take a straight pin. The shift lever is made from another straight pin with a large round head.

The fuel tank seen in Photo 4 was made from 0.218" (7/32) dia. styrene tubing cut 1'6" long. The ends were made from 0.030" styrene sheet using a 0.1875" (3/16) hole punch. The cap was made using a 0.125" (1/8) hole punch. The hold down straps are 0.010" x 0.060" styrene.

The engine is an HO Scale casting made by Life-Like, part # 1659, Power Generator. I removed the unit from its frame and cut off the fan and the crankcase. After I relocated the air cleaner, the unit was ready to be cemented to the engine platform. I reused the exhaust pipe by slipping it into a piece of 0.125" (1/8) tubing to represent the muffler.

The chassis required some work as well. I removed one front wheel to shorten the axle so that when reassembled the wheels would fit tight against the frame. I also removed the rear wheels and axle so I could deepen the notches in the frame that would allow the rear wheels to fit inside the new body wrapper.

I added a few nut-bolt-washer castings to the lift assembly and using scrap styrene rod and strip I fabricated a lift drive. The drive is a double-ended motor with pinions that drive the racks on the lift. All of the parts and pieces prior to final assembly can be seen in Photo 5.

I brush paint all of my models using Polly Scale acrylic paints. I painted the entire forklift body Olive Drab. The fork assembly, engine exhaust and wheels were painted Roof Brown. I used Grimy Black for the tires, seat, floor mat and steering wheel. The "CASE" dry transfer is a Woodland Scenics item. Finally I view the finish a model receives as another detail, so I brushed a generous amount of tan chalk over everything because a variegated surface always looks more realistic (Photos 6 and 7).
Easy Molds and Castings

Terry Terrance

Many modelers have a need for retaining walls, brick building walls or other scenic details that are best reproduced by casting. The process of making molds and castings can be intimidating and expensive, but it need not be.

The usual procedure for making a mold involves a two-part, pourable silicone or urethane rubber to produce the mold. The two-part rubber requires accurate measuring and thorough mixing to function properly and it tends to run, making sealing the mold box under and around the master an issue. A starter mold-making kit costs between $40 and $60. In addition, the unused silicone has only a 6-month shelf life after opening and if you only have a need for one or two small molds, you may wind up throwing out most of the mold material. Latex mold making materials are available at considerably less cost; but the molds they produce are more flexible and may not produce castings that are uniform from pour to pour, an important consideration for wall sections. Finally, latex molds are not as durable as silicone or urethane and will produce fewer castings.

Therefore, I wanted a method with less waste that was, hopefully, cheaper and that used readily available materials. An article "Cast Your Own Urban Structures" by Dick Scott appeared in the July 2001 Model Railroad. In his article Mr. Scott described a method for making molds using latex mold making rubber and silicone caulk from a tube. Briefly, several coats of the latex are used to coat the master and to reproduce the details and then the silicone caulk is used to back-up and reinforce the latex and fill out the mold box. This method also results in a mold with a flat back (just like a poured rubber mold) that does not require support during casting as straight walls or other scenic details that are best reproduced by casting can be incorporated in the latex. Therefore, I wanted a method with less waste that was, hopefully, cheaper and that used readily available materials. An article "Cast Your Own Urban Structures" by Dick Scott appeared in the July 2001 Model Railroad. In his article Mr. Scott described a method for making molds using latex mold making rubber and silicone caulk from a tube. Briefly, several coats of the latex are used to coat the master and to reproduce the details and then the silicone caulk is used to back-up and reinforce the latex and fill out the mold box. This method also results in a mold with a flat back (just like a poured rubber mold) that does not require support during casting as straight walls or other scenic details that are best reproduced by casting can be incorporated in the latex.

To begin, I bought some "Mold Builder" latex compound from Michael's (Photo 1). With a coupon it was about $9 and can make many, many molds. (It also has no expiration date!) I also built a work surface to make the molds on. It's an 8" x 10" (approx.) glossy ceramic tile bought at Home Depot for less than $2, glued (with Liquid Nails) to 1/2" plywood as shown in Photo 2. Why tile! Because the latex or other mold making compound can be scraped from it without damaging the surface thereby making it reusable.

Photo 3 illustrates a cut-stone wall section master being covered in latex mold compound. The master is held down with double-stick Scotch brand tape (not the foam type double-stick tape). The latex compound simply brushes on. Make sure that the first coat or two of latex is thin and does not contain any air bubbles. This first layer is the one that reproduces all of the detail, so it's important to get it right. Resist the temptation to glush the latex on as blobs of this material will cure with voids where the air is not run out. The light tan on the left on the previous layer of latex fully dried. On the right, new latex is being applied; it is a whitish compound, which will change to tan as it dries. Following the instructions on the jar of latex, I used a heat gun to help the drying process. This is not necessary but if you are impatient as I am, it helps.

While I'm on the subject of impatience, I did not build the entire mold box at the start of this project. Since the latex is brush-on, this was not critical. Photo 4 shows the mold box built around the latex-covered master. Wood molding was used to form the box. The mold box itself and any of the tile surface that it encloses must be covered with a few coats of latex too or the silicone will stick to it and be difficult or impossible to remove. About 5 layers of latex on the master and the interior of the mold box will be required.

To release the mold, cut around the circumference of the mold box with a sharp utility knife, as one would for cutting a cake out of the pan. I was surprised and pleased with the mold made by this method. There was some latex 'flash' that had to be removed where the latex rubber flowed under the master. This was accomplished with a sharp x-acto knife. As seen in Photo 6, the rough stone surface of the master has been captured in the latex.

I used the occasion of making this mold to try a new casting compound. The material that I used is Merlin's Magic (MM), a dental stone developed for the Fantasy/War game and Dungeons and Dragons market. The spec sheet indicates that it is harder and stronger than Hydrocal. It comes in white, tan, gray, and dark gray. I used the gray. This worked out well, as it looks like only a black ink wash will be needed to match the real stone.

Since this is dental stone, it behaves a little differently than plaster. The particles of MM are finer and denser than plaster and they settle to the bottom of the mold before coalescing into a solid mass.

I mixed a batch of MM about the consistency of thin pancake batter. I filled the mold about 80% with this mixture by slowly pouring a small stream into the mold to minimize air bubbles. This thin mixture will settle into the details easily.

I pounded the table with my fist to release any air bubbles sticking to the face of the mold. Next, I used a small object about the size of a toothpick, inserted it into the wet plaster and ran it along the face of the mold to release any remaining air bubbles and several large ones came to the surface.
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Track, without it there would be no railroad. Yet modeling prototypical track is the least practiced aspect of building a model railroad. Mike Cougill has set out to correct this with his second book in the Masterclass Modeling Series: Detailing Track. This is an in-depth, 123 page discussion of building prototypical track from the prototype. Topics include: The Anatomy of Track and Turnouts; Handlaying Track and Turnouts; Weathering & Ballasting; Detailing Commercial Track, Anatomy of an Interlocking; and Lineside Details.

For too long O Scale modelers have had to contend with layout books and trackplanning articles geared to HO or other scales. Masterclass Modeling Series: Pieces of The Puzzle changes that by giving design tips and techniques directed to the unique needs of O Scale. This 48 page book also includes a PDF format photo CD featuring the book's photos in full color along with a bonus chapter of extra material and photos not included in the printed copy. "Pieces of The Puzzle" will get you off to a good start if you are new to O Scale, pay all and think of finally starting that new layout.

Everything You Need To Know About O Scale!

Learn all you need to know about O Scale in the 21st century. The book covers: Operations, Track and Trackplanning, Locomotives, Rolling Stock, Scenery & Structures, Narrow Gauge, Traction, P48/Finescale and the latest in Command Control Systems. Plus you get OST's exclusive source lists to help you find everything you need to enjoy modern O Scale. The 2nd Edition Guide is completely rewritten and revised with all new color photos and up-to-date Source lists. No one considering O Scale should be without a copy of this invaluable guide.

To order these books send a check or money order payable to OST Publications Inc., for $30.95 for the Detailing Track, $16.95 for Pieces of the Puzzle, or $45.90 for both to OST Publications Inc., PO Box 289, Exton PA 19341. Penna. residents add 6% Sales Tax. Outside the U.S. or to pay by credit card, please go to www.oscalemag.com/ostpub.html and use our secure shopping cart.

Year of the Kit 10% Discount Coupon

This coupon is redeemable at Bar Mills, Brennan’s Model RR Products, BTS, East Gary Car Co., JV Models, La Belle, Mt. Albert Scale Models, P&D Hobby Shop, Rails Unlimited, Stevenson Preservation Lines, and Stoney Creek Designs. Each of their ads is marked with a ★ so they are easily identified in the magazine.

Don’t wait. Order your kit today and get started!

2011 is the Year of the Kit!

O Scale Trains Magazine in conjunction with select kit vendors is promoting a return to kit building. These select vendors have agreed to accept the coupon at the bottom of this page in return for a 10% discount on the purchase of a single kit from their stock. Some vendors may restrict which kits may be purchased.

After you purchase your kit, assemble it and send photos of the built-up kit (top, bottom, left, right and ends) to O Scale Trains. Our staff will review the photos and choose a winner in each category (locomotives, freight cars, passenger cars, non-revenue equip, and structures) and one grand prize winner. Category winners will receive $100 and the grand prize winner will receive an additional $250.

The kit entry must be accompanied by a proof of purchase, i.e., it has to be a kit purchased with the OST coupon from a participating sponsor so we want to see a copy of the sales receipt. The discount coupon is printed in the March issue only and expires Nov. 1, 2011. You must cut out the coupon and mail it with your order. Facsimiles will not be accepted.

The contest entry deadline is December 1, 2011 and the winners will be featured in the March 2012 issue of OST. All contest submissions will be posted on the OST Blog. Kit-bashes are allowed but there must be at least 50% of the original kit used in the bash.

The vendors participating in the promotion are: Bar Mills, Brennan’s Model RR Products, BTS, East Gary Car Co., JV Models, La Belle, Mt. Albert Scale Models, P&D Hobby Shop, Rails Unlimited, Stevenson Preservation Lines, and Stoney Creek Designs. Each of their ads is marked with a ★ so they are easily identified in the magazine.

Don’t wait. Order your kit today and get started!
Damascus Depot on the OST Abingdon Branch. The building was laser cut and assembled by Glenn Guerra of Mullett River Model Works based on drawings made by Harold Russell (pgs 24-26 this issue). Joe Giannovario painted the structure, did the roof details and scratchbuilt the chimney from the scrapbox. The phone pole is scratchbuilt. The electrical details are Grandt Line. The figures are from Arttista. The 1940 Ford is from Diecast Direct. The backdrop is from Backdrop Warehouse. Track and turnouts are Atlas O. The boxcar is a Wade Model Products kit. The Damascus sign is laser printed on label stock. The Railway Express Agency sign is an inkjet print from an image of a real REA sign found online. Jains Giannovario did the scenery using products from Brennan Model RR and Scenic Express. Compare these photos to those of the prototype on page 22.

Go to the OST Blog to see more photos taken during the construction of the scene. Look for Joe’s Projects ’We’ve Been Workin’ on the Railroad.’ You will also find a full-sized O Scale drawing of the depot for download.

**O Scale Trains Online**

Visit the OST Blog at: www.oscalemag.com/wordpress

Here’s what’s on the blog now: Model Railroad Magazine Index Beta, Superdetailing InterMountain (& other) Boxcars, One Modeler’s Solution for a Small Turntable, Building the Rock Island’s Fowler Clone Box Car, What’s on Your Workbench?, Commercial Track or Handlaid? Which is Right for You?, Scace’s Givens & Druthers, We’ve Been Workin’ on the Railroad, and much more! New content posted biweekly. Go check it out!

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News: Fall Aspen Tree Scene; MSRP: $29.99
Scenic Express, 175 Sheffield Dr. Ste 100, Delmont PA 15626
724-468-3851 • www.scenicexpress.com

Scenic Express, in cooperation with Creative Accents, has developed a series of scenes that include trees mounted to a base with ground foliage. Shown here is the Fall Aspen tree scene (CA0605). Also available is a Late Summer Aspen tree scene (CA0605S) where the trees have not yet completely changed color and the flowers and vegetation are a bit different. Also in development are other scenes exclusive to Scenic Express. All of the scenes are featured in Catalog #16 which can be downloaded from the Scenic Express website.

Sidetrack Laser, PO Box 447, Newberg OR 97132
503-449-5361 • www.sidetracklaser.com

Sidetrack Laser announces the release of the fourth kit in the On3/On30 Desperation Pass series: the single stall engine-house. They are accepting orders and it is in stock ready to ship. The kit features laser cut structural components, doors, windows, wood shake roof & interior detail. Also featured are Berkshire Valley cast details and Grandt Line stack, barrel, and operational door hinges. The footprint is 15 ¼” x 5’. MSRP is $134.95 plus tax.

Review: Double “T” Tilt-up Building, Kit #TT2304
Richard’s Guitars; MSRP: $90
Pecos River Brass, 290 W. Lake Park Road #810; Lewisville, TX 75057
www.pecosriverbrass.com

Reviewed by Jim Lincoln

You see them everywhere in our modern world. In fact, if you live in any sort of civilized area it is hard to escape the “double T.” What I am referring to is the “Double T” (TT) method of precast concrete construction. It is commonly used in bridges, buildings and, in particular, parking garages.

History
While we might think that the use of concrete is a modern phenomenon, in fact, the Romans were the first to employ its use. The development of and use of pre-cast concrete components is not all that modern either. The process was pioneered in Liverpool, England in 1905. The process became popular in Europe, but it did not gain acceptance in North America until after World War II. The first bridge constructed from precast, pre-stressed members was the Walnut Lane Bridge, built in 1949 in Philadelphia, PA. Since that time the use of precast concrete has become quite common. If we drive into a modern industrial park, we will generally see three types of buildings: those sided with metal/steel, those with steel frames filled in with concrete blocks and those built with tilt-up precast concrete panels. If we look at virtually any parking garage that has been built within the past 30 to 40 years, it is probably built out of concrete with double T precast panels used as the floor/decking. It is also relatively common to see double T beams rising on long flatbed trucks on their way to a bridge construction project.

While the double T is widely popular for constructing decks or horizontal surfaces due to its tremendous strength, if one takes a drive around their local industrial park as I did, you will not find too many structures built using double T panels for the walls. That, I realized, was because the industrial parks in my area were constructed in the 1990s and later. If you go to an area that was built in the late 1960s and ’70s, you will find these types of structures. With advances in technology, apparently it was determined that the incredible strength of the double T was not needed for a vertical panel. This does not mean that double T panels cannot be used for wall construction, just that they are not as popular now.

The Model
Pecos River is producing a new line of modular structure kits featuring the double T precast panels. The Double T (“TT”) Line complements their existing Modular Structure (MRS) Line of kits. The TT Line is made up of 15 different kits varying in price from $25 for a simple building flat to $125 for the 32’ tall Locomotive Maintenance Facility. Each kit includes different combinations of wall components, as well as windows and other details. The individual wall components, as well as the roof, are also all available separately; although at the time of this writing, the 32’ and the 12½’ wall components are not yet available on the Pecos River website. They do come in the kits, however. The kit we will be looking at is called Richard’s Guitars.

The reason I keep referring to the Pecos River TT models as kits is that really they are just collections of building components, and the included instructions say as much. These may be assembled in whatever configuration you want and the diagrams included are only to give a suggestion on how the components could be assembled. For that reason, the instructions are quite general. In fact, the first thing that I noticed when I opened the box was a 3 x 5 card with the following instructions: “DLHF! The walls are styrene. Use glue.” There were also some diagrams helping you to iden- tify which part is which as the numbers are not cast onto the parts themselves, as well as a diagram showing how the parts could be assembled. Lastly, there are some instructions on how to build a set or concrete stairs if you are using a wall section with a personnel door that is above street level.

After sifting through what little there was of the instructions, I set about checking out the parts. They came packed on their sides in the box, along with a bag of detail parts. These include the windows and a selection of roof vents and sprays for a rooftop air conditioning unit. There are no signs included with the kit. There is also no acetate included for window glazing. The walls filled the box with very little extra space inside, definitely different from the HO plastic kits that I have been used to. The walls are made of heavy styrene and are about ¼” thick, so the box had quite a lot of hilt to it. I laid out the parts for a photo (Photo 1), then I put them back in the box and got to work.

Construction
As I progressed through the construction of this kit, I realized that although the primary instruction (“DLHF”) gave me a chuckle at first, assembling this wall is really that simple. The walls are extremely nice castings and, for the vast majority of this structure, the only tools I needed was a straightedge, an 8” mill (bastard) file to clean up the edges of the panels and my cement. The instructions suggest using tube type cement, but I used liquid type (MK, Tenax 7R, etc) as it sets almost immediately. The plastic in the wall panels varies in thickness slightly, but because of the TT construction, the bottom parts of the T’s (the outside of the wall) are all the same depth. I laid the panels face down with the top (there are ridges to hold the roof that indicate which end is up) along the straightedge. This has the advantage of making all the panels face the same way and allows them to be positioned easily. I also decided to use the instructions quite general. In fact, the first thing that I noticed when I opened the box was a 3 x 5 card with the following instructions: “DLHF! The walls are styrene. Use glue.” There were also some diagrams helping you to iden- tify which part is which as the numbers are not cast onto the parts themselves, as well as a diagram showing how the parts could be assembled. Lastly, there are some instructions on how to build a set or concrete stairs if you are using a wall section with a personnel door that is above street level.

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I found the assembled kit to be an easy structure to build and it is extremely strong. The panels are molded well and the initial "Dulux, just use glue!" is spot on. The completed structure really captures the look and feel of the prototype (Photo 2).

Perhaps my one complaint about the structure is the lack of any prototype information or a photo. Now one might say, "But this is just parts, it does not have a specific prototype!" While that is true, the style of construction does follow a particular prototype and if a prototype photo had been included, it would have been helpful when painting the structure. I spent a lot of time filling in the seams between the panels, since I had not seen one of these structures close up. Once I had one up close, however, the seams are readily visible. Even a sentence in the instructions stating: "Don't over think this, there is no need to fill in the seams; you can see them on the prototype." In addition, a prototype photo would have shown that since these panels are pre-cast, they use smaller aggregate and thus have a smoother appearance that is different from cast-in-place structures. It actually would have saved me a lot of time trying to either fill in the seams or recreate the texture. In fact, these kits are actually would have saved me a lot of time trying to either fill in the seams or recreate the texture. In fact, these kits are easier to build than I made it.

The only other small problem I found was that the large window openings on the 20' high walls was not square: they opened in the openings with a little bit of extra filing and perhaps it is only a problem with the walls that came in my bunch as the large window on the 32' wall was square.

All in all, this was an easy structure to build and it is going on my layout, I since I am keeping this structure to build and it is going to be: a structure really captures the look and feel of the prototype (Photo 2).

One of the benefits of this system is that you can assemble the wall panels in any configuration that you wish. I was originally going to build this the way it was laid out in the instructions but since I am keeping this structure and it is going on my layout, I did change the placement of the wall panels to reflect what I was going to have this structure be: a chemical company. I figured that I had already been forced on some textured paint to give the walls a more concrete feel. After painting the roof vents, I placed them in their appropriate locations and the structure is essentially complete except for detailing and weathering.

Technology has changed the face of the hobby. The advent of laser technology has opened up a new world of possibilities. Recently Vector Cut, a laser detail parts company that has been around since 2007, has added O Scale line to their existing HO line. At present they have nine items in O Scale with more planned. So far there is a set of manhole covers, steam era industrial gears and hand wheels, a large & small set of hand tools, auto gaskets, builder anno plates and two different sets of generic nuts, bolts and washers. These parts are some of the finest laser work I have ever seen.

All these sheets are cut by laser from a resin impregnated card stock. They are 0.0145" thick. Some may say this is too thin but 0.0145" is approximately ¾ of an inch in ¼ inch scale. This is actually a lot thicker for some details. The detail level achieved here is truly amazing. Let’s start with the steam era industrial gears and hand wheels set (Photo 1). This set contains approximately 60 gears and hand wheels on the sheet. There are several that are the same, which proved to be handy as they are cut with only a single face. I can see many uses for these parts, especially the hand wheels. For example I have a boiler room project in the works and I will be able to use these hand wheels to represent the many valves handles for the piping system. Since some of the gears and hand wheels on the sheet are the same, you can glue several of them together to form thicker parts or to make them double faced. I tried this on a couple of the gears. This made a double-faced gear approximately 0.030" thick or 1/10" I glued three of the same design together to produce a gear needed for an over-head crane project. This made the gear double-faced and approximately 0.045" thick or 2/10" This can’t be done with all of them because of the curved spokes on some wheels, but then you really don’t need to in most uses. I think this is a very useful item for ¾ scale modelers. It is the most expensive item in the line at $13.75 a sheet, but also the most intricate.

The next item is the large hand tool set (Photo 2). This sheet has a collection of over 90 end wrenches, pipe wrenches, Crescent wrenches, pliers and paintbrushes. All required parts for enginehouse, machine shop and gas station scenes. These pieces are so detailed they even have the words "Vector Cut" lasered into some of them. Unbelievable! All of the white metal tools I have seen are way too thick and detract from the finished model but these, being only 0.0145" thick, are closer to O Scale thickness. They’ll look great on a changing ar rack or setting on a workbench. Size wise the biggest are about 1 foot long while the smallest are less than a foot long. The small size set is similar but has much smaller tools. The large tool sheet sells for $8.75. The smaller tools sell for $6.50 a sheet.

The third sheet is the 2mm nut/bolt/washer set (NBW) (Photo 3). There are so many on this sheet I didn’t try to count them. This sheet contains two rows of washers, two rows of nuts and two rows of bolt heads. The washers and the nuts are sized so that you can put them on a small piece of wire to represent the bolt. The bolt heads are simply glue down details. They even give you two wrenches. Nice touch! This is one of two sheets of NBWs. The other sheet has 1mm and 1 ½ mm NBWs. These are a great alternative to the standard plastic. I plan to have some of the nuts and washers lying around the worktable in my machine shop model. Loose washers and nuts are something you will find on almost any modeled but are a common item. I can see many more uses for them. The 2mm sheets sells for $7.50 while the 1mm and 1 ½ mm sheets sells for $6.00.

Vector Cut will do custom laser work, but for now, only as long as the item is something they can add to their line. This is of course with customer consent, and usually they reduce or eliminate the set up charge. I think they are doing some exceptional work and we should support them. They have other things planned like a screen door and Ian set. We even can see an example of one of the screen doors and it is beautiful. I highly recommend checking out their website. I think you will agree, as I have, that their products have many uses for O Scale modelers.

Review by William W. Davis
Detailing Track

In this book, Joe Giannovario has compiled a wealth of detailed information on all aspects of track design and construction. He begins by explaining the components of prototype track and how they relate to model track. He then moves on to the construction of a model of a piece of prototype track.

Joe covers the steps involved in building a model of a prototype piece, including cutting, weathering, and detailed construction. He also includes tips on how to weather your track to make it look more realistic. The book is comprehensive and covers everything from the basics to the more advanced techniques.

The book is well-organized and easy to read. Joe's writing style is clear and concise, and he provides plenty of step-by-step instructions. He also includes many photographs to help illustrate his points.

Overall, I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in building more realistic models of prototype track. It is a must-have for any model railway enthusiast.
Reviewed by Joe Giannovario

It's not always easy to make a great product better but Duncan McCreed at Tam Valley Depot has managed to significantly improve his Singlet Servo Decoder reviewed in OST #50. First, the single color yellow LEDs have been replaced with tri-color units that can be programmed for red, green or yellow illumination. Next, an auto-align feature has been added so that the user does not have to set the end points of the throw. As the unit starts up the servo begins to move to one side. As soon as the points touch a stock rail, the current in the servo starts to increase. The circuit senses this increase and starts the servo back toward the other stock rail to find the other end point. Once that's done the circuit is ready to use. The new board has a plug for a remote relay daughter board. TVD offers both SPDT and DPDT relays. As the servo moves through its zero point, the circuit activates the relay. These relays can handle 12VAC or DC at 1 amp. Finally, and this is not noted in any of the TVD literature, the speeds at which the points touch the rail are controlled by keeping the temperature down and fresh air moving through the boxcar.

I have been working with brass for many years but this kit has taught me some things about soldering that I did not know. Duncan's kit has been excellent to work with. Once you have the hang of the soldering techniques, you will do a much better job. I used the Yoder coupler and draft gear plate. If I were to suggest something that I think would make the construction a little easier, I would like to see some in-progress photos of the cars designed to a better price. These are available from several sources. Another tool that I found helpful was a mental bending brake. The kits can be built without these tools, they just make it easier if you enjoy building these types of kits as I do. The most enjoyable part of building this kit for me was the intricate detail of the underframe and brake rigging. There are only a few parts that are really well-engineered. That is not to say it just fell together but the education I received is easily worth the price of the kit.

Conclusions

I did have my elder moments with the rivet making and I managed to wander off the little dots in the etching but for the most part they all lined up reasonably well. I did have to take frequent breaks because of blurry eyes, but in the end patience paid off with a well-detailed underframe.

I also had a bit of trouble with the grab iron. NBW details but, again, frequent breaks from the work cleared up the eyes and the car sides and ends are nicely finished thanks to the engineering in this kit.

The kits come with brass railcasts for the AAR brake system and several Mullet River etched parts such as the running boards, transverse boards, brass framing for the running board end supports and the short walks on the ends of the car. In addition, there are a variety of etched parts that result in extremely nice details such as the prototype specific doorstops. These are not short of magnificence.

The decals are included in the kit, and they were produced from artwork that Glenn had especially made for his model. Several different heralds may be used for different era paint schemes but finding prototype photos of the cars requires some research by the builder.

If I were to suggest something that I think would make the construction a little easier, I would like to see some in-progress photos, especially of some the more difficult instructions on the instruction sheet.

It is my opinion that these ACL cars speak for themselves as unique and interesting as the produce shipping in bygone years. These cars are a real addition to the O Scale community and provide a unique mixture in a freight train. I may just have to order a few more of Mullet River's cars for diversity on our Soo Line railroad of yesteryear.

Mullet River Model Works, 118 Huson Ct, Plymouth WI 53073 920-892-8159 • www.mulletrivermodels.com

Reviewed by Ray Grosser, MMR 362

The Prototype

Kit #403217 is built from official Atlantic Coast Line 18000 series blueprints of the cars built in 1922-1923. These cars were used exclusively for hauling fresh fruit and vegetables. The ventilator cars had lozenges high and low on the ends that could be opened or closed along with a pair of screened and barred doors on the sides to protect the produce by keeping the temperature down and fresh air moving in the car as it was moved to market. The cars remained in service into the 1960s.

I personally do not remember ever seeing one of these cars on the Soo Line where I grew up but I am sure a few did get up north from time to time.

Fidelity

I had a lot of trouble finding data to compare the kit to the prototype but I did locate an asset through a friend that showed the basic dimensions of the car, and I found the model to be spot on for length, height and width. I am satisfied with the limited amount of data I could locate that the car is extremely close to the prototype because of Glenn's research and his use of original ACL blueprints for this car.

Almost every southern railroad had cars of this type, but variations in items such as frame construction and other minor details are not presently known. For the present time, to see my turnout points take almost two seconds to move from side to side. A similar setup by a well-known slow motion switch machine maker would run about $40. The Singlet is smaller, less expensive and draws less power. Want to save even more money? Buy the kit, which requires you to solder the LEDs and push buttons on the circuit board.

I have upgraded my Singlet I boards to Singlet II boards and added the DPDT relays to power the frogs on all my turnout points. Duncan even mounted the LEDs and push buttons on the front side for me because I mount my boards under the layout face down with adhesive backed Velcro®.

The kit is a laser cut model with plywood sides, ends, ceiling, roof and subfloor. It also has a most interesting prototype. The kit is a laser cut model with plywood sides, ends, ceiling, roof and subfloor. It also has a most interesting prototype.

The Model

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The kit is a laser cut model with plywood sides, ends, ceiling, roof and subfloor. It also has a most interesting prototype.
Fidelity

Dimensions match the available plans*. Drivers measure a correct 56 inches. The lead and trailing trailer trucks are single-molded 6-inch truck wheels. Their 60-inch running boards, height from railhead to top of truck, take advantage of the prototype dimensions. As I could measure, despite there being only 10 engines in the class, there was a little variation between them. Some had the big square cab seen in the plans; photos show others with the “raked” cab as on this model. Some engines had a funny fixture above the front coupler (is that some sort of anti-climber?) while others did not. Suffice it to note that the Sunset model is a very faithful, if not precise, representation of the prototype.

Performance

An intermittent short hampered the initial testing of the engine. After much searching, and helpful suggestions from the prototype, the engine did transmit force to the other four drivers under that big, heavy second front cylinder and still had to travel to Virginian rails by a fixed, the engine performed as good as it looks. It is smooth and very quiet in operation, and easily walked away with 30 big brass hoppers up a 1% grade without slipping. The engine will back through handful 46 turns without problem.

Conclusion

Other than a few minor points, I am certain you will be very pleased if you get one of these engines. Those side rods really do transmit force to the other four drivers under that big, heavy boiler, and you will be hauling the heaviest trains you can assemble. So lubricate all metal-to-metal bearings, including the crank pins.

I’m not sure else to say about this fat, big, ugly, slow engine except that it is wonderfully beautiful. Oh, to have been there when they rode that big brass hoppers up a 1% grade without slipping. The engine will back through handful 46 turns without problem.

Compatibility

All the wheelsets perfectly match the NMRA standards gaage. A kitchen coupler is provided on the tender.

Model

The nine-pound (engine alone) model has the same massive feel as the prototype. These are relatively sophisticated wheelsets without a lot of fancy furnishings hung on their boilers. But most of what was there is on the model. All drivers are sprung. Cab roof hatches open for crew ventilation and tender hatches also operate. An engineer and fireman occupy the cab section. If you are only pushing a big train up a relatively straight grade you do not need a lot of water, so the accurately scaled tender looks just as out of place behind the huge engine as the prototypes. A sound card is on one end and the tender floor is perforated for a speaker. The locomotive is cleverly engineered to negotiate 48-inch radius curves. The smokebox is bright silver that the prototype. These were relatively unsophisticated and did their job well up until the early 1950s. They were ungainly looking (and yes, slowest) engine in the roundhouse, which is smooth and very quiet in operation, and easily walked away with 30 big brass hoppers up a 1% grade without slipping. The engine will back through handful 46 turns without problem.

Somehow the fine, smooth, shiny paint job just does not fit the prototype. These were relatively unsophisticated and did their job well up until the early 1950s. They were ungainly looking (and yes, slowest) engine in the roundhouse, which is smooth and very quiet in operation, and easily walked away with 30 big brass hoppers up a 1% grade without slipping. The engine will back through handful 46 turns without problem.

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To ensure your event listing makes it into the proper issue, please note the following deadlines for publication:

Jan.-Feb issue: October 1
March/April issue: Jan. 1
May/June issue: March 1
July/August issue: May 1
Sept. Oct. issue: July 1
Nov./Dec. issue: Sept. 1

March 2011
5: Merchantville NJ
The Cherry Valley Model RR Club will hold its 6th annual swap meet at the Grace Episcopal Church, 7 Maple Ave, Merchantville NJ 08109. Table fee is $25 for the 1st (incl. admission). $20 each additional table. General admission is $5 (spouses/children under 16 free). Contact: jk84[iii]88@hotmail.com

11-13: Lombard IL
Chicago O Scale Show. THB best O Scale show there is. Held at the Westside YMCA and the Lombard YWCA. Stop in and visit. For more information contact: Melissa 630-745-7600 or email info at thestrasburgfireco.org

April 2011
3: Hudson MA
Metrowest Model RR Society’s 2-1/2- and 6-HO Scale O Rail Show. From 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. White Elephant sale at 160 West Main St. 508-430-1050. Table fee is $15 before 3/1 and $20 after (helpers must be registered), setup 7:00 to 10:00 AM. Admission: Adults $5; 1-12 yrs. $1. Family max $8. Contact: Larry Grant, (508) 337-6661, Bigfootler@verizon.net

9: Strasburg PA
Strasburg Train Show 2-1/2 rail swap meet at the Strasburg Fire Co, 203 W. Franklin St., 9 am to 1 pm. Admission: $5 (Wives/Children/Military w/ID, FREE). Tables: $25 first one, $20 each additional table. Great food. Modular layout, and clinics. Contact: John Dunn, Sr., 609-432-2871, jdk18888@hotmail.com

May 2011
13-14: Oak Pa
East Penn Traction Club 20th National Trolley Meet. Over 20,000 sq ft of Trolley car Manufacturer and dealer tables selling everything relating to tractions from models and modeling supplies to books, photos, and memorabilia. Awards for Modules and Displays. The meet will be held at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks. Route 422, Egypt Rd. O Oaks Exit, near 576 (PA Turnpike/Shuylkill Expressway) or SEPTA Bus Route 99. Fri. 11:00 am - 10:00 pm, Sat 9:00 am - 11:00 pm. $18 per person, $20 per adult. Spouses and children are admitted free with a registered adult. Dealer tables are $20 each. Info: Charles Long, registrar, 227 Locust Rd., Fort Washington, PA 19040, 215-247-9751

August 2011
6: Strasburg Pa
Strasburg Train Show 2-1/2 rail swap meet at the Strasburg Fire Co, 203 W. Franklin St., 9 am to 1 pm. Admission: $5 (Wives/Children/Military w/ID, FREE). Tables: $25 first one, $20 each additional table. Great food. Modular layout, and clinics. Contact: John Dunn, Sr., 609-432-2871, jdk18888@hotmail.com

September 2011
10: Merchantville NJ
The Cherry Valley Model RR Club will hold its 8th annual swap meet at the Grace Episcopal Church, 7 Maple Ave, Merchantville NJ 08109. Tables are $25 for the 1st incl. admission. $20 each additional table. General admission is $5 (spouses/children under 16 free). Contact: jk84[iii]88@hotmail.com

20-24: Indianapolis IN
2011 O Scale National Convention. Held at the Wyndham Indianapolis West hotel, 214-34 Executive Dr., Indianapolis, IN. Call 317-381-6143 for special rates ($99/night) and reservations by August 15. Clinics, layout tours, P48 mini-convention, On30 mini-convention, banquet, model contest. Admission: $35 per person. Table reserva-
tions: $45 per table before Aug. 15. More information contact: James Canter, 737-362-3322, jcanter@mpatt.net

October 2011
8: Strasburg PA
Strasburg Train Show 2-1/2 rail swap meet at the Strasburg Fire Co, 203 W. Franklin St., 9 am to 1 pm. Admission: $5 (Wives/Children/Military w/ID, FREE). Tables: $25 first one, $20 each additional table. Great food. Modular layout, and clinics. Contact: John Dunn, 609-432-2871 or jdk18888@hotmail.com

June 2012
1: New Jersey
2012 O Scale National Convention sponsored by the New York Society of Model Engineers. Details to be announced.

To view the full B-S-T, please log in to the appropriate issue. No need to purchase the entire magazine. For more information, contact Mark Hinchliffe at mark.hinchliffe@ostpublications.com. To sign up for email notifications, visit www.ostpublications.com/subscribe.
Ten Years And Counting!
Welcome to the 10th Anniversary edition of OST! It’s hard to believe we’ve been doing this for 10 years now. We started small, 48 pages with 16 in color and grew to 64 pages all in color. That pretty cool! Our growth has not been as robust as I would have liked but then we’ve had a decade of tough economic times and I’m glad we survived it. Our subscription base has grown steadily and continues to grow weekly. Thank you to everyone who subscribes! Along with our advertisers, you are the backbone of OST. Newsstand sales have declined but then all magazines are experiencing declining newsstand sales, so we’re not surprised.

Looking to the future, digital publication is definitely the way to go for many publications (and many are there already), but not for us. Reading a digital publication on a laptop or desktop is cumbersome and can be uncomfortable. For one, it’s the wrong orientation; horizontal versus the vertical page we’re all used to. Apple’s iPad is a game changer in that regard, but then all magazines are experiencing declining newsstand sales, so we’re not surprised.

We added Rob Adams to our staff last year to be our online editor and he will expand the content at the OST blog as we move into our 10th year. If you have ideas or suggestions for blog content, feel free to contact Rob. He is now listed on the masthead.

Thanks to everyone who has helped make OST what it is and what it will be in the future. We are the last bastion of O Scale craftsmanship keeping the traditions of the “King of all Scales” alive.

The Year Of The Kit
No sooner had I finished writing my Observations for issue #5 than an article appeared in the Philadelphia Inquirer about Lionel and a local plastics molding company. It seems Lionel is exploring (and exploiting) the “Made in the USA” idea I was talking about. Lionel has contracted with this local plastics company to manufacture a special line of “Made in the USA”, limited edition boxcars. Good for them!

While I was writing that column I came up with the idea to promote product buying here (here being North America) and it struck me that a kit is the item most likely to be manufactured locally, rather than overseas. So, I contacted several of our advertisers and asked if they’d be interested in promoting kit building for 2011 and the result is the Year of the several of our advertisers and asked if they’d be interested in promoting kit building for 2011 and the result is the Year of the.

My interest is to stimulate the O Scale economy and to encourage people to try their hand at building a kit, something that seems to have fallen by the wayside with all the R-T-R stuff available.

The kit you buy does not have to be a new kit. It just has to have been published during this promotion. For example, P&D and Rails Unlimited are participating and I am sure they have a stock of kits that go way back in time. It doesn’t matter if you buy an old JC Silversides ’70 passenger car kit from the 1950s. It just matters that you bought it Between March and November 2011.

So, start perusing those vendors’ catalogs and pick out the kit you want. Get it and enter it in the photo contest. Who knows, you could win more money that the kit cost!

The Good Old Days!
One thing you can be sure of, the “good old days” were never as good as we think they were. The 1990s seem like they were the heyday of O Scale brass. Models were being imported frequently by nearly a dozen importers. Prices were high but the selection was great.

Then the dot com boom went bust and things started to change. Times weren’t as good as they had been and everything was cutting back on buying, not just brass but everything. Prices on second-hand brass have dropped like a stone. Where once a model might have commanded $1000 in the 1990s, you might find it today for under $100. I attended an auction in late November where several Bill Lenox scratchbuilt engines sold for less than $150 each. Around 2002, I passed up a Lenox 4-8-2 priced at $3000. If you’re in the market for a brass locomotive now it is a great time as any to pick one up.

Today we have just four primary importers of O Scale brass:森田, Key,RY Models and Weaver. Ry Models is bringing in small diesels with DCC decoders factory installed. Key has just released their first brass import with factory installed DCC and sound. Key also says the model will have exact scale wheel profiles. That’s going to be another first, an O standard gauge engine with scale wheels. And while MTH locomotives are not brass, their new PS3 equipped engines are DCC compatible and have great sound.

There is a real trend here and, in my opinion, a good one for O Scale. I have long advocated that 2-Rail O Scale locomotives should have factory installed DCC with sound. Virtually all-current DCC decoders (sound equipped or not) are Rail-mode, i.e., they operate on straight DC as well as DCC. There is no reason 2-Railers should be short-changed when it comes to command control and sound. If you don’t like the sound just turn it off.

Next issue I’ll report on one of the new MTH PS3 equipped engines and the MRC Tech 6.0 controller. The Tech 6 is like “DCC for Dummies” and I think will make it convertverts a large number of added-on details. Premier engines also come equipped with elaborate lighting features including flashing ditch lights, lighted number boards, and cab interior illumination.

Look closely at any Premier Line model and you’ll find a combination of superb detailing, prototype accuracy, rugged construction, and smooth, dependable operation that is unmatched by others.

Available In 2 and 3-Rail Versions
M.T.H. Premier Line engines are full O scale models, 1/48 the size of their prototypes. Premier Line engines, like the SD35 shown in this ad and featured in our 2010 Volume 2 catalog, are as detailed as we can reasonably make them, and feature a large number of added-on details. Premier engines also come equipped with elaborate lighting features including flashing ditch lights, lighted number boards, and cab interior illumination.

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NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

NYC T-3 Electric

B&O, C&O and Erie Cabooses
These cabooses are steam era, perfect for your B&O, C&O and Erie Steam engines from us or others.

Coming in 2011. Reserve Today!

Baltimore and Ohio T-3
This 4-8-2 Mountain Type was very important to the B&O and has NEVER BEEN done before in O Scale. Available with rectangular or extra long Vandy Tender.

Coming Mid 2011.

B&O, C&O and Erie Cabooses
These cabooses are steam era, perfect for your B&O, C&O and Erie Steam engines from us or others.

Coming in 2011. Reserve Today!

Nickel Plate S-2, Pere Marquette and C&O “Kanawha” Berkshires. Also RF&P and W&LE.

These 5 Railroads had these wonderful 2-8-4 Locomotives, and now you have them too can too. Just $1299.95 Coming 2011, with all the fixens.

Reserve your special Berkshire Today!!

Norfolk and Western 6-6-6-6 TE-1 “Jawn Henry” Steam Turbine + Water Tender

Pair with the Norfolk and Western 6666 TE-1 “Jawn Henry” Steam Turbine + Water Tender and cruise through the era of the water tender era. Includes Railsounds, steam, and auxiliary tender.

Coming in 2011, Reserve Today!!

Berkshire Bonanza
B&O, C&O and Erie Cabooses
These cabooses are steam era, perfect for your B&O, C&O and Erie Steam engines from us or others.

Coming in 2011. Reserve Today!

Norfolk and Western 6-6-6-6 TE-1 “Jawn Henry” Steam Turbine + Water Tender

Pair with the Norfolk and Western 6666 TE-1 “Jawn Henry” Steam Turbine + Water Tender and cruise through the era of the water tender era. Includes Railsounds, steam, and auxiliary tender.

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