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Reality is overrated

TOY TRAINS ARE ALWAYS A GOOD ESCAPE

Recently, a few co-workers and I were flipping through a CTT special issue looking for track plan ideas. Someone commented that they didn't like something on a Lionel display layout, saying that "it didn't look realistic."

I blurted out, "Reality is overrated," and got a good laugh from everyone.

I thought about this statement later. Isn't the reason we have hobbies is our wish to avoid the realities of life?

Escaping reality with toy trains can take many forms, from designing a track plan to perusing a new manufacturer catalog, from weathering a structure to fixing that out-of-gauge wheel-set. Perhaps you're looking at online auctions, pondering your next purchase, or attending a train show.

Having a hobby has been shown to have health benefits. You can build good habits and routines and boost your brain's reward center when you



Meeting contributor Chris Raines at the TCA Eastern Division York Show this April.

do something for pleasure.

I'm not suggesting you ignore your to-do list or miss medical appointments. But even if life seems too busy, you likely can still squeeze in 10 minutes each day to enjoy toy trains. Pick up that manufacturer catalog or dig out the track-cleaning fluid and a rag and have a go. Let your mind wander and reap the mental benefits.

Rene Schweitzer

Rene Schweitzer, Editor

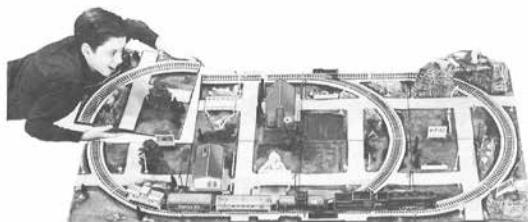
Feel free to send comments and questions to editor@ClassicToyTrains.com

1965 FLYER FUN

Not long ago I discovered tucked away in a drawer a "Model Railroad Equipment Buyer's Guide 1965-66" booklet, published by then

Kalmbach Publishing Co.

It contained a variety of books, tools, and yes, model trains. Page 7 included American Flyer train sets and scenic panels. I've scanned in parts of this booklet I thought our readers will enjoy and posted it on our website. Visit Trains.com and search "Model Railroad Equipment Buyer's Guide" to see more. — *Rene*



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CLASSIC TOY TRAINS

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Familiar containers make great structures

From time to time, *Classic Toy Trains* offers its readers tips on how to take items found around the house and with only a little bit of time and money turn them into objects that can be used on O or S gauge layouts. I recently did the same thing and want to share it.

I repurposed a container with bread crumbs into a water tower. Here's everything I did. First, I took off the outer label and painted the paper cylinder black and the top gray using basic crafts paints. Second, I added a few simple signs. My tower now supplies water to all the different water columns on my layout. — *John Fineli, Port Saint Lucie, Fla.*



One of our readers used a common food container for a familiar railroad structure on his O gauge layout.

Agreeing with Lou Palumbo

I agree wholeheartedly with Lou Palumbo's comments on "Works fine, lasts a long time," in his Views From the Underground in the **September/October 2023** issue of *Classic Toy Trains*. He salutes the durability of prewar and postwar Lionel and American Flyer trains.

My two prewar Lionel locomotives (Nos. 225E and 226E) and two postwar engines (Nos. 675 and 736) have covered hundreds of scale miles hauling freight and passenger trains. In contrast, my Lionel No. 81295 Lion-Chief Plus Santa Fe 2-8-2 Mikado from 2014-2016, with all its bells and whistles, has had to have its smoke unit repaired three times. The last time that happened I was told the mother board controlling the unit was damaged and Lionel no longer manufactures the mother board for that locomotive.

This situation makes me wonder whether new engines with all their electronic gadgets will last even 10 years. If they don't, will there be any parts to repair them? Yes, the old locomotives "work fine, last a long time." — *John E. Huegel, New Braunfels, Texas*

Finding the prototype

I enjoyed the article about Marx eight-wheel lithographed diesels in the **May/June 2023** issue of CTT with its photos of the Marx tinplate Southern Pacific 6000 diesel. Author Robert Wendt discusses possibilities of how designers at Marx may have developed the engines, suggesting they may have been based on Alco FA or Electro-Motive F3 units.

Photos in the book *E Units: Electro-Motive's Classic Streamliners* (Kalmbach Media) reveal the prototype being Southern Pacific's No. 6000A EMD E7 as delivered in red and aluminum for the *Golden State Limited* train. Comparing them to the Marx model reveals a few minor differences in the ventilator and window details, but you can definitely see it's the basis for the Marx model — even to the number 6000. — *David Beardsley, Saint Ann, Mo.*

Gauge of Lionel track plan

"Plan with a postwar vibe" in the **Spring 2024 issue** of *Classic Toy Trains* opens with the claim that a layout shown in Lionel's accessory catalog for 1963 is O gauge. The switches in the original drawing (reproduced on page 21 of that issue) make it plain the layout is O-27. And in fact, the author states his intention to modify the original plan to use O gauge track and switches — which is exactly what the article does.

To add to the confusion, the list of track components — supposedly O-27 items — fits the description of available O gauge pieces, except for the O-27 custom-cut straight sections. But O and O-27 sections don't fit together; therefore, the custom-cut sections must be cut from O gauge track instead. — *David Beardsley, Saint Ann, Mo.*



Blue Comet colors

Eugene Davilla asked in the **November/December 2023** issue of CTT about finding paints to match his Lionel O gauge *Blue Comet* passenger set (cataloged from 1978 to 1980). I suggested he go to the websites maintained by makers of hobby paints (Krylon, Rust-Oleum, Tamiya, and

Testor) and firms specializing in automotive touchup paints. Then he should download and print their color charts — and hope for the best! "Close enough" may be the best we can do. — *Wayne Antoniazzi, Henrico, Va.*

Simpler ways to build

I read the article about the *Polar Express* layout in the **November/December 2023** issue and can't see why the benchwork and other details were so complicated. I knew there

were simpler ways, something I learned again after starting on a basic and less-expensive three-rail layout measuring only 3 x 13 feet.

I began by ordering five bookcases costing \$25 each. It took me about 15 minutes to assemble each

of them. They're great as the benchwork for my layout. On top of them I placed a platform consisting of hollow-core slab doors (\$62 each), which I painted using gray latex satin finish deck paint from a home-improvement center (\$30 a gallon).

While my home layout has only one main line, there's room for eight sidings. I wired accessories and parked extra rolling stock there.

— *Nick Comando, Moriches, N.Y.*

Remembering a Super O promoter

Our hobby suffered a great loss with the death of **Harris "Mike" Spanier** back in January of this year. He significantly contributed to the toy train world by moderating the Super O Group for many years. Outgoing and personable, Mike was the largest buyer and seller of Super O track and switches, and he was always uplifting and a pleasure to be around. The toy train community will miss Mike greatly. — *Steve Garofalo, Las Vegas, Nev. CTT*

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52261	LOTS Schlitz Beer Woodside Reefer	45.00
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52573	TCA Sierra Railroad 40-Ton Stock Car	49.95
52586	NLOE Change of Aviation F/C w/Trailer	64.95
52592	NLOE Petland Discount Aquarium Car	89.95</

► Rick Tota's O gauge layout

Your brain practically explodes when you first see the amount of activity Rick Tota has packed into key scenes on his O gauge layout, which will be featured in an upcoming issue of *Classic Toy Trains*. This area on his sprawling tribute to the New York Central at his home in Baldwin Place, N.Y., features action on land and water. Handsome General Motors and Alco road diesels await their next assignments on either side of the river while a tugboat strains to pull a barge out to Lake Erie. "Rusty Rick," as his train buddies have nicknamed Mr. Tota, enjoys adding details to every sector of his display and weathering his rolling stock.



▲ James Spuhler's O gauge layout

You can bet workers at Brook Hill Farm Dairy wish James Spuhler could have wired his Lionel No. 3462P unloading platform closer to the loading dock. They just hate having to carry the canisters of milk across the main line. Jim is familiar with their complaints, but insists he had no choice when designing his O gauge layout in Strongsville, Ohio. While crews await the next operating milk car, he'll keep busy operating the Lionel No. 2065 small 4-6-4 Hudson on the upper level.

Send your best pictures of toy train subjects to CTT Photo Album, 21027 Crossroads Circle, Wauke-
sha, WI 53187-1612. 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. Email digital
photos (1 mg or larger) to photoalbum@ClassicToyTrains.com

If you send us a photograph and we decide to publish it, we will pay you \$50 just as long as we have not
previously bought the photo.





◀ Paul Brown's O gauge model railroad

One look at the marquee on the Palace movie theater should make it plain when modeler Paul Brown has set his O gauge railroad. *Godzilla*, the iconic science fiction classic from Japan, made its American debut in 1956, two years after the famous monster first destroyed Tokyo! Coincidentally, 1956 was the same year that the full-size version of Pennsylvania RR 4-4-2 Atlantic No. 1600 was retired after pulling trains for more than four decades. Paul enjoys coupling billboard refrigerator cars behind his replica of that venerable steamer from MTH's Premier line (product No. 20-3038-1) on the three-rail layout he has built at his home in Cape Coral, Fla.

■ ■ YOUR PHOTOS

► Carl Blum's O gauge layout

Why did Carl Blum, a resident of Johns Island, S.C., base his O gauge layout on a regional railroad whose rails came nowhere near the Palmetto State? One look at the terrific picture Carl snapped is enough to reveal his passion for the late, great Minneapolis & St. Louis RR. Carl was running a General Electric 44-ton center-cab diesel with the number "44" on his 12 x 16-foot version of the old "Misery & Short Life" on a quiet day. He had kitbashed the unique locomotive out of a couple of K-Line MP15 diesels. Then he revealed the truth behind his love affair: He grew up near the Minneapolis & St. Louis main line.



▲ Larry Kostka's O gauge layout

The arrival of two shiny Chicago, Burlington & Quincy passenger trains under a bright July sun makes you wonder whether the folks waiting on the platform on Larry Kostka's O gauge layout are about to start humming Bruce Springsteen's song, "Blinded by the Light." Though Larry lives in Covina, Calif., a time zone or two west of the main lines once plied by the CB&Q *Zephyrs*, he considers the Burlington Route his all-time favorite. His outstanding modeling pays tribute to that fallen flag.



▲ Steve Wolfe's O gauge layout

With a turn of the handles on a transformer, Steve Wolfe causes all three of the Lionel postwar engines on his three-level O gauge layout to brake to a halt. He does so in order to shoot this exciting picture at his home in Quakertown, Pa., and make it easier for us to admire the Nos. 51 Navy Switcher on the top tier, 671 Pennsylvania RR 6-8-6 Turbine in the middle, and 2352 Pennsy RR EP-5 electric on the main level. We had better finish looking because Steve is eager to get the trains moving again, even if the mountain climbers on the right are hoping for silence.



◀ Walt Hiteshew's O gauge layout

Some parts of Walt Hiteshew's O gauge railroad boast a toy-like appearance, all the better to enhance the color and whimsy of his roster of Marx motive power and rolling stock. Other areas, notably this long straightaway, look more realistic. Walt caught a No. 3000 Canadian Pacific 2-4-2 steam engine and tender roaring past some bluffs with gray and red striations nicely complementing the stripes on the side of his locomotive. Readers of *Classic Toy Trains* will see the toy-like as well as the realistic sections of Walt's layout in Sykesville, Md., in a future issue.



Atlas O Premier ES44AC

A POPULAR ENGINE IN NEW PAINT SCHEMES

The Canadian Pacific ES44AC graced the cover of the *Atlas Fall Premier* catalog and was delivered in March of 2024. Atlas O cataloged eight versions of the ES44AC, along with two CSX ES44DC models. These Premier models use former MTH tooling and feature DCS Proto-Sound 3.0. These O gauge units can be operated conventionally, too.

The unique paint schemes on these Canadian Pacific models are prototypical. The Hapag-Lloyd version, cab number 8781, was painted in 2021 to honor the long-standing partnership between the Canadian Pacific and Hapag-Lloyd, a shipping container company. The locomotive also features Port Saint John logos, which were added to promote new shipping service out of the eastern Canadian city.

The “Every Child Matters”

scheme commemorates Canada’s national Truth and Reconciliation Day (September 30). This is a day to remember Native American children who attended reservation schools. This model features the orange shirt logo and Every Child Matters website on the nose of the locomotive and traditional large Canadian Pacific with black beaver crest along the side.

OPENING THE BOX

The Premier box arrived in great condition. Opening the box, I found a tightly wrapped

model in a foam and plastic wrap with two Atlas-branded ribbons loosely knotted. They allowed for easy removal from the snug-fitting foam insert.

The delicate handrails are protected by strips of foam. The paint on the model is flawless, with crisp decals and lines. There is no variation between add-on parts or the plastic shell. After getting the unit onto the tracks and firing up the track power, it was easily added to the DCS remote.

These models feature an assortment of details and features. When comparing them

with the most recent Lionel versions, I saw a few differences. The Atlas O version weighs 5 pounds 13.3 ounces, only 0.1 ounce more than the Lionel version. The controls are accessed under the rear ventilation grates, similar to the Lionel model. The Atlas O model features multiple see-through vents, an improvement over the Lionel model.

Light-emitting diode (LED) lights are used throughout this model, including ditch lights, cab lights, and illuminated number boards. The trucks and wheels are metal. At 19.5 inches in length, the model can navigate O-42 curves. These models match up even with Lionel in pulling power at 2 lbs., 2 ounces.

The standard sound file offers freight sounds dialogue and a nice extended start-up sequence. The fan-driven smoke unit, after being

ATLAS O PREMIER ES44AC (NOS. 30138179 AND 30138178)

MSRP: \$679.95

Features: Proto-Sound 3.0, remote-controlled Proto-Couplers, onboard DCS/DCS decoder, O-42 operation, illuminated LED number boards, operating LED ditch lights

Website: <https://shop.atlasrr.com>

**LED LIGHTS ARE USED
THROUGHOUT THIS
MODEL, INCLUDING
DITCH LIGHTS,
CAB LIGHTS, AND
ILLUMINATED NUMBER
BOARDS.**

primed with fresh smoke fluid, pumps out plumes of smoke. I recommend adding more drops just as soon as you see the smoke output begin to decrease.

I used the DCS remote to test this model, but I did not use the Wi-Fi app. I was able to create a lash-up with both ES44ACs and an Atlas O SD70ACe. The models ran smoothly together; I didn't notice any pulling or pushing between locomotives.

Models include BNSF No. 5738 (No. 30138177), Cana-

dian Pacific "Every Child Matters" No. 8757 (No. 30138178), Canadian Pacific Hapag-Lloyd No. 8781 (No. 30138179), Canadian National anniversary models Nos. 3880 and 3883 (Nos. 30138180 and 30138181), Kansas City Southern No. 4859 (No. 30138182), Union Pacific models Nos. 5395 and 5293 (Nos. 30138183 and 30138184), BNSF H2 Pumpkin schemes Nos. 5719 and 5742 (Nos. 30138185 and 30138186), and CSX ES44DC locomotives Western Maryland No. 5327 (No. 30138187) and *Spirit of Cincinnati* No. 5500 (No. 30138188). — CHRIS MONTAGNA

Get more O gauge action on the
Chris's Trains & Things channel
on YouTube



Coal on the move: MTH has announced for its Premier line an O scale fish-belly hopper in five liveries, including this No. 20-95709 Norfolk Southern model. The cars, which will be available individually or in six-car sets, feature metal wheels and axles, O-31 operation, and more. **Price:** \$69.95 single; \$389.95 six-car set. Delivery expected in July 2024. Learn more on the MTH website at mthtrains.com



See more reviews online:

- MTH Premier 3-truck Shay video
- Menards Vehicle Showroom
- ScaleTrains S gauge 40-foot boxcar
- Schomberg Scale Structures Locomotive Tender Tank kit



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MTH Premier Line 3-truck Shay

AN ENGINE BUILT FOR LOGGING

More than 2,700 Shays were built by Lima Locomotive Works between 1880 and 1930. The geared locomotives came in many variations in four different classes. MTH's Premier Line model is Weyerhaeuser Timber 3-truck Shay No. 2 (No. 20-38791).

The details on this O gauge model are just amazing. The handrails, whistle, and bell are metal, as are the tender chains. The tender load is actual coal.

GETTING READY TO RUN

Controls for operation type, volume, and the smoke unit are under the top of the tender. Grab the edges of the magnetized plate with your fingers. You'll need a small Phillips-head screwdriver to adjust the volume and turn off the smoke unit.

There are two places to add smoke fluid: in the smokestack and under the steam dome (for the steaming whistle). The steam dome has a small magnet to hold it in place — a nice touch.

ON THE TRACK

We first ran the engine using an MTH Type Z-4000 transformer using conventional AC power. The engine started moving around 13

volts and was a little stiff. However, once it had gone around the layout a few times, it evened out and then moved smoothly.

The headlight illuminates when the locomotive is moving forward. When in reverse, the light on the tender goes on instead. The sound system is fantastic, and the gears looked great in action. The deep-sounding whistle is quillable, meaning you can change its pitch. The amount of smoke from the smokestack looked good, but we could not get the steaming whistle to emit smoke.

Next, we shifted to operate using MTH's DCS system via the app. You'll need a Track Interface Unit (TIU), Wi-Fi module (WIU), and either the smartphone app or a DCS remote control to operate the engine.

When you apply the fixed voltage from the DCS system, the engine's performance shines. It will crawl along at just 1 smph, and operation is smooth. If you have the basic (free) app, there are several options available to control the engine, like the whistle and bell, plus volume, turning off the smoke unit, and renaming the engine or changing its address. You must upgrade the app (\$4.99) to operate the steaming whistle.

I upgraded the app and was pleased by how many more options became available: four different crew talk options, extended shut down, adjustment of the chuff rate, and much more. The steaming whistle is fabulous and emitted a nice plume of smoke!

The engine box states that the Shay needs at least O-54 curves to operate. We have O-42 FasTrack curves on our in-house layout, and it had no problem navigating them.

If you have a logging theme or just like geared engines, you need one of these Shays for your layout. — RENE SCHWEITZER

MTH PREMIER 3-TRUCK SHAY

MSRP: \$1,349.95

Features: Operates in DCC, DCS, conventional AC, and conventional DC; O-54 operation; Proto-Sound 3.0 with freight yard Proto-Effects; operating tender LED backup light; steaming quillable whistle

Website: <https://mthtrains.com>

Colorful beer reefer:

The Chicagoland Lionel Railroad Club (CLRC) is offering a Lumber Jack Lager Refrigerator Car to current and new members. Manufactured for CLRC by Lionel, the O gauge model is a PS-1 modern refrigerator car. It features die-cast metal sprung trucks and measures 11½" long. A total of 200 cars have been produced in two numbers. **Cost is \$85** per car payable by check only, plus \$12 shipping. One-year associate memberships available for \$3.00. Full details at www.clrctrains.com



This year's Day Out With Thomas events are bubble-themed. Mattel

■ Day Out With Thomas events

Thomas the Tank Engine is a well-known fictitious character living on the make-believe island of Sodor. With his human-like qualities and ability to talk, Thomas is a



Hauling coal: Atlas O offers a four-bay coal hopper as part of its Premier line. The O gauge model features metal wheels and axles, two operating die-cast metal couplers, a detailed coal load, separate metal handrails, and more. The hopper comes painted and lettered for the Burlington Northern (No. 3001283), along with the Alaska RR, Chicago & Eastern Illinois, Conrail, Denver & Rio Grande Western, Lehigh Valley, and Southern Ry. **Price:** \$89.95. **Website:** shop.atlasrr.com



Festive fun: MTH has added Halloween items to its O gauge RailKing line. The No. 30-21237 ES44AC Imperial diesel engine has Proto-Sound 3.0, two hand-painted cab figures, illuminated LED number boards and ditch lights, O-31 operation, and more. **Price:** \$439.95. Also available is the No. 30-5243 Bump-n-Go Trolley (shown), which features LED lights, automatic reversing bumpers, movable power pole, and more. **Price:** \$109.95. Delivery expected in August 2024. Learn more on the MTH website at mthtrains.com

Want to submit?

Send complete ordering information and a high-resolution photo to editor@classictoytrains.com

News bits

steam-powered locomotive that has mesmerized children for many generations through beloved picture books and the long-running public television series, *Thomas & Friends*.

The Day Out With Thomas events — licensed by Mattel — are conducted at locations throughout the U.S. and abroad. On Trains.com, you'll find schedules of Day Out With Thomas events. Type in "day out with Thomas 2024" in the search box.

■ Model Train Stuff set to reopen

A statement released by Factory Direct Hobbies President Joe Grubba announced that M.B. Klein and Model Train

Stuff will reopen under the Factory Direct Hobbies family.

Plans for the revamped Model Train Stuff customer experience include improved logistics and faster shipping, enhanced search functionality, and a reintegration of the Model Train Stuff rewards program. Factory Direct Hobbies aims to maintain Model Train Stuff's identity as an independent website and brand.

Factory Direct Hobbies has stated that it is open to customer feedback during this reopening process. Questions, comments, and concerns can be directed to

customercare@modeltrainstuff.com

■ New Atlas catalog

The Atlas O Spring 2024 Premier catalog was recently published on the manufacturer's website.



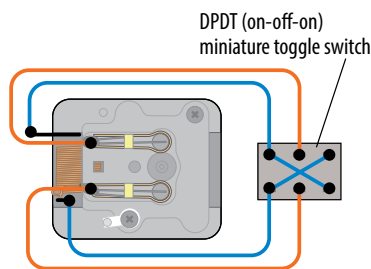
Highlights include three locomotives, assorted 60-foot heavy-weight passenger cars, four freight cars, a snow plow, pedestrian walkways, and an up-graded 24"-diameter turntable. All models are scheduled for release in the fourth quarter of 2024. View the catalog at shop.atlasrr.com



Liquid storage: Menards sells the No. 2759298 O scale Water Tower. This 14"-high accessory features LED lighting and brackets in the base to fasten the tower to your layout. The tower requires Menard's 4.5-volt power supply (Nos. 2794050, 2794061, or 2794062, sold separately). **Price:** \$24.99. Order from menards.com/trains



All aboard: Lionel Trains has introduced items in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the release of *The Polar Express* movie. The No. 2428170 O gauge 20th anniversary illuminated boxcar (above) with sound features, illuminated ticket graphics, and more. **Price:** \$159.99. The No. 2419020 S gauge 20th anniversary American Flyer boxcar (below) features a metal frame, opening doors, and die-cast metal trucks. **Price:** \$69.99. See more at lionel.com



Correction

In the Spring 2024 CTT, the illustration on page 46 ("Adding reverse to Lionel motorized units") contained an error. The miniature toggle switch should be a DPDT (double-pole double-throw) and not a SPDT. We apologize for the error. — EDITOR

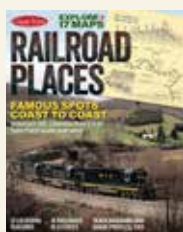
Kalmbach Hobby Store

Railroad Places, a special-interest publication from *Classic Trains*, features stories covering 16 railroads including the Baltimore & Ohio, Denver & Rio Grande Western, New Haven, Pennsylvania RR,



Southern Pacific, and more. In this 100-page perfect-bound publication, you'll learn about the railroad history and operations from the people who know these locations. In addition, each story

features at least one related map with a total of 17 maps. **Price:** \$12.99. See more at KalmbachHobbyStore.com



CTT AND LCCA TRACK PLANNING CONTEST

SUBMIT YOUR DRAWING FOR A CHANCE TO BE PUBLISHED AND WIN A YEAR'S LCCA MEMBERSHIP!

RULES

- Each entry must be an original work and include a scale layout plan and a written description. This plan can be of your own layout or a layout you may wish to build. Other criteria are:
 - The plan must be drawn for O gauge track, using Lionel FasTrack pieces only.
 - The plan must include only commercially available FasTrack pieces. No custom-cut pieces are allowed.
 - The plan must fit within a 100-square-foot space. Interior aisles, walkways around the outer edge of the layout necessary for operation, and access openings in the surface of the layout all count toward the 100-square-foot maximum.
 - The following features must be indicated on the layout: all track, structures, turnout sizes, curve radii, and placement of room walls and sizes of aisles and access openings, when applicable.
 - The finished plan should be either neatly drawn in pencil or ink or made using track-planning software. If using track-planning software, we request both a printout of the track plan and an exported PDF document of the plan.
 - A written description must accompany the plan. Please include both a printout and a text/Word document with your submission. Topics of the text may include: special features, construction or design techniques to solve unusual problems, operating concept, control system, period or place represented, and scenic features.
 - Extra illustrations, such as schematic diagrams, maps, grade profiles, and cutaway views may be included.
 - Each contestant is limited to one entry.
 - All entries must be received in CTT's offices no later than October 1, 2024.
 - Winning entries will be published starting in the Spring 2025 issue, both in *Classic Toy Trains* and *The Lion Roars*. All entries will be paid at our standard publishing rates. The top three winners will also receive a free year's membership to the Lionel Collectors Club of America (LCCA). Other layouts may qualify for Honorable Mention.
 - All winning entries become the property of Kalmbach Media Co. CTT will share the first-, second-, and third-place winning entries with the LCCA for publication in *The Lion Roars*.
 - CTT reserves the right to purchase any non-winning entries at our standard rate of publication.
 - Non-winning entries will be returned only if appropriate packaging and postage are supplied by the entrant with the original submission.
 - Kalmbach Media Co. employees as well as members of their immediate families are not eligible to enter this track-planning contest.
 - In the event no winning layouts are submitted, no prizes will be awarded.
- Mail entries to:** *Classic Toy Trains* magazine, Track planning contest, P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha WI 53187-1612 or upload to contribute.kalmbach.com
- Entry deadline:** October 1, 2024
- If you have questions, please email editor@classictoytrains.com



Athearn's Rock Island boxcar

O SCALE MODEL BLAZED THE TRAIL FOR LIONEL

Seventy years ago, some of the biggest news in the O gauge segment of the model railroading hobby celebrated the series of near-scale boxcars Lionel had recently introduced and intended to expand. Toy train enthusiasts of every age praised the No. 6464 boxcars that had made their debut in sets in the line cataloged for 1953.

Experienced O gauge operators knew that Lionel, though the giant of the industry, had not been the first manufacturer of near-scale replicas of the latest boxcars observed on North American railroads. Beating it to the punch was AMT, a small yet daring business in Indiana that had changed its name from American Model Toys to Auburn Model Trains in honor of the town where it was located.

But modelers with an even broader view of the hobby knew that AMT had not been the first to bring out O gauge replicas of the latest boxcars. They had in mind a relatively new firm making its mark with O scale rolling stock. Yet all it took was a little ingenuity to fit Lionel knuckle couplers onto those freight cars, which was why this Rock Island boxcar and others made by Irvin

Athearn in the 1940s deserve to be praised as classics every O gauger should salute.

INNOVATOR AT HEART

Most readers of *Classic Toy Trains* will be familiar with the name, even if they naturally associate Irvin Athearn with HO scale trains. During the postwar era, every hobby shop stocking Lionel or American Flyer likely had shelves filled with the easy-to-assemble HO kits sold by Athearn in yellow-and-blue boxes.

All the same, in the years immediately following the end of World War II, the ambitious Athearn concentrated his efforts almost exclusively on forging ahead in the O gauge field. He hoped to get rich by producing O scale models capable of being fitted with knuckle couplers compatible with Lionel trains.

While discovering the joys of model railroading during his formative years in the 1930s, Athearn had collected and run O scale locomotives and rolling stock that he modified to operate with Lionel pieces. He strongly believed many other hobbyists enjoyed doing that as well rather than sticking entirely with O scale.

The hard-driving entrepreneur started tentatively during the war years. In 1943 and 1945, Athearn had released a few standard brown boxcars lettered for, among others, the New Haven and the Santa Fe. He leaped ahead three years later with a great-looking O scale replica of the New York Central Pacemaker boxcar. It dominated advertisements placed in *Model Railroader* magazine back in the summer of 1946.

COLORFUL MARVELS

Where to go next? Honestly, the list of specialized boxcars to replicate was quite short at that time, although their novelty and vivid colors made them obvious choices.

Just follow the trail of advertisements found in the pages of *Model Railroader* to discern what Athearn was doing. Models of a Southern Pacific Overnight boxcar in black and a Baltimore & Ohio Sentinel made their debut in 1947. A year later came an orange Great Northern and this silver Rock Island "Route of the Rockets" boxcar.

Before shifting the bulk of his financial and manufacturing resources to HO products, Athearn filled out his roster of O scale special boxcars with replicas of a Baltimore & Ohio Time Saver (blue and orange), Missouri Pacific Eagle (blue and gray) and a Western Pacific (silver with an immense orange feather).

Seventy-five years later, assembled Athearn models — whether with original scale couplers or modified with Lionel couplers — can still be found and look great on O gauge layouts. Surprisingly, unbuilt kits are out there, including this Rock Island boxcar skillfully put together by modeler Seth Puffer. **CTT**

BUILD A BOXCAR SCENE

CREATE AN ABANDONED TRACK WITH LIGHT, SMOKE, AND SOUND FOR ONLY \$60

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CHRIS MONTAGNA

➔ **LIONEL'S 2021 RELEASE** of boxcars that play the sounds of hobos was a popular addition to many O gauge layouts and collections. These operating freight cars look great both in motion and when they're at rest. I saw an opportunity to create an interactive scene on my home layout with this boxcar (I used a No. 2226010 Erie Hobo Sounds Boxcar) as the centerpiece.

I wanted to create a static display with power for the hobo car so I could have the audio while adding scenic elements around the car. I found a location on my layout where I could add an abandoned track not far from the backside tunnel entrance.

TRACK FIRST

I had a spare 10-inch-long piece of Atlas O straight track. First, I covered the top of the rails with low-tack masking tape. I spray-painted the track with Rust-Oleum No. 279175 Camouflage Flat Earth Brown to create a weathered effect. Since I needed center-rail power for only one pickup roller, I trimmed the center rail so you can't see it at the end of the Hobo Sounds Boxcar. Doing so gave my scene a more realistic look.

I placed the track in position on the layout and secured it to the table with a screw through one of the ties. Next, I added power feeds for the outer and center rails. I could have wired the car direct to power, but I wanted to be able to move the car or possibly put it behind a steam engine in the future. As a result, routing power through the track made the most sense.

WEATHERING AND DETAILS

After I had the track in place and wired, I added commercial ground cover and sand to make the area around the boxcar look overgrown and abandoned. I then added some static grass around the track area and perimeter of what would become the campsite.

I decided to heavily weather the boxcar it to make it look like an abandoned car. Weathering rolling stock is a polarizing topic, so this part is up to you. I won't dive into the weathering process; there are resources available on Trains.com.

While the boxcar is nicely detailed, I thought it could use more. I painted the floor brown to make it look like a worn wood deck. I added 3-D printed crates inside the car.

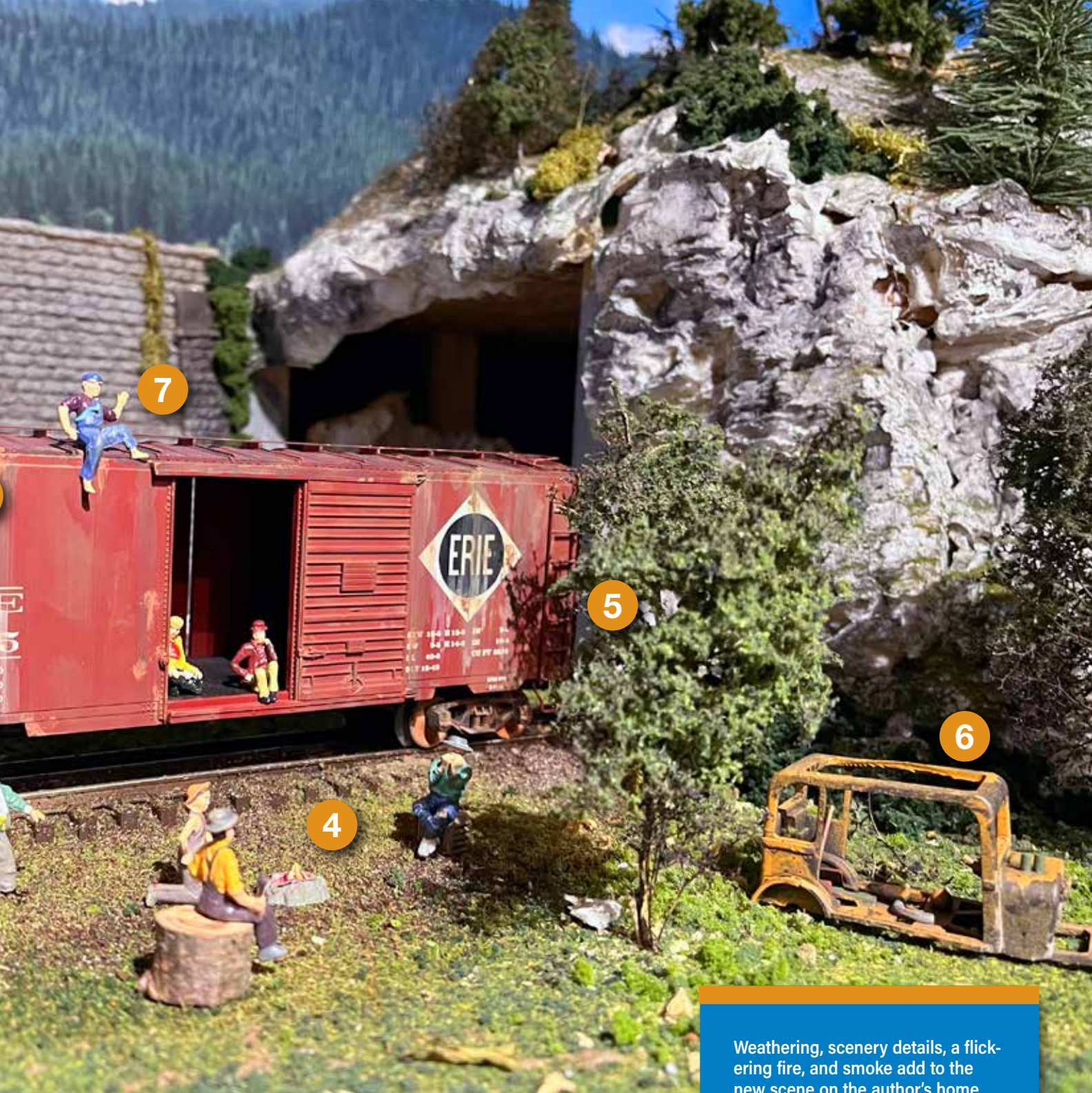
To increase the population, I bought a Woodland Scenics No. A2734 Hobo Figure Pack that has five hobos, a small crate for a seat, and a fire pit. I purchased a rusted-out car frame from Model Tech Studios and added overgrown shrubs to the area plus some SuperTrees from Scenic Express. Smaller saplings or immature trees will look good in this area, but I suggest keeping the larger trees for the sides or end of the spur itself.



LIGHT, SMOKE, AND MORE

With the camp finished, overgrowth in place, and boxcar weathered, what else could I do? I love my Hobo Sounds Boxcar, but I didn't want a constant looping audio when running trains. I got a push-button switch from Evan Designs (evandesigns.com), which I wired into the track to make it easy to turn the sounds on and off.

Next, I purchased a firelight flicker



light-emitting diode (LED) set from Evan Designs. This includes three LEDs with a built-in resistor that lets you wire it direct to the track power and switch. I drilled a few holes into the Woodland Scenics campfire piece and threaded the wire through a 1/4" hole I drilled into the layout table.

A final (optional) step involves adding smoke. Seuthe offers many small smoke units. I bought a chimney unit

online and added a 5/16" pipe to the top. The unit rests on the layout table, making it easy to fill the unit with smoke fluid. However, I wired it into the same power and switch as the track. Just like that, I had a smoking campfire!

I spent about \$60 building this neat scene (not counting the boxcar). If you don't want sound, you could just use a boxcar you have as the centerpiece instead. Happy railroading! **CTT**

Weathering, scenery details, a flickering fire, and smoke add to the new scene on the author's home layout he built around a Lionel No. 2226010 Erie Hobo Sounds Boxcar.

1. Ground foam and static grass
2. Painted piece of track
3. Weathered boxcar
4. Flickering campfire with smoke unit
5. Tree/shrub overgrowth
6. Rusted car frame
7. Hobo figures

A 9 X 20 TRACK PLAN
WITH A WATER FEATURE,
BRIDGES, AND PLENTY
OF ACCESSORIES

MODEL THE NORTH

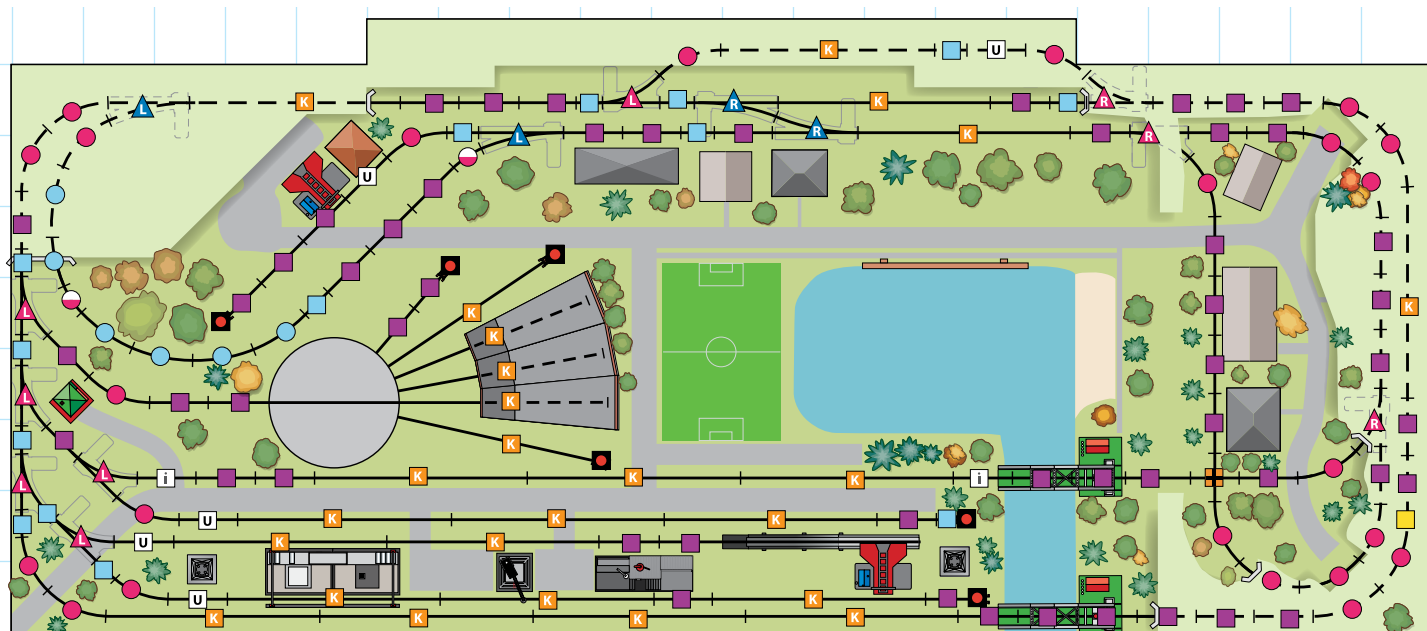
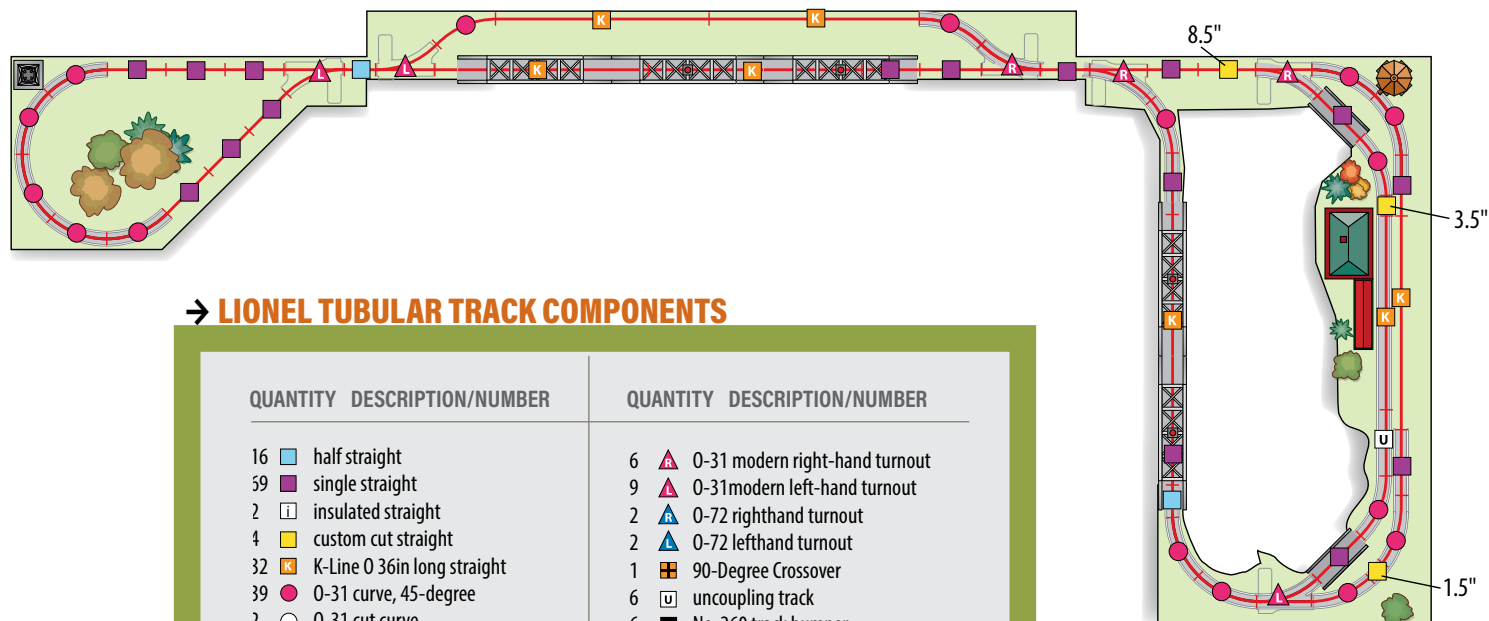


illustration by Kellie Jaeger

LOWER LEVEL



→ LIONEL TUBULAR TRACK COMPONENTS

QUANTITY DESCRIPTION/NUMBER

- 16 half straight
- 59 single straight
- 2 insulated straight
- 4 custom cut straight
- 32 K-Line 0 36in long straight
- 39 0-31 curve, 45-degree
- 2 0-31 cut curve
- 5 0-54 curve

QUANTITY DESCRIPTION/NUMBER

- 6 0-31 modern right-hand turnout
- 9 0-31 modern left-hand turnout
- 2 0-72 righthand turnout
- 2 0-72 lefthand turnout
- 1 90-Degree Crossover
- 6 uncoupling track
- 6 No. 260 track bumper

UPPER LEVEL

BROOKFIELD RAILROAD

BY MICHAEL TYLICK

The North Brookfield Railroad is a traditional track plan made using tubular track, with continuous loops on several levels. I've included a number of places trains can be kept while waiting their turn and a number of side tracks where you can show off your collection of operating accessories. Three trains can run unattended. Most of our track is easily accessible by placing it within a few

feet of the layout's edge. The "tight" O-31 curves remove the temptation to run large equipment; the thrill of seeing speeding trains careen around impossible turns is probably what made us interested in the first place. The turntable and roundhouse may be somewhat hard to reach, but only light engines run at slow speeds here, making derailments unlikely.

There are a number of ways you can build the upper track level, but I prefer a combination of bridges and trestles so the lower level is mostly visible. A few short tunnels and retaining walls provide a surprise when a train emerges from hidden track. The railroad is flat, so a large plywood table would make sense. Cutouts would be necessary for the waterways. Make the tables strong enough to support a person just in case; there is a lot of hard-to-reach territory in the center.

Generic scenery is in keeping with a traditional layout, but the scenery could follow almost any theme. There is room for more than meets the eye. With a little care, the North Brookfield RR could provide a real showpiece for your collection.

HIGHLIGHTS

1 The large table provides a "wow" factor not often possible with shelf layouts. The large table also evokes childhood memories of department store and hardware store Christmas displays. For

collectors, leaving the outer walls alone provides ample space for display areas.

2 The upper loop allows you to keep a train moving while switching and operating accessories. The passing siding at top center makes it possible to keep two trains on this line. For those interested in gadgets and electronics, it should not be difficult to implement automatic two-train operation. A second operator could be entertained by selecting the train to run on the upper line, all isolated from the lower line. In the case of snafus, two independent loops ensure that one will always be operating.

3 The turntable and roundhouse are difficult to reach, but in many cases, these are showpieces that aren't heavily used. Not many of us would hide our collections inside covered roundhouses, either!

4 The soccer field is large enough to make a lift-out hatch to access the roundhouse. Be sure to make the roof removable. The sharply defined edges of the field make it easy to hide the hatch edges.

5 Dry land scenery could easily be substituted for the harbor area, but then you lose the reason for those nice operating drawbridges. Ideas might include an amusement park, a town, or a large mountain. Since this is a fantasy layout, you could paint the waterways blue without cutting the plywood to lower its elevation. Don't

→ A BRIEF HISTORY



The North Brookfield Railroad (Mass.) was built in 1876. It connected the Quaboag Rubber and Aztek Asbestos Textile companies with the former Boston & Albany RR main line four miles away in East Brookfield. The line was leased by the B&A until it was in turn leased by the New York Central in 1902. It was abandoned by Conrail in the 1970s. Around 2010, an attempt to reopen the line was proposed but did not pan out. Today the right of way is a town-owned bike trail.

forget to include a few docks and boats.

6 Scenery could be improved by building a few of the roadways on overpasses.

7 Be sure to leave access for the lower level track. It's also more fun to not hide a train for too long.

8 Although not on my plan, the upper-right side, across from the harbor, could be a good location for a large union station. **CTT**

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PAINT SAMPLES AND ENGINEERING MOCK-UPS GALORE

PRESENTING THE LOUIS ROSE LIONEL COLLECTION

STORY BY ROGER CARP // PHOTOS BY WILLIAM ZUBACK

LOUIS ROSE, AKA “CHOO CHOO LOU,” epitomizes the term “passionate collector.” He identifies the trains he wants and their significance to his collection. Then he sets out to find them, all the while learning about their place in Lionel history.

Not too long ago, Louis and his wife Meredith decided to move to a different part of the country. It became necessary for him to thin out the massive number of trains he had thoughtfully and carefully acquired over 35 years of passionate collecting. So, Louis contacted his longtime friend Greg Stout, owner of Stout Auctions, to consign the vast majority of his collection, which was sold in a series of five large auctions.

Fortunately for *Classic Toy Trains* — and everyone who appreciates and values classic American electric toy trains from

the prewar and postwar eras — Lou and Greg invited us to view the hundreds of items in the auctions. We are thrilled to share some of the highlights here and in a future issue, along with their background, Lou’s hobby philosophy, and his experience of devoting energy, time, and resources to searching for “the best of the best” for more than 35 years.

THE WORLD CHANGES

When asked just how he became a Lionel collector, Louis mentions an O gauge set cataloged in 1954 and given to him in

1966. This impressive steam freight train is among the handful of items he vows will never leave his sight.

Louis recalls how, at the age of eight, his father Nat greeted him at Chanukah by placing in front of him a large, corrugated carton. Inside was a No. 2225WS five-car work train purchased from a neighbor who had hardly used it.

A No. 736 2-8-4 Berkshire steamer with a No. 2046W streamlined tender pulled five pieces of rolling stock. Leading the way over the oval of track were Nos. 3461-25 Operating Log Car and 3562-25 Operating Barrel Car. Next came Nos. 3620 Searchlight Car and 6460 Crane Car. A No. 6419 Work Caboose rode behind.

Louis absolutely loved the Lionel train. “It was so very heavy,” he says. “I thought

BOXCAR MOCK-UPS



LEFT Louis Rose collected engineering mock-ups and paint samples to learn about Lionel’s history. He recalls how in the 1950s, Ronald Saypol aimed to win sponsors for new models. To show executives at Corn Products Refining Co. what was possible, Saypol had engineers take a No. 6034 O-27 Pennsylvania RR boxcar with the name of Baby Ruth candy and substitute decals with the Corn Products logo and the name of its Bosco Chocolate Flavored Syrup. The campaign succeeded — the No. 6014 Bosco “plug-door” boxcar joined the line in 1958.

RIGHT This “plug-door” boxcar represented another of Saypol’s efforts, this time to win an account from the Pillsbury Co., once among the world’s largest producers of grain and other foodstuffs. Lionel took one of its basic white plastic body shells and decorated it with decals with the name and logo then printed on bags of Pillsbury Flour. Nice as the boxcar was, it failed to gain the approval of Pillsbury leaders.

it weighed at least 100 pounds!” He played with it endlessly by himself and with his friend Lenny Kovel who lived nearby.

More than just running the Berkshire and the freight cars, an inquisitive Louis wanted to figure out how they operated. He received a crash course in basic electricity by connecting his train accessories to a Lionel type-ZW 275-watt transformer. One vivid memory involved Lou and Lenny trying to solder the wires on his 3620 Searchlight Car when they had become detached.

Finally, as would a future collector, Louis reminisces about how important the component and outfit boxes were to him. He handled them delicately. As for his powerful steam locomotive, Louis regularly laid it on a couch pillow to protect it after each and every use. He didn’t want the big Berkshire to get scratched.

INEVITABLE RETURN

As the years went on, Louis’ love of all things by Lionel grew to a fever pitch. He and his dad would travel to Madison

Hardware Co. in midtown Manhattan to acquire more accessories and operating cars. His memories of Lou Shur and Carl Shaw, the eccentric and cantankerous brothers overseeing the store, were far from sweet. Lou Shur took whatever money Louis had brought with him and then showed him and his father the door.

By the time Louis reached his high school years and beyond, schoolwork, new leisure pursuits, and other activities were stealing time from his Lionel trains. Yet that love always remained deep in his

GP7 & GP9 PROTOTYPES



TOP Among the most gorgeous pieces in Louis’ collection was this engineering mock-up of a GP9 road diesel decked out in the colors of the Alaska RR. Lionel had its eye on the far north in 1958, because news was spreading that Alaska would be joining the Union as the 49th state. Eager to capitalize on the public’s interest, executives at Lionel weighed the advantages of adding engines and cars decorated for the Alaska RR to the line about to be cataloged for 1959. In the end, they settled on an NW2 diesel switcher; three freight cars, including the desirable No. 6464-825 near-scale boxcar with the Alaska RR’s Inuit herald; and a Southern Pacific-type caboose.

BOTTOM Among the most intriguing items Louis owned was this preproduction GP7 road diesel painted olive drab and decaled for the United States Army Transportation Corps. Lionel never put the locomotive into production, despite the fact that in the late 1950s and early ‘60s it was expanding its list of engines and motorized units with models decorated for the U.S. Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy.

memory and heart. His Berkshire steam engine and whistle tender, along with the classic operating cars, spent months and then years stuck in their boxes, never seeing the light of day.

But Louis had never forgotten his Lionel trains. A born collector, he was focused on coins, fossils, and postage stamps. Still, there was never a doubt he

would return to the world of orange-and-blue Lionel boxes. After all, marketing executives at Lionel contended that any boy actively operating their electric trains at the age of 14 was sure to be operating them by the age of 40. In Louis' case, that prediction was true!

Indeed, Louis' personal experience nearly paralleled what marketing leaders

at Lionel long believed. Having completed his education at Brooklyn College and then establishing himself in a successful career on Wall Street by 1986, Louis was at age 28 drawn back to his first love of collecting Lionel trains.

GETTING STARTED — AGAIN

Louis' reentry into the hobby of Lionel

COLOR SAMPLES



TOP Whenever you observe versions of regular-production rolling stock whose colors differ dramatically from what Lionel ultimately used, questions arise as to why these curious “oddballs” exist. That’s the case with these samples of the No. 6446 (-25) Norfolk & Western quad hopper painted pale green and pale pink with black heat-stamped graphics. The most logical explanation for their pastel tones is they were being considered for the No. 1587S Lady Lionel outfit. The Girl’s Set ended up with the No. 6436-500 Lehigh Valley car painted lilac.

MIDDLE The glossy brown used on the Southern Pacific-type caboose, stockcar, and short gondola matches the kind Lionel applied to some of the sheet-metal “tinplate” Pullman coaches and observation cataloged for the final time in 1949. Interesting to note how the No. 6656 Lionel Lines stockcar introduced in yellow in 1950 was illustrated as a dark brown car in the consumer catalogs for 1950 and '51.

BOTTOM During the mid-1950s, the Engineering Department experimented with standard pieces of rolling stock by painting them in colors unlike those typically used in the cataloged line. Collectors search tirelessly for legitimate paint samples — Louis had several. These two models, perhaps considered for the No. 1587S Lady Lionel outfit for 1957, featured a light shade of turquoise. The Lehigh Valley graphics used on No. 6456 hoppers and the New York Central graphics used on No. 6462 gondolas were heat-stamped on the two samples.

trains progressed from operating them to seriously collecting them. In the 1960s and '70s, collectors might easily have picked up original outfits at yard sales and flea markets. They might have been able to buy old stock at low prices from hobby shops glad to be getting rid of it.

By the late 1980s and beyond, those possibilities were drying up. To be sure, Louis did place advertisements for Lionel trains in local newspapers and shopping publications while scouring retail outlets that formerly had sold various brands of electric trains. Those ads and store visits did occasionally bear fruit.

Coincidentally, one place where Louis

did corral some outstanding pieces was his boyhood Lionel mecca — Madison Hardware Co. By then, he had some real money to spend, so Lou and Carl proved to be slightly friendlier because he was flashing real money at them for individual engines in pristine condition.

But those success stories, whether at Madison Hardware or anywhere else, proved to be the exception. Louis began to attend toy train auctions and purchase mint and near-mint Lionel trains. He elected to buy only “the best of the best,” concluding that hard work and a thick wallet, far more than luck, would truly determine how his collection of Lionel

locomotives and rolling stock grew in quantity and quality.

Louis spent hours of valuable time researching what Lionel had produced and cataloged during the postwar era. He became familiar with how its employees had designed, assembled, and decorated various models. In-depth knowledge, along with an air of caution, were essential to if he hoped to avoid spending money on rare and expensive trains that were nothing more than counterfeits.

SEEKING THE BEST

The beauty of Lionel trains, along with their sharp and colorful decoration and

PRELIMINARY MODELS



TOP Too bad Lionel failed to catalog this red-painted double-dome tank car with decal Texaco graphics. It would have complemented the Nos. 2348 Minneapolis & St. Louis GP9 and 2383 Santa Fe F3s while giving the colorful single-dome models cataloged by the A.C. Gilbert Co. for its S gauge American Flyer line a run for their money. One of the stockcars planned for the line in 1958 was a model imagined to be transporting hens and roosters. The No. 6434 Poultry Dispatch would feature artwork of chickens by Louis Melchionne in the Engineering Department. This preproduction model in Louis Rose's collection includes the original illustrations printed on paper, labels glued to each side, and a yellow shell painted brown (the final manufactured version ended up being painted red with white markings).

BOTTOM America's race with the Soviet Union to be first to send an astronaut into the atmosphere led Lionel to create space-oriented models. The No. 6413 Mercury Capsule Carrying Car made its debut in 1962, when John Glenn orbited Earth three times. This mock-up was likely sent to trade shows and displayed at Lionel showrooms to preview what was planned for the coming year. It had brake stands at both ends, though experience with the No. 6544 Missile Firing Car had shown how those details tended to be snapped off when packaged. Lionel therefore eliminated them on the 6413 as it was produced. Lionel introduced a bay-window caboose in 1955 as the No. 6517 Lionel Lines. Not until 1966 did one have the name of a full-size railroad (No. 6517-75 Erie RR). But this preproduction version painted red and decal for the Baltimore & Ohio sheds light on what was considered. Lionel had brought out F3 cab units and two boxcars decorated for the B&O in 1956. So a caboose would have made sense the next year (note BLT "3-57" / BY LIONEL to the right of the extruding alcove). Lionel failed to bring back the Nos. 2368 F3s and 6464-375 Sentinel boxcar for 1957, which might explain why this caboose was rejected that year.

brilliant design, fascinated Louis. It was those characteristics that had fueled the fire behind his love of Lionel trains from the time his dad brought home the 2225WS Berkshire outfit.

Everything Louis attained from his college education and business career reinforced his appreciation and exceedingly high opinion of Lionel trains. So, he set out to collect only what he deemed “the best of the best” by Lionel.

Louis’ quest was to search for the finest examples of the most desirable, top-of-the-line engines, sets, and accessories cataloged during the postwar period. Of particular interest to him were the many versions of Lionel’s GG1 electric and Fairbanks-Morse Train Master. Among his favorite Train Masters were the black-and-yellow No. 2331 Virginian and the No. 2341 Jersey Central.

Complete outfits in their original set boxes became a passion for Louis. He hunted tirelessly for superlative examples of Super O, O gauge, and O-27 sets that

Lionel had cataloged from the late 1940s through the end of the postwar era in 1969. As you can imagine, he searched for and collected outfits with all the original packaging and paperwork.

Seeking “the best of the best” broadened to Louis’ desire to acquire rare and unique engineering mock-ups and paint samples developed in anticipation of being added to the regular line. Especially intriguing were one-of-a-kind models whose design and look had not yet been adopted by the decision makers. Those rare items, distinctly different from regular-production models, were often displayed at trade shows in New York and elsewhere.

TIME TO LET GO

The tireless search for “the best of the best” preoccupied Louis for over 35 years. He attended countless auctions and chased down endless leads concerning Lionel postwar trains. Over time, Louis’ interests expanded into Lionel prewar O gauge and

American Flyer S gauge trains, always focused on the highest quality.

There comes a time when a smart collector’s urge for pursuing the best of the best begins to wane. That point came when Louis decided to sell his house on Long Island and move to a smaller home down south. He weighed the advantages of thinning out his collection and decided to put 80% of it up for auction. Louis kept more than 35 mint and near-mint complete sets, both prewar and postwar, along with 60 mint locomotives and prototypes that may never be sold.

The auctions scheduled and supervised by Greg Stout offered opportunities for other Lionel collectors to bid on incredible models, which included many prototypes and color samples. We are pleased to be able to showcase many of them while thanking Louis for all he has done to protect these Lionel gems. His dedication to the hobby enabled other collectors to learn more and deepen their understanding of what made the Lionel Corp. great. Lionel’s motto, “A Lifetime Investment in Happiness,” became Louis’ mantra. **CT**

Louis set out to collect only what he deemed “the best of the best” by Lionel.

ALCO DIESELS



TOP The list of locomotives available from Lionel exploded between 1957 and 1965 with the release of 34 different entries in its series of O-27 Alco FA diesels. First to arrive were the Nos. 202 Union Pacific and 205 Missouri Pacific. The mock-up of the 202 came with an open pilot whereas the production model had a closed one. The mock-up of the 205 had an unpainted royal blue body mold adorned with white decals.

RIGHT Kids perusing the consumer catalog for 1960 couldn’t have skipped over pages 10 and 11, not after seeing the No. 1633 O-27 “Land-Sea-Air” diesel freight outfit. Leading the way were the new No. 224 U.S. Navy Alco A and B units; Louis owned preproduction models of the two blue engines.

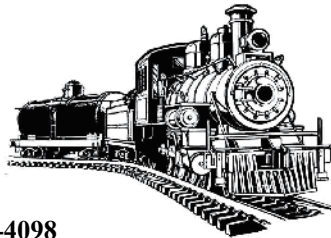




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UNCOVER THE FACTS BEHIND LIONEL'S NO. 9021



When fully assembled, the Lionel No. 9021 Santa Fe Work Caboose looked terrific coupled at the end of a freight train. But the design of the O-27 model converted it easily into a flatcar.

THIS MODERN-ERA FREIGHT CAR EASILY CHANGED IDENTITY

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MARK SUEK

When the topic of early 1970s convertibles arises, most of us turn our thoughts to Chevrolet Camaros or Corvettes, Pontiac Firebirds or GTOs, Ford Mustangs, or perhaps one of the many mid-size and full-size top-down cars that prowled the streets in those bygone days.

In terms of toy trains,

though, Lionel produced its own convertible in the form of the No. 9021, a fascinating yet overlooked O-27 model that was introduced in 1970. As the catalog for that year noted, this Santa Fe Convertible Work Caboose could be changed to a flatcar with stakes. The 9-inch-long 9021, cataloged again in 1971 and 1973-75, was unlike anything else Lionel ever made.

START WITH THE 9021

Model Products Corp., the division of General Mills overseeing production of Lionel trains in the first years after the cereal giant licensed the rights to make and market those trains, introduced the 9021 as a work caboose in the No. 1082 Yard Boss freight set cataloged in 1970.

The 9021 consisted of a black plastic flatcar with

molded wood slats and a black plastic ladder at the end, on top of which were added a red plastic tool bin and a red plastic cab with a black plastic smoke jack. It was a work caboose similar in appearance to the No. 6119-100 work caboose cataloged as a set component and a separate-sale item in 1957-66 and 1969.

Five variations based on components and markings

CONVERTIBLE CABOOSE

were reported in *Greenberg's Guide to Lionel Trains, 1970-1991*. When the 9021 made its debut in 1970, it came with AAR trucks and plastic wheels. The model had one Manumatic coupler that could be operated by hand and one non-operating coupler. The Manumatic type of coupler lacked the thumb tack pressed into the armature shaft that was required for remote-controlled uncoupling.

The black plastic frame typically featured the yellow ATSF markings, 40,000-pound weight limit, and 48-foot length shown here. Most variations had "9021"; however, one lacked that four-digit product number and another had "9022" identifying it as the matching flatcar.

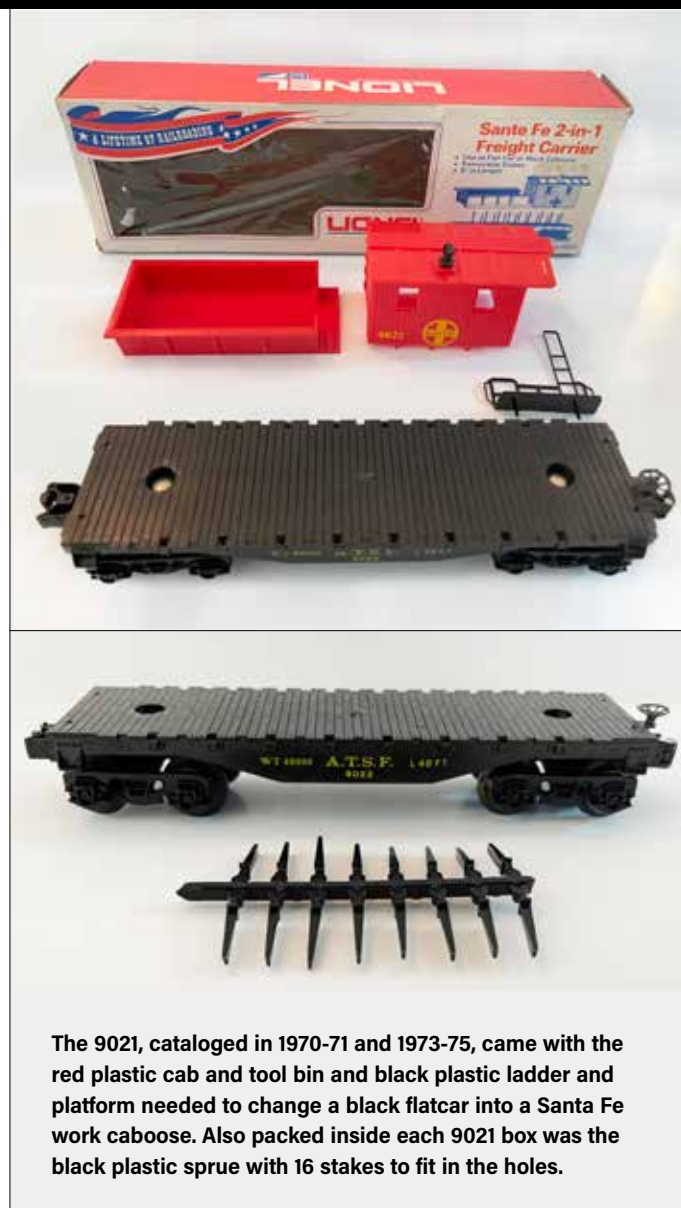
As first offered, the 9021 featured a medium red cab and a light red tool bin with the Santa Fe "cross" logo done in yellow. A second version had a light red cab and two Manumatic couplers.

The third variation (without a number on the frame) came with a dark red cab and tool bin, Symington-Wayne trucks, and one operating coupler and one non-operating one. The fourth included an orange cab. The fifth version was identical to the first, but the number was "9022."

MOVE TO THE 9022

The 9021 Santa Fe work caboose appeared only as an outfit component in the list of Lionel sets and models for 1970. But another low-end outfit, the No. 1081 Wabash Cannonball, was described as including the "New Santa Fe All-Purpose Flat Car with Side Stakes."

After unfolding the amply



The 9021, cataloged in 1970-71 and 1973-75, came with the red plastic cab and tool bin and black plastic ladder and platform needed to change a black flatcar into a Santa Fe work caboose. Also packed inside each 9021 box was the black plastic sprue with 16 stakes to fit in the holes.

illustrated catalog, readers studying the locomotives and cars discovered the model in the Wabash Cannonball and Yard Boss sets was the 9021 "New 2-in-1 Santa Fe Freight Carrier." The remarkable model could be used with its cab and tool bin at the end of a train. Or those parts might be taken off to give operators a flatcar with a plain wood deck on which they might place miniature automobiles, trucks, or machinery.

However, the 9021 had more even more versatility, thanks to the black plastic sprue with removable stakes packed inside each box. A modeler had merely to take off the stakes and put them in the holes molded into the frame to create a flatcar that could transport logs or pipes.

Starting in 1971, Model Products Corp. chose to catalog the 9021 work caboose as well as the 9022 flatcar with side stakes and bulkheads as a

separate-sale member of its O-27 roster.

SIMPLE CONVERSION

Converting the flatcar into a work caboose meant removing the side stakes and fitting the cab and tool bin onto the frame by way of small nibs (three on each side for a total of six on the cab and five on each side for a total of ten on the tool bin) that secure the pieces in place.

Meanwhile, the ladder fit on the rear of the car via two nibs of its own, and the top fits through a slot in the rear of the cab roof. The mounting holes for the ladder were also where one of the bulkheads attaches on a 9022 flatcar, truly making the 9021 a car with multiple purposes.

VALUES

Greenberg's Pocket Price Guide for Lionel Trains 1901-2025 values the 9021 Santa Fe convertible work caboose at \$20 in excellent condition and \$29 in mint condition. Finding an example with all the nibs intact, the stakes still attached to their original sprue, and the two extra protective cardboard pieces in the box is quite a challenge and increases the value of any mint example. You may have to pay two or three times as much.

If you're buying a 9021, make sure all the fragile mounting nibs are present on the three work caboose pieces. Without these nibs, the cab and tool bin aren't secure atop the flatcar base.

Owners of either a 9021 or a 9022 could consider pairing it with a No. 6560 red-and-black crane car from the post-war or modern period for additional operating fun. **CTT**



Breaking new

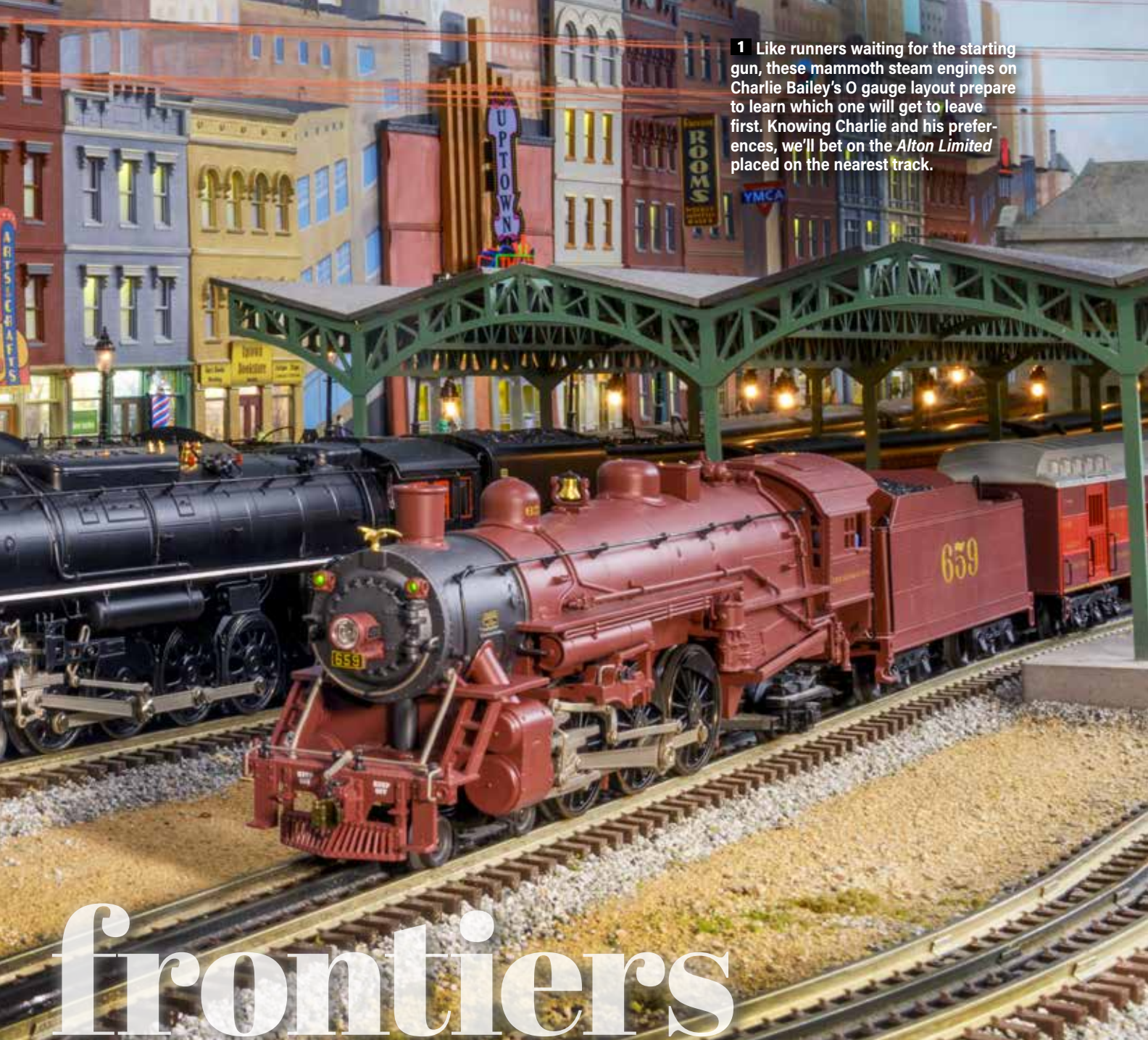
THE SKY'S THE LIMIT ON CHARLIE BAILEY'S GREAT O GAUGE LAYOUT

STORY BY ROGER CARP
PHOTOS BY DENNIS BRENNAN

In light of Charlie Bailey's love of flying, you might think he would prefer to be featured in a different Kalmbach publication. During his distinguished career as a pilot, he flew everything from two-engine propeller airplanes to jumbo jets. So why not get him into *FineScale Modeler*, with its detailed scale replicas of DC-3s and 747s? Or perhaps *Astronomy*, since from the cockpit at 35,000 feet he observed the Milky Way and planets in our solar system. *Classic Toy Trains* would seem irrelevant to him!

There's just one problem with drawing these conclusions. Charlie is passionate about toy trains. He collects Standard gauge (modern reissues from Lionel and MTH) and takes pride in the wonderfully detailed and expertly wired O gauge railroad filling much of the lower portion of the home he shares with his wife, Jane.

We're thrilled to tour this 42 x 49-foot three-rail empire and see the great work Charlie has done. And we can pay tribute to the folks who have helped him, starting with Jane and moving forward to such friends and talented artists and builders



1 Like runners waiting for the starting gun, these mammoth steam engines on Charlie Bailey's O gauge layout prepare to learn which one will get to leave first. Knowing Charlie and his preferences, we'll bet on the *Alton Limited* placed on the nearest track.

frontiers

as Tom McKenzie, Jeff Baumgartner, Tom Carey, and Roger Farkash.

LONG APPRENTICESHIP

Charlie, like other hobbyists overseeing construction and operation of an immense O or S gauge display, acknowledges that his current layout wouldn't have been possible without the projects he accomplished in the past. He speaks about his long and meaningful apprenticeship as a builder, one that has spanned much of his life.

COVER
STORY

Just as a pilot doesn't begin with the largest airplane or the fastest jet aircraft, a model railroader seldom starts by constructing an enormous layout. Instead, he or she undertakes smaller projects that can be completed and enjoyed in a relatively short time. Each one teaches important lessons applied to the next.

How did it all begin for Charlie? Best to look back to the late 1940s, when with his brother he was introduced to Lionel railroading by a favorite uncle. They created a compact

display on which to run their No. 2056 steam engine, along with a handful of freight cars. Charlie envisioned something grander, and so over the next few years he added a pair of switches, a more powerful transformer, and a trackside signal.

While in junior high school, Charlie and his family moved to a bigger house. The previous owner had left behind an HO scale layout. Charlie decided to transform it into an O gauge railroad. He learned more about wiring, especially how to regulate the speed of his different Lionel locomotives. He also added plenty



2 Modern railroading at its finest characterizes Charlie's enormous layout, thanks to a splendid roster of Lionel and MTH O gauge motive power. His interest in Plasticville U.S.A. structures from the postwar era injects life and fun into each and every scene. Something every reader can learn from studying Charlie's model railroad is how to incorporate older and toy-like buildings into scenes characterized by realistic track and scenery and dominated by highly detailed contemporary locomotives.

of operating accessories and Plasticville U.S.A. kits to assemble a village or two.

Then Charlie arrived at high school and was exposed to what he jokingly refers to as "the fumes." He's referring to how he was entranced by "perfume" and "car fumes." To make a long story short, he sold the trains to buy a 1954 Chevrolet, presumably to pick up a local sweetheart or two smelling very sweetly.

REVIVAL YEARS

A decades long absence from the hobby concluded in the early 1990s, thanks to Charlie's youngest son expressing a fascination with Thomas the Tank Engine. Eager to please the boy, Charlie bought large scale Thomas trains and constructed a 7 x 11-foot layout with Pola structures.

Charlie found himself invigorated by a different set of fumes now that he was in middle age: namely, the aroma produced by melting smoke pellets and lubricated drive wheels. Let the children play with the large scale display — he wanted something for himself.

Charlie indulged his passion first by purchasing reissues of classic Standard gauge engines and rolling stock by Lionel and MTH Electric Trains. At the same time, he was assembling a roster of modern O gauge trains and accessories made by Atlas O, Lionel, and MTH. His ultimate goal was to have two layouts to accommodate both groups of trains.

Fortunately for Charlie, as he worried about never having enough real estate for two big layouts, Jane suggested they search for their "forever" residence. They

needed a larger house for their family, where they could remain for their retirement years and enjoy their hobbies and host their kids and grandchildren. Charlie agreed with his wife and shared a wish for their new home to have a three-car garage where he could park his vintage cars and a basement for the planned layouts.

GETTING TO WORK

Over the years since Charlie had returned to the toy train hobby, he had made the acquaintance of several talented individuals who became both good friends and capable partners in constructing the Standard and O gauge displays. Tom McKenzie had assisted Charlie on the initial phases of work on a 15 x 20-foot three-rail layout whose progress had to be curtailed once the Baileys mentioned their hope to locate a bigger residence.

But Tom had no intention of abandoning his pal. To the contrary, he encouraged Charlie to launch work on the layouts of his dreams as soon as he and Jane had moved in.



Charlie and Jane Bailey



3 Who do you envy more, the travelers riding in style on the Southern Pacific Daylight train or their counterparts relaxing in a TWA L-1049 Super Constellation airplane overhead? Knowing that a storm is brewing, maybe the most fortunate folks are those bedding down in a nearby inn.

and screwing the legs and braces together to form the foundation of the layout built along the walls of the train room. He relied on L-girder and cookie-cutter types of benchwork to secure the platform standing about 36 inches off the floor. The wood used as supports ranged in dimension from 1 x 4 to 2 x 2, with pieces of ¾-inch plywood serving as subroadbed.

Experience had shown Charlie the value of using Atlas O track. But they didn't merely buy the straights and curves and nail them down. "Tom would pull the rails from the ties and bend them individually to the shape we wanted using a bender made by Llagas Creek. Next, he reassembled the track and screwed it to the subroadbed using the screws made by Fastenal. They're longer and tougher than the ones made by Atlas O."

Charlie purchased scale remote turnouts from the Atlas O product line. He controls them using single-pole double-throw momentary microswitches made by Mouser Electronics.

Anything else to know regarding trackwork on the layout? "Yes," Charlie says with emphasis. "I use different types of ballast available from Brennan's Model Railroading because they look so realistic and are priced very reasonably. Ballast is essential for a realistic appearance."

ON TO WIRING

From the choices Charlie made regarding ballast, screws, and track, you can tell how knowledgeable he has become about the wide assortment of products and tools on the market today. He has become equally proficient when it comes to evaluating the different methods and systems available these days for controlling trains and accessories.

Perhaps surprisingly, Charlie has not yet settled on a single type of command control, even though he's exclusively a Lionel patron. The Standard gauge display uses TrainMaster Command Control and Legacy, while the O gauge railroad has

Quickly, the two built a 16½ x 35-foot Standard gauge railroad, which featured loops of track where Charlie ran his reissued Ives circus train and MTH *Blue Comet* plus a newly cataloged Milwaukee Road *Hiawatha* passenger outfit from Lionel. Surrounding the lines were an MTH reissue of the Leland-Detroit monorail, a T-Reproductions reissue of a Dorfan crane, and a reissued Lionel airport.

After screwing down the final section of Standard gauge track and wiring the lights, Charlie and Tom launched work on his O gauge layout. Love of O gauge trains pushed Charlie to develop a great display.

Tom believed the best work Charlie and he could do was yet to be done. They discussed plans for an L-shaped railroad intended to fill much of what remained in

the finished train room. It would be an imaginary land dominated by long freights traveling between a city with industries and commercial sites and a distant town mainly dependent on logging, mining, and farming.

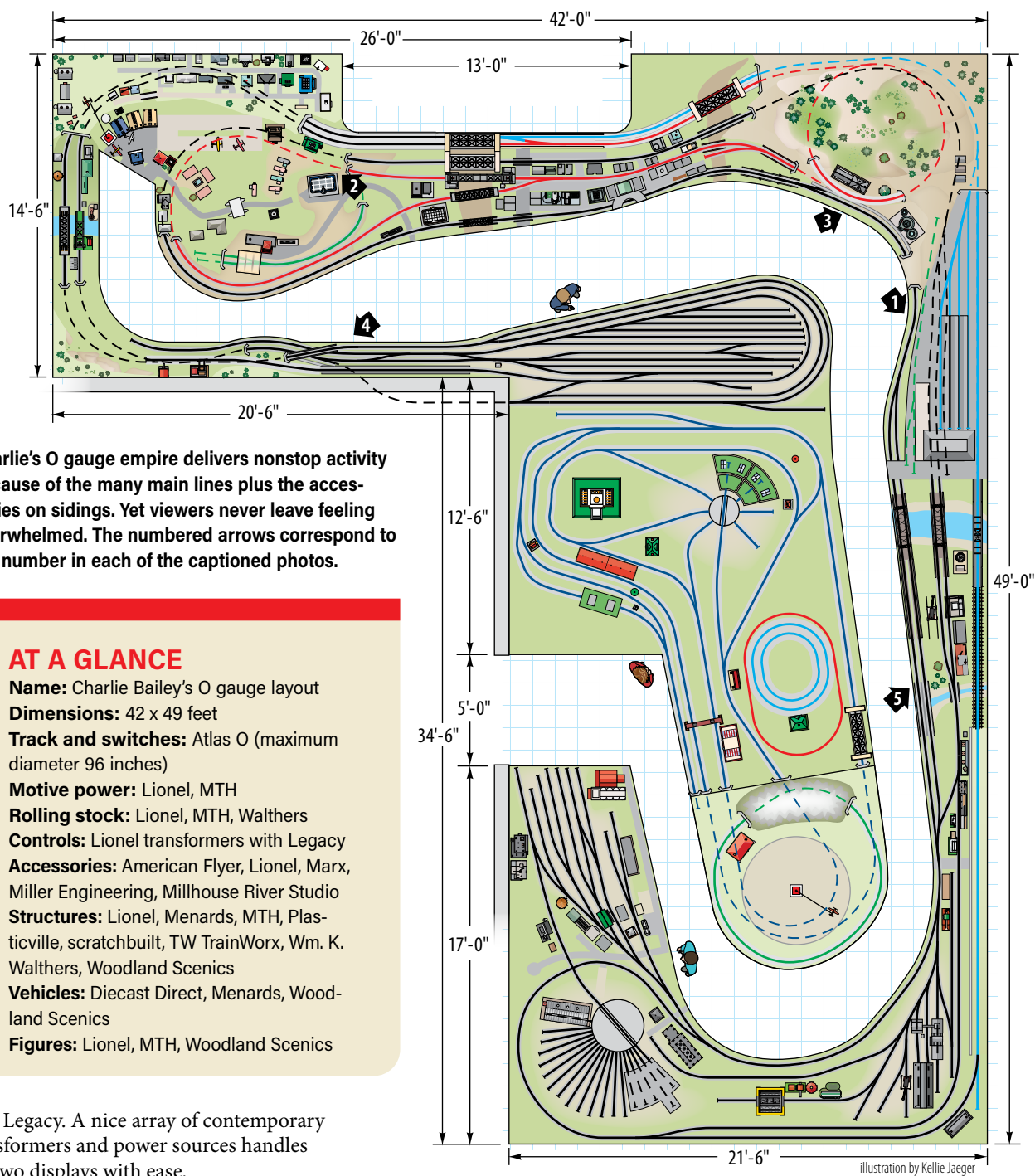
Charlie contacted Jeff Baumgartner, a highly skilled artist, to paint almost 130 feet of murals on the drywall surface behind the benchwork. "All the wall-to-ceiling areas," Charlie said, "would be curved with no hard corners in order to give the optical illusion of going on forever."

PLENTY OF SAWDUST

Charlie remembers the many weeks spent cutting lumber

Great attention to detail enables Charlie to develop awesome vignettes that entertain every visitor.





Charlie's O gauge empire delivers nonstop activity because of the many main lines plus the accessories on sidings. Yet viewers never leave feeling overwhelmed. The numbered arrows correspond to the number in each of the captioned photos.

AT A GLANCE

Name: Charlie Bailey's O gauge layout

Dimensions: 42 x 49 feet

Track and switches: Atlas O (maximum diameter 96 inches)

Motive power: Lionel, MTH

Rolling stock: Lionel, MTH, Walthers

Controls: Lionel transformers with Legacy

Accessories: American Flyer, Lionel, Marx, Miller Engineering, Millhouse River Studio

Structures: Lionel, Menards, MTH, Plasticville, scratchbuilt, TW TrainWorx, Wm. K. Walthers, Woodland Scenics

Vehicles: Diecast Direct, Menards, Woodland Scenics

Figures: Lionel, MTH, Woodland Scenics

only Legacy. A nice array of contemporary transformers and power sources handles the two displays with ease.

Whether considering feeder wires (spaced every 15 feet on the main lines and sidings) or accessory wires, Charlie has a liking for 20-stranded 15-gauge wire. This type of wire works as well for the turnouts and the 80 electrical blocks on the layout. The latter features are all controlled by double-pole double-throw switches by Mouser Electronics.

THEN GREAT SCENERY

Everywhere your eyes turn when studying the huge layout there are terrific and attractive scenes to take in. Charlie, aided by Tom and other hobby friends, has

designed and fashioned some magnificent mountains, forests, waterways, and other natural landforms.

Step one in the landscaping process involves taking cardboard boxes of varying dimensions and stacking them to get the general shapes Charlie and his crew desired and still be able to remove them after the plaster shell formed with them has thoroughly dried. This shell is formed out of rolls of plaster-infused cloth soaked in water and then carefully draped across the boxes. Charlie and the others soften

the corners and edges of the foundation with crumpled-up newspaper.

Step two involves brushing or squirting on acrylic latex paints from a hardware store until every square inch of white plaster has been covered. Before the brown and green colors have dried, Charlie and his friends dump on lots of ground foam, coarse and fine turf, and decomposed granite collected and sifted to size.

Step three involves planting commercial bushes and trees, most of them sold by Woodland Scenics, which also makes



4 Coal and logs are big business in the world Charlie has created for his Lionel and MTH O gauge trains. Several good friends in the hobby helped him lay the network of Atlas O track and switches before finishing the impressive hillsides and forests.

the ground foam and turf Charlie likes. In addition, he buys finished trees from Grand Central Gems and sagebrush armatures from Trackage Model Railroading on which he puts leaves to create unique forests for his hillsides.

Road and highways should be considered types of scenery for Charlie. He states there are three different kinds on his layout: asphalt (made out of patching plaster he then paints), concrete (made with sheet styrene), and gravel (made of rock sifted and cleaned).

Bodies of water couldn't be simpler. The bottom of the lake or stream gets a coat or two of paint. Once that has dried, Charlie coats it with acrylic gloss medium made by Liquitex.



5 The magnificent mural Jeff Baumgartner painted on the walls surrounding the layout add depth and beauty to the railroad. Classic accessories keep people busy while a freight train consisting of colorful boxcars and refrigerator cars rumbles by overhead.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Charlie usually keeps both feet on the ground these days. Not that his time in the cockpit has ended; he'll always be up for a flight somewhere or a test of new aircraft. Mainly, though, he's busy refining his O and Standard gauge layouts, often with guidance from Tom McKenzie or Roger Farkash from TW TrainWorx.

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Just as Charlie appreciates the insights shared by friends, so too does he treasure the opportunity to share his knowledge. He emphasizes the need to do lots of preparation when designing a layout and acquiring a familiarity with various products on the market. Sometimes, he notes, you learn about a novel structure or accessory a

bit late, and then are required to tear down and start anew on a key scene.

When change seems to be called for and improvement will result, Charlie advises folks to proceed forward. Keep striving to get better and take more pleasure from your trains while inviting friends and newcomers to the hobby to see what you have achieved. Let your spirit and vision soar, exactly as Charlie's does when flying or building. **CTT**




HOW TO
DOWNSIZE
AND STILL
ENJOY THE
HOBBY

Photography is always an interesting part of the hobby. A tripod and a time exposure make it easy with a digital camera.

LESS IS MORE

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STAN TRZONIEC



Since many of us toy train folks are mature adults, the question on what to do with all the equipment we have collected will come up eventually. It's nice to have that collection sitting on the racks near your prized layout, but when the time comes to start thinning out this horde of trains, what do we do? And can you still enjoy the hobby?

DOWNSIZE YOUR COLLECTION

Want to thin your collection? You have a few choices.

Tell your friends you're thinking of getting rid of some items. I did that, and a few buddies spoke up. Still, most of my collection remained on the shelf.

You can also sell items in a variety of ways. The easiest may be to see if a local hobby shop buys secondhand products. If



The author's beloved 700-square-foot Delaware & Raritan Valley O gauge layout was featured in *Classic Toy Trains* several times before he dismantled it. Stan is building a smaller layout using some of the components he saved.



Stan's new O gauge layout uses GarGraves track and Ross switches. The covered area behind him, part of the old layout, will be integrated into his smaller railroad.

you have a lot to unload, you may wish to call ahead to see what or how much they may want to buy. You can bring some boxes of items to a local train show and see whether a dealer is interested.

If you're good with a camera or cell phone, take photos of your items and sell them online, either in auctions or on a "marketplace" website. Keep in mind that this is more effort on your part, but you'll get a better return over time.

Companies that advertise in *Classic Toy Trains* often buy entire collections of model trains. I recommend getting quotes from several firms first. The buyers will likely ask for a detailed inventory before purchasing, as they may be located some distance away. Please don't expect to receive full retail price for your collection: Any buyer will have to take the time to resell your items.

BUILD SOMETHING SMALLER

I wanted to have a smaller O gauge layout to keep maintenance easier. My 700-square-foot Delaware & Raritan Valley RR would be reborn. So, after taking down

the scenery, leftover buildings and what seemed to be miles of track, thousands of ties, and a forest of plywood, I will be reusing some of that material on my new pike (see photo at upper right).

My new layout will measure 10 feet across and 24 inches wide in three sections, with a slightly wider part for a yard with easy access to facilitate model railroad photography. I plan to design it in four sections bolted together to allow for a center opening and a lift bridge to eliminate a duckunder. It can easily be disassembled if my wife and I ever move to smaller quarters.

While some hobbyists may view downsizing as sad, I look at it as a way to have fun. I'm building this layout with no set track plan in mind; I'm just laying track and switches as I move along. My O gauge railroad will include my most favored and saved parts, equipment, and accessories. Who knows what will develop?

Downsizing can be something to look forward to. Rather than dread it as an ending to your favorite pastime, consider it a new beginning in the hobby. **CTT**

Rebuilding a home layout offers new ways to enjoy the hobby. This photo of the enginehouse Stan detailed and lit inside was used as his Christmas card last year. It's the perfect use of a beautifully landscaped diorama.



NO LAYOUT? NO PROBLEM!

FIVE GREAT WAYS TO ENJOY THE HOBBY

1 If you don't want to build another layout or you have limited space, join a club where you can operate some of your equipment. I belong to a local club that has an HO scale railroad and an O gauge layout for members to use. Some clubs have modular layouts they display at shows.

2 If you're now confined to a smaller workspace, building a diorama may be the ticket. Most lumberyards will cut a piece of plywood to about 24 by 36 inches, which is perfect for a small scene with some track, buildings, and scenery.

3 Look to social media to find folks with similar hobby interests.

4 Get outside to enjoy and photograph full-size trains, either by yourself or with a group of friends.

5 Volunteer at local model railroad shows or at a railroad museum. — S.T.

Lots of SECOND CHANCES

RECYCLING IS FUN FOR GARY WRONKIEWICZ
ON HIS AMERICAN FLYER LAYOUT

STORY BY ROGER CARP // PHOTOS BY GARY WRONKIEWICZ

Who doesn't appreciate a second chance? If you make a mistake or somehow miss the mark the first time around, there's great value and meaning in having the opportunity to try again. This is especially true should you fall short because of mental or physical fatigue. Another chance may be all you need to shine brightly.

American Flyer enthusiast Gary Wronkiewicz strongly endorses the philosophy of offering second chances. Maybe he's such a strong advocate because his brothers wanted him to succeed when they were all growing up in the 1950s and '60s. His fair and generous attitude gained validity after Gary and his late wife, Barbara, became parents of two sons in the 1980s.

For this reason, Gary enjoys reviving American Flyer locomotives and rolling stock from the postwar era that may have endured hard times and poor treatment. "They've earned a second chance," he says before pointing out on his 10 x 16-foot S gauge railroad engines he has repaired, hoppers he has repainted, and structures

he has redesigned. "I like taking vintage model trains others have heavily played with and turning them into something that looks and runs like it was brand new."

NOT HIS FIRST RODEO

The pictures Gary has shot of his layout reflect skills refined over the past 30 or so years with both photography and model construction. He'll be the first to admit how the process of trial and error has led him to the high level of expertise he now occupies. Two of his favorite hobbies — toy trains and painting — have afforded him endless second chances.

But when did Gary get those all-important first chances? Namely, when did he enter the model railroad hobby and thus learn about laying track, wiring transformers and accessories, and making scenic effects?

The questions raised cause Gary to pause for several moments before he

answers a bit cryptically that his first chances have come more than once! Maybe this isn't really possible — don't you get only a single first chance? — but the responses he shares actually do make plenty of sense. Let's listen as he explains.



Gary Wronkiewicz



Gary's long and worthwhile journey started with the American Flyer Frontiersman set he received for Christmas in 1960. Wait, that's not entirely correct. You see, his older brother, Jim, already owned S gauge Santa Fe Alco diesels and streamlined passenger cars, along with some of accessories from the A.C. Gilbert Co. line.

Still, the Frontiersman was the first electric train Gary could claim as completely his own. Wait, that's not entirely correct either. After all, his parents all but ordered him to divide time at the controls with his younger brother, Paul.

Not a big deal, since Gary and Paul had terrific times together with the Flyer train and a Civil War playset from Louis Marx & Co. The brothers loved staging versions of the Mississippi battle they had seen in the 1959 film *The Horse Soldiers*.

Once Gary reached his teenage years, however, the trains and playset lost much of their appeal to him. He had found other pastimes to pursue and so had no objection to packing away the old toys.





1 While an American Flyer No. 293 steamer basks in the sun outside the three-stall engine house, a No. 322 New York Central 4-6-4 Hudson and tender drive past a Plasticville switch tower with a dozen or so hoppers brimming with coal.

READY FOR MORE

Little changed in Gary's feelings about his boyhood activities until after he and Barbara married and became the parents of Joe and Jeff in the 1980s. Then it struck him as the perfect time to revive an interest in model railroading. An HO scale layout came to life at the Wronkiewicz' home, and elements of what he learned 20 years earlier returned to Gary's mind.

All the same, not until the turn of the 21st century did another chance to engage with toy trains rather than scale models occur. So much of what took place seemed new and unpredictable to Gary that he refers to it as a first chance to master the intricacies of collecting and operating Flyer trains. He had long ago reached adulthood, but only now did he feel prepared to plunge into the hobby.

"While looking for property for my business to redevelop," Gary recalls, "I met a guy who had something our firm was

interested in buying. He also had a nice collection of American Flyer trains. I listened as he described them and didn't hesitate to make an offer. I bought everything — four locomotives, plenty of freight and passenger cars, and 10 switches — and began planning a layout that would be totally mine. Finally, I was on my own!"

A NEW LIFE

Gary, encouraged by Barbara and their sons, moved forward in a slow yet deliberate fashion. He envisioned creating a world for his models reminiscent of the town in Illinois where he grew up in the 1960s. Everything, including the vehicles and details, was going to be historically faithful to the place and time.

Gary cobbled together out of pieces of 1 x 4 lumber framing set 16 inches apart

with floor joists over a 2 x 4 beam set 12 inches in from the perimeter. He eventually added sections of 1 x 6 wood as a border along the outer perimeter and painted the border black. Over the grid he laid sheets of $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood and added $\frac{5}{8}$ " carpet padding and cork roadbed.

The framework, which stands 40" high, impresses other modelers for two reasons. First, it is level and sturdy — as the foundation of a great layout must be. Second, the design makes it possible to disassemble and move it easily.

Next came a network of S gauge track formed out of 36"-long sections of GarGraves flextrack with wood ties. The realistic appearance of that brand meets with Gary's approval, although for the sake of nostalgia and to save money he still relies on the Flyer remote-control turnouts he

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2 This stockyard looks so inviting you almost forget how it probably smells in real life! Cows look forward to their ride in the stockcars parked on a siding adjacent to several American Flyer No. 771 cattle loaders and Plasticville barns.

bought about 20 years ago. Track diameters go from 40 inches all the way up to 80 inches, ensuring a smooth and comfortable ride for the people and cargo traveling on Gary's home railroad.

SECOND CHANCES

Refurbishing postwar switches is one example of Gary's wish to give a second chance to trains and related items originally constructed with integrity. Employees at the Gilbert Co. took pride in producing items guaranteed to work dependably and consistently. Our host saw no reason why those superb products should be forgotten simply because they had been neglected or poorly maintained.

Other examples of Gary's outstanding handiwork can be discerned when studying the models being put to excellent use on his layout. Check out some of the postwar Flyer freight cars. According to Gary, many of them had been heavily played with and were almost ready for the trash can when he discovered them at train shows. "I replaced broken parts and added missing details to cars," he states.

"Then I repainted them — hoppers,

boxcars, tankers, and passenger cars — either in their original schemes or ones I liked. You can see unusual railroad names and heralds on my rolling stock. When I repaint a car, I add the number first used by Flyer, even if the road name is different. This way, I give models a second life, which they deserve after years of being played with by kids of my generation."

Structures receive the same kind treatment. Gary refurbishes vintage Plasticville



U.S.A. kits, often by repairing cracks in the walls and chips in the roofs. He also gives a different kind of second chance to HO scale or O gauge buildings whose dimensions don't fit his S gauge universe. Adding a floor, cutting down the sides, and brushing on a coat or two of paint work wonders. So does sprinkling gravel on a roof and wiring lights to a facade.

SIMPLE SCENERY

The picturesque backdrops with sky and clouds painted by Barbara years ago looked wonderful, so much so that Gary



3 The brakeman perched on the platform of the American Flyer No. 979 Action Caboose waves his lantern to greet his fellow railroaders driving the No. 312 Pennsylvania 4-6-2 Pacific steamer on a pleasant afternoon in September.



4 Coal, petroleum, and refrigerated produce represent some of the most lucrative parts of the economy here. Locomotives move raw materials and finished goods, and passenger traffic remains heavy.

knew he would have to raise his scenery-making game if he hoped to complement what she had accomplished. Looking at the layout leaves no doubt he did just that, much to his satisfaction.

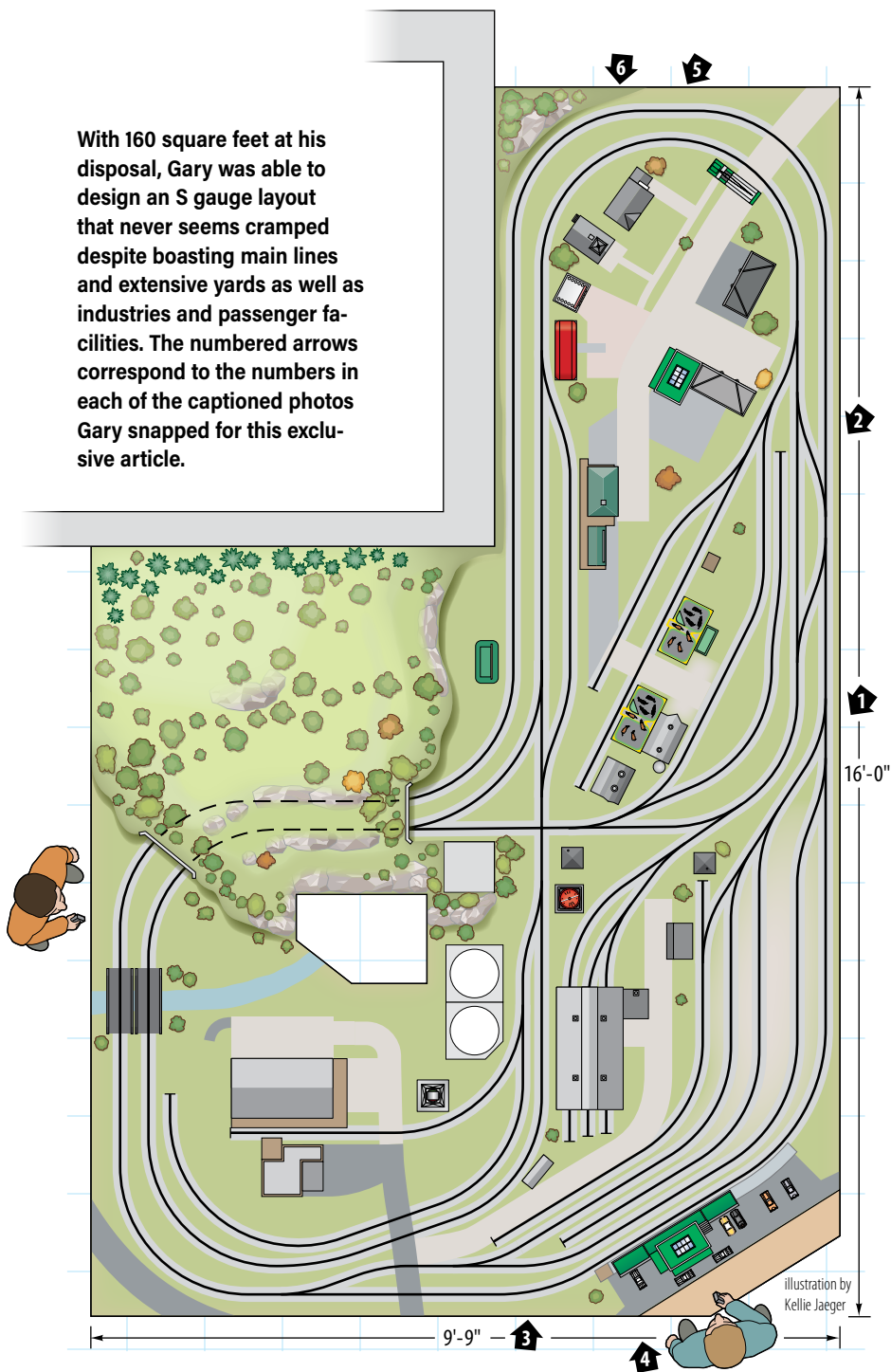
Cardboard and foamboard served as the foundation for the different landforms. Over that Gary draped either paper towels covered with drywall compound or dampened strips of plaster-impregnated cloth material. When everything had dried thoroughly, he put on a coat of leftover latex house paint.

Not brand-new paint? “No,” Gary laughs, confessing to a preference for giving everything, even old materials, a second chance to star on the layout!

“When paint gets old sitting in the can, it turns into a lumpy mixture. This can actually improve scenery because it alters the texture. I tint it an earth color and spread it on top of my hardened shell with brush strokes going in different directions. I like the uneven yet natural appearance. Then I sprinkle on types of ground foam and turf from Scenic Express and Woodland Scenics and plant forests of trees, in particular the evergreen types I buy at crafts stores after the holiday season.”

Something else that Gary enjoys modeling is water. For his river and the ponds he uses Realistic Water from Woodland

With 160 square feet at his disposal, Gary was able to design an S gauge layout that never seems cramped despite boasting main lines and extensive yards as well as industries and passenger facilities. The numbered arrows correspond to the numbers in each of the captioned photos Gary snapped for this exclusive article.



AT A GLANCE

Name: Gary Wronkiewicz's S gauge layout

Dimensions: 10 x 16 feet

Track: GarGraves flextrack (diameters range from 40 to 80 inches)

Switches: Gilbert American Flyer

Motive power: Gilbert American Flyer, S-Helper Service

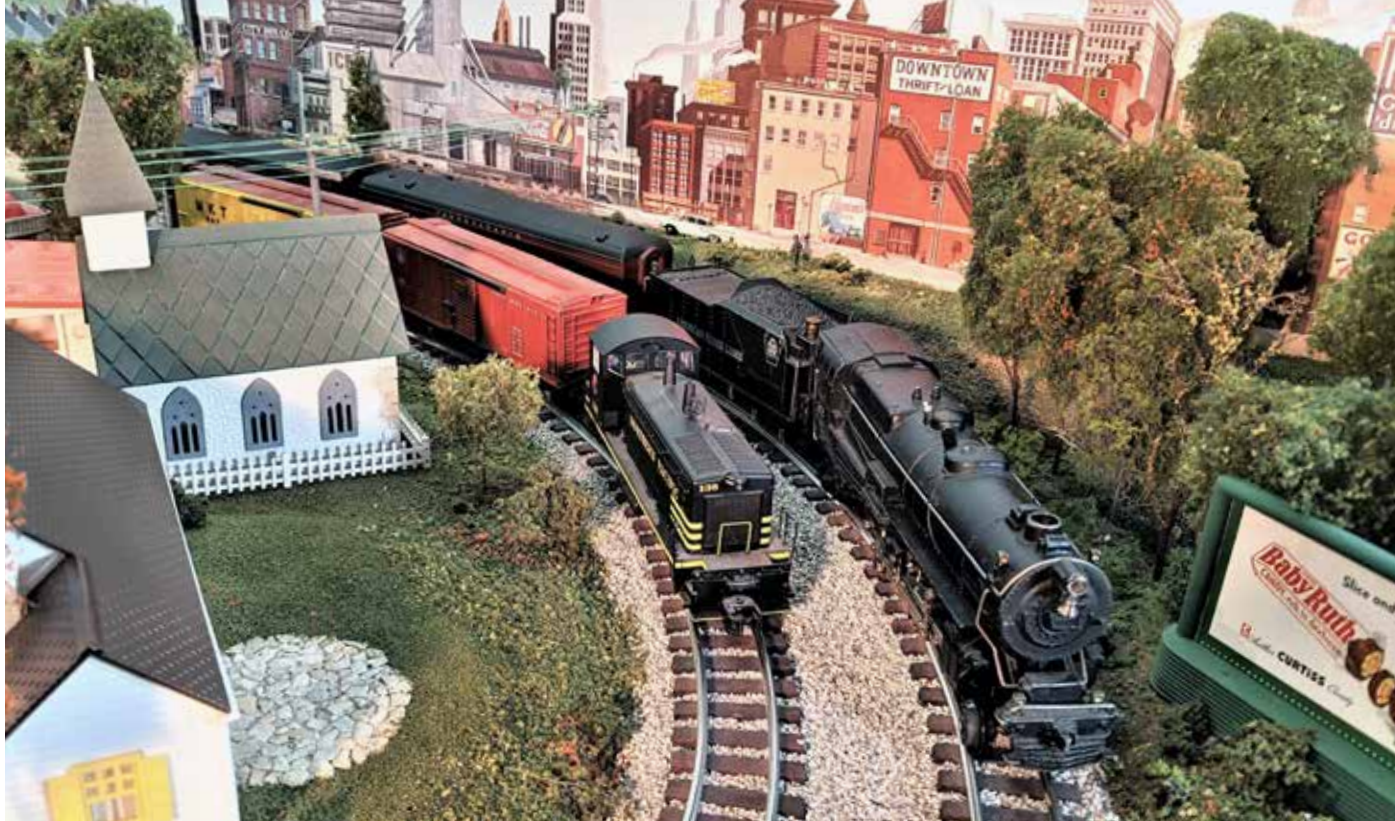
Rolling stock: Gilbert American Flyer

Controls: Gilbert American Flyer No. 12B transformer

Accessories: Gilbert American Flyer, Marx

Structures: Atlas O, Plasticville U.S.A., Wm. K. Walthers

Figures: Barclay, Ertl



TIPS ON MAKING ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Gary Wronkiewicz has learned so much about how to model mountains, forests, and waterways. But some of the finest and most attractive aspects of his S gauge layout are the roadways. Here, he shares ideas about the right materials and most successful techniques to adopt for your paved streets and dirt roads.

1. ROADWAYS CONNECTING THE STOCKYARDS: Gary used Road System Paving Tape from Woodland Scenics. He filled it in with plaster and painted on a blend of Woodland Scenics Asphalt and Concrete Top Coat.

2. STREETS IN THE CITY AND WAREHOUSE AREAS: Gary used blue or pink rigid insulation foamboard from home-improvement centers. To create the "crown" (highest point seen in the center of a street), he sanded the foamboard from the center towards the curb (what would be the lower point). Then he put a metal edge along the curb to keep it straight.

3. SURFACES: Gary next spread diluted plaster on the foamboard in the direction of the street and let it dry. Then he sanded down bumps, vacuumed up dust, and painted it with the blend of Woodland Scenics Asphalt and Concrete Top Coat mentioned above.

4. CONCRETE POUR JOINTS: Gary drew them in using a soft pencil and a straightedge.

He also drew in stress cracks and tire tread marks. For the latter, he took the soft black pencil, added thick marks, and smeared them by dragging a finger through them several times in the travel direction of vehicles.

5. PARKING LOTS. Gary started with corkboard and then painted it with the asphalt and concrete mixture to give the surface a rather faded appearance. For the lanes and parking spaces, he used narrow yellow tape. He finished by adding a few favorite vehicles. — R.C.



6 Developing various kinds of paved and unpaved roadways is among the areas where Gary's modeling excels. Here you can glimpse a parking lot and a highway he fashioned for the many die-cast metal automobiles and trucks he owns.

5 New and old are duking it out on the double-track main line. GarGraves track, Plasticville structures, and Walthers backdrops blend beautifully here.

Scenics. Before pouring it, he paints the middle of the bottom a dark hue. For the next step, he blends lighter shades as he gets close to the banks.

Because environmental statutes were nonexistent in the early post-World War II period, Gary believes that to give his scenes a realistic appearance, he has to make the water look dirty and polluted. He inserts pipes from factories and other facilities adjacent to his waterways and models yellow or green "chemicals" being dumped into them. Nearby, he plops in trash, rusty scraps, and barrels of "leaking" chemicals. This isn't the pristine world we wistfully remember.

INSPIRING OTHERS

Besides offering beaten-up S gauge trains a second chance, Gary tries to motivate tired and hesitant modelers to give the hobby a second chance. Folks who visit and doubt they have the time, resources, or talents to build a layout leave with a happier frame of mind.

The ultimate value of Gary's layout is how it inspires others to give toy trains a shot. In the case of newcomers, a first chance to discover the joys of our hobby may in his opinion be the key to a lifetime of pleasure and satisfaction. **CTT**

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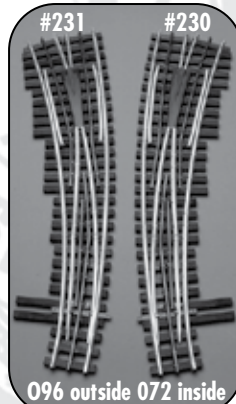
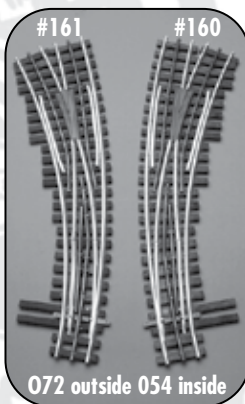
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Lionel No. 225E 2-6-2 steam engine

A PHONE CALL FROM THE SALVATION ARMY MADE A DREAM COME TRUE

STORY AND PHOTO BY JOHN HUEGEL



The Lionel No. 225E the author picked up at a Salvation Army office in Mexico City still runs like a charm on his layout more than 80 years after its debut.

➔ **I MUST HAVE BEEN** 11 or 12 years old when I first saw Lionel's 1938 catalog. On page 16 I saw locomotive No. 225E at the head of two sets with three cars: Nos. 182E passenger train and 183E freight train. I fell in love with the 2-6-2 steam engine. It wasn't the Baldwin disc drivers or the air compressors on the side that drew my attention, but rather the Elesco feedwater heater on the brow of the boiler.

The distinctive look of the 225E just captivated me, but I didn't think my parents could get me one of the sets for Christmas. Each was priced at \$21.50 — about \$450 today. That was more than my father and mother could afford.

Still, that didn't keep me from dreaming. I drooled over the pictures of the same steam engine leading terrific outfits in Lionel's catalogs for 1940, 1941, and 1942. It seemed even more attractive with its brand-new No. 2235W whistle tender.

When the Lionel consumer catalog came out in 1946, I was disappointed not to find the locomotive, nor did it appear in any future catalog. One time a friend gave me his discarded Lionel trains, which included No. 800 series freight cars and a No. 226E engine. But not a 225E. I kept hoping someday to find one.

Almost two decades, while living in Nashville, I visited a gentleman who had a small collection of Lionel trains. To my delight, he owned a 225E steam engine. I asked him if he would sell me the locomotive, but he could not part with it.

Then during the 1970s, I was living and working in Mexico City, and had contact with the Salvation Army. The person in charge of the children's home learned that I was interested in toy trains and offered to sell me an American Flyer layout that had fallen into disrepair. I wasn't interested but took a friend there, and he bought the layout.

Sometime later, the director of the home called me to say that a woman had given the children's home a box of old trains and asked if I would be interested in looking them over. I drove there, and the director quickly handed me a small box filled with vintage toy trains. I pulled out a 225E with its tender and three freight cars. I could hardly believe it!

I asked the director how much she wanted for the train set. She replied that the band at the children's

home needed a used trumpet, which would cost \$25. I wrote a check for that amount and handed it to her. I went home to test the prewar steam engine on my O gauge layout. The 2-6-2 ran perfectly.

A purist would not add anything to the locomotive, but I have made cosmetic modifications to enhance its beauty. The picture of the locomotive in the 1938 catalog showed a curved handrail at the bottom of the boiler front, so I added that.

I have always admired the beautiful Ps-4 4-6-2 Pacifics used on the Southern Railway. They had the bell in front of the feedwater heater, so I repositioned the bell on my 225E engine and added numbers to the headlight.

My son Daniel replaced the four-wheel trucks of the 2235W tender with six-wheel trucks from a No. 2263 Vanderbilt tender.

My 225E has given faithful service for more than 40 years. Since both my 225E and 226E run at the same speed, I have on occasion coupled the pair of steamers (I added a front coupler to my 226E) and operated the two engines as a double-header to pull a long passenger limited. **CTT**

LEARN MORE ABOUT the 225E and other models from the final years of the prewar era in *Lionel Trains of the 1940s*, a special-interest publication from *Classic Toy Trains*.



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gauge. However, the Atlas O track kept the wheels from turning easily.

I've encountered a similar problem with other Williams tinplate products, and even with some reproduction axles available from restoration parts suppliers, but seldom to this extent. The difference in gauge on these passenger cars, amounting to more than $\frac{1}{8}$ " per wheelset, was unusually large, making it almost impossible for a period locomotive to move the cars.

FIX WHEEL GAUGE PROBLEMS

To lessen the gauge measurement (the distance between the wheel treads), I reduced the wheel stops on the axles by approximately half (**Fig. 3**), using a cutoff disk in a motorized rotary tool. I angled the cuts to slope away from the holes in the wheels. The axle on the left side of **Fig. 3** is uncut. The wheel stops at the left end of the other axle have already been shaped, and the cutoff disk is shown at the correct angle to reduce the size of one of the wheel stops at the opposite end.

Sparks will fly from the cutoff wheel during this operation. Such sparks carry microscopic particles of metal, so I strongly recommend wearing protective goggles to shield your eyes. Work slowly to prevent removal of too much of the round part of the axle. (In the absence of a rotary tool, you can cut away half of each wheel stop with a small file, but it's a labor-intensive job that will take a long time.)

Be sure to test the wheels on each modified axle before reinstalling them on the cars. If they bind, even slightly, use a file to remove extra material the motor tool may have missed. All wheels must rotate freely. Apply a small drop of oil to each wheel where it turns on the axle.

Figure 4 shows a modified Williams wheelset (left) side by side with an original Lionel wheelset. The distance between the wheels is now identical. Don't worry if there's a slight variation, because clearances on these old models are not critical. A small inconsistency in the wheel gauge won't cause any problems.

If you love the look of vintage trains yet are reluctant to risk wear and tear on original examples, consider acquiring reproductions from such manufacturers as Williams and MTH. Even if they require some modification to work well, a little effort will yield substantial rewards in operating fun. **CTD**



Figure 2. When placed side by side with a Lionel wheelset from the 1930s, the Williams axle (left) appeared to be forcing the wheels too far apart for them to roll easily on modern T-shaped rails.

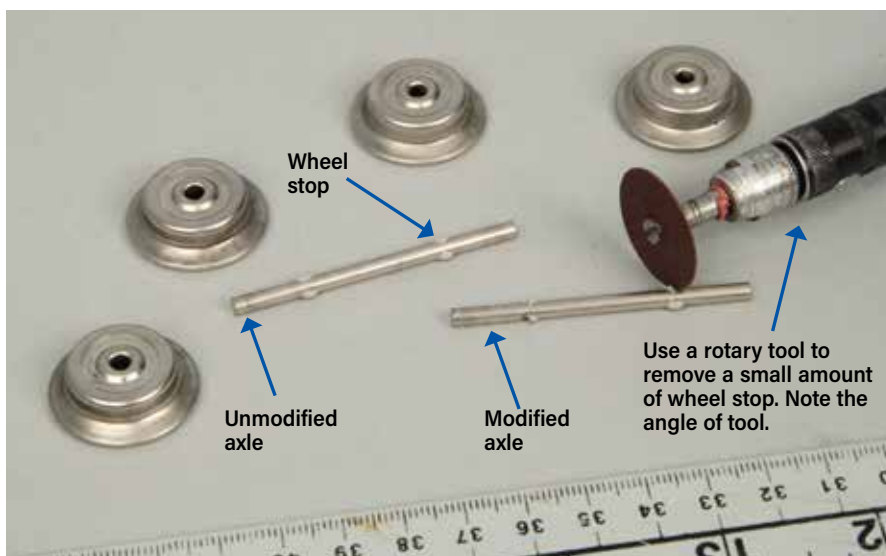


Figure 3. A cutoff disk in a motorized rotary tool, such as this Dremel model with a flexible shaft, makes quick work of reshaping the wheel stops.



Figure 4. Once the width between the wheel stops on the Williams axle (left) had been modified to match the original Lionel axle on the right, the author felt confident they would operate smoothly and properly on any brand of O gauge track.

Inside the carton of the author's Lionel No. 348 Culvert Unloader were the entertaining unloader and a No. 6342 New York Central Operating Culvert Car packed in a perforated box intended for a No. 6826 Christmas Tree Flat Car.



End of the line for postwar Lionel accessories

STORY OF LIONEL'S NO. 348 CULVERT UNLOADER

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
FREDERICK DAVIS

Accessories, especially freight loaders and unloaders, distinguished the line Lionel cataloged during the postwar era. But the firm kept reducing the number of accessories it offered as the 1960s wore on. Then a surprise in the consumer catalog for 1966: the appearance of a brand-new item, the No. 348 Culvert Unloader.

The 348 was first offered as a separate-sale piece in the advance catalog for 1966 (as the No. 348-1) and later that year in the consumer catalog. No catalog was issued for

1967. But the 348 reappeared in the catalogs put out by Lionel in 1968 and finally in '69.

RETURN OF THE 346

Lionel had cataloged the No. 345 electrically operating culvert unloader in 1957 through 1959 as an independently operating accessory and as a companion to the No. 342 Operating Culvert Loader. Then the firm modified the unloader to become a manually driven model (No. 346) to serve as a component in three promotional (uncataloged) outfits sold exclusively through Sears,

Information stamped on the two identical instruction sheets that were packed inside the author's 348 indicated they had been created for the No. 346 manually operated culvert unloader.

Roebuck & Co. in 1964 and 1965. Lionel did not use the manually operating culvert unloader in its cataloged line in either of those years.

According to *Authoritative Guide to Lionel's Promotional Outfits, 1960-1969*, the 346 was intended to be placed in a pair of large freight sets available through Sears in 1966. However, decision makers at Lionel elected to add the manually operated culvert unloader to its cataloged lineup for that year as the 348. It remained there through 1969.

The 348 was identical to the 346, which is why collectors cannot distinguish one from the other without original packaging. The boxes used for the manually operated models typically came stamped "346" by the manufacturer. Then, as the accompanying photo shows, the three numerals were covered by white tape and restamped "348."

AUTHENTICITY

If you acquire a still-sealed example of a 348 and want to confirm its authenticity, you may want to examine first the large metal staples that were used to close the packaging. I paid close attention to the metal staples on the 348 I purchased in New Jersey in the 1980s and saw they were identical to the large metal staples Lionel had used to seal the No. 461 Platform with Truck and Trailer (an uncataloged accessory that's associated with the year 1966).

I opened my 348 and found a No. 6342 New York Central Operating Culvert Car in a perforated box. The box, the kind Lionel was using in 1959 and '60, had the white tape I had observed on the accessory's carton. It had been placed over a box labeled "6826-6" and dated "4-59" originally intended for a No. 6826 Christmas Tree Flat Car.

Having once seen the same kind of box with identical markings in the Lionel Archives left no doubt


mine was original factory production and not something done aftermarket.

Then I checked out the culvert car. It was the late production model, which meant it had a semi-translucent red plastic body shell. The AAR trucks with open axle journals had been riveted directly to the shell. There was one operating knuckle coupler and one non-operating one. A final characteristic: the 6342 lacked the "NEW 2-49" date.

What else did I find inside the box containing my 348? First, there was a

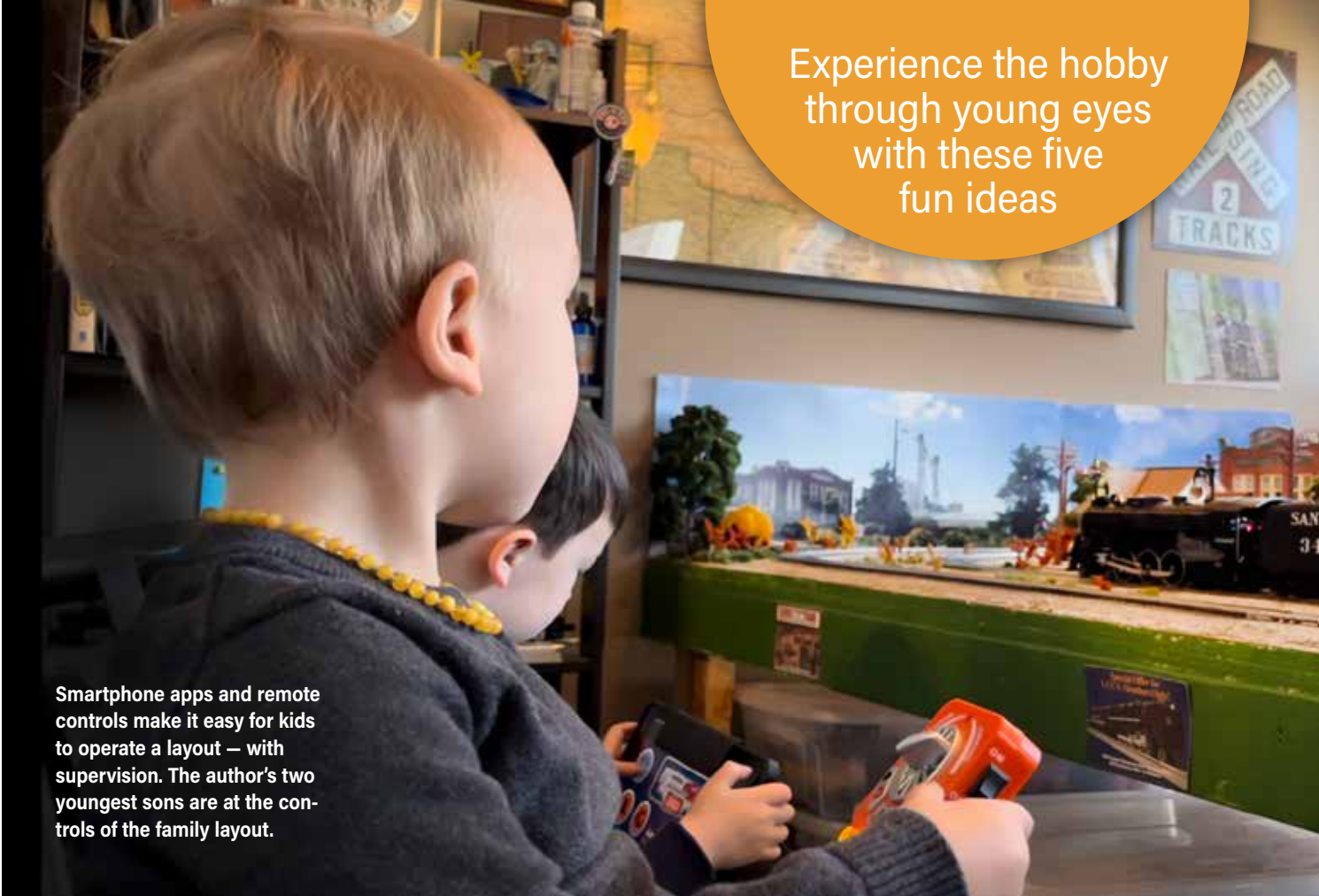
thick manila sealed blank bag holding seven metal culverts. Second, there were two identical instruction sheets titled, "How To Install and Operate Lionel No. 346 Culvert Pipe Unloader Set For All Lionel Track." Each sheet was printed in black ink on white paper.

Still examining the instruction sheets, I noticed both were designated part No. 346-21 and dated 8/65. Plainly, they had been intended for the promotional 346 culvert unloader. Also, they informed the owner that the accessory had a 90-day warranty. Any problems should be referred to the Lionel Service Company, Hoffman Place, Hillside, NJ, 07205.

Lionel last showed the 348 in the advance and consumer catalogs issued for 1969. Not too many years later, I bought the sealed example I still consider one of the jewels in my collection of Lionel trains and accessories from the post-World War II period. 

Almost 40 years ago, the author found a Lionel No. 348 Operating Culvert Unloader, still sealed in its original box with the number on white tape.





Experience the hobby
through young eyes
with these five
fun ideas

Smartphone apps and remote controls make it easy for kids to operate a layout — with supervision. The author's two youngest sons are at the controls of the family layout.

ENGAGE KIDS WITH TOY TRAINS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PATRICK DOWNING

I've had a lifelong fascination with trains, stemming from my father's nearly 40-year career on the Santa Fe and BNSF railroads. Some of my fondest childhood memories included trips to the depot in Fort Madison, Iowa, where I would watch freight trains come and go. I'll never forget coming home from school one day when I was 8 years old to see Dad in our basement, setting up what would become our HO scale train layout.

Fast-forward to early 2018, when my interest in the hobby was reborn. My oldest son (then 2 years old) had received the best gift from Santa Claus: a Lionel *Polar Express* set. The two of us built a layout, added locomotives and accessories, and connected with local modelers and on social media.

Many of us talk about the future of toy trains and the need to get the next generation interested in pursuing it. Let me share a few ways to involve kids in toy trains that have worked with my three young sons, along with some tips provided by other hobbyists, especially my friends in the "Train Dads" (see sidebar on next page).

1 LET CHILDREN OPERATE THE LAYOUT

I have had so much joy as a parent watching my sons control our O gauge layout. Does this mean I let them run my Lionel Legacy locomotives unsupervised? Nope.

However, I'll never forget the smile on my four-year-old's face when he operated a Lionel Legacy 2-8-0 Consolidation steam locomotive for the first time with the LionChief app on our iPad. As he pressed the whistle button



The author suggests including kids in hobby projects. His four-year-old son enjoyed learning how to weather so much, he tried out his chalk technique on a wood gondola.

and saw the whistle steam feature activated on the engine, he felt as though he was right inside the cab sitting in the engineer's seat!

Along with the LionChief app, my children enjoy the simplicity of the Lionel remotes. They feel equally at



on with my 4-year-old, and he took it upon himself to weather a gondola in his collection of wood trains!

3 TAKE FAMILY TRIPS TO A RAILROAD MUSEUM

Living in eastern Iowa, we're fortunate to be within driving distance of several incredible railroad museums and historic sites. We've traveled to the Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad and the James H. Andrew Museum in Boone, Iowa. We also explored the McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park in Scottsdale, Ariz., while visiting family out there.

During the past two summers, my wife and I have taken our sons to the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, Ill., during its "Day Out with Thomas" excursions. We love watching our children's excitement when they see Thomas and Percy chugging down the tracks! Their interest in the permanent collection of equipment is thrilling for them, too. Walking alongside these giants is an incredible experience for them at such young ages.



Holiday events provide perfect opportunities to include children and model trains. The author's sons watch the layout at the Quad City Festival of Trees in November 2023.

oldest son was almost 4 years old then, and our second child was just a couple of weeks old (our third didn't arrive until two years later). Big Boy headed westbound from Chicago, with the locomotive and its consist making a stop in Wheatland, Iowa, and later traveling to Des Moines, Iowa, and Omaha, Neb.

Seeing the world's largest operating steam locomotive was an extraordinary experience. We're looking forward to more special trains and excursions as they come close to our home, notably the upcoming CPKC Steam Tour featuring the No. 2816 4-6-4 Hudson nicknamed "Empress" and the CPKC Holiday Train in November/December.

[Visit [Trains.com](https://www.trains.com) to find family-friendly events, railroad hot spots, museum locations to visit, and tips for travel. — *Editor*]

5 SET UP A CHRISTMAS TREE DISPLAY

A great way to keep a child's interest in toy trains is to set up a holiday operating layout around the Christmas tree, whether it be a simple loop or a Christmas village.

Setting up the *Polar Express* train on three-rail track placed beneath our Christmas tree has become as much a beloved tradition as hanging up our stockings on the fireplace, watching holiday movies, and leaving out milk and cookies for Santa Claus.

Keeping children involved with the hobby can start with fun projects on the layout, taking a trip to a hobby store together, or simply (and safely) standing near the tracks and watching a friendly exchange of waves between engineers and our kids. Isn't this an incredible hobby? **CTT**

home with a Universal Remote as they are with the individual remotes that accompany train sets or older LionChief Plus locomotives.

2 DO A PROJECT TOGETHER

Observing how creative my sons can be makes me feel proud. They have ideas for new locations of buildings, scenery, die-cast metal cars and trucks, figures, you name it! While trips to our local hobby shop may include their pleading to purchase every new O gauge item on the shelf, it's fun to see them think out loud about what a new package of trees or foliage will look like on the layout or how some new cars can fill our auto racks.

Two recent projects have involved gluing cow figures into our stockcars and weathering boxcars with chalk. The weathering idea really caught

4 CHECK FOR EVENTS IN YOUR AREA

Speaking of locomotive giants, we were fortunate that Union Pacific Big Boy No. 4014 came through our region in July of 2019. Our

MEET THE TRAIN DADS

A few years ago, I connected with a few model railroaders on social media. The five of us — Michael McNamee, Chris Raines, Matt Rotchford, Nicholas Tate, and I — all have two things in common: We have O gauge layouts and we're all fathers. The "Train Dads" group was born, and even though we reside in different states, we have stayed in touch.

While many of our conversations revolve around the hobby, we always come back to talking about our children and families. My wife and I are the proud parents of three little boys, ages 8, 4, and 2. All three of them are young "trainiacs!"

Read more about the Train Dads on [Trains.com](https://www.trains.com).



SCAN THIS CODE WITH YOUR PHONE'S CAMERA



Time to get your Marx No. 422 Overhead Crane back to work. The ingenious David Smith, a frequent contributor to *Classic Toy Trains*, shares a simple and inexpensive way to install an electromagnet so the crane can load and unload barrels.

ADD VERSATILITY TO YOUR MARX CRANE

HOW TO INSTALL AN ELECTROMAGNET ON A NO. 422 OVERHEAD CRANE

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVID SMITH



MANY OF THE Marx O gauge layouts that I have visited over the years feature a No. 422 Overhead Crane. Unfortunately, not many of those vintage accessories operated. I've come up with a way to add an electromagnet to the crane and make it a more functional and entertaining accessory.

To start, you need a small electromagnet. I removed the electromagnet from an old Lionel No. 6029 Uncoupling Track. As shown in **Fig. 1**, I unsoldered the two wires from the track, bent the tabs on the bottom, and removed the center rail. The electromagnet popped out.

It didn't take long to cut, grind, and sand the elongated tabs to make it round (**Fig. 2**).

My second step called for flexible two-conductor wire. I cut a 24-inch-long piece from a pair of earbuds and soldered the two wires of the electromagnet to the two wires inside the flexible cable, making sure to shield the soldered connections from each other to prevent shorts.

The third step in the easy project involved wrapping the soldered connections around

the electromagnet and then securing them in place with black electrical tape from a hardware store. I ran the wire through the end of the boom on my crane and through the grommet hole where the crane rotates (**Fig. 3**).

Figure 4 shows how I continued by mounting a double AAA-cell battery holder to the underside of the crane platform, using double-sided foam tape. I removed the roof from the crane's cab by bending the four tabs that hold it in place.

Then I drilled holes for the miniature toggle switch and a 3mm red light-emitting diode (LED). In the lower front of

the cab I drilled a hole for the wires to exit.

Then, as shown in **Fig. 4**, I soldered wires to the switch, resistor, and LED before guiding the wires through the cab hole and down the grommet hole. I soldered the wires to the battery box.

ROLLING ALONG

I wanted my crane to move back and forth. Therefore, I started by removing the two bottom track braces from the legs. There are holes in the four legs, so on one side I mounted two small ¼" thick blocks of wood, and on the other side I mounted two short bolts.



Fig. 1. A vintage Lionel Uncoupling Track David picked up at a local train show provides an electromagnet for this project. It didn't take him long to remove the red magnet from the track.



Fig. 2. Once you've removed the electromagnet, go ahead and sand and grind it until it's round.



Fig. 3. Here you can see the type of thin and flexible wire David used and how he ran it through the end of the boom on the crane and then through the grommet hole where the crane rotates.

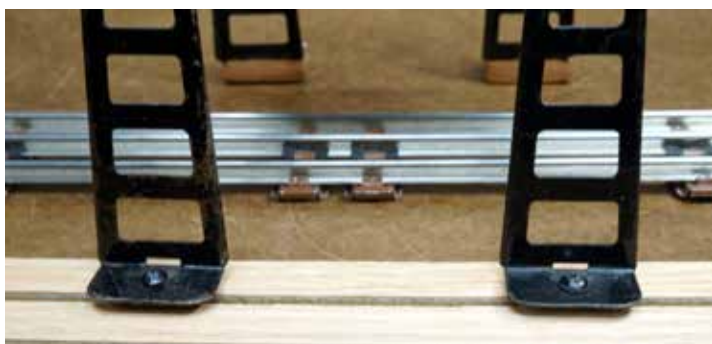


Fig. 5. Getting the Marx crane to slide in a track made of thin strips of wood hardly took any time. David mounted two 1/4-inch-thick blocks of wood and then put two short bolts on the bottom.

As shown in **Fig. 5**, the two bolt ends slide in a track I constructed out of 1/8" strips of wood or hardboard.

We can't forget the loads (**Fig. 6**). I used wood barrels from a craft store, but anything of similar size should work. I attached large-head upholstery nails to the top of the load.

On the bottom of each small barrel, I glued circles cut from refrigerator magnets. These weak magnets keep the barrels upright and in place when they're attracted to the metal bottom of a Marx gondola.

Now you're ready to load and unload merchandise, just as real railroads do daily. **CTT**

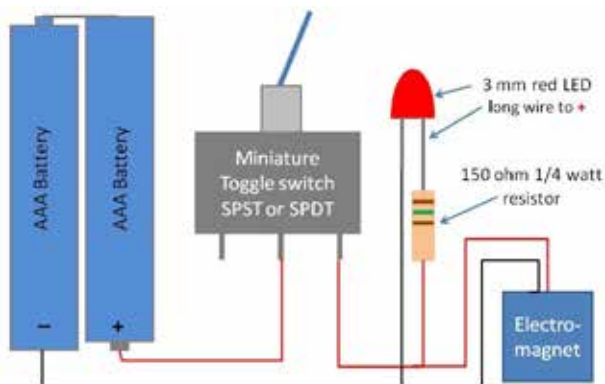


Fig. 4. This diagram shows where David mounted a basic double AAA-cell battery holder to the underside of the crane platform, using double-face foam tape to secure it. In addition, you can see where he installed a miniature toggle switch as well as a 3mm red light-emitting diode (LED).



Fig. 6. The project ended with David buying small wood barrels and adding magnets to them.

BILL OF MATERIALS

- Lionel No. 6029 Uncoupling Track
- Upholstery tacks
- Double-sided foam tape
- Electrical tape
- Refrigerator magnets
- Double AAA-cell battery holder
- Miniature toggle switch (single-pole single-throw or single-pole double-throw)
- 3mm red light-emitting diode
- 150-ohm 1/4-watt resistor





Lionel introduced the No. 362 Barrel Loader in the banner year of 1952. The all-white rubberized figure was used for that year and was phased out in favor of a blue figure during 1953.

BARRELS OF FUN

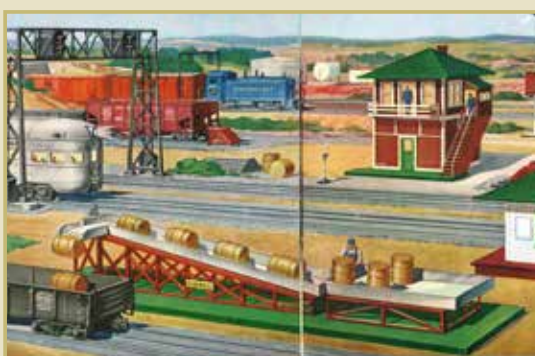
WITH LIONEL'S NO. 362 LOADER

A POSTWAR ACCESSORY GUARANTEEING LOADS OF ACTION

STORY BY JOE ALGOZZINI
AND ROGER CARP
PHOTOS BY WILLIAM ZUBACK

The post-World War II era represented a golden age for Lionel in many ways. Among the greatest achievements the company made in the late 1940s and early 1950s were many innovative and entertaining trackside and operating accessories that its engineers developed and marketing leaders promoted.

The No. 362 Barrel Loader, cataloged from 1952 through 1957, stands out for its excellent design and dependable performance. It appealed to hobbyists of all ages and found a prominent spot on the O gauge layouts families were constructing in attics, basements, and rec rooms across the country. Time to look in depth at the 362.



The advance and consumer catalogs Lionel issued for 1952 showed operating barrel loaders that differed in key ways from the production model. Perhaps they were engineering mock-ups of the 362.

1952 PRODUCTION AND FEATURES

LIONEL INTRODUCED the 362 Barrel Loader in 1952, assigning the innovative and entertaining accessory a retail price of \$7.75 (almost \$89 today). The

full-color consumer catalog included excellent if slightly enhanced illustrations of the accessory; it never showed some of the colors there.

For example, artists showed the base (part No. 362-6) as green instead of gray as it was produced. Similarly, they made the conveyor ramp assembly

and the tilting gate (part Nos. 362-36 and 362-48) grayish silver and not brown. Elements of the structure were shown as red and not the correct brown. The figure (part No. 362-73) was presented as white with

continued on page 55



Starting in 1953, Lionel substituted an all-blue rubberized figure for the white one originally installed on examples of the 362 Barrel Loader. However, the illustration of the model in the consumer catalog still showed the figure as white. In addition, the loader's metal baseplate as well as the packaging also changed, although only in minor ways, during that year.

1953 PRODUCTION AND FEATURES

FOR THE CONSUMER catalog that Lionel issued for 1953, the artwork of the 362 Barrel Loader improved to make it a more accurate depiction of what the firm really was producing. Lionel raised the price to \$8.75.

Two noticeable changes characterized loaders made in

1953. First, a blue figure replaced the white one. Second, the two holes near the rubber grommets (part No. 362-87) at each end of the bottom of the baseplate were larger (explained in the *Lionel Service Manual*). Blackened or silver-tone baseplates with die-stamping lettering were the rule.

As a final point, Lionel used a Type II box for the 362, again produced by St. Joe Paper Co. Rather than opening at both ends as was true of the Type I, the new box opened on top. The No. 362-103 box measured $4\frac{3}{8} \times 19\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{3}{8}$ inches and had a Type II cardboard insert.



SOMETIME IN 1952, LIONEL WENT FROM USING A BARE-METAL BASEPLATE with A SILVER TONE AND BLACK RUBBER-STAMPED LETTERING (LEFT) TO A BLACKENED ONE HAVING WHITE LETTERING.

blue coveralls but was always solid white in 1952. And the wood barrels (part No. 362-78) were shown as a lighter shade of brown, almost gold, rather than the actual dark brown.

Lionel completed at least two production runs of Barrel Loaders in 1952. The first one

used a bare-metal baseplate with a silver tone secured with shiny or blackened bolts. Information identifying the 362 and Lionel was rubber-stamped in black on the bottom.

During the second production run — or at the end of the first — Lionel started to blacken

the baseplate and switched from black to white rubber-stamped lettering. By the end of the second run, the blackened baseplates had imprinted or die-stamped lettering.

The Type I box, which was manufactured by St. Joe Paper Co. of South Hackensack, N.J.,

initially measured $4\frac{1}{2} \times 19\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Because that made the Type I one-piece insert fabricated out of corrugated cardboard quite tight, the No. 362-90 box was later enlarged to $4\frac{1}{2} \times 19\frac{3}{8} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ inches. We can designate the new kind of box Type Ia.

1954 PRODUCTION AND FEATURES

FOR 1954 Lionel raised the price of the Barrel Loader to \$8.95 (about \$104 today). The illustration of the 362 in the consumer catalog was better, but the figure was still white, not blue, and the barrels were beige, not brown.

Catalog artwork tended to show accessories in landscaped settings. That subtly convinced consumers to buy more of those ancillary items and wire them together on home layouts.

Two-page spreads in the catalog caught the eyes of kids and adults while nurturing their dreams of building the finest O gauge railroad. The marketing strategy, like the illustrations, was brilliant and suggested Lionel executives knew that families were

increasingly moving into larger homes in the suburbs.

As insightful was the decision to develop an operating piece of rolling stock meant to interact with the 362. The No. 3562 Operating Barrel Car made its debut in 1954 and was shown in the consumer catalog working alongside the popular loader.

The 362 itself returned unchanged from 1953. It did, however, come packaged in a Type III box, which flipped open on top and can be identified by the Lionel circle-L logo printed on it. The No. 362-103 box measured $4\frac{3}{8} \times 19\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{8}$ inches, came with a Type II corrugated-cardboard insert, and was manufactured by St. Joe Paper Co.

Life for the barrel loader got only better in 1954. Besides arriving in a new box with the Lionel circle-L logo, it could be partnered with the new No. 3562 Barrel Car.



While the barrel loader as produced stayed the same for 1955, its packaging did change. The Type III box and Type II insert by St. Joe Paper Co. were still used. But a second firm, the Robert Gair Co. of Teterboro, N.J., was making Type IV boxes without dates.



1955 PRODUCTION AND FEATURES

MARKETING PERSONNEL elected to use the two-page spread from the previous year to illustrate the 362 in the consumer catalog for 1955. However, no retail price was listed, due to the sudden discontinuance of "fair trade laws." Price lists and order forms made available by Lionel to its authorized dealers informed them the cost had risen to \$10.95.

Production for the 362 was the same as before, as baseplates were still blackened with imprinted or die-stamped lettering. Be aware, though, that transition could have existed with the carryover of earlier silver-tone baseplates still in inventory. The same was true with the figure: Blue was the norm, but old white ones might have been around.

As shown in the photo to the left, the Type III box made by St. Joe Paper Co. was still used to package Barrel Loaders in 1955. Examples with the months 4-12 (April through December) have been reported. Yet a Type IV is also associated with 1955 production. Made by Robert Gair Co. of Teterboro, N.J., it looked identical to the Type III except for lacking a date. Both packaging firms placed a Type II insert inside their boxes to protect the loaders.

1956 PRODUCTION AND FEATURES

THE BARREL LOADER returned for a fifth year in 1956, with its retail price unchanged at \$10.95. Sadly, though, the size of its illustration in the full-color consumer catalog had been reduced by more than 60%, a change suggesting that the sales appeal of the 362 was dwindling. When Lionel reduced the catalog art of an item, it indicated the firm would soon phase out that model from its product line. To make matters worse, the artist had not even bothered to show the figure.

Very likely, the end of “fair trade laws” had motivated Lionel to shift emphasis from selling accessories as integral parts of layouts to promoting O-27 and O gauge sets to families new to the hobby. Images

of various accessories in the consumer catalog were smaller and had been relegated to one crowded section in the back pages, where they might be missed.

Only newer and larger operating accessories, specifically the Nos. 342 Culvert Loader, 464 Lumber Mill, and 465 Sound Dispatching Station, received the attention they deserved in the consumer catalog for 1956. Older items, including the Barrel Loader, had enjoyed a nice run but, in the estimation of Lionel decision makers, had hit their saturation point with consumers. There was little else to do except quit making them and present them inauspiciously in the catalog until all the remaining examples were sold.

1957 PRODUCTION AND FEATURES

THE PRICE increased to \$11.95 (\$130.58 in today's dollars), and the illustration in the consumer catalog for 1957 was the same downsized example Lionel had relied on for 1956. It was plain Lionel was cleaning house, and the end was near for the Barrel Loader.

Production records for 1957 indicated 1,540 examples of the 362 loader remained in inventory at the Lionel factory. That notable statistic supported the view that 1956 models were likely also left-over stock, as no further production of the 362 was planned.

BARRELS, INSTRUCTIONS, AND MORE

EACH LIONEL 362 Barrel Loader came packaged with a 362-78 box of six wood barrels that had been stained brown. There was as well a No. 362-94 Envelope dated (10-52, 3-53, or 3-54), and it had the necessary extra items and an instruction sheet to properly run the loader.

Lionel issued four No. 362-96 instruction sheets — all of them printed on white paper. The first two were dated 10-52 and 4-53, and each used darker blue printing or ink. The third sheet, dated 4-54, used black ink. The last one, dated 4-55, used a brighter blue ink.

Probably beginning in 1953, four small cardboard inserts were positioned inside at each end of the 362 when boxed to further protect the accessory during shipping. The large Type II open insert was cleverly made, or cut, to also hold the 362-78 box in place.

Although each box, starting in 1953, can be opened at the top or bottom, it was designed to be opened at the top only. The bottom of each box had a horizontal inner “tuck” flap that ran the length of the box and helped hold the 362 in place.



This 362 from 1955 shows how Lionel packaged the Barrel Loader. You can see the Type II insert, No. 362-78 box with six barrels stained brown, No. 362-94 Envelope with necessary items, and No. 927 list of authorized Lionel service stations.

CONCLUSIONS

IT ISN'T DIFFICULT to find each variation of the 362 Barrel Loader mentioned in this article. Admittedly, finding a silver-tone or a blackened baseplate with sharp rubber-stamped lettering can be a challenge.

The scarcest and most desirable example of a 362 Barrel Loader has “Lionel” in raised red and not gold lettering on the sign placed on the front and rear trestle panels. Research of original Barrel Loaders has

led to the conclusion that the scarce red-lettered variation occurred in 1953.

Lionel used a 362 on five of the displays offered to dealers in 1953: the Nos. D-101 (countertop display) and D-103, D-104, D-105, and D-106 (all layouts). In the black-and-white dealer display catalog, three showed a white figure and the other two a blue figure.

One D-101 has a die-cast metal figure painted blue with a white face; the colors

may have been done that way to spice up the 362 Barrel Loader wired to that display. In truth, blue rubberized figures with a white-painted face were made, probably in very low numbers, and were used in the final production run for 1955. Leftover examples could have been used later in production about any way Lionel needed. **CTT**

Thanks to Bob Kaplan, Marlow Koch, Sterling Myers, Bob Pasztor, and Jessie Todd.

Battery versus track power for Lionel postwar horns

WHY DID SOME DIESELS USE A BATTERY FOR THEIR SOUNDS?

Q Hanging out with some train buddies, the conversation turned to Lionel diesels from the postwar era. We began talking about their horns, and one friend asked why those locomotives used batteries for their horns instead of track power. After all, the steam engines had whistle tenders that relied on track power for their sound. Why were there batteries for the horns? — *Steve Gross, Waterville, Maine*

A Thanks for a question that somehow hasn't been asked in the past in *Classic Toy Trains*. You may be surprised to discover that the horn mechanism installed on postwar F3s, Train Masters, and a few other types of diesels was not made by Lionel in its factory. Instead, the company bought the horn mechanism from an outside manufacturer.

The horn, as you might have figured out, was basically a battery-operated bicycle horn that operates on only 1.5 volts. Consequently, the mechanism was developed to be powered by a D-cell household battery like the one shown in the accompanying photograph.

Lionel had no reason to deviate from what the outside firm had designed, especially because a battery was the simplest and least expensive power source. Postwar diesels originally came with Ray-O-Vac batteries, which makes me wonder whether Lionel had worked out an agreement with that business.



The Lionel No. 2341 Jersey Central Train Master was one of several diesels from the 1950s that used a battery to power its horn. Designers preferred the small batteries rather than track power for reasons explained here. Photo courtesy Peter Campo

Substitutes for incandescent light bulbs

Q I've recently heard there's a ban on incandescent light bulbs. Are the small bulbs used on prewar and postwar Lionel trains still being manufactured and sold? If they are not, what can I substitute for them? — *Michael James Huff, Baldwin, N.Y.*

A Most of the light bulbs commonly used on prewar and postwar Lionel toy trains have compatible LED (light-emitting diode) replacements. It shouldn't be difficult to learn which ones will work for whatever need you have.

I recommend you talk with the technicians at the toy train store nearest your home. Then you can check the Internet to

see what other vendors currently have. When you have figured out this issue, please share the information with us.

Lights on Department 56 structures

Q I have a Lionel layout and want to add some of my Department 56 buildings to it, an enjoyable project that I have seen done by others on their O gauge railroads. But how do you suggest that I wire the lighting since they use C-7 light bulbs? Must I cut and splice the wiring? Is there another idea? — *Jack Meharg, Sinking Spring, Pa.*

A The C-7 bulbs are 120 volts. Cutting and splicing can be dangerous. I would suggest getting some low-voltage sockets and miniature LED bulbs.

Lionel switch problems

Q We use Lionel Nos. 5165 and 5166 O-72 switches from the 1990s and new GarGraves track on our O gauge layout powered by postwar type-ZW transformers. The switches hold current even when the track voltage is zero. This affects some of our Lionel postwar and modern diesel locomotives by not letting them go into neutral so we can then operate them in reverse.

We have two O gauge tracks powered by a single ZW. I power the tracks on the A and D terminals of that transformer. I use the switch "push-in pins" to power the switches. I set at 18 volts to throw them; we wired them to a terminal block with a bridge, with one wire running to the B or C terminal on the ZW.

Using the B or C terminal results in the same problem, as do three ZWs. With terminal A (track with the switches) set at 0 volts, one side of each switch will hold 16 to 18 volts. This happens with two different pairs of O-72 switches. The power to the switches is on at the B or C terminal. I've been told not to get power to the switches with the A or D terminal running the track at 0 volts. Should I turn my voltage to 0 on the B or C (only one terminal used) when I want to put my single-motor diesels in neutral? — *Jon Wall, Brogue, Pa.*

Converting TMCC engines to conventional control

Q I'm looking for directions on how to convert my Lionel locomotives made with TrainMaster Command Control components back into conventional mode. Since Lionel has stopped making TMCC circuit boards and many replacement components cost a great deal of money, I want to know if this is viable and whether you have addressed this topic before. — *Kurt Rakozy, St. George, Utah*

A There are companies producing electronic reverse units that work with DC can-style motors. Installing one of them will take care of running operations for your locomotives. Be aware, however, you'll lose control of other functions, such as directional lighting, smoke, and sounds without doing additional work.

A It sounds like the fixed voltage plug is not disconnecting from the center rail. This should happen as soon as you push the plug in. My best advice is to start by pulling them out one by one until you discover which is the offending switch.

Smoking Lionel road diesels

Q My Lionel O gauge SD70ACe road diesel with command control just does not smoke. When I put in smoke fluid, I can smell the fluid, but no smoke appears. I blew into the stack after adding the fluid, and smoke came out the cab windows. How can I get my diesel to smoke? – *John DeFilippo, North Arlington, N.J.*

A The smoke unit on your Lionel unit uses a motor and fan to blow the smoke out of the stack. You need to determine whether the fan is working. If it is not, you'll need to determine what the fault is. The motors can become soaked with smoke fluid; that can cause them to stop working. The cir-



Lionel released back in 2021 a number of powerful and attractive O gauge replicas of the SD70ACe road diesel produced by the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors. The units came equipped with the Legacy brand of command control.

cuit board on the top of the unit has electronic components that can fail, as can as the control board for the model.

Trains running in opposite directions on S gauge

Q I'm building an S gauge layout with a two-track main line. I plan to install a pair of Lionel No. 22947 Automatic Crossing Gates I want to control with No. 14111 1531R controllers. If I run two trains in opposite directions, can I use the sensors to operate the crossing gates? I'm concerned that if one train has just activated the gates, the second may end up burning out the sensors or the gates.

The instruction manual illustrates a setup for trains traveling in different directions using a 12-volt DC relay and a diode (1N4001-1N4004). But it shows only one track and not two at the point where two trains approach a crossing at the same time. Thanks for any help you can provide — *Jack Fasanella Jr., Lawrenceville, N.J.*



Lionel No. 22947 Automatic Crossing Gates (cataloged from 1998 through 2000) are designed to be used with No. 14111 1531R controllers, even with two trains.

A The fact that you have two trains operating on two tracks really shouldn't matter. All you need to do is place the 1531R controllers in the proper location. Make sure to wire everything as explained in the instruction manual with the relay placed in the circuit. Then everything should run just as safely as you hope. Good luck. **CTD**

Want to share? Email us at qsandas@classictoytrains.com or write to Classic Toy Trains, P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha WI 53187-1612.

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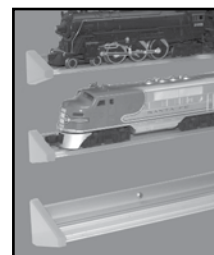
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Events

CA, SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO: Flyer Fest West, sponsored by the Golden Gate American Flyer Club, The Basque Cultural Center, 599 Railroad Avenue, Saturday, August 10, 2024. 10am-3pm. Admission: \$10, Family \$15. S gauge train sales and operating layouts. Contact Paul Guaraglia, 510-677-4062, info@ggafc.org

FL, MELBOURNE: The Melbourne Train and Toy Show. Azan Shrine Center, 1591 West Eau Gallie Blvd, Melbourne, FL 32935. Saturday, September 7, 2024, 9am-2pm. Admission: \$5, kids under 10 FREE. Vendor tables \$25 each or 3 or more \$20 each. Join us for trains, toys, and fun! Lunch snacks available. For more information: SchultzSpaceCoastTrains@aol.com or 321-805-1963

FL, TALLAHASSEE: 33rd Annual Tallahassee Model Railroad Show and Sale! 2-DAYS! June 22-23, 2024. Saturday, 9:00am-5:00pm & Sunday, 9:00am-4:00pm. Leon County Fair Grounds, 441 Paul Russell Rd., Bldg. 2 & 4. Admission: Adults/Children 13 & over, \$10 BOTH DAYS! Scouts in uniform/children 12 & under FREE! Scales Z-G! Food! Contact: Andy Zimmerman, 850-524-4399. Email: GNTrainman@comcast.net

IA, ELKADER: 12th Annual Elkader Model Train Show-Swap Meet. Sunday, August 18, 2024, 10:00am-3:30pm. Johnson's Reception Hall, 910 High Street. Adults \$5, children 6-12 \$2, under 5 FREE. Free parking, lunch stand available. Information: Larry Lerch, 563-880-2066 or 563-245-3345

IN, INDIANAPOLIS: Central Indiana Division/NMRA announces the Franklin Train Show. Johnson County Fairgrounds, 250 Fairground St., Franklin, IN 46131. August 3-4, 2024. 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 20, 2024. 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 \$20 each. Contact Steve Gardner, 620-230-9545 or email: sgardner1@att.net

NY, LINDENHURST: Long Island Classic Train Show/Swap Meet. Fireman's Memorial Park, 555 Helling Blvd. (north of Hartford St.), Lindenhurst, NY 11757. September 22, 2024, November 3, 2024, and January 5, 2025. 8:30am-1:00pm. Adults \$5.00, under 16 free w/adult. 100+ tables. Handicap accessible. Contact: John Mitchell 917-596-3494 or John Miata 516-353-1751. Email: LIClassicTrainShow@hotmail.com

OH, VAN WERT: Van Wert Railroad Heritage Weekend Model Railroad Show & Swap. Van Wert County Historical Society, Van Wert County Fairgrounds, 1055 S. Washington St., Van Wert, OH 45891. July 27-28, 2024. Saturday 10am-4pm & Sunday 10am-3pm. Adults \$6.00. Scouts in Uniform and Children 12 & under: FREE. Info: Chuck White, railcarman@frontier.com, 260-760-1666, www.vwrrhw.com

WI, LA CROSSE: Rail Fair, Copeland Park, Rose & Clinton Streets. Saturday, July 13, 2024, 10am-4pm. Admission \$5.00, under 12 free with adult. Railroad Show-Flea Market-Swap Meet. BUY/SELL/TRADE. Model, Toy & Antique Trains & Memorabilia, Railroad Exhibits & Displays. Information: 4000 Foundation, PO Box 3411, La Crosse, WI 54602, 608-781-9383 or 608-498-9522. www.4000foundation.org

*All listed events were confirmed as active at the time of press.
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Variations in Lionel 6464 boxcars

Senior Editor Roger Carp joins Lionel postwar expert Joe Algozzini in this exclusive video. Roger and Joe show and discuss variations of the popular Lionel 6464 series boxcars from the postwar era.



Buyer's guide to structures

Editor Rene Schweitzer put together this list of structures in both O and S scales. Whether you want a kit or a preassembled or custom-built item, you'll find lots of variety in this article!



Types of dealers and buyers

In 1990, longtime contributor John Grams wrote a CTT article about the types of folks you might see at a train show. How does it hold up today? Take a look and leave a comment with your thoughts.

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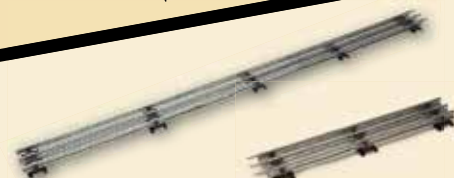
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Cheap trains for kids

■ **WANT TO SHARE** your love of toy trains without fear of little ones harming your prized possessions? Look for near-O gauge trains that may be compatible with O gauge track. My children received the battery-powered Caterpillar Construction Express train set shown here after their older cousins had outgrown it. They loved playing with it on the kitchen floor, but the all-plastic track easily came apart. I used rubber bands to keep the track sections together, which I hasten to add was not a kid-friendly solution!

Then I had an epiphany: The train might work on O gauge track. It did! True, it did not like the FasTrack O-36 curves packed in a Lionel starter set, but it worked fine with larger FasTrack O-48 curves, and even turnouts, on the City Terminal & Transfer project railroad the CTT staff once built.

The lead truck does not pivot enough to accommodate the tighter curves; however, without any turnouts or crossings it's still able to navigate the simple loop with just the lead truck derailed. (I haven't tested it on any tubular track.) Only the rear truck is powered, and it's equipped with rubber traction tires.

One note of caution: The locomotive is so tall that it barely cleared the layout's tunnel. There are multiple versions of this train marketed with the same name, and I can't attest to the compatibility of all of them. Still, the version that comes with the four-wheel tipping freight car is compatible. The locomotive is marked "Toy State Industrial Ltd" on the bottom. — **BRIAN M. SCHMIDT**



Lionel No. 394 Rotating Beacon spins again

■ **THE LIONEL NO. 394** Rotating Beacon, which I've owned for about 65 years, has always rotated very slowly, if at all. The beacon rests on an incandescent light bulb that has a depression at its top. The heat generated by the bulb is supposed to flow upward through the vanes in the beacon's lens frame. As the heated air rises, it should cause the beacon lenses to rotate. I've always been unhappy about the system's slow rotation.

I hid a fish-tank air pump under my layout and connected some rubber tubing to it. I did not want to drill any holes in my vintage piece, so I fastened the tubing to the outside of the beacon's frame and through the horizontal slots of the upper platform with twist ties. I pointed the end of the tubing toward the bottom frame of the colored lenses, plugged in the air pump, and watched the beacon spin!

Finally, I am satisfied that my Lionel Rotating Beacon actually rotates. And it does so without creating excessive heat (which a few years ago melted the plastic lenses of a previous beacon). — **RICH GREGER CTT**

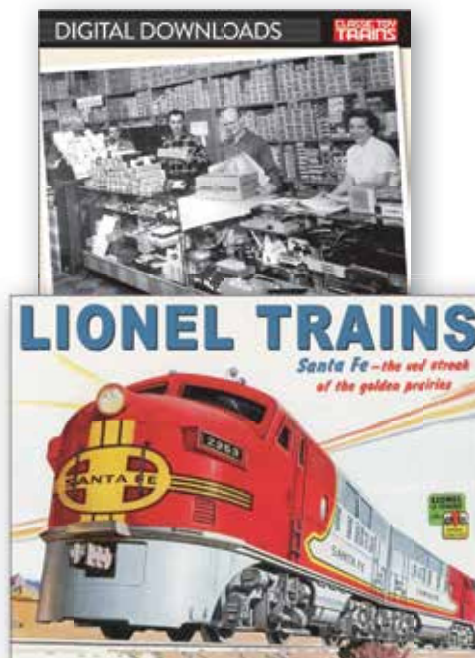
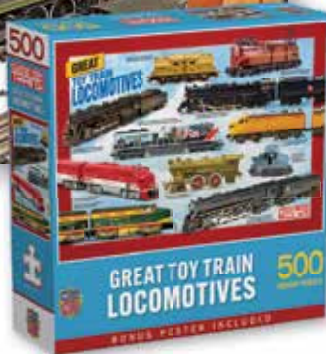
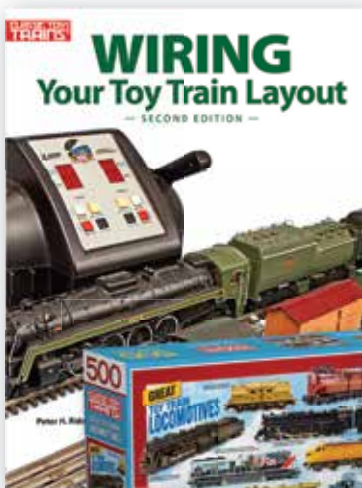


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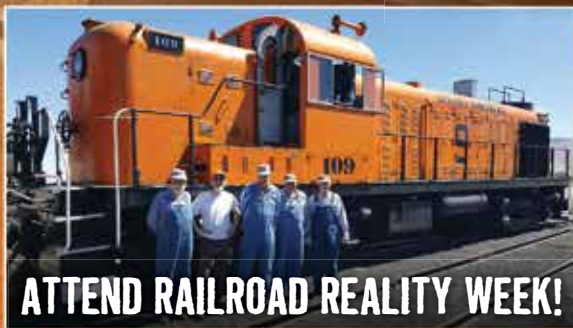
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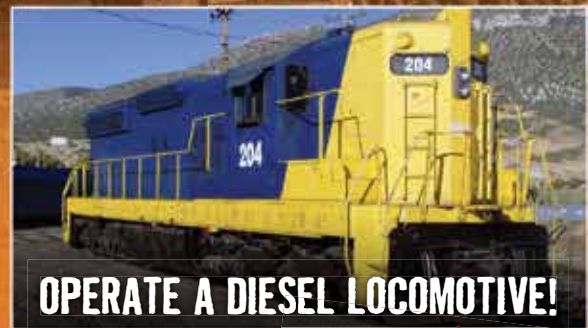
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