

**RARE UNCATALOGED MARX SET** p.36

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JULY/AUGUST 2023

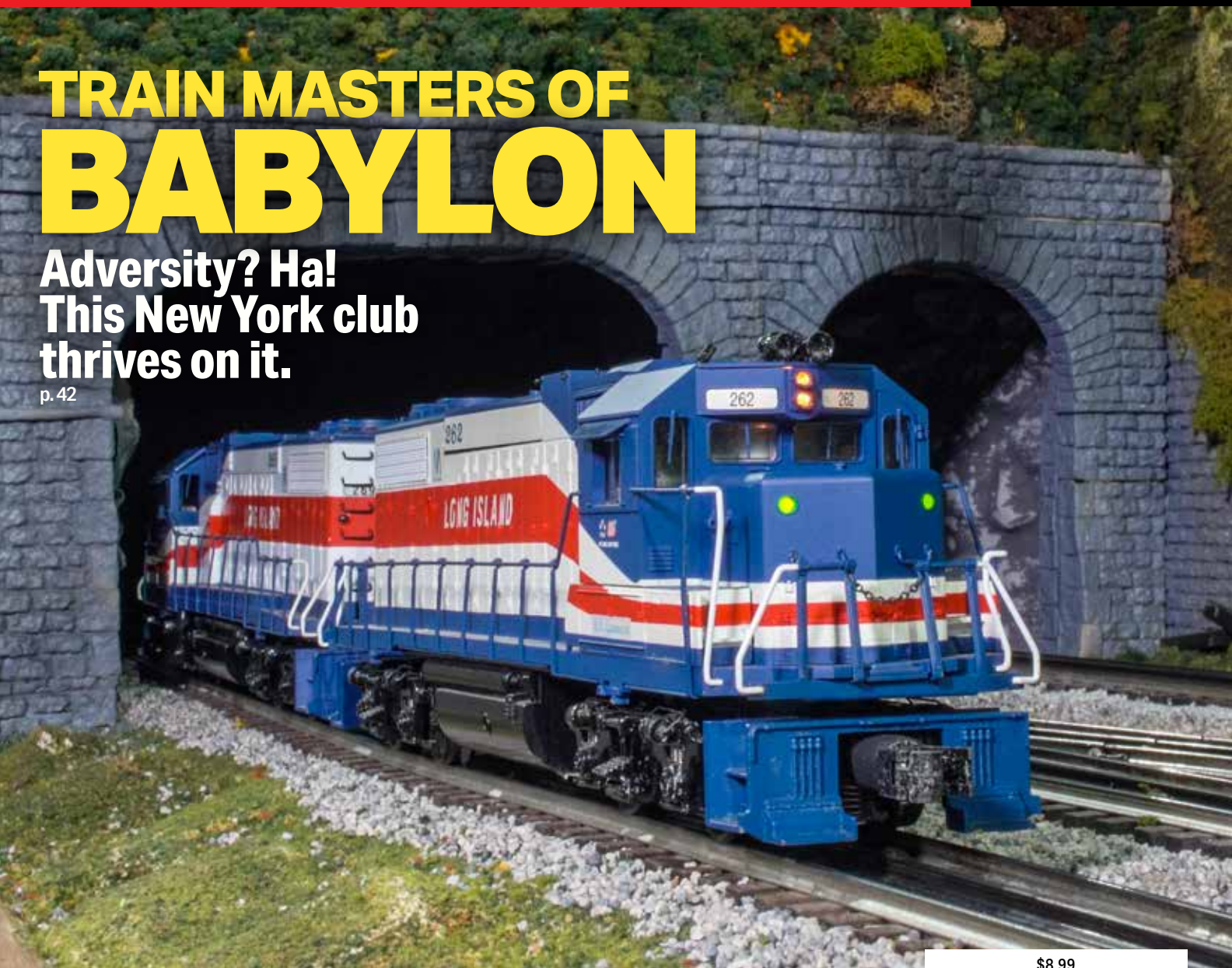


**DOUBLE  
DUTY** Lionel's  
Legacy F40PH p.50

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**Adversity? Ha!  
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thrives on it.**

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*Cover photo by Ben Lake*

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# Yeah, that's what it's about

Gathering shows a camaraderie for the hobby that spans generations

## ■ AT THE RECENT SPRING YORK TCA SHOW,

I was fortunate enough to be invited to the home of YouTuber and frequent Trains.com and *Classic Toy Trains* contributor Chris Montagna for a train-operating session. He said a few people would be showing up for pizza and beverages.

I figured there would be maybe a dozen of us. No. Forty or 50 people came and went and consumed a pile of pies.

The pizza was good and the trains were great. But the best part of the night was the mix of folks that were there.

Enthusiasts from their teens to their 70s and maybe beyond were enjoying the O gauge layout. There were stories about collectible pieces acquired as well as laments for those sold too soon, or that got away.

It was one of those times when what's great about the



**More mingling of the young and young at heart: A seminar at the York show featured YouTubers (standing from left) Shawn Conahey (Dakman Productions); Chris Montagna (Chris's Trains and Things); R.J. Incandela (RJ's Trains), and Sidney Flumbaum (Sid's Trains).**

hobby is on full display. Trains are at the core, but people sharing what they have and what they know make it special.

One attendee told me he's involved in several other social pastimes and noted such *bonhomie* isn't typical in all of

them. "People aren't as willing to give up their secrets about how they do things," he said.

The sharing continued at the show the next day as the social media guys answered questions from watchers of all ages. Again, a great mix.

## Contributing editor

Speaking of Chris, he's been added as a Contributing Editor to the masthead below. Over the past year or so, he's done a fantastic job developing how-to stories and product reviews for the magazine and Trains.com.

See his story about creating a farm scene on page 38 and locomotive review on page 50.

## Keep the votes coming

You still have time to vote for the People's Choice Engine in *Great Toy Train Locomotives*. See details on page 4 of the May-June CTT. The winner will be announced in the September-October issue.

Hal Miller, Editor

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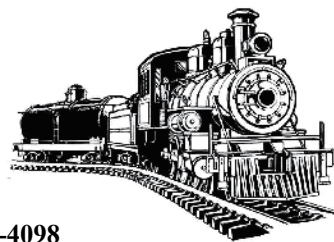
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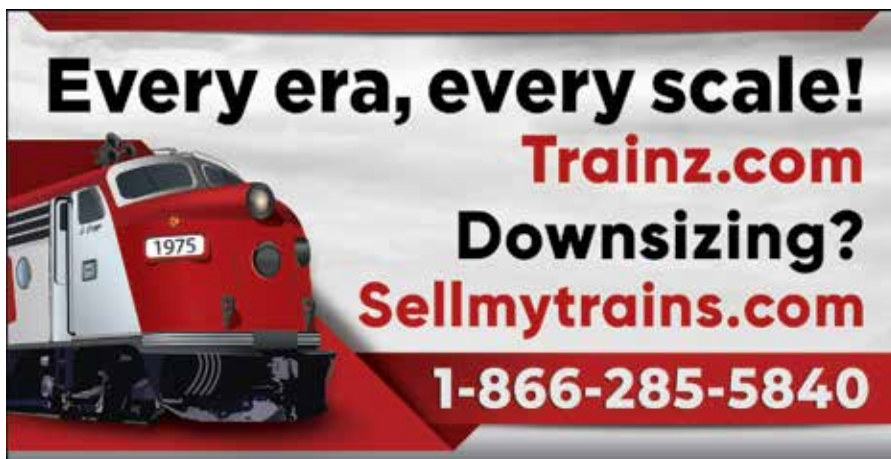


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# Searching for the Marx inspiration

■ **I JUST RECEIVED THE MAY/JUNE 2023 ISSUE** of *Classic Toy Trains* and must say I really enjoyed the article about “Marx eight-wheel lithographed diesels,” with photographs of the Louis Marx & Co. No. 6000 Southern Pacific unit. Author Robert Wendt discusses possibilities of how that diesel may have been developed by Marx, suggesting the toy maker could have based it on the Alco FA or EMD F3 diesels.

I wondered whether the answer might be found in my library of railroad books, especially *E Units: Electro-Motive's Classic Streamliners*, written by Jeff Wilson and published by Kalmbach Publishing Co. in 2002. On page 113 of that book I found what I think is the full-size diesel that inspired designers at Marx: Southern Pacific's E7 No. 6000A, as delivered in red and aluminum colors for the *Golden State Limited* passenger train (see the photograph reprinted on this page).

Comparing the Southern Pacific E7 in the black-and-white photo snapped by Stan Kistler with the Marx model shows a few minor differences in the ventilator and window details. Still, it's



**This vintage photo of Southern Pacific E7 cab units answers questions about which full-size diesels inspired the O gauge versions from Marx.**

likely that this diesel was what Marx based its model on, even to the number 6000. – David Beardsley, Saint Ann, Mo.

## Where are the engines?

“Collectible Classics” is usually the first thing I read when I get my new copy of *Classic Toy Trains*. Lately it seems that Roger Carp has not been highlighting any locomotives. Will you be doing so in the future? – Oliver Ardith, Los Angeles

Good news, Oliver. Our brand-new special-interest publication will focus on more than 60 of the best Standard, O, and S gauge locomotives manufactured since 1900. Great Toy Train Locomotives will be available in October! – Editor

## Get your Kix

I suppose this letter will show my age, but I wonder how many other readers of *Classic Toy Trains* remember how 75 years ago boxes of Kix breakfast cereal came printed with pictures of trains on them that you could cut out to enjoy?

I first came across the special box of Kix in Chicago in

1948, while visiting my aunt and uncle. The box had a 4-6-0 Ten Wheeler steam engine and tender on the back. I had my aunt cut it out, and that got me started on collecting them!

Back home in Sheboygan, Wis., I began to eat Kix every single morning. Sometimes,

we had several boxes of Kix in the house, all with the back of the box missing. More than once, I went through all the shelves at local grocery stores, looking for a box of Kix with a train item I didn't have. Finally, I was down to the last two items I needed, including a

Union Pacific 4-8-4 Challenger steam engine.

During a heavy snowstorm, I ran to the grocery store on the street behind our house and went through the supply of Kix. I found those two items. After eating all those boxes, I never ate Kix again. – Mike Stoebl, Crossville, Tenn.

## Small correction

The pictures selected for Photo Album always interest me, and I study them pretty closely. So I noticed the road diesel shown on Steven Tripp's layout in the May/June issue is a Lionel model of an Alco RS3 and not an RS1 by MTH as was stated in the caption. You still have a great publication, and this mistake only proves you're human like the rest of us! – Robert Martin, Sound Beach, N.Y.

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18286 Union Pacific Dash-9-44CW 'Scale'.....	325.00
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18322 Lackawanna (Maroon Top) Trainmaster.....	395.00
18351 New York Central Scale S-1 Electric.....	395.00
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18582 Seaboard NW-2 (blue & orange).....	350.00
18588 Delaware & Hudson C-420.....	325.00
18598 New York Central RS-11 (Scale).....	325.00
18892 PWC Burlington GP-7.....	225.00
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24507 Milwaukee Road 66 'AA' Scale.....	650.00
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14586 Delaware & Hudson PB-1 Alco 'Scale'.....	145.00
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18966 New York Central PB-1 w/Railroads.....	225.00
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34545 Rio Grande F-3 LEGACY B-unit (PWC).....	225.00
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## Modern era notes

WITH BOB KELLER

# Operator or collector?

How much meaning is in a label?



Bob Keller (left), the host of Bob's Train Box on Trains.com, showed CTT Editor Hal Miller a few of the great items he's collected inexpensively to operate on his O gauge layout.

■ **WHEN I RE-ENTERED THE TOY TRAIN HOBBY** in the early 1990s, I was about 30 years behind in knowledge and needed to ask a lot of questions to catch up. Occasionally, someone queried me too. Perhaps the strangest and most unexpected question I heard from folks on the other side of the train-show tables was:

"Are you an operator or a collector?"

Seemed pretty odd to me. Then I started to notice how the vendors steered attendees to particular items on their tables (or underneath them) based on the answer given.

As I quickly learned, there seemed to be two shades of collectors: Enthusiasts who wanted – more or less – one of

everything. The second group went for quality over quantity. They intended to build collections of trains as close to mint, never run before, as possible.

In contrast, operators, as the moniker suggests, were mainly concerned about

**THERE WAS PLENTY OF OVERLAP BETWEEN EACH COMMUNITY, MAINLY BECAUSE THEY BOTH WERE FOCUSED ON LOVE OF THE TRAINS THEY HAD AS KIDS.**

internals. Did the item run? Did the engine's reverse unit have any issues? Were the smoke unit and lights okay? Of course, price was an issue, but dings or finger-worn paint were nicely tolerated.

### Apples or oranges?

I originally thought there was a white-collar/blue-collar vibe going on, but I



was wrong about that. More accurate is a baseball analogy. I came to think of it more as a National League versus American League rivalry. Hey, I'm a "senior circuit" guy, but if the local team is from the American League, I can watch their game with enthusiasm, too!

There was plenty of overlap between each community, mainly because they both were focused on love of the trains they had as kids.

The hobby has evolved quite a bit in the past few decades. While it's probably easier for people to track down what they want via the internet, we've had 20-plus solid years of toy train production. As a result, there seems to be an almost infinite variety of engines and rolling stock to accumulate.

Older trains are still sought after, but fans of steamers, diesels, electrics, and specific road names have never had it so good. Which made me wonder how many people still consider themselves primarily collectors versus operators.

#### All the same, really?

Then I recalled a conversation I had with the late John Grams (aka prolific toy train author Ray L. Plummer). He claimed we were all collectors. John went through some examples, such as acquiring just locomotives or passenger car sets or variations (like body shells made with clear plastic).

John reminded me that, while I identified myself as an operator, I acquired trains with something of a collectors strategy. First choice road name: New York Central, New Haven, or Florida East Coast. Rolling stock preference: Freight. Locomotive preference: Diesel. Era: The transition period from steam to diesel.

Son of a gun! While I do have equipment outside that list, John was mostly on target.

Huh, I was a collector after all, I just didn't know it. Who'd have thunk it?

In the end, labels don't have much meaning these days.

Whether your fleet is S, O, or a larger scale, we're united in love of our toy trains, the connection with our past, and a hobby filled with people who don't mind getting stopped at a grade crossing – so long as the locomotives haven't already passed by! **CTT**

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## PHOTO ALBUM

YOUR PICTURES



### ↑GEORGE HORN'S O GAUGE LAYOUT

Hobbyists who appreciate Lionel trains from the modern era, a group that includes George Horn, are familiar with the colorful billboard refrigerator cars advertising beer, cigarettes, and flour, among the products. George enjoys assembling a freight train with the desirable reefers to operate on his 6 x 17-foot layout. He has a Lionel No. 84471 Union Pacific 2-8-8 Light Mikado locomotive and tender effortlessly pulling the eye-catching cars. The UP steamer running on his railroad in Montague, Mich., is far from its home, but then again so is the Long Island RR speeder from K-Line, shown idling in the Pioneer Valley Models cardstock shed George skillfully modified.

### WANT TO CONTRIBUTE?

Please send your best pictures to CTT Photo Album, 21027 Crossroads Circle, Waukesha, WI 53187-1612 or email them to [photoalbum@ClassicToyTrains.com](mailto:photoalbum@ClassicToyTrains.com). Digital photos must be taken with the camera set at the largest possible file size. Include your name, address, and daytime telephone number; a description of each image, including the gauge and make of the train; and the name of the photographer or layout owner if he or she is someone other than you. If your photograph is published, we will pay you \$50 as long as we have not previously bought the photo. For more on photos specs, please go to [trains.com/ctt/magazine/contributor-guidelines/](http://trains.com/ctt/magazine/contributor-guidelines/)





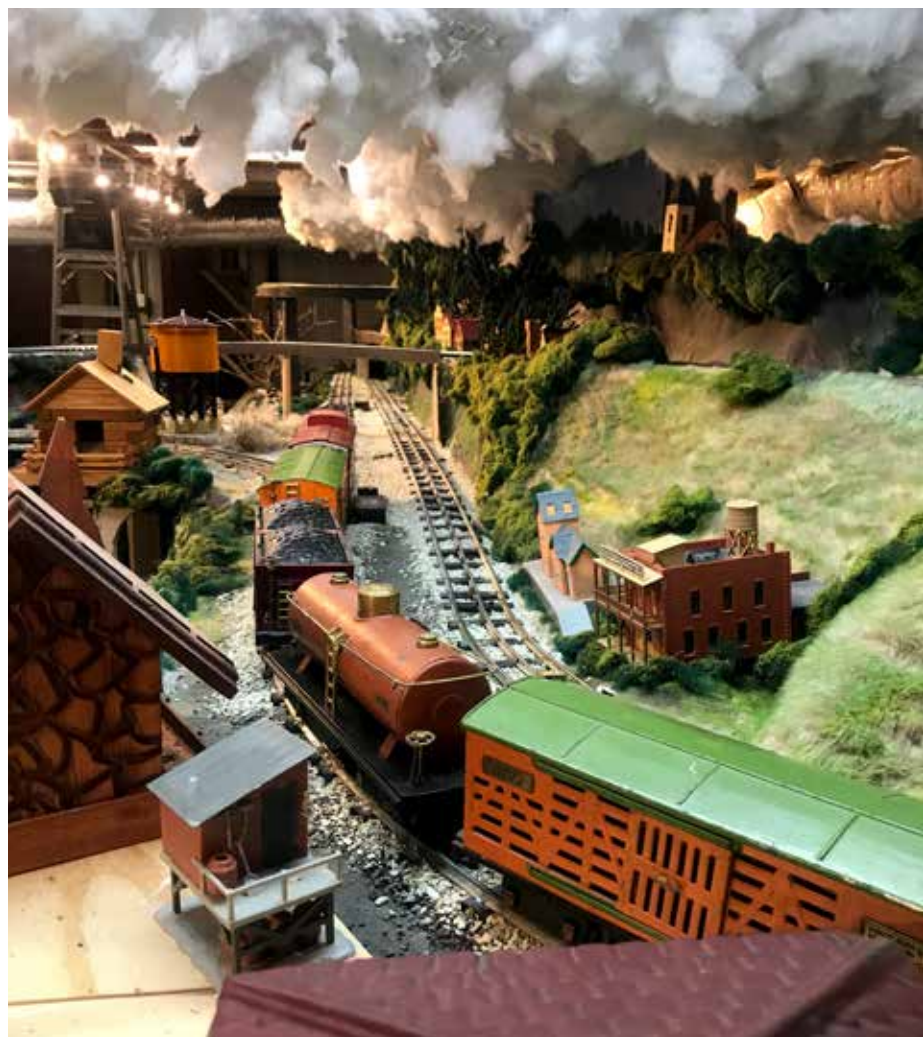
### → KATHY DUANE'S STANDARD GAUGE LAYOUT

Tom Quinlan owned a lot of Standard gauge trains, but never got around to building a layout to showcase them. A few years before Tom died in 2014, his daughter, Kathy Duane, took matters into her own talented hands by constructing for her father the layout he always dreamed of having. In addition to freight cars from Lionel's No. 200 and 500 series of Standard gauge models, the railroad in Equinunk, Pa., includes several prewar and postwar accessories, along with many homemade structures.



### ↑ JOE MYER'S O GAUGE LAYOUT

Joe Myer, who resides in Dover, Del., certainly put plenty of activity into the industrial sector on his 8 x 12-foot O gauge railroad. Workers on the K-Line No. K-42406 Railroad Paint Shop accessory are busy spraying a New York Central boxcar the brilliant shade of blue used by Conrail. Another laborer keeps busy moving scrap metal at the controls of a Lionel No. 12834 Pennsylvania RR Magnetic Gantry Crane. Over on the left side of this action-packed photo, the Lionel Oil Derrick is pumping crude while the Lionel Sawmill turns logs into lumber. The Lionel No. 28613 Reading 0-6-0 Dockside switch engine pulls a load into Myersville, including a flatcar with Chevrolet Corvairs, one of which resembles the 1964 convertible owned by Joe as his second favorite hobby.





## PHOTO ALBUM

YOUR PICTURES



### ← BRUCE BARON'S O GAUGE LAYOUT

O gauge enthusiast Bruce Baron typically shares with us at *Classic Toy Trains* photos of steam engines on his layout. So it came as a surprise – and a very pleasant one – to receive this slick picture of a diesel pulling covered hoppers into the big city on his layout in Munson Township, Ohio. The hardy New York Central GP30 road diesel Bruce caught in action is a Lionel model (No. 28850) he recalls being cataloged in 2004. It's hauling a string of covered hoppers filled with cement and similar materials.

### ↓ JIM AND DEBBY FLYNN'S O GAUGE LAYOUT

More and more of the O and S gauge railroads presented to *Classic Toy Trains* strive for realism. There's nothing wrong with that approach, but then you have modelers who, like Jim and Debby Flynn, honor the traditions of our hobby by creating a three-rail layout with a decidedly toy-like look. They operate a prewar Lionel Milwaukee Road *Hiawatha* set on one main line (consisting of sections of Lionel T-Rail) and a postwar *Texas Special* passenger outfit on the one closer to the camera. Look for an extensive treatment of the outstanding display built by this husband-and-wife team from Gilbertsville, Ky., in an upcoming issue of CTT.







### ↑ STEVEN PASTERNAK'S O GAUGE MODEL RAILROAD

Some O gaugers spend years designing and building their layouts, and others go at it with the speed of a runaway train. Count Steven Pasternak among the "I won't sleep till the work is done" crowd. He told us he finished this two-level 5 x 9-foot three-rail display in less than 100 days! Lionel and Kusan trains from the postwar era share space on his layout in Lake City, Fla., with accessories from the same period as well as more recent times. Steve is especially fond of space-oriented models, and so he made certain to install his own version of Cape Canaveral on the upper part. Below, you can pick out Plasticville U.S.A. structures and lights.



### ↑ DINARTE FERRO'S O GAUGE LAYOUT

You never know what will inspire someone to plan a layout with its own special personality. Dinarte Ferro saw pictures of a Lionel No. D-264 Super O display from 1959 and decided it would be perfect as a home for his collection of O gauge trains and accessories from Louis Marx & Co. Just one look at the realistic scene Dino snapped in his train room in Smithfield, Rhode Island, leaves no doubt about the wisdom of his choice. Drifting past a No. 2979 Oak Park lithographed station on this sunny morning in July is a freight train headed by No. 1829 4-6-4 Hudson steam locomotive and tender, which Marx offered with or without a smoke unit.



WITH THE CTT STAFF



**A CLASSIC COVERED HOPPER.** Atlas O has released its Master Line Pullman-Standard 4,427-cubic-foot-capacity low-side covered hopper in eight new paint schemes. Road names include Archer Daniels Midland, Cooperative Marketing Association, Gold Kist, Indiana Farm Bureau Co-op, Peavey Co., Scoular, Tabor & Co., and Valley Mills. The ready-to-run model, priced at **\$84.95**, has positionable hatches with working latch assembly; see-through running boards; and sprung, die-cast metal 100-ton roller-bearing trucks with rotating bearing caps. The O gauge covered hopper, in hobby shops now, has a minimum diameter curve of O-45. Visit the manufacturer's website at [shop.atlasrr.com](http://shop.atlasrr.com)

**CALLING ALL SHOPPERS.** The Menards Store (item No. 2759120; **\$139.99**) is the latest O scale structure from Menards. The home-improvement store has a 22½" x 6" footprint and comes fully assembled, decorated, and wired for light. Add-on details include customers and staff, Jack the German shepherd, and LP gas tank exchange cages. Lighting requires a 4.5-volt power supply sold separately (Nos. 279-4061/4361, 4062/4362, or 4050). Power may be applied through either a rear tabletop plug-in or from below the building with a pigtail connector. Visit [menards.com/trains](http://menards.com/trains) for more information about this and other structures.

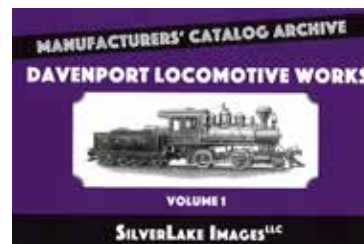


**BREWING MEMORIES.** The New Jersey Hi-Railers offer double-sheathed refrigerator cars lettered for Fidelio Beer. The custom-decorated MTH 36-foot cars, due in January 2024, have separate, factory-applied metal grab irons; a vertical brake staff; and positionable roof hatches. The O gauge cars are priced at **\$84.95** each (including shipping) and are available in two road numbers. The numbers memorialize the birth and death years of club member Al Spaventa. Place your orders online at [njhirailers.com/shop](http://njhirailers.com/shop)

## MEMORIES FROM THE HAWKEYE STATE.

Five catalogs are reproduced in *Davenport Locomotive Works: Vol. 1*

from SilverLake Images LLC. The 140-page softcover book (**\$35**) covers various steam locomotives, including Consolidations, Moguls, Prairies, saddle tanks, geared, and six- and eight-wheel switching locomotives. Order from Ron's Books online at [ronsbooks.com](http://ronsbooks.com) or by phone at **914-967-7541**.







**BIG-TIME STEAM.** The Train Loft of Winston-Salem, N.C., in conjunction with Lionel Trains, has announced the No. 20331640 Vision Line Big Boy No. 4025 in the Denver & Rio Grande Western heritage paint scheme. These O gauge steam engines are priced at **\$2,999.95** each plus shipping. Call 336-760-9817 or email [JKonc52032@aol.com](mailto:JKonc52032@aol.com)

## NEWS

# ATLAS O RELEASES WINTER 2023 PREMIER CATALOG

### ATLAS MODEL RAILROAD CO.

spotlighted several of the O scale models scheduled for release in the fourth quarter in *Winter 2023 O Scale Premier Announcements* catalog. The 16-page PDF includes freight car offerings, Collector's Series additions, and track and layout accessories.

Among the items soon to make their debut are a pair of freight cars new to the Atlas O Premier line. The BethGon Coal-porter will be decorated for Burlington Northern, CSX, and David J. Joseph. The car will also be available in three fictional schemes: Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe; Pennsylvania RR; and Reading & Northern.

The Coalporter (\$79.95) has 1:48 scale dimensions. Features on the model include an ABS body, die-cast metal trucks and couplers, and metal wheelsets.

The second newcomer is a Pullman-Standard 40-foot PS-1 boxcar with 7-foot doors. Paint schemes include Erie Lackawanna; Maine Central; New York, New Haven &

Hartford; Port Huron & Detroit; St. Louis Southwestern (Cotton Belt); and Western Pacific.

The boxcar, which also has 1:48 scale dimensions, operates on O-31 curves. Details include an ABS body; separate, factory-applied details; die-cast metal trucks and couplers; and positionable doors. The model will be priced at \$84.95.

Rounding out the freight car announcements from Atlas O are new paint schemes on the Pullman-Standard PS-2 two-bay covered hopper. The O gauge car will be lettered for Chicago & North Western (with Chicago Great Western reporting marks); Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range; Full-O-Pep Feeds; Jersey Central Lines;

Southern Pacific; and United States Borax & Chemical Corp. The covered hopper will be priced at \$84.95.

To view the *Winter 2023 O Scale Premier Announcements* catalog as well as other offerings, please visit the manufacturer's website at [shop.atlasrr.com](http://shop.atlasrr.com)



## From KalmbachHobbyStore.com

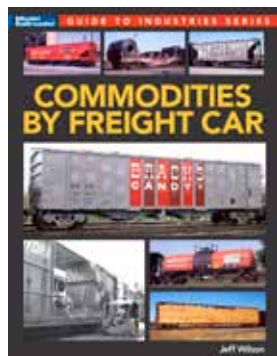
The following special publications are in stock at the Kalmbach Hobby Store. All are available in print and digital formats. The digital editions are powered by Zinio and are compatible with PC, Macintosh, Android via Google Play app, iOS via AppStore, and Win8 devices.



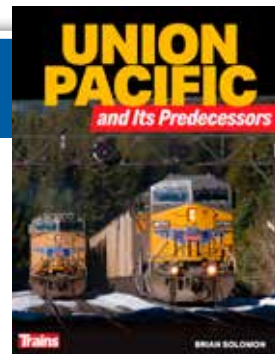
**LOTS OF STEAM.** *Search for Steam Vol. 1* from our sister publication *Trains* magazine features more than 40 steam engines from across the United States and England. The two-hour DVD (\$27.99) includes fantrip and tourist line

favorites, such as Durango & Silverton 493, U.S. Sugar 148, the Victorian Iron Horse Roundup, and much more. The DVD comes with the option to turn off the music and narration so you can enjoy the steam locomotive sounds.

**WHAT'S IN THAT CAR?** The latest entry in the Guide to Industries Series is *Commodities by Freight Cars* by Jeff Wilson. From the all-new 112-page book (\$21.99) you'll learn how all-purpose boxcars, gondolas, and flatcars gave way to a dizzying variety of specialized freight cars for coil steel, lumber, flour, sugar, automotive parts, and frozen foods; how freight handling has changed over the years; how railroads handle hazardous car-



goes, such as chlorine and liquefied petroleum gas; and which experimental car designs worked to make transporting goods more efficient – and which turned out to be failures.



**MEET UNCLE PETE.** *Union Pacific and Its Predecessors* is the latest book by noted railroad author and photographer Brian Solomon. Topics covered in the 208-page softcover publication include an examination of the building of the original Union Pacific; major railroads the UP has acquired or merged, with brief histories and operational summaries and maps for each; an up-to-date look at the modern UP; and chapters on UP freight traffic, steam locomotive development, unique turbine-electric locomotives, and diesels. The book is priced at \$27.99.

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**EVEN MORE BEER REEFERS.** The New Jersey Hi-Railers club has also announced a pair of O gauge 36-foot double-sheathed refrigerator cars lettered for Trommer's Evergreen Brewery in Brooklyn, N.Y. The custom-decorated MTH cars, scheduled for release in January 2024, feature an ABS body, die-cast metal trucks, metal wheelsets, and opening car doors. The O gauge reefers, priced at **\$84.95** each (including shipping), will operate on O-31 curves. The road numbers memorialize the birth and death dates of longtime club member John Blume. The cars can be purchased online at [njhirailers.com/shop](http://njhirailers.com/shop)



**CONTEMPORARY CONTAINERS.** These newly tooled O scale 40-foot high-cube inter-modal containers are in stores now. The injection-molded plastic models, based on the ISO Type Code 45G1 prototype, are decorated for Ocean Network Express, ZIM, CMA CGM, Global, Hapag Lloyd, HMM, Turkon, and Seaboard Marine. The containers are compatible with all Atlas O well cars and existing 40-foot container models. Features include detailed door rods, landing pads, and corner posts. Single containers sell for **\$26.95**. Mixed eight-packs are priced at **\$215.60**.

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WITH ROGER CARP



# Lionel's No. 17014 graffiti hopper

Modeling a controversial trend on railroads

■ **PRODUCT DESIGNERS AT LIONEL** and other electric train manufacturers during the prewar and postwar eras followed the latest trends on real railroads. They did so to update their lines and thereby appeal to consumers eager to stay abreast of current developments. Studying what was happening on American railroads was essential for any company striving to maintain its place in the toy marketplace.

But what happens when the trend changing the face of domestic railroading is controversial? Will toy train makers race to embrace it, or do they feel pressured to avoid it?

**Movies have shown how spray-painting trains transforms them into what one observer calls “a rolling museum of outsider art” and others have criticized as terrorism.**

Those questions influenced discussions at Lionel in the final decade of the 20th century, when planners debated the merits of making O gauge rolling stock with graffiti.

Some observers condemned

the actual practice as destruction of private property. Other commentators praised the painted-on images as the creation of mobile artwork.

Not until 1999 did Lionel show its cards. That was the year it released two hoppers with graffiti. Let's check out the No. 17014 Golden West Service model.

## Real-life tagging

As I explained at Trains.com, the trend of spray-painting letters, words, and images on the sides of locomotives and rolling stock began in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Members of gangs in New York City and Philadelphia started to “tag” trains as a means of expressing their personal and collective identity or showcasing their artistic

talents on immense moving canvasses to gain respect from their peers and build a reputation for themselves across the land.

Graffiti, which one writer has argued includes “boasts,

hastily scribbled epigrams, social commentary, threats, jokes, names, notations of date and location, and formal displays of lettering proficiency,” has added color, flair, and visual appeal to modern subways and freight cars, especially boxcars, refrigerator cars, and covered hoppers.

Words, names, and messages added by unknown artists, often at night while risking injury or arrest, reflect the spread of gangs and the emergence of a hip-hop subculture. Movies have shown how spray-painting trains transforms them into what one observer calls “a rolling museum of outsider art” and others have criticized as terrorism.

## Cool models

Engineering and sales personnel at Lionel and other American manufacturers of O gauge trains recognized how controversial graffiti was. However, they also believed that models with some simulated words and pictures on them might very well boost sales.

Lionel took the plunge in

1999 with two-bay hoppers, similar to the American Car & Foundry models it had cataloged the previous year. The Nos. 17013 New York Central and 17014 Golden West Service each featured some graffiti, although not so realistic.

What was added to the blue plastic 17014 related largely to Lionel. Not too many gang-bangers and rappers would opt for “ZW” (in honor of the classic transformer) and “LLC” (the name of the company at the time). Regarding “Forever Young,” it either referred to Lionel enthusiast and rock legend Neil Young or it expressed how toy trains helped middle-aged guys retain their youthful glee and vigor.

Over the past quarter-century, Lionel and its competitors have gone whole hog for graffiti. They've put on the market boxcars, coil steel cars, and even locomotives with realistic graffiti plastered across their sides. The trend, now a common sight in every rail yard and at busy grade crossings, started with an otherwise plain blue covered hopper. **CTT**



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WITH JOSEPH L. MANIA & THE CTT STAFF

There's lots to learn when you're investigating the mechanisms Lionel installed on its many O gauge locomotives during the post-World War II era, in particular the No. 2340 Pennsylvania RR GG1 electric from 1955, shown with the *Congressional* set.



## Understanding Lionel's postwar motors

Focus on Train Masters and GG1 electrics

**Q** I own two postwar Lionel locomotives, each originally equipped with two motors: Nos. 2321 Lackawanna Train Master and 2340 Pennsylvania GG1. Their motors look similar, but they're listed with two different part numbers. I noticed the GG1 seems to move more slowly than the Train Master under the same load conditions. Are they geared differently, or are the motors actually different even though they look alike? – *Stuart Mitnick, Highland Park, N.J.*

**A** The motors on your Lionel engines are slightly different in shape, but the gearing and electrical properties are virtually identical. The one on your GG1 does weigh a bit more than the motor used for Train Masters. Be aware that many other factors can come into play, such as the condition of the motors and drive components. More wear on one compared to another can change the running properties.

### Flanged wheels

**Q** The flanged wheel on my Williams O gauge Dash-9 road diesel doesn't align with the truck when the locomotive is operating. It is a plain flanged wheel. Should it have a grooved flange? – *Phillip Berry, Albuquerque, N. Mex.*

**A** Look for damage on the part. The grooved wheel is simply for a traction tire and has nothing to do with alignment of the wheel with respect to the truck.

### Transformer needed

**Q** What transformer or power supply do you suggest for running my Williams O gauge No. 8000 4-6-6-4 Challenger? I really want to operate this big steam engine at its very best! – *Jerry McSherry, Spring Grove, Pa.*

**A** Any standard O gauge transformer will work fine. I always recommend a power source with at least 75 to 90 watts. That way, you'll have sufficient current available should you want to use passenger cars with interior illumination.

### Flyer accessories with FasTrack

**Q** I'm planning to build a compact O gauge layout at home using Lionel FasTrack. However, I want to add some of the classic postwar American Flyer accessories, including the Nos. 759 Bell Danger Signal and 760 Automatic

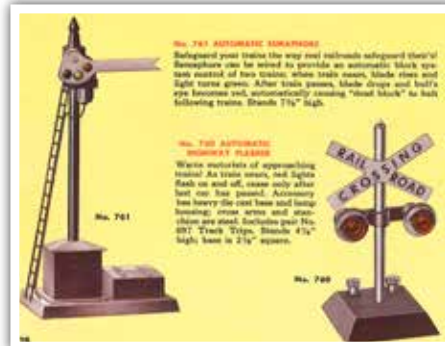
Highway Flasher. Unfortunately for me, FasTrack has no equivalent to the No. 696 Track Trips made by the A.C. Gilbert Co. to operate these neat accessories. What do you suggest? – *Daniel Nolin, Reston, Va.*

**A** There are companies offering circuit boards that can be activated by an insulated track section to send out a pulsed output to ring a bell or alternate flashing lights on the American Flyer trackside accessories you mentioned.

### Installing transient voltage suppressors

**Q** I bought transient voltage suppressors for Lionel Type-LW transformers. I'm not sure how to install them. Do they connect directly to posts A and U, bridging the two posts, or one on each post? – *Larry Brookhart, Harwich, Mass.*

**A** Your first guess is correct. The voltage suppressors bridge the A and U posts. It's almost as though you're shorting out the posts with the suppressor.



**Installing a special circuit board from a commercial source should be all you need to get American Flyer trackside accessories, including the Nos. 760 Automatic Highway Flasher and 761 Automatic Semaphore, to work on an O gauge layout.**



## Power for bascule bridge

**Q** I'm trying to install a Lionel No. 313 Bascule Bridge from the postwar era on my layout. I've followed the standard wiring diagram on the instruction sheet using a ZW transformer, and everything works. However, my postwar locomotives cut out and stop when crossing the bridge. The No. 260 Bumpers work on each end, which shows there's adequate track power. What's wrong? – *Joe Barbieri, New Britain, Conn.*

**A** The movable bridge section picks up track power from the short track section. The bridge closes on three contact pads that touch the rails. The bridge goes over the pins on the track on the other side (opposite the shed). If that track is powered, power should go through the bridge section.

## Tuning Lionel power truck

**Q** I had to replace the power truck on a Lionel postwar No. 2338 Milwaukee Road GP7 road diesel. I added a spring washer between the truck and frame since I saw it was missing. The engine now runs and coasts fairly well on O-27 track, but it doesn't seem to pull that well unless I crank up the voltage. When I do so, I notice extra

**A few pretty simple adjustments are needed to prevent a Lionel No. 2338 Milwaukee Road GP7 road diesel from shimmying on track after replacing its power truck.**

shaking and noise. The Geep shimmies laterally, especially through curves on my layout.

I cleaned and lubricated the motor, the gears, the axles, and so forth, but all the issues are still there. How do I fix them? – *Robert Czarnowski, Fort Myers, Fla.*

**A** Two fundamental points need to be addressed. First of all, are the gears in the replacement truck in very good condition? Second, has the motor been properly

served? From my experience, merely lubricating it is not enough.

Putting the spring between the truck and the frame will prevent the truck from seating properly against the frame. Putting the spring in its proper place between the motor and the frame will prevent the shimmy. Good luck. **CTD**

## HAVE A QUESTION?

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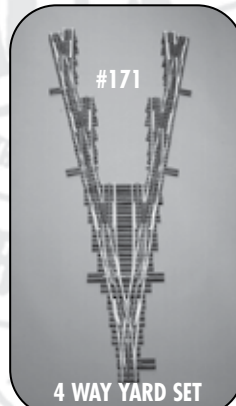
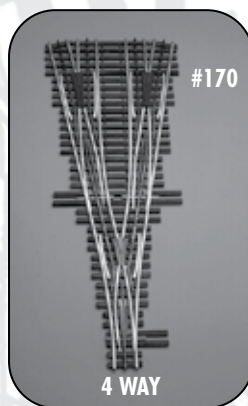
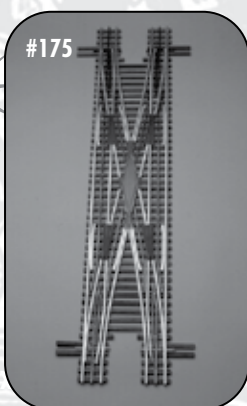
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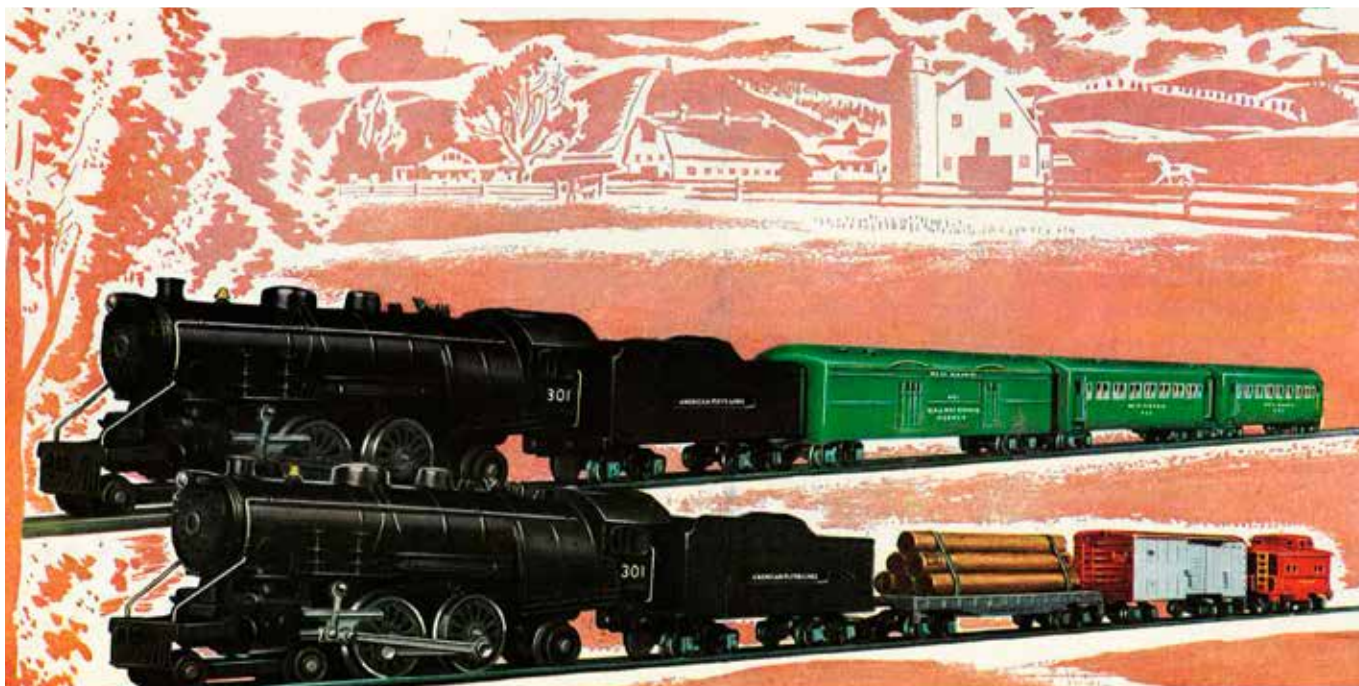
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# Osgood Bradley cars

The inspiration was outside the window



## ■ A BASIC PART OF FOLLOWING

American Flyer S gauge history is learning more about how the A.C. Gilbert Co. determined that certain cars, locomotives, and more would fit well in the line.

For example, I've always wondered about Gilbert's 1946 introduction of the "American Flyer" S gauge cars produced in the prototype by the Osgood Bradley Works of Pullman-Standard Car Manufacturing Co. in Worcester, Mass.

## The prototype

The New Haven RR commissioned Walter Dorwin Teague, a noted industrial designer, to create a streamlined passenger car, concentrating on a flush, teardrop, "air-flow" effect featuring a tubular cross section. The roof was of a turtleback type, eliminating a clerestory. Curved skirts at the bottom covered the running gear.

The original set of cars were 84 feet, 6½ inches long and 13 feet, 4 inches tall, slightly lower than standard cars. The first set of 50 was placed into service in 1935;

The Nos. 650-G green coaches and 651-G green baggage car shown as the components of American Flyer set No. 4604 were based on a prototype used by the New Haven RR.



Osgood Bradley passenger cars on the New Haven RR inspired the American Flyer models.

three years later there were 205 of them in operation on the New Haven, roughly two-thirds of the total constructed.

After W.O. Coleman consolidated with Gilbert in 1936, the firm began to phase

out its O gauge line in favor of S. It continued the Flyer line in O gauge, but made new trains in ¾ scale on O gauge track.

The designation "S" wasn't used by the Gilbert Co. until about 1950. The S gauge



"Osgood" cars were designed during World War II, and Gilbert was working on the tooling needed to make the cars.

### Catalogs offer a map

Gilbert catalog offerings starting in 1938 show the progression of the passenger cars. They were made in HO first (1938, die-cast), then O (1938, sheet metal), and then S (1946, plastic).

Gilbert made its Osgood cars at the same time the New Haven RR was fabricating prototype cars. The first O gauge Osgood-type cars were sheet metal in red, light green, Tuscan, metallic gray (for the whistling baggage car), and blue (lettered for the Baltimore & Ohio's Royal Blue).

In the catalog Gilbert released for 1946, the Osgood cars showed up first in a pair of three-car sets. The No. 4604, led by a No. 301 4-4-2 Atlantic and tender, had two No. 650-G green coaches and a matching No. 651-G baggage car. The same three cars now in red filled the No. 4609, which used a No. 312 Pennsylvania 4-6-2 Pacific.

Set No. 4621 for 1946, led by a No. 332 Union Pacific 4-8-4 locomotive and tender, offered even more. Besides a pair of

Green and red S gauge models based on the Osgood Bradley cars were used to fill sets in the American Flyer line.



the 650-R coaches done in red, the set came with a No. 718-R Automatic Mail Pick-Up Car and Control Box.

The red operating mail car and the red coach were also included in the highly desirable No. 4622 American Flyer Complete Railroad System.

To sum it up, between 1946 and 1955, Gilbert cataloged these S gauge passenger cars, adorned with white bands painted around the windows, either painted or molded in green or red. The 600-series can be found on many S gauge layouts. **CTD**

The late Don Heimberger, who wrote this account of the Osgood Bradley cars, was editor of S Gaugian magazine. Prototype photo courtesy of J.W. "Jack" Swanberg. For further information, please see Carl

Byron's articles in the May and September 1991 issues of S Gaugian. Additional information for this article was kindly provided by Flyer collector Andrew Jugle.





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WITH LOU PALUMBO

# 'Works fine, lasts a long time'

## Prewar and postwar trains run forever

### ■ ONE OF MY EMPLOYEES AT THE UNDERGROUND Railroad

Shoppe worked as a technician for a local copy machine company until he retired. Since then, he has been helping out at my store in New Castle, Pa.

Paul is a train collector and does some of my repairs. After completing a job, he typically announces, "Works fine, lasts a long time." He learned the phrase while at the copy machine business from a well-respected manufacturer's rep.

We all get a kick out of Paul's uttering that simple yet direct phrase after he has repaired a locomotive or accessory.

"Works fine, lasts a long time" has now become the standard saying at my store. In all reality, this phrase can be used to describe the many thousands of prewar and postwar toy trains that have been around for more than 110 years.

Unfortunately, as way too many of us have discovered, you can't say that about the modern locomotives and control systems being produced.

Yes, the sounds on current engines are great, and the electronic components that operate the trains can be useful. But when any of these items break, well, that is a whole new ballgame!

Most of the O and S gauge trains produced overseas are of high quality. And they are fine when they are working.

The main problem is that there is no uniformity among the huge variety of electronic components now being used in the production of trains.

If you can get the parts, they tend to be expensive. Their cost usually exceeds the value of the item being repaired.

Good old Lionel and American Flyer trains produced before 1970. Most of the parts are available and were uniform in the construction of those old beauties.

Postwar Lionel and Flyer was all I collected when I got back into this hobby.

The postwar steam engine everyone wanted was Lionel's No. 773 New York Central Hudson from 1950. At \$50 (\$583 in today's dollars), it was the highest priced die-cast steamer made in the '50s.

The No. 336 Union Pacific 4-8-4 was the most popular postwar American Flyer steam engine. It had a great streamlined presence; it looked like it was moving even when it was standing still.

The greatest thing about the postwar locomotives is most of the parts were interchangeable, and there were plenty available to complete needed repairs at a reasonable cost.

The electronic reverse units (E-units) were standard for all the motive units Lionel made during this time.

The gears were also similar and used every year with these motorized units.

The locomotives were not really complicated to assemble and disassemble for repairs.

Once repaired, any of the Lionel or American Flyer engines would definitely, in Paul's words, "Work fine, last a long time."

Smoke, horn, or whistle were the only options in the locomotives produced during that era. Those engines required only the commands that controlled them with the off and on handle on each transformer. We were never bored operating the trains of that era. Call me old school, but I loved them then and still do.

The heavy die-cast metal steam engines and colorful plastic diesels of the most popular road names led the parade for kids of all ages to enjoy in that era.

When you repair one of these great engines, you can proudly declare, "Works fine, lasts a long time."

Keep searchin'. **CTD**

**LOU PALUMBO**, the owner of the Underground Railroad Shoppe in New Castle, Pa., writes this exclusive column for *Classic Toy Trains*. He can be reached at 1906 Wilmington Rd., New Castle, PA 16105 or by email at [trainplum@yahoo.com](mailto:trainplum@yahoo.com)



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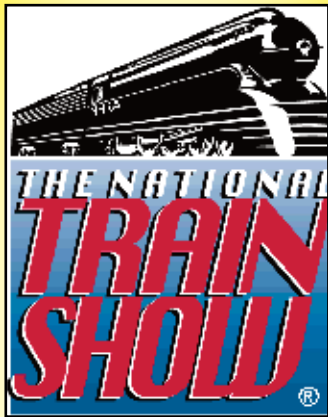
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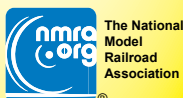
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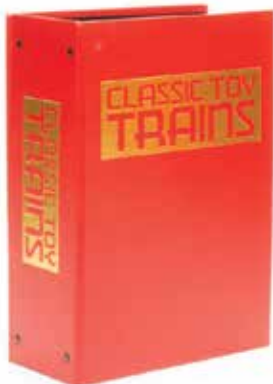
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Tim Price keeps upping his S gauge game

# *Better & better* **FLYER LAYOUTS**

STORY BY ROGER CARP ● Photos by Tim Price



Watching an American Flyer No. 300AC Reading Lines 4-4-2 Atlantic steam engine operate so smoothly and dependably on Tim Price's S gauge railroad makes viewers believe they're suddenly back in the postwar era right before the holiday season.



**D**edicated American Flyer enthusiast Tim Price may tell friends and fellow toy train lovers that he resides in a house, but a department store is more like it. So what if there are bedrooms and a kitchen at the Price residence. It hardly matters that visitors can recognize a front porch, a backyard, and a garage on the property.

What makes us say that Tim and his wife, Doreen, live in a department store? You won't discover a men's department, a households area, or a beauty salon at the Prices'. Nor will you chance upon a counter where they can return items or an escalator that can ferry them up and down from one floor to the next.

Still, a look at the 6 x 9-foot S gauge layout Tim recently finished leaves viewers imagining they've traveled back more than half a century to awaken inside a retail center the likes of which hardly exists anymore. They can envision strolling through a toy department whose new highlight is an operating display of Flyer trains and accessories surrounded by Plasticville and Marx structures.

Of course, what has been gathering compliments and winning over Flyer fans is Tim's latest tribute to the postwar models he admires. Since the dawn of the 21st century, Tim has arranged vintage track and buildings from the postwar era to form a spectacular compact layout reminiscent of the displays built to sell Flyer products when he was young. Without further ado, let's take the elevator down to where trains are on display to seek out Tim's latest and greatest S gauge railroad.

### ■ Curious origins

When Tim introduced himself to the staff of *Classic Toy Trains* and expressed his passion for the electric trains and other sorts of playthings manufactured and marketed by the A.C. Gilbert Co. back in the 1940s and '50s, we all assumed he had been given an American Flyer set not long after his birth and had never quit adding to it. How else could we explain his passion for those S gauge trains and the impressive group in his collection?

Turns out Tim's start in the hobby is more curious and unexpected. On the one hand, he is about the right age to have been given a Black Diamond freight set or an Arrow Passenger set. Yet at no point did Tim rhapsodize about receiving a classic Flyer train when he was growing up and spending hours playing with it.



Everyone has fun watching and operating Tim Price's American Flyer layout. Even the cows bouncing around the No. 771 stockyard and climbing up the ramp to enter the No. 736 Missouri Pacific stockcar on their way to the nearest meat market have a smile.



The temperature has climbed into the triple digits on this July day, which explains why no one is lounging around the Plasticville U.S.A. swimming pool. Let's hope the folks relaxing indoors can still see the pristine Flyer No. 283 Chicago & North Western 4-6-2 Pacific striding past.



Seriously, Tim didn't relate stories about how as a kid he would sprawl on the floor with the lights out and watch a steamer circle past him with its headlight shining through the darkness. He never recalled a grandparent or an uncle constructing a simple S gauge layout with a few accessories for him to enjoy.

"I got my first train in November 1996" – thus did Tim tell us about his origins in the hobby. Pressed for information, he added cryptically, "Well, maybe I should have said that I inherited my first train back then. You see, my parents bought a Flyer freight set in 1950. I briefly remember playing with it as a boy."

Let's take the man at his word and figure that even if he dipped his toes in the hobby waters more than 60 years ago, he didn't plunge in until 25 years ago. Once immersed, Tim refused to dry off. His commitment to Flyer equals that of most

## Tim's commitment to Flyer equals that of most other S gaugers. It may be greater, as he builds a new layout every year!

other S gaugers. It may be greater, as he builds a new layout every year!

### ■ New start

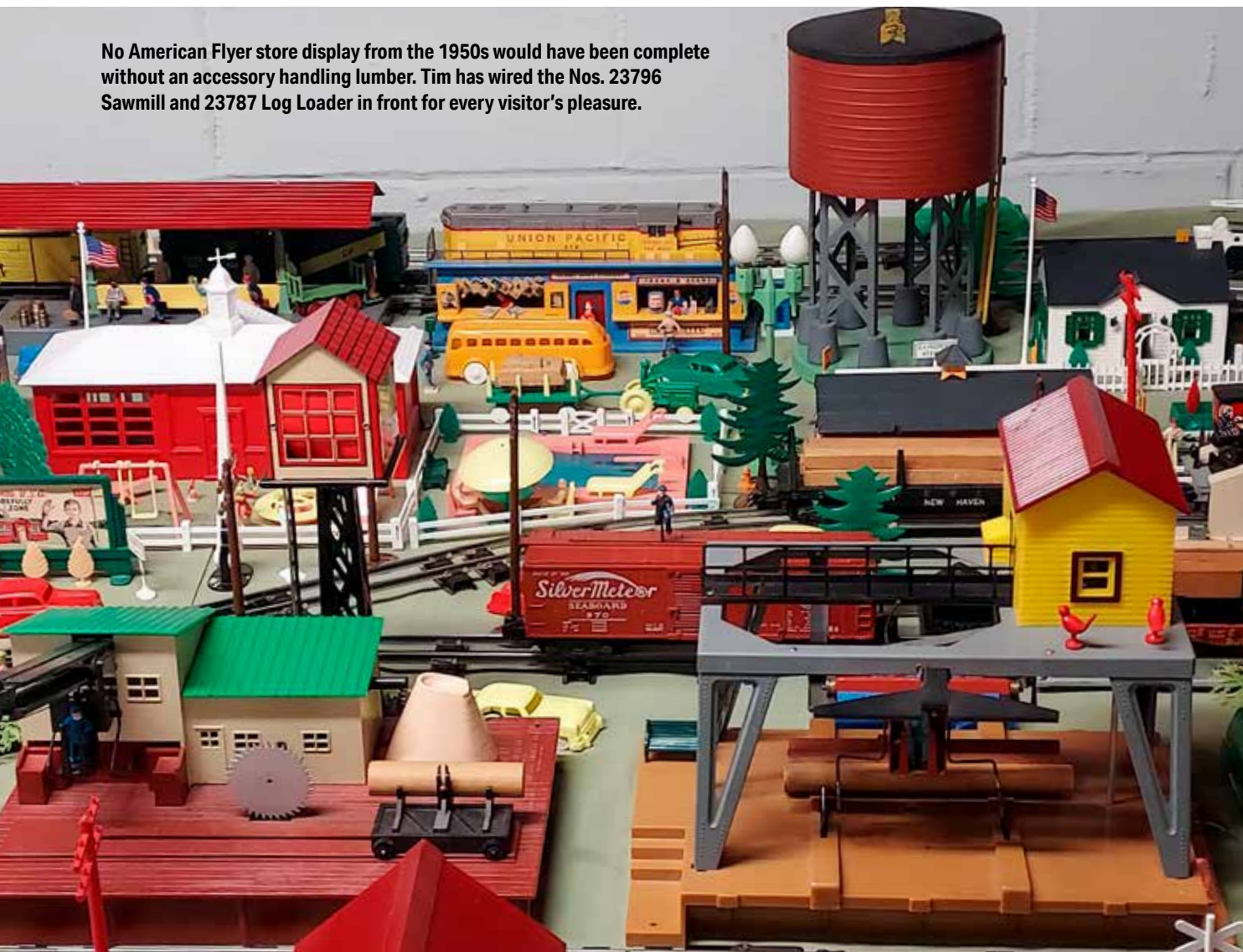
Pause to allow this last fact to sink in. Tim starts over every November. No matter how pleased Doreen and their children (Brandon and Erin) may have been with the layout he built, the head of the family takes everything down come February. Tim carefully packs up the trains and accessories, disassembles the network of postwar track and switches, and moves on to some other pastimes.

How many other layout builders, regardless of gauge or scale, dare to spend

months creating something spectacular and entertaining only to tear it down and start over? Though Tim needs less than a month to build a layout, he follows this ritual because he believes his next one will be the best one he's ever built.

And what will distinguish Tim's upcoming layout? As with the one shown here, he probably will have picked up another freight loader, signal, or structure and so wants to find a place for it. Possibly, he's decided on a slightly different arrangement of the track. Whatever the change, he's ready to innovate and provide his family with another exciting and colorful tribute to American Flyer.

No American Flyer store display from the 1950s would have been complete without an accessory handling lumber. Tim has wired the Nos. 23796 Sawmill and 23787 Log Loader in front for every visitor's pleasure.





This reminds us of how display artists affiliated with department stores in the postwar era needed to accomplish the same thing. They also were required to take down whatever they had created to entice shoppers prior to Christmas – there were new toys and other items to promote in picture windows and near sales counters. Come the autumn, though, and they would resume planning for the holidays with an operating layout they believed would be even more magnificent.

Like those now-forgotten department store employees, Tim devoted the final weeks of this past year to arranging track and wiring accessories and transformers atop a table. It was going to be layout number 23 since 1996!

### ■ Latest masterpiece

The dimensions of Tim's layout resemble those of a ping-pong table. The platform stands 31 inches off the floor. Its top layer consists of three pieces of particle board on which Tim lays the postwar straights, curves, and switches he inherited.

Tim doesn't nail or screw down any of the track. Instead, he places it on the particle board, which has green bedsheets over it to suggest ground cover.

Asked about controlling the trains, Tim directs attention to the American Flyer transformers located at the right side of his layout. The Nos. 4B, 8B, and 22050 date from postwar days have been his since he returned to the hobby.

Lines of 20-gauge wire wind around the exterior. Tim splices connecting lines (also made using 20-gauge wire) into the bus lines for towers, lights, and non-operating illuminated accessories. The Nos. 760 Highway Flasher and 23759 Bell Danger Signal depend on the same arrangement. The direction of the turnouts is changed manually with No. 720A Switches.

Virtually all the accessories are Gilbert items from the postwar era. There are exceptions, such as the three Marx towers and the Junior Bridge Co. No. 401 Signal Bridge. Tim likes the distinctive look of the bridges, maybe as much as he likes the tinplate billboards from American Flyer and Plasticville, plus old cereal boxes.

### ■ Where next?

Tim hopes everyone has been smitten with his home display. Everything folks appreciate about postwar trains – their colors, their animation, and their excitement – characterizes his compact railroad. It does



**American Flyer cabooses – regular and action – swing under the Junior Bridge signal bridge Tim recently acquired to wire in place on his newest layout. He placed a figure on top, one of the many details he adds to his layouts to improve their appearance and entertain his guests.**



**Classic steam and diesel locomotives handle freight trains on Tim's enjoyable layout. We'll look forward to seeing what he does next to accommodate the postwar accessories and buildings he continues to add to his collection. Tim tells collectors to fill their operating displays with everything they can ever acquire.**

carry you back to the time when operating layouts like his filled department stores in the weeks before Christmas, thrilling children and filling their dreams.

However, our host informs us, the layout is history. Tim took it apart and put the components in storage. "Layouts don't have to be time consuming, extravagant,

or permanent for you to find enjoyment in this hobby," he declares.

To the contrary, Tim has found meaning and accomplishment in starting anew each year. No wonder friends and family can't wait to see what he comes up with right after Doreen and he have cleared the dishes after Thanksgiving. **CTT**





Steven Blotner  
preserves the  
history of our  
hobby

# WHERE DISPLAYS *COME TO LIFE*

STORY BY ROGER CARP ● Photos by Ben Lake





Take your first steps into the veritable museum Steven Blotner has developed over a lifetime devoted to collecting American toy trains, and you're all but guaranteed to feel blown away by the endless assortment of commercial displays, signs, posters, and so much more credited to American Flyer, Ives, and Lionel.

"Quite a collection" were the words photographer Ben Lake and I uttered in unison when walking into the three enormous rooms Steven Blotner devotes to his toy trains. Then all at once the realization hit my friend and me that what we were viewing could hardly be described as a collection. To call it a collection suddenly seemed much too limiting. No, what we saw on our visit and now will present to readers of *Classic Toy Trains* should best be judged as a museum.

After all, what else other than a museum showcases toy trains and accessories from every era of domestic production in the 20th century? And what else offers fortunate visitors opportunities to discover some of the most important items manufactured and marketed by notable firms, including American Flyer Manufacturing, Dorfan, the A.C. Gilbert Co., Ives, Kusan, Louis Marx & Co., and, of course, Lionel?

Truly, a lifetime of interest in and powerful commitment to

American toy trains has enabled Steven to assemble a veritable museum dedicated to preserving the history of the hobby through the vast assortment of Standard, O, and S gauge displays he has found, maintained, and restored. Countertop and shelf displays, operating layouts, presentation items, posters and signs, plus showroom relics stand out.

Steven has dedicated one area in his terrific museum to Lionel, American Flyer, and Marx hobby store signs. He has almost every decal Lionel sent to its authorized service stations from the 1930s well into the 1970s, along with so many of the different tools, parts, and testing equipment Lionel provided to them.

Arranged here are pieces which by themselves would be centerpieces of a spectacular collection, but for Steven represent elements or components of a grander and more significant entity. We take pride in introducing a few of the highlights of his museum and are grateful for Steven's hospitality. Other key and influential features will be presented in future issues of CTT.





### ■ Ives art, “poster” stamps, and promotional offer of a conductor’s outfit

In any museum, despite knowing which area will appeal most to your interests, you feel a bit obligated to start at the beginning with the earliest artifacts. Visitors to Steven’s museum end up feeling glad they did that and went to the small group of items created by Ives Manufacturing Corp. more than 100 years ago. There is colorful artwork used for the lid of a boxed set from 1909-10, the 12 orange and black “poster” stamps printed in 1915-16 to promote six of the firm’s locomotives and six of the toys in its Struktiron line of pressed-steel structures and models, and an advertisement from 1927 explaining how kids would receive a miniature conductor’s “outfit” with every set purchased. You don’t have to wonder – yes, Steven owns one of the outfits (in its original cardboard box), which consisted of a red and blue conductor’s hat as well as a ticket punch and tickets plus lapel pins.



### ■ Lionel No. 178 O Gauge Scenic Railway from 1922

The oldest example of a display owned by Steven is this pristine example of one of the Scenic Railways shown in the Lionel consumer catalog for 1922. Both individuals and commercial businesses could purchase one of these 3 x 5-foot operating displays with a train doing laps around the compact loop of O gauge track. The cost about a century ago amounted to \$100 east of the Missouri River and \$120 west to the Pacific Ocean. For what computes to \$1,674 and \$2,008, respectively in today’s dollars, you received a three-car passenger outfit (No. 150 locomotive with a pair of No. 603 Pullman cars and a No. 604 observation, along with one each of the Nos. 62 Semaphore, 069 Electric Signal, 118 Tunnel, and 124 Station, and five of the No. 60 Telegraph Poles and four illuminated metal houses.





### ■ Lionel No. 1536 Mickey Mouse Circus Train Outfit

In 1935, not long after Lionel climbed back to solid financial footing after entering receivership the previous year, it cemented its relationship with Walt Disney Studios with a spectacular mechanical train that featured a locomotive and tender combination with Mickey Mouse appearing to shovel coal into the firebox. The "stoker tender" was promoted by a special store display and then starred with the wind-up version of the Commodore Vanderbilt engine on the No. 1536 Mickey Mouse Circus Train Outfit. Priced at \$2, the rare item included a cardboard tent, flagpole, gas station, Sunoco billboard, circus vehicles, and figures, along with a book of circus tickets for admittance to the fun.

### ■ Lionel No. 51 Airport Mock-Up Carrying Case

Steven expresses a special fondness for the lineup of outstanding playthings Lionel put on the market in 1936. In addition to the new No. 238W replica of the Pennsylvania RR's Torpedo streamlined steam engine and tender, the corporation offered two speedboats and a brand-new airplane. Children given the No. 50 Lionel Airplane could pretend to be flying across the country, delivering mail and transporting travelers. The cardboard base included with the single-engine plane illustrated landing spots all over America. Frank Pettit, then working at the showroom Lionel maintained in New York City, created a carrying case for a folded No. 51 Airport. The mock-up never went into production, so he kept it in his home for the rest of his life. Steven purchased the one-of-a-kind item a few years after Pettit died in November of 2000.







### ■ Signals from Lionel Showrooms

Not one area of Steven's museum should be overlooked or passed through nonchalantly. Even so, certain spots deserve more time so an observer can soak up what is there and think about its significance in the history of Lionel. In this corner are artifacts reminding viewers of the showrooms the firm established. The towering semaphore once stood in the office in Chicago. As for the cardboard crossbucks, the white one in the rear may have been used in the New York showroom while the smaller gray one on the left was the mock-up developed by Frank Pettit and kept in his home. Working after World War II as the development engineer at Lionel, he devised many operating cars and accessories, along with this signal.



### ■ American Flyer No. 152 Illuminated Wall Display

For reasons Steven can't quite explain, finding American Flyer displays from the post-World War II era has always been more challenging than acquiring those associated with Lionel. Always up for something new and difficult, he has made adding displays from the A.C. Gilbert Co. more of a priority in recent years. Besides a handful of Erector Set store displays, Steven takes pride in the ones he owns that were designed and constructed for the purpose of promoting American Flyer S gauge trains and accessories, including this No. 152 from 1955. A merchant probably would have loaded the illuminated shelves with a few examples of the latest cataloged sets. Steven, however, is content simply to operate the 4 x 6-foot layout and its top-of-the-line accessories, such as the Nos. 769A Aircraft Beacon, 774 Floodlight Tower, 779 Oil Drum Loader, 787 Log Loader, and 799 Talking Union Station.



### ■ Lionel No. D-147 O Gauge Display Layout

A slick assortment of store paraphernalia – service station decals, metal placards, and painted signs – surround the large Lionel and American Flyer layouts Steven has carefully placed in a central portion of the smaller of his enormous train rooms. Here, our attention is riveted on the No. D-147, a two-level railroad that Lionel made available to authorized accounts for the

holiday season of 1955. The 5 x 9-foot layout boasted some of the latest accessories and animated cars, with the Nos. 193 Industrial Water Tower, 282R Portal Gantry Crane, 362 Barrel Loader, 445 Switch Tower, and 3482 Milk Car and Platform standing out. Steven runs a variety of postwar trains; today, a New Haven freight set is dashing through the middle of the D-147.





### ■ Plasticville and Lionel Layout

Steven puts great effort into learning the history of each of the extraordinary number of neat displays and other unique items he has acquired during his lifetime of collecting. Other hobbyists gladly assist him, and answers generally surface. But the story behind this operating display featuring several Plasticville U.S.A. structures and a loop of Lionel track has eluded him to this point. Most likely, the layout was developed by Bachmann Bros., the Philadelphia business that manufactured the easy-to-assemble kits and other details filling the Plasticville lineup in the postwar period. Sometime in the late 1950s, it negotiated an agreement with Lionel to sell the train maker different sorts of buildings and related items used to fill orange-and-blue boxes. The products were colorfully illustrated in Lionel's annual consumer catalogs between 1958 and '62. To increase sales for both companies, this wonderful operating display was made. Where it originally was located and for how remain questions we can only hope Steven will be able to answer in the near future.



### ■ Sterling Plastics Pencil Sharpener Display

Here's something curious and rare. In 1963 only, Lionel cataloged the No. 6407 Flatcar with Missile as an outfit component and a separate-sale item. The load was a white plastic rocket topped by a dark blue Mercury capsule. Rather than making the load, Lionel purchased it from the Sterling Plastics Co., located in Union, N.J., near the Lionel factory. The capsules installed on the vast majority of rockets on 6407 cars lacked a sharpener, because Lionel was selling trains and not school supplies and so had no reason to order rockets with sharpeners. However, a few models may have come with a sharpener, which makes Steven's rare Sterling display all the more fascinating.

### ■ Marx The Meteor Operating Layout

Louis Marx & Co. flooded the prewar and postwar toy markets with inexpensive metal and plastic train sets. So eager were families for the low-end engines and rolling stock that Marx hardly felt the need to promote its trains with operating displays. Very likely only small quantities were ever produced, and even smaller numbers have been reported as having survived as prized parts of contemporary collections. Steven takes pride in the basic layout he added not too long ago. It dates from the middle of the 1970s, after Marx developed the No. 2915 Meteor three-car freight set, which was led by a battery-powered Lehigh Valley General Electric 70-ton diesel switcher. Don't miss the blue battery box and controller that came packed inside the sturdy cardboard box. **CTT**





a young railroader find under his Christmas tree a powerful twin diesel puller... 35 1/2-in. overall! Newly designed, realistic locomotive with oilless bronze bearings. Locomotive, cars of sturdy steel construction. Silver colored cars. Set consists of: control, forward or reverse. Locomotive, 2 passenger cars, 27x36-in. track; 2 straight, 8 curved sections. Locomotive; coal-water tender; 1 observation, 2 passenger cars. 27x36-in. track; 2 straight, 8 curved sections. Underwriters approved transformer. Track connector. Cord and plug are included. 110-120 volt AC only. 35 Y 4805E—Mailable. Shipping weight 8 pounds. **9.65**

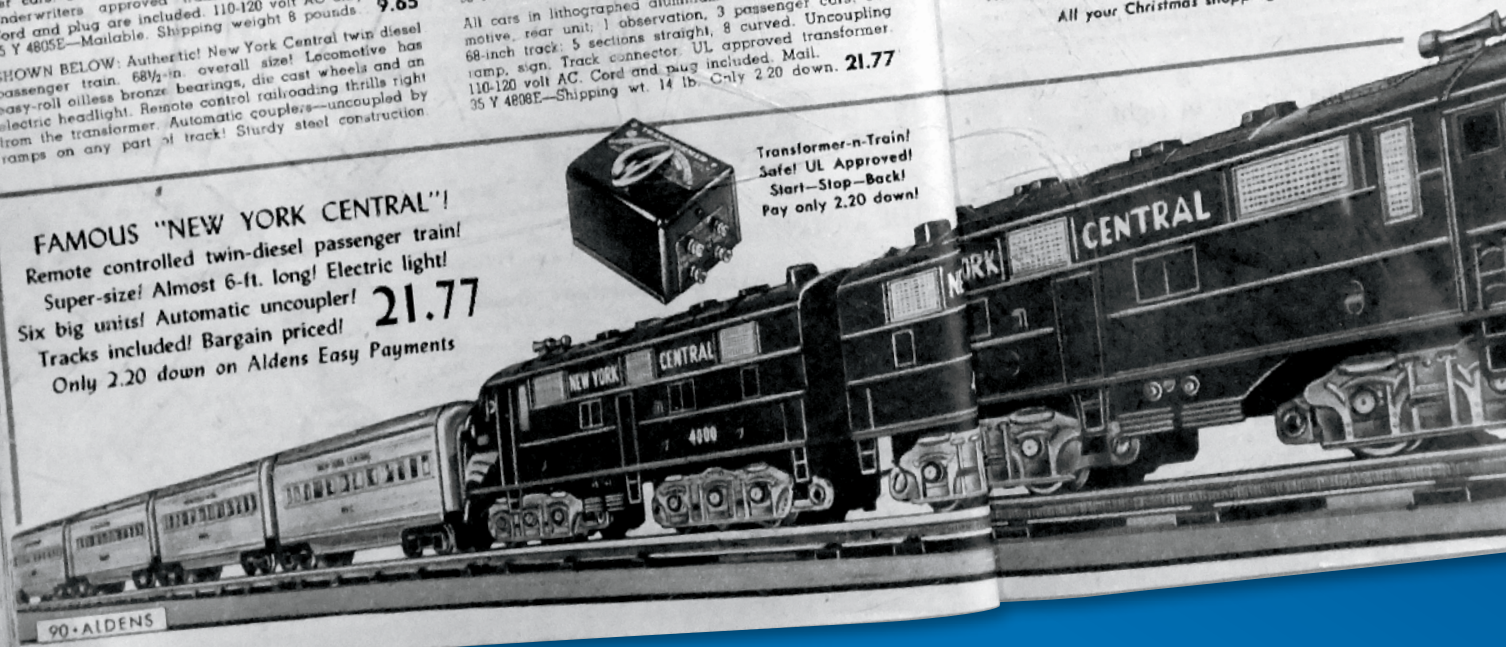
made of... road design. Consists of: Electric... car, gondola, caboose, box car, 8 sections of... track, track connector, UL appd. transformer. Assembled train measures a big 35 1/2-inches overall. Track measures 27-inches in diameter, 84-inch circumference. 110-120 volt AC. Cord and plug included. Shipping weight 7 lb. **7.89**  
35 Y 4804E—Mailable. Shipping weight 7 lb. **7.89**  
All cars in lithographed aluminum color. 6 units: Locomotive, rear unit; 1 observation, 3 passenger cars. 34x68-inch track; 5 sections straight, 8 curved. Uncoupling ramp, sign. Track connector. UL approved transformer. 110-120 volt AC. Cord and plug included. Mail. 35 Y 4808E—Shipping wt. 14 lb. Only 2.20 down. **21.77**

4. Junior... powerful twin diesel puller... They can slow it down on curves; speed it up... stretches; run it forward or back it around the track—just like a real train—all by remote control! Lithographed steel locomotive is authentically designed, has oilless bronze bearings, die-cast wheels and a bright headlight. Authentic railroad design rolling stock of lithographed...  
All your Christmas shopping can be done on Aldens Easy

**FAMOUS "NEW YORK CENTRAL!"**  
Remote controlled twin-diesel passenger train!  
Super-size! Almost 6-ft. long! Electric light!  
Six big units! Automatic uncoupler! **21.77**  
Tracks included! Bargain priced!  
Only 2.20 down on Aldens Easy Payments



Transformer-n-Train!  
Safe! UL Approved!  
Start—Stop—Back!  
Pay only 2.20 down!



## UNCATALOGED

# Marx NYC passenger set

This elegant O scale train was available only by mail order

STORY BY ALBERT WOODWARD ● Photos by Ruth Levander

**T**he most attractive and significant toy trains of the post-World War II period didn't always appear in their manufacturer's cataloged line. This insight, applicable to Lionel O gauge trains, was especially true with the O gauge trains produced and marketed by Louis Marx & Co. and the S gauge trains made by the A.C. Gilbert Co.

A noteworthy example is an impressive Marx New York Central passenger train available by mail order from a Chicago-based firm during the holiday season of 1954. The overlooked set, led by twin E7 diesels and featuring three silver coaches with interior illumination and a matching observation, deserves much more attention.

### ■ Scale toy trains

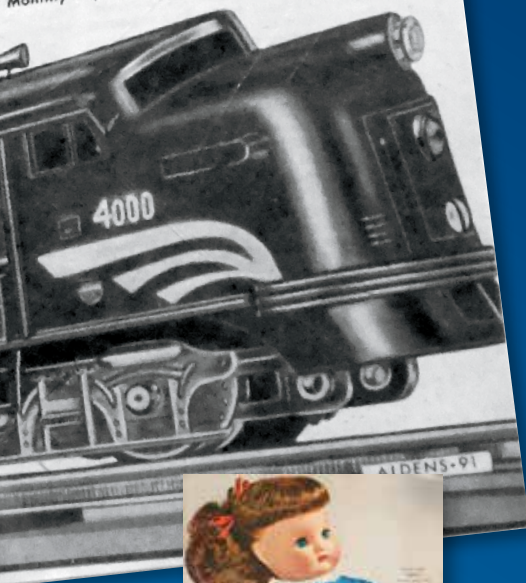
The New York Central set developed by Marx carried forward a trend launched by the Gilbert Co. in 1939 for its American Flyer line of O gauge trains. Namely, models built to the scale of 3/16" to the foot and intended to run over three-rail track. In reality, many of the Gilbert items were actually made smaller.

Three years later, Marx released the first of its freight cars made from actual railroad blueprints to the scale of 3/16" to the foot. At the time, these new scale-series freight cars were the most realistic ready-to-run items available.

After the U.S. entered World War II, federal restrictions caused Marx and other firms to suspend production of metal toy trains. Lionel resumed manufacturing in



connector. The  
ed. Add this train to your Easy  
unt. See page 181 for details.  
4806E—Mailable. Shipping weight 10 pounds. 12.25  
Monthly Payments. See page 181 for details.



The Christmas catalog issued by mail-order giant Aldens for 1954 showed a Marx streamlined passenger train with New York Central graphics. The spectacular set was available through Aldens and never added to the line cataloged by Marx.



Serving as the motive power for the Aldens passenger set was a pair of No. 4000 New York Central E7 cab units (cataloged as the Nos. 1094 and 1094D), only one of which came with a motor. Note the longer version of the white wing-shaped stripes at the front.



For less than \$22, owners of the Aldens train set acquired three of the No. 3557 illuminated coaches and a matching observation, along with track and a small transformer.

1945, and Marx and Gilbert began again a year later, although the latter firm decided to switch its line from O gauge to S gauge.

Marx, however, continued to focus on producing O gauge locomotives and rolling stock. And it stayed with its scale series of models until about 1955.

### ■ Time for more streamliners

Marx marketed a few engines and cars featuring the name and graphics of two of the best-known railroads: New York Central and Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe. In doing so, it competed with models from Lionel.

According to listings found in the third volume of *Greenberg's Guide to Marx Trains* (published in 1991), Marx released a steam passenger set in 1950 decorated for the New York Central. The No. 35150 had a No. 333 4-6-2 Pacific and tender. The combination pulled a trio of streamlined New York Central cars painted two shades of gray: Nos. 234 coach, 234 Vista-Dome, and 236 observation.

Marx cataloged the No. 35250 New

York Central passenger set the next two years. It came with the same steam engine and tender and three passenger cars; the sole difference was that instead of 14 pieces of track there were now 16.

Next to dominate the cataloged line put out by Marx was a series of diesel passenger sets whose motive power and cars came painted silver and lettered for Santa Fe. The Nos. 44124, 44444, 44544, 44564, and 44644 sets all featured No. 1095 Santa Fe E7 A units (one powered and one unpowered) on the point. Most of them consisted of Nos. 3152 coach, 3152 Vista-Dome, and 3197 observation.

### ■ Ready for the Central

Product developers at Marx must have realized they were missing a great opportunity to appeal to youngsters with a streamlined silver passenger set bearing New York Central graphics. Oddly enough, the one they created was never cataloged.

Instead, the elegant train shown here,

consisting of powered and unpowered No. 4000 New York Central E7 A units, three No. 3557 coaches, and a No. 3558 observation, was offered exclusively in the mail-order catalog put out by Aldens for the holiday season of 1954. Founded in 1889, Aldens had grown during the first half of the 20th century to become the fourth largest mail-order distributor in the U.S. It also built up a network of retail stores in the Midwest.

The black-and-white artwork in the Aldens catalog failed to convey the beauty of the sleek diesels and the silver illuminated passenger cars with their blue lettering and colorful inserted strips illustrated with the faces of travelers.

Missing from the Aldens set was one of the No. 3557 New York Central Vista-Dome cars. Few of the great-looking models are known to exist, possibly because the Central never owned a dome car. The clearances in Grand Central Terminal in New York City were too tight for a dome car to pass through. **CTT**






*Building a*

# FARMHOUSE SCENE

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CHRIS MONTAGNA





Chris Montagna transformed a bare spot of plywood on his O gauge layout into this great-looking scene. He also added some elevation.

## Plus some helpful tips to get rid of that flatland look

**W**hile drinking coffee and running trains early one Saturday morning, my eyes suddenly focused on a spot of bare plywood on my O gauge layout. My goal for this area has always been to build a farm scene. I had the Woodland Scenics barn, windmill, and cows plus the Old Homestead structure. As I looked at the half-finished scene, I thought about how I could complete it.

One thing I see far too often in model railroading is flat ground. We use plywood to build our tables, lay our track, and then toss some ground cover on the plywood. While this can look finished, it's not all that realistic. I think we need to have ground elevation changes, even as small as a half-inch. In O scale that's 24 inches.

### ■ The hills are alive

These undulations create more depth to your scene. Planning for this before building makes life much easier. However, the inspiration may not strike for months or even years after the layout is built.

A way I planned for this on my layout is the scene where I built a lake. This area was empty for four years before I finished it. My layout is made of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " plywood with  $\frac{1}{2}$ " Homasote on top. I cut away the latter in specific areas where there wouldn't be track, specifically where "water" is now. This created a natural elevation change without cutting the plywood, which can cause its own set of problems, especially if you're planning to use water effects.

In the farm area there was only plywood, so the only place to go was up. I cut some  $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood and screwed it to the table. This created a higher-elevation area for the house to sit on. I cut a width of  $\frac{1}{4}$ " plywood for the driveway lane and screwed that down, making a grade from the layout base to the top of the elevation.

Then I used Sculptamold with various shades of brown acrylic paint mixed in to create terrain and slopes. I tried to cover the top of any plywood with that material to ensure the ground had texture beyond





A scrap of 3/4" plywood raises the terrain. A 1/4" piece for the driveway serves as the transition.



After contouring with Sculptamold, Chris added static grass in various lengths and colors.



Details really make the scene. A truck, a water pump, and fencing make visitors look closely.

just ground cover. Once that had dried, I began to add layers of ground foam.

### ■ Adding some detail

With my static-grass applicator, I added a blanket of 4mm across most of the scene. That was followed by large patches of 7mm and smaller patches of 12mm grass. I made sure to use an assortment of colors for a more natural look. This is an old farm and not a suburban neighborhood!

This project represented my first real attempt at using static grass, and overall I'm happy with how it turned out. One benefit of using static grass is it sticks only where you've added glue.

I used a mini shop vac with a paper towel over the end to suck up the loose grass and capture it for reuse. After 15 minutes drying time, running the vacuum over the grass helped it stand up straight.

For a small patch of corn, I used Brennan's ground cover in fine and coarse blends. I applied that with thinned white glue, let it dry, and drilled holes for JTT Products cornstalks. I didn't glue them in place; they have a good friction fit.

### ■ Fence me in

I used Woodland Scenics Barbed Wire Fence as a perimeter around half the property. Honestly, I didn't realize it was barbed wire; it just looks like an old steel fence. The posts come in a light brown, almost tan color. I added a minimal coat of a darker brown on the posts.

To install the posts, I simply drilled spaced holes and set the posts in them. Again, I opted not to glue in case I need to adjust them down the road.

The fence is a decent length, and it runs along half the property line of the farm. I added some long golden field grass tufts around the posts.

One area I had a clear vision for was the driveway lane. I used Brennan's fine ground cover over its total width. Then I added sand from the same source. I created tire tracks in it, then glued it down with diluted white glue before adding weed tufts to enhance the unkempt look.

To finish the scene, I wanted an old farm truck. I found a shiny black 1934 pickup at my local hobby shop. Having it

## ON THE WEB

You can view this project from start to finish on Chris's YouTube video "Creating an O Scale Farm Scene," which documents the process. <https://youtu.be/6MGo504Mogc>



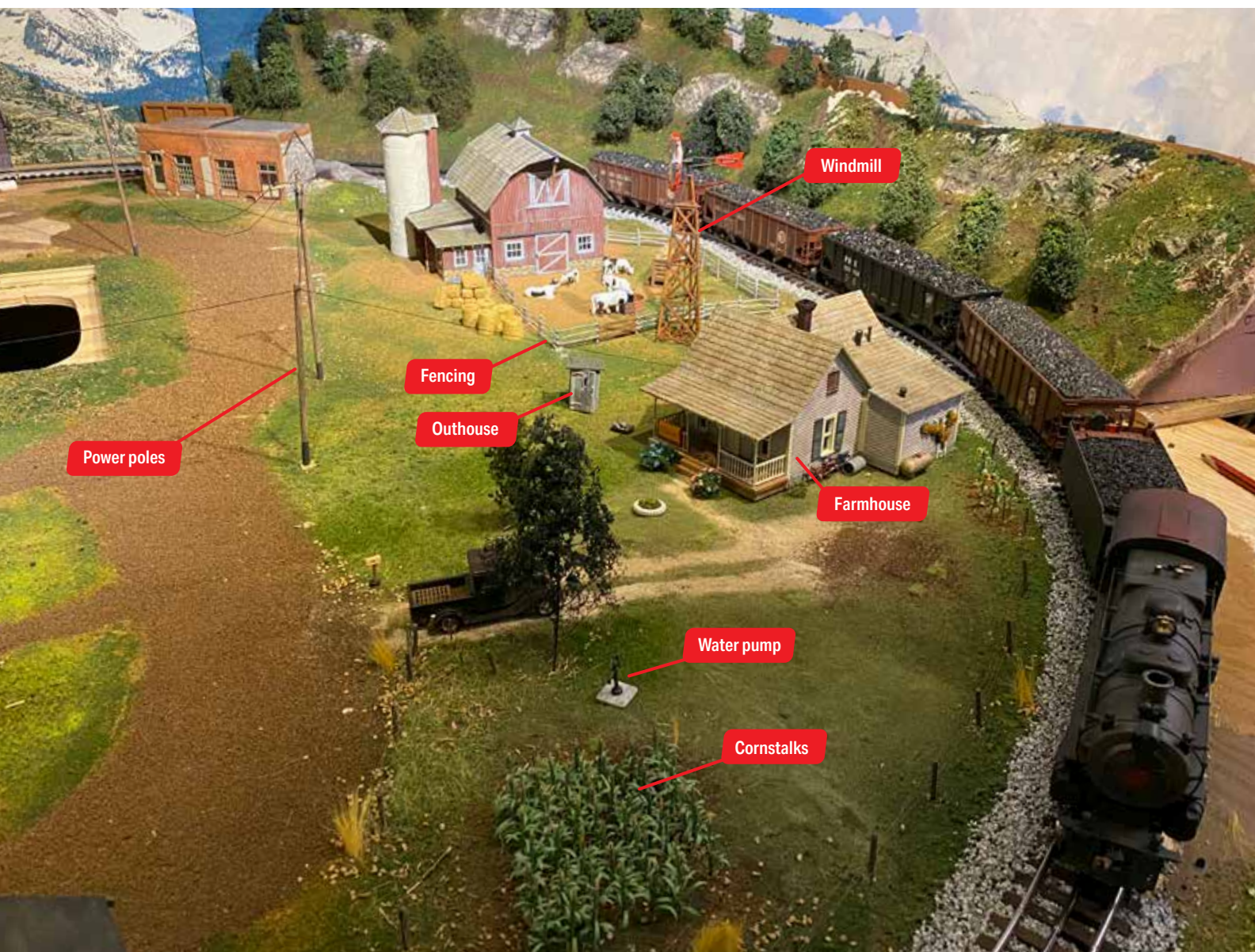
look brand-new wouldn't do, so I took it to the workbench and weathered it. This process involved some acrylic paint, a lot of weathering powders, and a matte clear coat. My goal was to really "grime it up!" Finally, I had some laser-cut wood pallets handy, so I glued one up, weathered it, and plopped down on the truck bed.

### ■ The old homestead

To wrap up this project I used the Woodland Scenics Utility System to connect the house to the electrical "grid," placed the other detail parts that came with the house, and added some Scenic Express SuperTrees to the property. This scene was in a "finished" stage in about 36 hours, though there are more details to come. I also need to add some layers to the static grass to enhance the dimension. **CTD**



Chris went for that rustic look with dirt in some places, grass in others, and details all over.





**1** The O gauge railroad built by the Train Masters of Babylon may encompass more than 2,400 square feet, but the level of detailing equals that on a layout much smaller. This station scene comes alive, thanks to the figures, signs, lights, and billboards.





# ADVERSITY MOTIVATED CONSTRUCTION

Nothing could  
stop the Train  
Masters of  
Babylon

STORY BY ROGER CARP ● Photos by Pat Nardella







**Members of the Train Masters of Babylon, based in Farmingdale, N.Y., range in age and hobby experience. Officers welcome everyone to help with the club's large O gauge layout.**

**“T**hrive on adversity.” Have you ever seen this short yet wise statement before? Maybe from an arcade machine where, after depositing a nickel, you learned your weight and got a ticket printed with an adage. Or perhaps the fortune inside a cookie handed out at your favorite Chinese restaurant.

In reality, the view you can “Thrive on adversity” can be traced to Babylon. Only we’re not referring to the fabled city in the ancient Middle East. The source of this three-word idea is a town on Long Island.

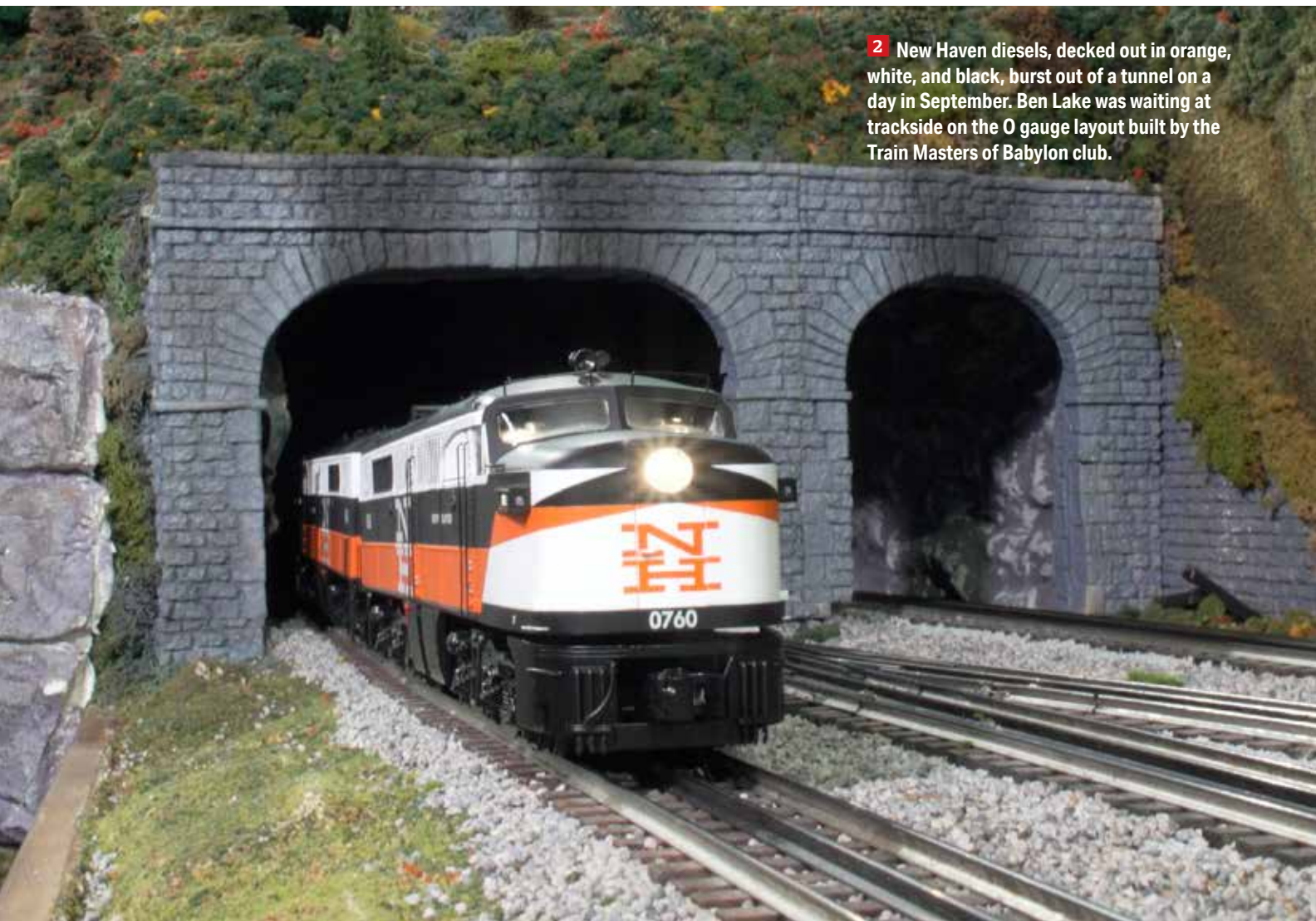
No need to confuse you. A club of skilled and devoted O gauge modelers has learned from its experience over the past three decades how to thrive on adversity.

The Train Masters of Babylon have built some great three-rail displays while overcoming major obstacles. Their latest layout, spanning 41 x 60 feet and open to the public, demonstrates how smart and talented hobbyists can solve problems to create something truly spectacular.

### **First things first**

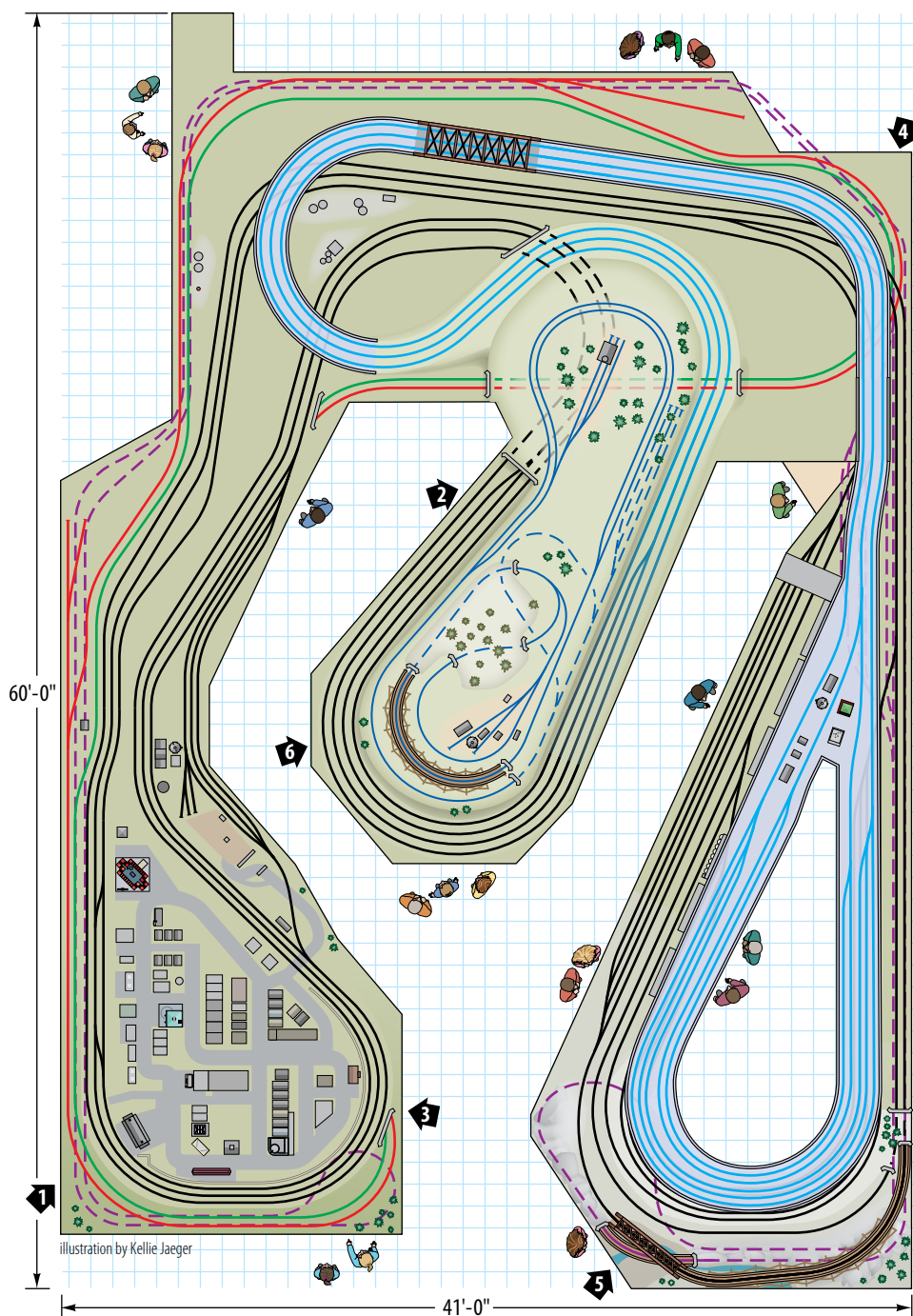
Before looking back at the instances of adversity the members of the TMB have overcome, let’s pay attention to how the club has thrived since seven O gauge enthusiasts established it back in March of 1994. In fact, why don’t we take a good look at how the organization is picking up momentum now. An overview of the current three-rail spectacle during a typical open house will be just perfect.

Folks arriving at the current location in Farmingdale, N.Y., often have the opportunity to meet with the club’s officers. President Dave Williams, Vice President Bill Hugues, Treasurer Mike Fiorella, and



**2** New Haven diesels, decked out in orange, white, and black, burst out of a tunnel on a day in September. Ben Lake was waiting at trackside on the O gauge layout built by the Train Masters of Babylon club.





## AT A GLANCE

**Train Masters of Babylon (120 Schmitt Blvd., Farmingdale, NY 11735)**

**Gauge:** O

**Dimensions:** 41 x 60 feet

**Track:** GarGraves (diameters range from 128 to 180 inches)

**Turnouts:** Ross Custom Switches

**Motive power:** Atlas O, K-Line, Lionel (postwar, modern), MTH, Weaver, Williams

**Rolling stock:** Atlas O, K-Line, Lionel (postwar, modern), Menards, MTH, Weaver, Williams

**Controls:** Lionel Type-ZW (5), MTH Nos. Z-1000 (2) and Z-4000 (11) transformers with Lionel TrainMaster Command Control and Legacy and MTH Digital Command System

**Accessories:** Lionel (modern), MTH, scratchbuilt

**Structures:** Ameri-Towne, Korber, Lionel, Menards, MTH, scratchbuilt

**Vehicles:** Bachmann, Brooklin, Corgi, Ertl, Matchbox, Rextoy, Road Champs, Solido, Vitesse

**Figures:** Artista, Model Power, Woodland Scenics

Visitors are welcomed by the Train Masters of Babylon. Go to their website to see when there's an open house to enjoy the club's superb 41 x 60-foot O gauge display. The numbered arrows correspond to the numbers in each of the captioned photos.

The massive O gauge railroad also has a pair of branch lines. Both extend 200 feet, or 1.82 scale miles. Each can handle only a single train. And there's a subway system that boasts 320 feet of track (2.29 scale miles). Shifting our gaze toward the ceiling affords us a view of the narrow logging line spanning 96 feet. Then, right before preparing to exit, Pat casually adds the club has a trolley line of 40 feet.

### Climbing to the hills

The Train Masters of Babylon may have a bit in common with nomadic tribes from ancient times. They have, after all, been on the move since their start.

Luckily for the officers and members of the club, their situation has been stable since 2013, when they moved into their

Secretary Steve Scagnelli typically are on hand to greet visitors and guide them around the display while pointing out additional sights and exhibits.

For the moment, we'll ask Pat Nardella, a longtime TMB member who took the terrific photos for this feature article, to show us around the railroad.

### Start with seven lines

After offering a warm welcome, Pat shares some of the important information about

the layout. The overall network of track includes seven different lines. They enable members to run nine trains simultaneously. With more than 70 members, the club usually does have that many at speed.

Seven lines form one sprawling and complex system. Pat first directs our attention to the two main lines, each of which he says can host two trains at once. One route measures 800 feet in length, or 7.36 scale miles. The second main line is 600 feet long, or 5.54 scale miles.



**3** A benefit of belonging to a train club is being able to share models from a favorite railroad. The Missouri Pacific, though far from Long Island, is the star today.

### Pleasing everyone

Unless you have been a member of a model railroad club, you probably can't conceive of all the decisions that must be made before a layout can be launched. Longtime associates of the TMB can recite from memory the wide range of questions and issues related to constructing and wiring their large display they had to discuss and answer while maintaining harmony.

Consider the track. Pat states, "We use the Phantom brand of flexible track by GarGraves. We had to accommodate curves with a minimum radius of 5'-4" and a maximum of 7'-6"."

Reaching a consensus on the brand of turnouts proved to be easy because the track plan eliminated much of what was then available on the market. Pat notes the club opted for products from Ross Custom Switches. "They performed dependably and had the large sizes we required."

Variety characterized the locomotives members could operate. Every contemporary manufacturer is represented by TMB members. Atlas O, Lionel, MTH, and Williams lead the way, followed by firms that recently left the market (K-Line and Weaver). Postwar locomotives are hardly strangers to the layout, although most members prefer modern-era engines.



**4** Some parents spend a few hours every Saturday morning watching their little boys and girls enjoy the swings and slides at the playground bordering a main line. They'll still turn around to admire the custom-painted engine slowing down as it passes.

latest and largest home. It offered them 4,400 square feet, which they were thrilled to claim despite knowing a good deal of preparation lay in store before the space would be ready for any layout.

Members assembled 40 individual tables as the foundation of the L-girder and open-grid benchwork. The majority of the tables had a length of 15 feet, while their width varied. To fill in gaps between tables or to connect them, members built smaller tables. For the surface of all tables, they relied on 1/2" plywood.

The vision for the network of track entailed multiple levels of activity. Lowest

was subway system, only 34" off the floor. Next, another 11" higher, were the two branch lines. They remained at 45", never rising any higher or dipping beneath the principal platform.

The main lines dominating the layout traveled long distances at 54" from the floor. Then, once they hit the mountains, they climbed another 18" until leveling off at 72" before dipping back down to where they started.

As for the logging line, it began only an inch above the main lines. But then it headed for the clouds, grinding higher and higher to a whopping 84".







**5 Outstanding modeling contributed to this popular scene, where a towering wood trestle carries the line by the rugged mountains and over the lake enjoyed by swimmers.**

### Controls for all

You should have gotten the picture regarding a club layout by this point. Track and switches require uniformity; engines and rolling stock require none!

Controls fall into a different category. No longer must everyone in a club agree on the brand. They must, however, figure out how to install a system that lets members to operate whatever they carry in.

The Train Masters of Babylon thus solved what might have been a serious dilemma by guaranteeing every main line, branch, and so forth could be operated in a conventional manner. So, guys owning older engines breathed sighs of relief.

Of course, club members believed adding command control was essential. They elected to wire all seven lines for Train-Master Command Control and then Legacy from Lionel. The two main lines, along with the logging route and the subway, also could be operated via the Digital Command System from MTH.

### What adversity?

Summarizing the decisions officers and members have had to make, you might think everything was coming up cupcakes, rainbows, and balloons. What adversity did anyone have to overcome to thrive?

So, we ought to pause from investigating the current layout and hearken back to

the early history of the group. Times were way tougher back then.

Merely thinking about starting a club entails many challenges. Somehow, seven men united only by their love of O gauge trains managed to organize the TMB and keep it going in 1994. They did so in spite of lacking a home for the group. Adversity therefore meant finding a permanent site.

Check off the most daunting task when members rented part of the lowest level in a shopping mall. Improvements followed before construction of an O gauge display could get off the ground. Year after year, the club gained strength and momentum, only to have the mall sold in 2002.

Adversity struck again in form of an eviction notice. Members hunted for a year before learning the rear of a bakery supply business was available to lease in 2003. They built another layout over the next few years and increased membership.

Another devastating moment occurred in 2013 with the announcement that the building housing the O gauge display had been sold. The TMB had no choice but to leave, dismantling sections of the layout but not having to destroy all of it.

### Happier times

However discouraged and downhearted members likely felt on having to evacuate their home, most expressed hope that better times were on the horizon. They were correct. The current location opened up before the end of 2013. Plans for a new

layout were then drawn up and work began on what you're admiring here.

Scenery contributed to the success of the layout. Members agreed on creating the base for landforms, notably the mountains, out of strips of cardboard covered with strips of plaster cloth. Over that foundation they added plaster, which they painted and landscaped.

### Ready to visit

Before I realized it, Pat was concluding our tour of the Train Masters of Babylon layout. He pointed out the finest scenes, in particular the 20-foot-long wood trestle and rock wall at Whitaker's Crossing, the drive-in theater showing a movie, the harbor with loading docks, and the old farm.

Sensing my worry about having missed something, Pat and the others assured me there would be opportunities to see it during the six free open houses the club hosts each year for the public.

Wow! There's really only one response when you receive an invitation like that – go to the club's website: [www.tmbmodel-trainclub.com](http://www.tmbmodel-trainclub.com) and check out the dates when you can stop by.

You won't be disappointed, not when you can watch so many long and fascinating trains traveling with purpose from one destination to another while never seeming to be going in circles. Even better for your own modeling, you'll be inspired by learning how adversity has taught this club how to thrive. **CTD**

**6 Members decided an old-time logging route perched high amid the mountains, while not part of railroading on Long Island, would look great. One look at the Climax steamer blowing out a cloud of smoke, and you know they were absolutely correct.**





Set from 1972 gave  
new life to a classic  
steamer

# Treasure in Lionel's NO. 1250 SERVICE STATION SPECIAL

STORY AND PHOTO BY BRENDON DEATRICH

**T**he early 1970s saw General Mills breathing life back into the Lionel brand, which had stagnated in the late 1960s under the original Lionel Corp. Model Products Corp., the division overseeing the manufacturing and marketing of electric trains for General Mills, introduced many advancements, including fast-angle wheels, improved Pullmor motors, and new plastics.

The most memorable of improvements associated with MPC was Mighty Sound of Steam, which arrived in 1971. It upgraded a classic steam engine that, with much fanfare, was added to the Lionel line in 1972: the No. 8206 New York Central Hudson.

Also that year, MPC continued a trend launched in 1971.

It released a train set available exclusively through members of its network of authorized service stations. The No. 1250 used the impressive small Hudson to pull six pieces of rolling stock. It also came with eight pieces of O gauge curved track and six pieces of straight. Let's take a look at the components, with an emphasis on the outstanding 4-6-4 Hudson.

## ■ Classic comes back

The 8206 locomotive resembled its postwar counterparts in many respects. But make no mistake, it represented the highest end offering to date from MPC and had all the latest advancements, notably Mighty Sound of Steam, synchronized puffing smoke, and an all-new electronic whistle. Those different features had debuted the previous year on

smaller steam engines, but the Hudson was used by MPC as a technological flagship.

The 8206 came equipped with Baldwin disc drive wheels, which had not been seen on a Lionel steamer since early in the postwar era. The inclusion of the old water scoop on the tender, previously implemented as an intake for the air whistle, was also a nice touch. It was now purely ornamental, as the new whistle did not require one.

Speaking of the neat tender, designers based it on the postwar streamlined tender (No. 2046W). It came with Symington-Wayne trucks as well as a knuckle coupler.

The 8206 New York Central engine was cataloged as a separate-sale item in 1972 and remained in the line through 1974. It appeared in the 1250

Service Station Special. The die-cast metal model included was often a shiny black variation found only in that uncataloged set. Containing some of the first engines off the production line, the examples packed in the 1250 featured crisp detail on par with that distinguishing their postwar predecessors. A separate whistle controller was packed with the locomotive, too.

## ■ Superb rolling stock

Rolling stock in the New York Central Service Station Special included a few items recognizable as direct remakes of classic postwar models, such as the Nos. 9709 Rutland and 9710 Bangor & Aroostook State of Maine near-scale boxcars. The colorful No. 9707 Missouri-Kansas-Texas stockcar was almost identical to its postwar







The only way to acquire a Lionel No. 1250 New York Central steam freight set back in 1972, when the outfit made its debut, was through an authorized service station.

counterpart (No. 6556 from 1958), the sole discrepancy being yellow sliding doors in place of the old white ones.

The No. 9111 Norfolk & Western open quad hopper put a nice spin on the postwar classic (No. 6446) by introducing a rugged brown paint scheme. The No. 9151 Shell single-dome tank car was brand new for the 1250 set and featured all updated graphics and striking colors, a trend that other tank cars made by General Mills would follow.

Bringing up the rear of the freight train was the No. 9163 Pennsylvania RR N5c porthole caboose. The good-looking model painted a familiar shade of Tuscan Red retained much of its postwar stampings. It, like all the other pieces of rolling stock, rode on newly tooled Symington-Wayne trucks. Those trucks allowed for better operation with fast-angle wheels and needlepoint axles.

#### ■ Final points

The 1250 Service Station Special, as noted, came with a nice supply of O gauge track – not O-27 pieces, as was the case in most of the sets cataloged in



Motive power for the 1250 Service Station Special train set was the newly released No. 8206 New York Central small Hudson and streamlined tender with Mighty Sound of Steam. The 4-6-4 locomotive and tender are now valued at \$155 in mint condition.

1972. It used a mix of so-called Banner and Red boxes. Some of the Banner boxes used for cars in the 1250 were found only there. Variations did occur, depending on when a set was packed.

Amid notable developments

in 1972, the second Service Station Special raised the bar for MPC. It proved how much General Mills aimed to breathe new life into its electric train line. In doing so, it laid the foundation for the brand's continued growth today. **CTT**





# An all-time passenger great

Lionel's Legacy F40PH models an engine that saw freight service, too

**T**he Lionel F40PH is an outstanding model of a locomotive that has quietly become one of the great diesel success stories in railroad history.

The F40PH was built in various phases by the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors between 1975 and 1992. Its purpose was initially short-haul passenger service for Amtrak. This mission was quickly revised to full Amtrak service due to the failure of another EMD engine, the SDP40F. All told, 475 of the model were produced by EMD and Canadian subsidiary General Motors Diesel.

Amtrak ran the F40PH into the new millennium until the debut of the General Electric P40DC Genesis locomotive. The F40PH retains a significant number converted to combination cab-control/baggage duty. Dubbed "Cabbage" cars, these unpowered units are distinguished by a roll-up door on the side. Lionel is offering O gauge models of these, too.

The F40PH wasn't solely a product for the National Rail Passenger Corp.; it also saw extensive long-haul service with VIA Rail Canada. The locomotive has also, and

in some cases continues to, served in its originally intended shorter-haul role with North American commuter agencies. Chicago's Metra, the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA), Caltrain, New Jersey Transit, and Toronto's Go Transit have all been significant F40PH users. Rebuilt units haul passengers to this day.



As a testament to the versatility of the model, some F40PH units have even toiled in freight duty. The Alaska RR still has a couple of F40PHs on its active roster. The Panama Canal Ry. acquired 10 ex-Amtrak units and uses them in dual service.

## Checking out the model

My Lionel F40PH unit is painted for the Panama Canal Ry. If the paint scheme looks familiar, it's because Ferrocarril de Panama, or Panama Canal Ry., is owned by entities including the Kansas City Southern. It's not terribly common for trains in a country to run coast-to-coast across only one railroad, but these locomotives do! As you may have guessed, the line runs just less than 48 miles from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, paralleling the world-famous Panama Canal.

The latest Lionel O gauge version of the F40PH diesel features the full spread of control options, ranging from Bluetooth to Legacy, even conventional. Units have a fan-driven smoke unit, LED lighting, flashing strobe lights, inset ditch lights, and emergency lights when appropriate.





## O Gauge Legacy F40PH by Lionel

**Price:** \$629.99

**Features:** O-54 operation; TMCC, Legacy, or conventional control; strobe, ditch, and emergency lights; illuminated cab dials; Kinematic pilots; crew figures.

**Current road names:** Amtrak: Phase III in two numbers (2233711 and 2233712); Phase IV (2233721 and 2233722); Phase V (2233730); and a veterans tribute unit (2233740). CSX Business Train in three numbers (2233751, 2233752, and 2233753). Rio Grande Ski Train: two numbers (2233761 and 2233762). Panama Canal Ry. is a custom run from METCA, available at [metca.org](http://metca.org)

**Website:** [www.Lionel.com](http://www.Lionel.com)

These engines are 14¾ inches long and feature Kinematic pilots. They require O-54 curves to navigate a layout.

The locomotive could be described as kind of basic looking from the front, but the detailing around the trucks and fuel tank shouldn't be overlooked. Piping and air tanks are well done. The paint lines are crisp, and the warning signs are legible.

It's rare when a model is delivered and has a feature not listed when it was cataloged. The F40PH falls into this category,

with a detailed interior including lighted instrument panels! While not something the operator can readily see while the model is running at speed around a layout, it's a really neat add-on. The "office" also has engineer and fireman figures.

The F40PH has a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$629.99. Lionel's 2022 Volume I catalog shows the F40PH in various Amtrak schemes: Phase III in two product numbers (2233711 and 2233712); Phase IV in two numbers (2233721 and

2233722); Phase V (No. 2233730); and a veterans tribute unit (No. 2233740).

Lionel also offers CSX Business Train units with three product numbers (2233751, 2233752, and 2233753) as well as the Rio Grande Ski Train locomotives with two numbers (2233761 and 2233762). The Panama Canal Ry. version is a custom run purchased from METCA (Metropolitan Division of the Train Collectors Association) and is available on its website, [metca.org](http://metca.org). – *Chris Montagna*

## BLASTING OFF

# MENARDS O GAUGE ROCKET LAUNCHING TOWER

■ **"Commencing countdown, engines on."** The words from the David Bowie song *Space Oddity* got stuck in my head when I saw this O gauge accessory. It hearkens back to the 1960s, when the race was on to put satellites into orbit and land astronauts on the moon.

The Menards rocket is 13½ inches tall; its launch tower stands 16½ inches high. The model represents a Saturn V and the infrastructure needed to service it. The accessory is not quite to scale; the prototype is about 360 feet tall, which scales out to 7½ feet in O. Trust me, the model is more manageable and wouldn't look out of place on an S gauge layout.

When you supply electricity and water, you get lots of lights (40 or so) and steam emitting from the launch pad base as if it's just seconds from liftoff.

The accessory is pretty economical on real estate, having only an 8¾-inch square footprint. Like many Menards accessories, it requires a 4.5-volt power supply (sold separately). The item (No. 2759032) is \$99.99. – *Hal Miller*





WITH THE CTT STAFF

# Cripple Creek County Jail

Send your O scale scallywags to this pokey from Menards

When I popped Menards' Cripple Creek County Jail out of the packaging I was impressed. Most modern O gauge structures look, well, new. That's because they are. The Cripple Creek County Jail departs from that. This looks like the sort of municipal building that might have been constructed when Woodrow Wilson was president in the 1910s and never upgraded!

The Cripple Creek County Jail has a sort of dark demeanor that you need to take your 10-year-old who filched a candy bar and scare them straight! It has what the movies call "atmosphere." In the O gauge world that means it will stand out from the crowd on Main Street.

## Setting the scene

Perhaps the key thing about the jail is the modest 10 x 5¼-inch footprint. It should be easy to swap out an existing structure or design a downtown around it.

The base is the standard Menards foundation of simulated concrete. The walls are an interesting mix of standard brick as well as uneven stone. There are two vehicle bays with gray stone arches helping them stand out.

There are two prisoner transport vans parked beneath them. There is a tint of ominous red lighting. They are nose out, which reminded me of scenes in old movies where Public Enemy No. 1 was spotted – and prowls cars, motorcycles, and vans carrying the riot squad erupt from police headquarters!

The left side has a tower above the entrance. A patrolman keeps his eye on the street. Jack the German shepherd is his handy backup. A pedestrian (or perhaps a bail bondsman) observes another officer leading a prisoner out of a van.

Exterior lighting is provided by two carriage lights at the entrance, with a third on the right corner.

The overall weathering of the structure



is great, with some areas of brick or stone lighter than other segments – very lifelike.

I really liked the medieval look of the tower. It's a nice Gothic design element reminding folks that crime doesn't pay!

The accessory lighting requires power through Menards' 4.5-volt power supply (No. 279-4061/4361, 4060/4362, or 4050).

The Cripple Creek County Jail fits right in with the rural vibe of previous associated structures while exuding the feel of a time not all that long ago! – *Bob Keller*

## Cripple Creek County Jail from Menards

**Price:** \$79.99 Stock No. 279-8490

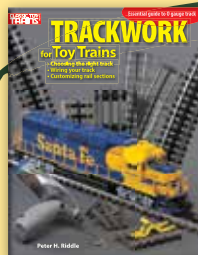
**Features:** Illuminated upper floors, die-cast metal police cars with flashing lights, police and criminal figures plus Jack the German shepherd

**Website:** [www.Menards.com/Trains](http://www.Menards.com/Trains)

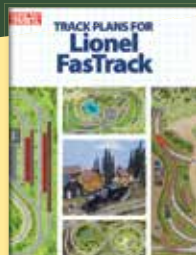


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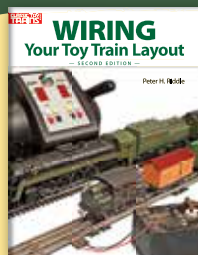
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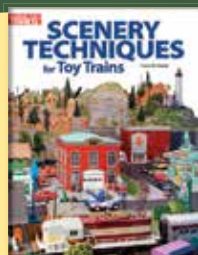
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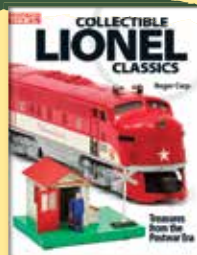
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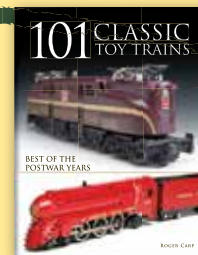
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### Events

**CA, TULARE:** TRAIN, TOY, & MODEL KIT SHOW. November 18-19, 2023, 10am-4pm. International Agri-Center, 4500 S. Laspina St., Tulare, CA 93274 (off Route 99). Admission: \$10/person; \$15/family. FREE parking. Up to 400 vendor tables plus operating train layouts, live steam displays, a parts dealer. Vendor information: send SASE to TTOS-Tulare Show, PO Box 6710, Fullerton, CA 92834

**IL, GALESBURG:** 2023 Galesburg Train Show. June 24-25. Saturday 10am-4pm, Sunday 10am-2pm. Knox College, T. Fleming Fieldhouse, 199 East Knox Street. Admission \$5, under 12 free. 400 tables of model trains, books, videos, t-shirts, memorabilia. 80+ vendors and exhibitors. Operating layouts. Tables: \$30 each. Refreshments available. Handicap accessible. Show Directors: Greg Norris 309-335-2634, John Manderscheid 563-349-0134

**IN, INDIANAPOLIS:** Central Indiana Division/NMRA announces the Franklin Train Show. Johnson County Fairgrounds, 250 Fairground St., Franklin, IN 46131. August 5-6, 2023. Saturday 10am-4pm, Sunday 10am-3pm. Admission: \$7/person, 16 and younger free w/adult. NMRA members (show membership card) \$5/person. Demos, Displays, Operating Layouts, Door Prizes, Free Parking, Food available. Info/table rental: Michael Roderick, 317-833-3556, FranklinTrainShow@gmail.com or www.cidnmra.org

**MO, JOPLIN:** Joplin History & Mineral Museum Model Train Show and Swap Meet. Saturday, July 15, 2023. 9:00am-3:00pm. Schifferdecker Park, 504 South Schifferdecker Ave., Joplin, MO 64801. Admission: \$5 adult, 12 and under admitted free with paid adult. Swap Tables \$15 each. Contact Steve Gardner, 119 West Jefferson Street, Pittsburg, KS 66762; 620-230-9545 or email: sogaardner1@att.net

**OK, STILLWATER:** Summer Train Show. Saturday, July 29, 2023, 9am-3pm. Admission: \$5.00, kids under 18 free with paid adult. Payne County Fairgrounds Expo Center. 4518 Expo Circle E., Stillwater, OK 74075. Buy/Sell/Trade. Operating layouts and door prizes. Concessions available. Sponsored by the TTOS Sooner Division. For further information visit: www.ttos-soonerdiv.org

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### NEW PRODUCT REVIEWS

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### THE FABLEMANS TRAINS

Meet the man who restored multiple train sets for use in the recent movie *The Fablemans*. It's based on famed director Steven Spielberg's childhood, and O gauge trains played a bigger role in it than you may imagine.



### MEET THE MODELER

If you've read *Classic Toy Trains* for long, you know the work of Peter H. Riddle. Learn more about this modeler and author as we ask a few questions.



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# A prize for good signs

Plus help for stray command-control signals



## AWARD-WINNING SIGNS

■ I recently discovered that a local trophy store creates a lot of its award labels out of various colors of plastic. The staff there can provide O gauge-sized signs accurately and precisely to order.

The Crestmont sign on a building I scratchbuilt is made on a two-color laminate of black and gold, with the engraving deep enough to expose the latter color to match the real brass surrounding it.

Such engravings cost a bit, but to me obtaining a precise representation of my miniature fantasy is worth the cost! – *Robert Nordberg, Canton, N.Y.*

## THE DIRT ON GROUND PLANES

■ Everyone using Lionel's command-control systems, specifically TrainMaster Command Control and Legacy, ought to know what a ground plane is and when to use it.

Simply put, any time a track crosses under another or when they are closely spaced, a ground plane is needed to keep a locomotive from getting confused by the other track's signal.

We've been told to zigzag a wire or run one above the track and connect it to an earth ground, usually the third prong on a plug. Hardware cloth, chicken wire, and the like have also been suggested as options.

I failed to install a ground plane when I was constructing my layout, so I had to go back under it and through the tunnel portals to put the plane in place. I've been dreading this task for a few years.

Many of my locomotives did not seem to need it, but a few of them would always get stuck in the tunnels. What I found that worked, which was simple, was to

apply aluminum tape used in the air-conditioning trade for ducts.

One side of the tape is sticky and easily attaches to the underside of the above track. The aluminum gathers the loose signals. A connecting wire is needed between strips to conduct the signal, but it does not have to be insulated. There's not enough electrical current to get shocked.

For connecting pieces of the tape, I overlap and fold over the tape so the metal touches; the adhesive portion holds it in place. The wire to the earth ground can be attached similarly.

These connections will not handle much stress, but once this is in place it should not need to be touched again. I was done in 30 minutes. The tape molded easily to the plywood and the beams supporting my O gauge layout. This was so much easier than trying to drive screws, nails, or staples to hold up a wire. – *Scott Smiley, via email*

**Rolls of aluminum duct tape to create an electrical ground plane can be found at home improvement stores.**



**WANT TO SHARE?** Write to "Tips" at Classic Toy Trains, P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187-1612, or email us at [tips@classictoytrains.com](mailto:tips@classictoytrains.com) and put the word "tips" in the subject line. We'll pay you \$25 for any tip we publish unless it was contained in a previously purchased article.

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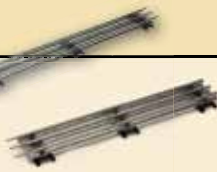
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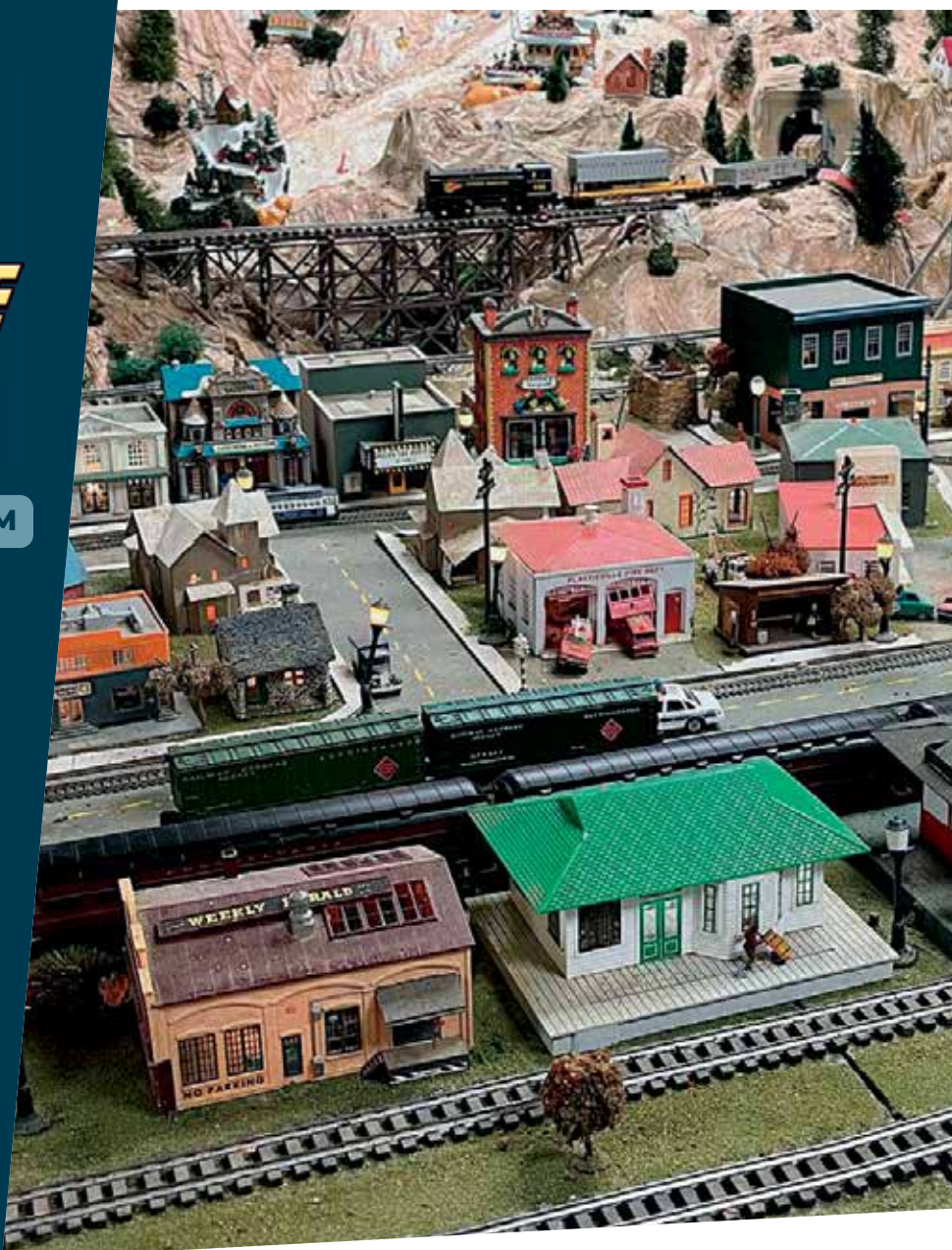


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