

FLYER ALL★ABOARD PANEL LAYOUT p. 40

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JULY 2021



p. 50

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your scene p. 58

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Rare postwar
era hopper p. 36



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BY ROGER CARP

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BY ROGER CARP



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What is normal going to look like?

Some of the things we've done during the pandemic should continue

■ THERE'S A SAYING I'VE TOLD MY KIDS

many times throughout their lives: "You never know what you can do until you *have* to do it."

A little more than a year ago most of us had never heard of COVID-19, nor did we think such a thing could wreak so much havoc around the globe.

The illness and the loss of life have been staggering and should be first and foremost in our minds. Precious few of us haven't been touched by the loss of a friend or loved one.

In the efforts to avoid getting ourselves and others ill, we've had to change so many things. From a hobby standpoint, this has meant the cancellation of shows, scrapped work and operating sessions, virtual club meetings, and fewer visits to hobby stores.

You'd think O and S gauge model railroading would, as a result, be on life support. But not only is the hobby still alive, it's actually doing well. Really, most hobbies have enjoyed an uptick over the past 12 months.

The silver lining

With limitations on businesses and interactions, people have



Our "booth" for a recent World's Greatest Hobby show. Virtual events should be part of the new normal.

had time to stay home and work on their layouts or start new ones. I've had quite a number of emails that start with "I'm just getting back into the hobby and ..." This kind of trend is great to see.

That said, I'm as eager as anyone to get back to more in-person interaction. I want to wander the aisles at shows and shake hands and just talk.

But I think there will and

should continue to be virtual meetings and shows via the internet. Such events reach a different audience and expand the scope of the hobby.

Not to mention they bring people together who might never have crossed paths.

Some individuals have really embraced technology, learning to use and installing cameras that give others a look at them, their layouts, and

their niche in the hobby.

There's a good chance that none of this would have happened – at least not as quickly – had it not been for the events of the past year.

I hope the positive momentum continues.

Hal Miller, Editor

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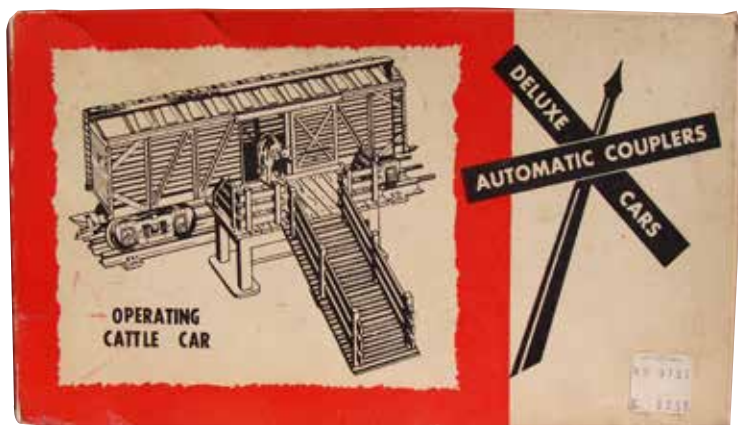
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Marx also loaded cattle



The operating cattle car offered by Louis Marx & Co. never earned the publicity of Lionel's, but it always entertained O gauge modelers.

■ **I JUST RECEIVED THE MARCH ISSUE** of *Classic Toy Trains* and wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the article by Roger Carp about Lionel's no. 3656 operating cattle car and corral. I remember seeing TV commercials back in the 1950s that showed one of those units in operation.

Louis Marx & Co., of course, had its own version of an operating cattle car that was quite basic and yet always enjoyable. When the O gauge car was eased in next to the unloading platform, a protruding lever at the car's bottom would be pushed back, causing the door to open and a small cow to tentatively move forward as if to exit the car – which it never did! The best thing about this unit was the unloading platform and ramp. By adding a few non-Marx cattle, it made a terrific addition to any three-rail layout.

– Eric Beheim, Descanso, Calif.

Milk car benefits from Turtle Wax

I was brought up in Friendship, Maine, about a mile from where I live now. My father was a lobster fisherman, and he owned land contiguous from our house to his wharf. The salty air tended to make things rust, including the piece of plated steel onto which the milk cans of my Lionel operating milk car were tossed. Mine always seemed to work better when the steel was frequently polished with Turtle Wax.

My boyhood layout was in the walk-in basement, where our milkman left quart bottles of fresh milk. Once I invited him to watch my Lionel cattle

car in action. After my demonstration he said firmly, "Just like all cows, you have to prod them." – Stephen H. Burns, Friendship, Maine

Lionel cows need help

I've been rereading the article about how to maintain and adjust the Lionel 3656 operating cattle car and corral and think it's great. My old set has never worked right. Twenty years ago, I took it to a service guy and paid him 50 bucks, and he still couldn't get the accessory to cooperate. I reworked the car following the tips in the article and have seen some improvement. Too bad the car still seems to interfere

with the ramp and the first cow in tries to back up. Any advice? Also, one mistake in the text: Operation requires 12 to 24 volts, not watts, as printed.

– Jim Kussy, West Chicago, Ill.

Catching up on CTT

Most of our lives have certainly changed over the past year, as sheltering in place became the norm! My wife and I, after 55 years of marriage, finally found time to clean closets, empty drawers, and rearrange a room or two. But there was only so much cleaning, sorting, rearranging, and other house tasks I could do to fill the free time.

So I found opportunities to work on my postwar Lionel trains. And when I needed something interesting to read – and didn't want to immerse myself in news magazines bound to leave me feeling depressed – I turned to *Classic Toy Trains*, in particular old issues I'd let pile up.

What a surprise it was to go back to copies from more than 30 years ago and find a wealth of interesting, and still timely, articles I had forgotten. Each time I read through one of those old issues was like reading it for the first time!

If you have vintage copies of CTT, I encourage you to give them another look or two. You won't be disappointed. The number of articles and their high quality has changed little over more than 30 years.

– Richard Pemble, Fargo, N.D.

Postwar memories

I just finished reading Lou Palumbo's "Views From The Underground" in the March 2021 issue of CTT. His column is always a highlight for me, and the latest one brought back

so many good memories of growing up in the 1950s with Lionel trains. If Lou and I got together for lunch, I'm certain we would end up talking well into the night! – Tom Fidler, Warrington, Pa.



Memories of Johnston's

I was surprised to read about the Johnston's Electric Train Shop in the February 2021 issue of *Classic Toy Trains*. I grew up in St. Louis and remember the store quite well.

I received my first electric train for Christmas of 1946, when I was three years old. It had a Lionel no. 224 steam engine with a whistle tender, three freight cars, and a caboose. My father purchased it and a type-Z transformer from Johnston's. That Christmas gift lit a fire that continues to burn today. I still have that train and transformer. Christmas and my birthday were good times to ask for an addition to my collection.

As I got older I always looked forward to the month of November. I would pester my dad to take me to Johnston's to see what was new and to get a copy of the latest Lionel catalog. I would read through that catalog until the pages were nearly worn out. In 1954, I used my own money to buy a train from Mrs. Johnston. It was a New York Central F3 set I still have. Thank you for your great story.

– Nick Dalba, Canton Ga. CTT

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11705	Chessie SD-40 Hopper St'O' Set	350.00
11710	C.P. Rail SD-40 St'O' Freight (sealed)	350.00
11713	Santa Fe Dash-8 St'O' Freight (sealed)	395.00
11718	Norfolk Southern Triple Crown Set	395.00
11733	W.P. 'Feather River' Freight Set	295.00
11738	Soo Line GP38 Freight Set	275.00
11744	NYC RS-3 Diesel Freight Pass. Set	245.00
11749	Western Maryland GP20 Hopper Set	225.00
11838	ATSF Warhorse Hudson Weathered Set	695.00
11909	N&W J Warhorse Weather Hopper Set	695.00
11914	NYC GP-9 TMCC Freight Set	325.00
11918	Conrail SD-20 Mergier Freight (sealed)	250.00
11984	Corvette Set (sealed)	450.00
29122	Phoebe Snow F3 Aluminum Passenger	895.00

K-LINE DIE-CAST 2-BAY HOPPERS

K6251-1752	New York Central Smooth-Side	49.95
K6253-1862	Pennsylvania Ribbed	54.95
K6255-1051	ATSF Outside-Braced	44.95
K6255-1351	Chicago, Burlington, Quincy	44.95
K6255-1891	Pennsylvania Outside-Braced	44.95

K-LINE DIE-CAST 'QUARTER' STATE CARS

K623-7425	Connecticut Scale Hopper Car	30.00
K623-7427	Norfolk & Western O-Gauge Tank Car	25.00
K623-7432	North Carolina Scale Hopper Car	35.00
K623-7421	Delaware O-Gauge Tank Car	20.00
K623-7427	Maryland O-Gauge Tank Car	25.00
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8153	5/4 B&O PA Alco ABA's Diesels	395.00
8251	Erie PA Alco 'AA' Diesels	275.00
8350	Boston & Maine GP-7 Diesel	195.00
8458	Southern GP-7 Diesel	175.00
8458s	Southern GP-7 Diesel w/6 South. Freight	295.00
8552	NYC GP-9 w/6 Matching Freight Cars	395.00
42550	Nickel Plate LEGACY ES44Ac Diesel	489.95
42560	Monongahela LEGACY ES44Ac Diesel	499.95
42566	American Flyer Line 0-6-0 Dockside	99.95
47992	New Haven LEGACY PA Alco 'AA' Diesels	649.95
48000	Southern Pacific GP-9 Diesel	175.00
48000	S.P. GP-9 w/6 Matching SP Freight Cars	395.00
48001	Illinois Central GP-20 Diesel	150.00
48002	Southern Pacific GP-9 Non-Pwd Diesel	135.00
48008	New Haven EP-5 Diesel	195.00
48009	American Flyer GP-7 Diesel	155.00
48010	Milwaukee Road EP-5 Diesel	175.00
48017	Nickel Plate Road GP-7 Power/Dummy	245.00
48019	Southern Pacific GP-20 Diesel	175.00
48020	Milwaukee Road GP-9 Diesel	195.00
48034	Seaboard Baldwin Switcher Diesel	195.00
48041	U.P. TMCC 2-8-2 Mikado Locomotive	495.00
48043	New York Central Baldwin Diesel	185.00
48048	Duluth Missable SD-9 Diesel	195.00
48049	Southern Pacific SD-9 Diesel	225.00
48065	American Flyer SD-9 Diesel	295.00
48070	U.P. LEGACY Big Boy Steam Locomotive	995.00
48071	Canadian National GP-9 Diesel	250.00
48075	New Haven EP-5 Diesel	245.00
48102	C&O PA Alco 'AA' Diesels	275.00
48129	Silver Flash PH-1 A-unit (non-pwd)	145.00
48144	Pennsylvania Baldwin Switcher Diesel	245.00
48185	ATSF Warbonnet LEGACY U33C Diesel	479.95
48187	D&L LEGACY U33C Diesel	429.95
48193	Penn Central LEGACY U33C Diesel	429.95
48270	NASSG 2008 Baldwin Switcher Diesel	325.00
49613	Southern Baldwin Work Train Boxed Set	395.00
9614	PRR PA Alco Passenger Boxed Set	625.00

AMERICAN FLYER PASSENGER CARS

44130	Polar Express Baggage Car	57.95
44131	Polar Express Abandoned Toy Car	57.95
44132	Polar Express Coach Add-on Car	57.95
48914	Missouri Pacific Coach Car	49.95
48944	ATSF Streamlined 4-Car Set	295.00
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48975	Penna. Streamlined 2-Car add-ons	149.95
48990	NYC Heavyweight 4-Car Set	349.95
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48993	Penna. Heavyweight 2-Car add-ons	189.95
48994	Blue Comet Heavyweight 2-Car add-ons	174.95

LIONEL 'LEGACY' STEAM LOCOMOTIVES

11267	Pilot Streamlined Milwaukee Road S3	1395.00
84468	New York Central Light Mikado	875.00
85176	Chesapeake & Ohio USRA 2-6-6-2	1149.95
85178	B&O USRA 2-6-6-2	1149.95
85182	New York Central USRA 2-6-6-2	1149.95
1931400	Chesapeake & Ohio T-1 #3001	1249.95
1931420	Pennsylvania J1 #0174	1349.95
2031170	or 2031180 Santa Fe 4-8-4 Northern	1439.95
2031370	Bethlehem Steel B6sb	595.00
2031380	Milwaukee Road B6sb	595.00

LIONEL 'TMCC' STEAM LOCOMOTIVES

11103	Southern PS-4 4-6-2	995.00
11105	New York Central L-2a Mohawk	995.00
18043	C&O 'Yellow Belly' Hudson	495.00
18046	Wabash 4-6-4 Hudson	295.00
18053	#726 Berkshire & Tender	395.00
18057	#671 Lion Lines Turbine & Tender	395.00
28007	New York Central 4-6-4 Hudson	275.00
28028	Virginian Allegheny-Scale	895.00
28052	Norfolk & Western Scale Class-A	895.00
28057	Southern 4-8-2 Mountain-Scale	595.00
28059	Western Pacific 4-3-2 Mountain-Scale	595.00
28066	B&O Presidential 4-6-2 Pacific	695.00
28069	New York Central Niagara-Scale	795.00
28074	Nickel Plate Berkshire (last US made)	495.00
28075	C&O 2-6-6-2 Scale Mallet	695.00
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38026	Norfolk & Western J #606	895.00
38029	Union Pacific 4-12-2 Scale	995.00
38032	Virginian 2-6-6-2 Scale	725.00
38043	Frisco 4-6-0 Scale	450.00
38044	Pennsylvania K-4 #5385	795.00
38051	Erie Scale Berkshire	795.00
38053	New York Central L-2a Mohawk	895.00
38057	Weyerhaeuser Shay	795.00
38060	Union Pacific H-7 2-8-8-2 (JLC Series)	995.00
38079	Southern Pacific Scale-Size GS	995.00
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August 21-22 Pomona, CA - Fairplex
August 21-22 Oaks, PA - Greater Philadelphia Expo
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Modern era notes

WITH BOB KELLER

Playing the long game

But what do you do after you find "The One"?

■ **EVERYBODY IN THIS HOBBY** has passed through the "I want it all" stage. This usually results in buying a lot of stuff that in a few years may become excess to requirements. This isn't about the stuff you eventually sell to get something new, but what happens when you find those items that fall into the stop everything, "Oh my gosh I've got to get that!" category.

Cases in point

When I got back into the hobby in the early 1990s, I discovered all my postwar equipment still worked. But my track had mostly rusted away, and I wasn't sure about my old Lionel no. 1033 transformer. I also realized that I had known more about three-rail trains when I was 8 years old than my 40-year-old self remembered. So I needed a starter set, just to get going.

I worried about this a bit because there were quite a few choices between K-Line and Lionel. I ended up getting a Lionel New York Central Flyer outfit led by a no. 18632 4-4-2 Atlantic steam engine and tender and built a layout around it. That was easy – the next thing was just fleshing out the railroad. Until ...

I saw a photo of a layout where the owner had no fewer than six 6-8-6 Turbine locomotives running.

They looked awesome. That was my next quest.

Postwar was hot, hot, hot at the time, and the West Coast prices had that "west of the Mississippi" surcharge. You know,

from all the wagon trains needed to bring those toys out west.

I agonized and fretted while checking the local stores – it was a golden era, with no fewer than six of them in the area selling postwar Lionel.

I checked the ads in the club magazines and even the then-common ads offering



I was smitten by an MTH Trains New York Central 4-8-4 Niagara, but played hard-to-get until the right one came along.

postwar trains in *Classic Toy Trains*. I ended up buying a pair of Turbines: the nos. 671 and 2020.

Those Pennsy engines became my go-to postwar steamers when running at public displays with the local club in Tacoma, Wash. They were bulletproof and could handle all the freight and passenger cars I could couple to them!

In the intervening years the "must

haves" tended toward rolling stock and an accessory or two. That changed in 2000.

After getting a few original MTH Electric Trains ProtoSound engines, such as the four-motored Centipede, and dealing with the "five clanks of death" (or was it "five clunks of doom"?), the arrival of ProtoSound 2.0 caused me to pay greater attention to MTH locomotion! And there it was: a New York Central Niagara. But it was priced in the \$1,000 range.

Now I'll confess, I had previously bought a steamer with a \$1,000 price tag. It wasn't MTH and had visible flaws in the die-casting; it looked a bit more tubby in person than in the catalog; and when running with the sound off, its audio footprint was like an electric coffee grinder. I was underwhelmed, and it left the fleet after a few years.

The Niagara kept calling my name, but I wouldn't budge. It was still being offered

here or there at or above the original sticker price. I'd seen examples at shows, and I loved the locomotive to death. Still, once stung, twice shy and all that.

Then I saw an MTH Niagara being offered in an online auction at a nice discount. It had a broken pipe below the cab, but a photo revealed it had been fixed. Maybe not the best repair, but if the train was in motion you'd never notice it. There were even 50 watchers on the item. Nobody was biting.

Certainly there must be a reason, right?

I think the Niagara was online for three weeks, a lifetime for something with that many watchers. After saving some of the photos to my iPad (so I could see them larger) I pulled the trigger and bought it. I really expected to be disappointed and was prepared to use this as a "don't ever do this again" moment.

Until the steamer arrived. I checked its progress across country six times a day! It

arrived on a day my wife was at work! A double-win!

I scurried to the basement, unpacked it, and placed it on the tracks. It looked new. It was exceptionally clean, not even dust from being out on a shelf. I checked the Digital Command System, and it had less than 20 hours on the odometer! That was less than an hour a year. Clearly, this wasn't the jewel of someone's operating fleet.

Firing it up with the MTH app, I discovered the Niagara sounded amazing. The smoke was a steady stream, and the locomotive literally glided along the rails. Underway, it made my New York Central passenger car fleet look, well, shabby. Sigh.

Unlike Captain Ahab, who found his Great White Whale, I didn't get dragged to the bottom of the ocean when I found mine.

This is a case where taking the (really, really) long view paid off. So what's my next "must have?" I'm not really certain, but I'll surely think of something.

As Sherlock Holmes once said, "The game's afoot!" **CTD**



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PHOTO ALBUM

YOUR PICTURES

↓ JOHN STUNDON'S O GAUGE LAYOUT

Late one evening in June, when movie theaters and restaurants are closing for the night, a handful of teens and adults wait for the Metro North M7 that will carry them back to the neighborhoods they call home. John Stundon, who resides in Hopatcong, N.J., knows all about the exciting sights that come alive when the sun goes down over Manhattan. He's captured the mood on his 4 x 12-foot home layout, where this LionChief set will never quit running as long as commuters need a lift.



→ ARNOLD CRIBARI'S O GAUGE LAYOUT

The quiet scene Mel Garelick photographed on the three-rail layout built by his friend Arnold Cribari leaves them wondering if life was once this relaxed and peaceful in Yorktown Heights, N.Y., where Arnold makes his home. The two talented O gauge modelers captured an MTH New York Central Alco RS-3 road switcher ferrying a few Lionel postwar coaches along the main line near the local the station. The plastic figures painted by Arnold and his children, David and Maria, look terrific alongside the die-cast metal items from the Artista line.





WANT TO CONTRIBUTE?

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

↑ JOHN TORGERSON'S O GAUGE LAYOUT

The perimeter of John Torgerson's 6 x 14-foot tribute to the prewar and postwar trains manufactured by Louis Marx & Co. never fails to showcase something scarce and unusual. Just stand by, as readers of an upcoming issue of *Classic Toy Trains* will discover, and a jewel from the collection on display in La Crosse, Wis., will appear. A favorite to share with fellow enthusiasts is this New York Central passenger train with a rare single-powered E7 diesel with silver horns and short flags pulling stately matching cars that lack any illumination.

PHOTO ALBUM

YOUR PICTURES



← RICK ARMSTRONG'S STANDARD AND O GAUGE LAYOUT

Every smile-inducing aspect of pre-war and postwar trains makes Rick Armstrong's Standard and O gauge layout the ideal place to while away an afternoon. Surrounded by antiques and railroad memorabilia, folks who drop by his home in Castine, Maine, find it impossible to quit investigating the different scenes on Rick's slick 12 x 28-foot display. He photographed a favorite corner where his Lionel nos. 66 semaphore and 124 station neatly frame a Standard gauge no. 8E electric pulling two matching pea green passenger cars.

→ BILL BROWN'S S GAUGE LAYOUT

Summer will have arrived by the time you pick up this issue, and that's the time of year commonly associated with baseball games, picnics, fishing, and circus performances. Fortunately for visitors to Bill Brown's S gauge model railroad in Cicero, N.Y., the circus is always in town. In addition to his classic American Flyer no. 5002T circus set, he has acquired during a lifetime of collecting and modeling many sideshow attractions, tents, wagons, and human and animal figures that fill out the scene in a wonderful fashion. Look around and you can almost hear the ringmaster announcing the next show and see acrobats, clowns, and daredevils rehearsing for tonight's crowd.





↑ **ROBERT BARTH'S O GAUGE LAYOUT**

The letter Robert Barth mailed to our offices in which he included this photograph of his O gauge layout and a brief description couldn't have been more direct: "My layout is Classic; it's Toy; and it's Trains." A good look at this bustling area in which an American Flyer no. 531 4-6-4 Hudson steam engine and tender from 1940 lead a few other prewar models attested wonderfully to the truth of his declaration. "I can run any O gauge train from any time," Bob added, motivating us to check out the colorful Marx and Lionel models nearby. Really, there's no question that he can run old and new on the slick three-rail display he's built at home in Perryopolis, Pa.



↓ **CHARLES PLAYER'S O GAUGE LOCOMOTIVE AND TENDER**

Skilled modelers sometimes find a locomotive that, gorgeous as it was made, they still think can be improved. Charles Player thought a black New York Central 4-8-2 Mohawk engine and tender from Lionel (no. 18009) could be transformed into an elegant thoroughbred by repainting it. Charles, whose workbench and paint booth are incorporated into his home in Ventura, Calif., viewed Rust-Oleum Satin Hunter Green as perfect. He painted the firebox with Gun Metal Gray and then completed the job with Rust-Oleum Satin Clear Coat.



WITH THE CTT STAFF

NEWS

ATLAS, SCALETRAINS.COM
ACQUIRE MTH TOOLING

WHEN MTH PRESIDENT MIKE WOLF announced his retirement in June 2020, there was much speculation about who would acquire the tooling for his company's product lines. This spring, Atlas Model Railroad Co. purchased a selection of tooling from MTH's Premier line of O gauge locomotive and rolling stock as well the company's RailKing accessory line. ScaleTrains.com bought the S gauge and HO scale tooling.

According to a release from Atlas, the company acquired molds for more than 20 freight cars and 15 diesel locomotives; heavyweight, lightweight, and Amfleet passenger cars; and figures, lights, and other accessories from the RailKing line.

In addition, Atlas acquired a license for the MTH Proto-Sound 3.0 sound and control electronics boards. Part of the license will also give Atlas the option to sell Digital Command System (DCS) components.

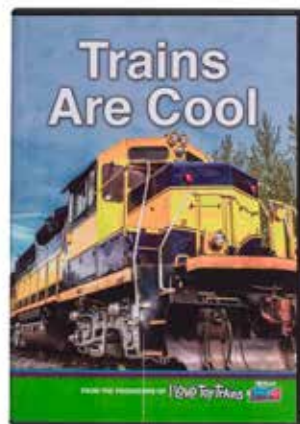
Jarrett Haedrich, chief operating officer of Atlas Model Railroad Co., said, "We will be working closely with the existing supplier to ensure that the models are produced and delivered in a timely fashion."

ScaleTrains.com, known among model railroaders for its HO and N scale products, purchased steam and diesel locomotive, freight car, and track tooling from MTH's S gauge and HO scale lines. Also included with the HO tooling were turbine and electric locomotives, subway sets, passenger cars, and engineering schematics for several all-new HO steam locomotive projects.

"The purchase of MTH's HO products allows us to broaden our product line into passenger cars, track, and more," said Shane Wilson, president of ScaleTrains.com. "We believe there is an opportunity to grow the S market as well."

Mike Wolf announced in 2020 he would close MTH Electric Trains in May 2021. The company's electronics department will live on as a separate entity, continuing to manufacture and provide support for DCS hardware and the Wi-Fi app.

WANT TO SUBMIT A PRODUCT? Send complete ordering information and a large, hi-res photo file to hmill@kalmbach.com or on a CD by mail to Hal Miller, Classic Toy Trains magazine, P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187-1612.



ALWAYS SO COOL. TM Books & Video has long defined the coolness in toy trains, so it makes sense for them to release a 30-minute video called *Trains Are Cool*. The newly released DVD features visits to two FasTrack layouts, reviews of a pair of Lionel starter sets, and a tour of the Hesston Steam Museum in Indiana. Narrated by Jeff McComas, *Trains Are Cool* sells for **\$14.99** plus shipping and handling. To order, call **219-879-2822** or visit tmbv.com

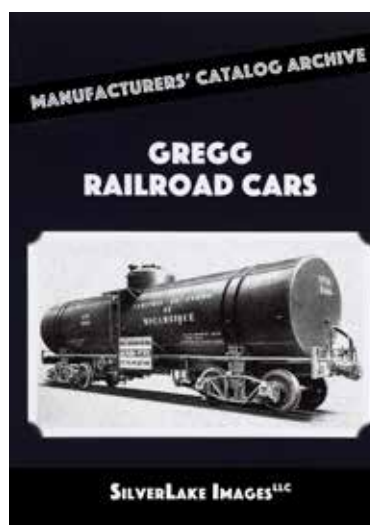
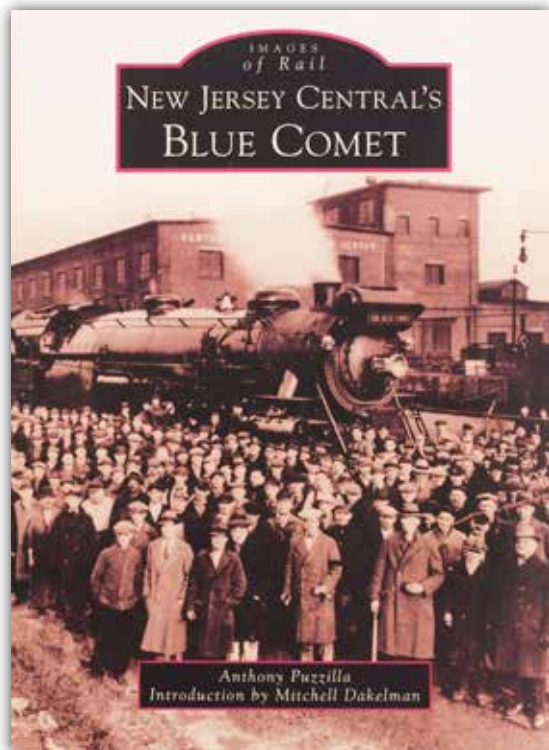


NEW ADDITIONS. Atlas O will be expanding its Trainman line roster of 70-ton three-bay hoppers with new paint schemes, including Seaboard Coast Line (black and white); Baltimore & Ohio (Chesapeake & Ohio patchout); Chicago, Burlington & Quincy (black, white, and red); Cambria & Indiana (black and white); Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac (black and white); and Southern Ry. (brown and white). The O gauge model will be available in two road numbers per scheme; undecorated models will also be offered. The three-bay hopper will have flat or arched ends as appropriate; sprung, die-cast metal trucks; and a separate, factory-applied coal load, brake wheel, and brakewheel platform. The car, scheduled for release in the fourth quarter, will be priced at **\$72.95 (undecorated, \$67.95)**. You can order the hopper at your favorite Atlas O dealer or by contacting the manufacturer by phone at **908-687-0880** or online at atlasrr.com

SWEETEST TRAINS. The perfect way for an O gauger to start the day is with the fresh and delicious baked goods packaged in an Entenmann's wrapper. This long-established business on Long Island has inspired the Metropolitan Division of the Train Collectors Association to offer an exclusive locomotive and caboose combination from Lionel. The GP7 road diesel features LionChief Plus 2.0, along with dual motors, smoke, and die-cast metal trucks. The NE5 caboose comes painted and lettered to match. The O gauge duo is priced at **\$399**, which includes shipping in the continental U.S. Checks payable to METCA. **METCA Entenmann's, % Stuart Rankin, 6 Packard Dr., Middletown, NJ 07748**; online orders (credit card or PayPal) at metca.org



COMETS BIG AND SMALL. Lionel collectors and rail-fans alike will discover a world of information about the famous *Blue Comet* passenger train in Anthony Puzzilla's *New Jersey Central's Blue Comet*, an entry in the Images of Rail series available from Arcadia Publishing. The 128-page softcover book contains information as well as historic photos of the full-size train and the Standard gauge version cataloged by Lionel in the 1930. Copies of the 6½ x 9¼-inch volume can be ordered from **Amazon.com** for **\$21.99** plus tax and shipping.



A BYGONE BUILDER. *Gregg Railroad Cars* is part of the growing Manufacturers' Catalog Archive from SilverLake Images LLC and Ron's Books. The softcover book (**\$35**) features a reproduction of an undated freight car equipment catalog presumed to be from the 1950s. Among the body styles featured are boxcars, cane cars, dump cars, flatcars, gable-bottom cars, gondolas, Granby cars, hoppers, mine cars, passenger cars, sisal cars, stockcars, and tank cars. Also shown are various freight and passenger car trucks used by the company and the different types of couplers available for the cars. To purchase a copy, call **914-967-7541** or visit **ronsbooks.com**

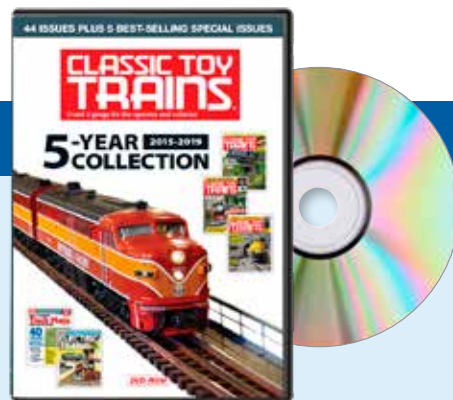


CLASSIC CATALOGS. *Heisler Locomotives Vol. 1: Geared & Fireless Locomotives* is now available from SilverLake Images LLC and Ron's Books. The 124-page softcover book (**\$35**), includes reproductions of Catalog 123 (selecting an industrial locomotive and Heisler features); *Heisler Fireless Locomotives* (a look at some of the locomotives they build), and *Pictures Tell the Story* (a look at Heisler locomotives in use in various industries, including mining, construction, and logging). The book also includes four Descriptive Folders for Heisler geared locomotives (2240 [two-truck, eight-driver with I-beam frame], 4763 and 5065 [two-truck, eight-driver with diamond frame], and 7090 [three-truck, 12-driver with diamond frame]). To order, call **914-967-7541** or visit **ronsbooks.com**



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FIVE FOR THE ARCHIVE: The past 5 years of *Classic Toy Trains* magazine are available on DVD-ROM (no. 15360). You can access every issue from 2015 to 2019, including the 30th anniversary issue, an expanded issue with how-to articles, and another about compact layouts. Also featured are exclusive special issues, including some long out of print: *Small & Midsize Track Plans for O Gauge Trains*, *Lionel's Showroom Layouts*, *Lionel Trains: Accessories*, *Lionel Trains: Best Layouts & Store Displays*, and *Electric Trains from A to Z*. Price is **\$29.95**.



MAINTAINING THE FLEET. Perform routine maintenance, clean locomotive wheels, and more with this O gauge test track from GoodDealsDCC. Priced at **\$54.95**, the 36"-long test track (locomotive shown not included) features non-warping PVC construction; GarGraves "Phantom" line track; foam bumpers; wired connectors; and soft, non-marring padded feet. The track is compatible with AC and command-control power systems. Order online from the Kalmbach Hobby Store website, KalmbachHobbyStore.com



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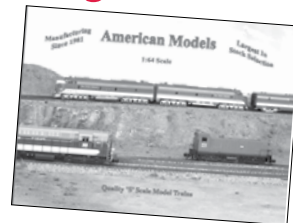


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The Lionel no. 464 operating lumber mill provides entertaining and dependable action. Unfortunately for operators with sensitive ears, it can be unbearably loud. Is there a safe way to adjust its noise level?

Ear-splitting Lionel saw mill

Can you adjust the sound on a no. 464 accessory?

Q My Lionel no. 464 operating saw mill works well, but it's really loud. Any suggestions on how to adjust the sound? – *Ted Large, Fowler, Calif.*

A The motor in the 464 is a vibrator type and relies on a vibrating armature to continually tension a string wrapped around a pulley. This movement makes the pulley turn and operate the accessory. This design was an inexpensive alternative to the standard motors of the time, but unfortunately, it ends up making a ton of noise. Some of the postwar saw mills are quiet, and some are loud. If your works reliably, I suggest leaving it alone. Trying to modify the delicate tuning can sometimes render them non-operational.

Marx with FasTrack

Q I built my layout with Lionel FasTrack. I want to install a Marx switch tower that activates via the train passing. The tower connections are a rail that goes under the outside tubular rail and the clip-type connector that goes on the third rail. How can I attach it to FasTrack sections with molded roadbed? Should I use the FasTrack accessory power set that has a rail section with two connecting wires and two short isolating pieces that go on either end of the activation track? – *Dave Molter, Pittsburgh, Pa.*

A Yes, Dave, you absolutely can use the Marx switchman's tower with Lionel FasTrack sections. You clearly have the basic understanding, so just follow the same wiring and connect it in a different way. The wire that would go to the small connector to the center rail will go to the center rail of the FasTrack with the spade connector. The wire that goes to the control rail will go to the isolated section of the activation track.

Best operation for Flyer Atlantic

Q I recently purchased an American Flyer no. 302 4-4-2 Atlantic steam engine and tender. Does this S gauge locomotive run on AC or DC? Also, what Gilbert transformer would you recommend to safely operate this vintage train? – *Gary Smith, Prescott, Ariz.*

A The American Flyer 302 Atlantic has a universal motor and therefore can be run on AC or DC. It's probably best to stick with AC if you plan to add Flyer accessories in the future because some were designed for AC only. Just about any American Flyer or Lionel transformer will be more than adequate. All this basic steamer needs is 15 volts, which is what a Lionel no. 1033 generates.

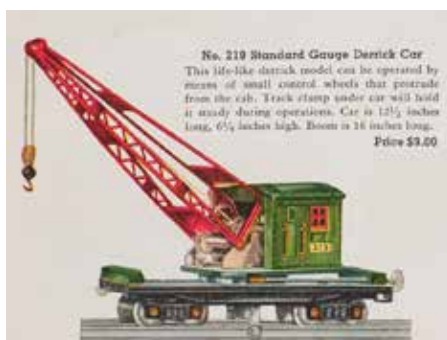
Longer trains need some boost

Q I like to run long trains on my O gauge layout, but when I try to do so I have to shorten them so they run at all. I'm talking about two Williams passenger trains: a Baltimore & Ohio set pulled by an Alco PA-PB-PA combination (the first two units are powered) and a Southern Pacific set pulled by matching steamers. It's difficult to keep the PA and PB units synchronized. I have the same problem with the double-headed steam engines. Is there a heavy-duty reverse unit I can use and then tether to the other power to solve my problem? Or do you have a better solution? – *Ken Woelfer, Bowleys Quarters, Md.*

A I like your plan, Ken, and so would recommend using the no. 1400 electronic reverse unit from Dallee Electronics (www.dallee.com) It can handle 12 amps. Good luck and let us know how everything works out.



Gilbert first cataloged the no. 302 4-4-2 Atlantic steam engine and tender in 1948.



Crane cars promised fun, whether they're Standard gauge models like this no. 219 from the prewar era or various O gauge types from postwar days. But over time, parts can become damaged and require replacement.

Disintegrating gears

Q In trying to repair a Lionel Standard gauge no. 219 crane car, I noticed the boom and drum gears were made from die-cast metal. Over the years, both gears have disintegrated. Replacement brass gears are available; taking care of the boom gear seems easy because the hole in the middle is keyed (simple on and off). But the drum gear seems more difficult. With the original gear disintegrated and gone, I'm left with a brass shaft with a small lip on the outside edge. The replacement gear doesn't fit over the lip, and even if it did I'm not sure how it would bind to the shaft. What do you recommend to fix it? – Paul Hoffman, Raleigh, N.C.

A The raised lip held the original gear in place. From the factory, the gear was placed on the shaft and the lip was rolled over to stake it in place. You'll need to remove the rolled lip to get the new gear in place. You won't have enough material to roll it back over (and probably

lack the tools to do this), so you'll have to secure it another way. Any type of glue or epoxy that adheres to metal should work.

Using WD-40 correctly

Q The wheels on the trucks of the used Lionel Dash 8-40C road diesel I recently bought didn't move. The grease had hardened to the point that it was like cement. I used WD-40 to lubricate the gears and was able to get the engine running again. Will the WD-40 do any harm? – Robert Houghton, Universal City, Texas

A WD-40 is not a lubricant. It is a water displacer hence the "WD." It does contain some petroleum-based oils and Naphtha, among other ingredients. While WD-40 does have some lubrication qualities (so does water), it's not intended for that task. With that in mind, be aware WD-40 may affect some plastics. Your Dash 8 may have plastic gears, so the risk of damaging them does exist.

Instructions for Lionel E6 diesels

Q I recently acquired Lionel no. 24504 Santa Fe E6 A-A diesels from 2004. Is there an owner's manual for this combination? Also, does anyone make diaphragms for these O gauge cab units? – Ed Lambrechts, St. Peters, Mo.

A Lionel didn't offer diaphragms for those locomotives, possibly because the distance between them failed to allow for the proper clearance. You may try to alter the ones available for passenger cars. As for an owner's manual for your diesels, you'll find it available for download at www.lionelsupport.com.



The Lionel O gauge replicas of the famous E6 cab units developed by the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors look absolutely stunning. An instruction sheet would make upgrading them a bit easier.

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Speed control with TMCC

Q I bought a used Lionel TrainMaster Command Control setup for the O gauge layout I'm constructing. It worked fine, but I had to make changes to my benchwork that required removing all the track. Since I have laid it again and tried to operate the trains with the hand-held unit, the trains take off at full speed. I can't control the speed with the CAB-1 handheld. This has happened with my TMCC-equipped engine and an older conventional steam engine with an E-unit. I double-checked the wiring, and it is correct. Any ideas on what the problem might be? – *Ralph Davis, Fayetteville, Ga.*

A You don't mention what you're using for power. The command base has no effect on conventional trains. The only way to control conventional trains with a CAB-1 is through a PowerMaster. Your transformer will put 18 volts into the PowerMaster: You put the switch on the PowerMaster to CONV, and the CAB-1 will vary the voltage to the track. With command control, the transformer still supplies 18 volts, but the PowerMaster is switched to CMD and 18 volts goes out to the track.



The TrainMaster Command Control system works equally well with engines designed to operate via command control and older ones dependent on conventional modes.

When a TMCC engine takes off, there's either a problem internally (such as the speed sensor) or loss of the TMCC signal. Conventional locomotives don't have

speed sensors nor do they react to TMCC commands, so yours has another problem. You'll need to determine what the track voltage is in both scenarios and figure out why there's high enough voltage to make the conventional locomotives speed off.

Check your wiring again. Make sure the command base is plugged into a properly grounded outlet (the house wiring is part of the signal circuit). If you're using a PowerMaster, check the switch on the side and make sure it's in the proper position. If everything checks out, you may have one or more faulty pieces of equipment.

Question for readers

Before I switched from modeling in HO to O gauge, I enjoyed assembling car kits from Bowser and Athearn. What manufacturers past and present have offered kits to build rolling stock? How about structures? – *Philip Coblenz, Jefferson, Md. CT*

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The pioneers

Remembering two longtime friends

■ THE RECENT PASSING OF

CHARLES RO SR. reminded me of just how my interest in our great hobby was renewed. After a hiatus from model trains lasting from my late teens until my middle 30s, I started to purchase trains again in the 1970s.

I started by going to local train shows and some hobby shops. I also subscribed to *Model Railroader* magazine and read each issue from cover to cover. I was searching for information on this “new” hobby I had rediscovered. The articles about O gauge layout inspired me, as did the advertisements. In fact, those ads sparked a return to the hobby I have never left after almost half a century.

The key advertisers for O gauge trains in the pages of *Model Rail-*

roader were Charles Ro Supply, Train-World, and Madison Hardware Co., dealers from whom I bought many trains.

I eventually met Charlie Ro and Peter Bianco, the owner of TrainWorld. They seemed to have the best selections of O gauge trains and were the most reliable of the retailers. I first got to know them over the telephone. Both men seemed cordial and down to earth – guys you would enjoy sitting down with and having a beer.

Our conversations started with “How are you doing, Lou?” and then “How’s everything out in New Castle?” From there, we talked about trains and family.

I met Pete and Charlie in person when I started out attending the semi-annual train shows put on by the Eastern Division of the Train Collectors Association (TCA) in York, Pa. Both of them had tables in the Yellow Hall (under the grandstand on the county fairgrounds). I always looked forward to seeing them during the show and often had dinner with them and their staff.

Charlie and Pete had a good philosophy on the hobby and the business. Their promotion of model trains was unmatched by anyone in the hobby. They provided

excellent outlets for both collectors and operators to find the vintage and new trains they were looking for.

Pete passed away on Sept. 14, 2003, but I’ve maintained good relations and a strong friendship with his son, Kenny, and his grandson, Kenny Jr. In addition, I’ve been a good friend of Charlie Ro Jr. (“Chuckie”) over these many years.

I call them “sons of the pioneers,” using the name of the great cowboy country and western singing group from the 1940s known for songs such as “Tumbling Tumblweeds” and “Cool Water.” I’m definitely aging myself by mentioning that old-time group.

Chuckie and Kenny have a great knowledge of model trains and the business. They should, since they were brought up by fathers who were kings of

model train sales in America.

The sons and I often talk about the pulse of the hobby and exchange ideas on its betterment. We also discuss the TCA and how it can improve the hobby.

Surprisingly, neither Kenny nor Chuckie is an avid train collector. They don’t have personal train collections, at least as far as I know.

Maybe being brought up in the business never gave them a chance to search for trains for their own collection. Of course, each has sold thousands of trains over the past 50 years.

I honor Charlie Ro and Pete Bianco as two good friends who were notable “pioneers” in this hobby. Let’s hear from CTT readers about the pioneers who shaped their love of O and S gauge modeling.

Keep searchin’ **CTT**



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

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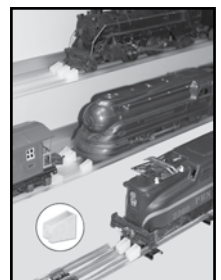
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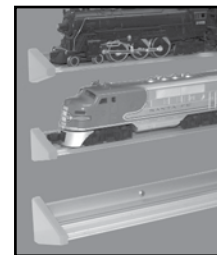
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WITH ROGER CARP

Lionel's no. 9854 billboard reefer car

Baby Ruth graphics honored tradition

■ **DECISION MAKERS AT MODEL** Products Corp., the division of General Mills overseeing the manufacturing and marketing of Lionel trains after 1969, took baby steps when assembling their initial lines. They first used old tooling to produce familiar locomotives, rolling stock, and trackside accessories. Later, they invested in new tooling so they could create models unlike what had filled postwar catalogs.

Among the items added was an O gauge refrigerator car distinguished by large, generally colorful graphics reminiscent

of a billboard. The no. 9854, one of six reefers introduced as uncataloged items in 1972, helped launch what quickly became a popular series. That it carried bright red lettering for Baby Ruth candy enabled it to honor a tradition at Lionel.

Sweet sight

Full-size billboard reefers appeared on freight trains during the first third or so of the 20th century until banned by the federal government as an unfair trade practice. Until then, they promoted a fascinating variety of perishables. The

graphics created were genuine works of art, which explained why modelers love the cars.

Curtiss Candy Co., the Chicago business responsible for developing Baby Ruth candy bars, never owned any billboard refrigerator cars. So it never promoted its milk chocolate-peanuts-and-caramel treat in the manner suggested by the Lionel model. That might have been unfortunate, since the 9854 looks so sweet.

Why, then, might the product planners at MPC have concluded a Baby Ruth billboard reefer would enhance the line

cataloged for 1973? The answer could very well be connected to the history of Lionel's pre-war and postwar lines of trains.

Curtiss Candy and Lionel signed an agreement in 1934 to permit Lionel to decorate O-27 boxcars with the name of Baby Ruth and eventually an illustration of the wrapper. By the end of the decade, more than 750,000 such models had been manufactured. In addition, ads for Baby Ruth were appearing regularly in *Model Builder*.

Ties between the two firms revived after World War II, starting with the no. X2454 in

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1946. Any number of O-27 boxcars were issued with the Baby Ruth name again stamped on the sides, with the keystone associated with the Pennsylvania RR not far away.

Not forgotten

The trend died quietly after 1956. The parade of short boxcars advertising a candy every child in the U.S. loved ended

with the no. X6014. Perhaps Curtiss, believing electric trains were losing their favor, chose to stop paying a royalty. Or else executives at Lionel preferred a different advertiser on its low-end rolling stock.

Whatever the reason, Baby Ruth disappeared from Lionel Lines for the rest of the post-war era. Things might have stayed that way if someone at

MPC had not chosen to revive the tradition. A billboard refrigerator car would have been the ideal vehicle, because its color and decoration could mimic the wrapper of a Baby Ruth candy bar, even if no full-size reefer had been built.

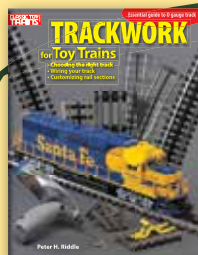
The 9854 looked superb, thanks to the electrocalcs added to the 11½-inch-long white body with a red roof and ends.

Sliding plug doors and a brake wheel looked neat. The car ran well, thanks to its Symington-Wayne trucks. — Roger Carp

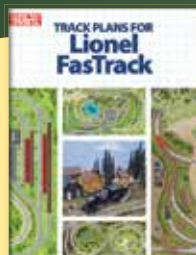
Lionel cataloged the no. 9854 Baby Ruth refrigerator car from 1973 through 1976. The 2021 edition of Greenberg's Pocket Price Guide to Lionel Trains values it at \$22 in excellent condition and \$26 in mint.

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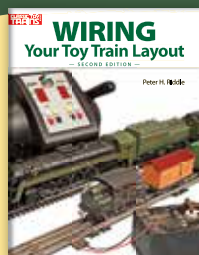
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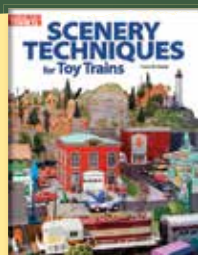
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The secondary market – and rising re-sale prices – continues to grow from people who couldn't find an item during its first release, and from new collectors entering the fray years after an item sold out. A check of verified sales of Menards buildings from the secondary market revealed some interesting results. Many Menards products, both retired and product still available from the Menards website are selling for more than double the original cost. That sounds like a great investment to me!

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TRAINS FROM A SPECIAL UNCLE

Saluting the real Santas in my life

STORY BY TOMWALKER

December 24, 1952. It's almost midnight, and I'm still awake. Lying in my foldup bed, eyes closed so Mom and Dad will think I'm sleeping. They probably can hear me giggling with joy at the thought of opening the Lionel Santa Fe F3 diesel locomotives and the silver streamlined passenger cars that I'm absolutely sure Santa Claus will bring me.

I had told Santa exactly what I wanted as I sat on his lap at the Marshall Field's Department Store on State St. in downtown Chicago. I had watched those diesels with my Aunt Harriet as they went around the layout in the store's fabulous toy department.

I really wanted that O gauge layout, but since my family lived in a 200-square-foot apartment I knew it wasn't possible. In fact, I didn't know how Santa was going to deliver my train – we didn't have a chimney – until Mom told me Santa had a magic key.

Lionel set No. 1463WS includes No. 1023 90 Watt transformer. Right hand throttle controls speed of the engine. Left hand whistle blows whistle.

THESE LIONEL "O27" SETS ARE REAL BUYS!

LIONEL No. 1477S "O27" 3-CAR FREIGHT
This locomotive puffs SMOKE

Here's a load of railroading for the money! Handwork locomotive puffs realistic smoke as her big driving wheels eat up the miles. Just look at the detail of this loco — sand dome, steam dome, ladders and handrails. Action of driving gear is thrilling to watch. Cars include finely designed "Baby Ruth" box car, gondola, and caboose. Cars and tender have real railroad type knuckle couplers that operate by remote control. This set includes No. 1034 transformer with engineer type throttle and red warning light for "shorts." Set is 3 ft., 5 1/2 ins. long. Track furnished forms oval 44 1/2" x 27 1/2".

LIONEL No. 1463WS "O27" 3-CAR FREIGHT
With SMOKE and built-in WHISTLE

One of Lionel's outstanding values! Locomotive is the tough, speedy 2026 that will rocket along your rails with smoke streaming from her stack and whistle long and short for the crossings at the touch of your transformer control. This loco is a wonderful piece of reproduction — see the closeup picture of the head and where at the left. Cars include the extra long gondola, complete with barrels, "Sunoco" double dome oil car and caboose. Lionel No. 1023 90 Watt transformer comes with the set. Train is 3 ft., 5 1/2 ins. long. Track furnished forms oval 44 1/2" x 27 1/2".

Lionel No. 1477S 3-Car Freight Set Comprises:

- 1 No. 2026 Locomotive with Smoke
- 1 No. 6465 Tender
- 1 No. 6012 Gondola Car
- 1 No. 6014 Box Car
- 1 No. 6257 Caboose
- 8 set. 1013 Curved Track
- 2 set. 1018 Straight Track
- 1 No. 5019 Remote Control Track Set
- No. 1034 Transformer
- CTC Locks, Ties of Loblent
- SP Smoke Pellets, Instruction Booklet

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Lionel No. 1463WS 3-Car Freight Set Comprises:

- 1 No. 2026 Locomotive with Smoke
- 1 No. 6465 Tender with built-in, two-tone Whistle
- 1 No. 6462 Gondola Car
- 1 No. 6463 Double dome "Sunoco" Oil Car
- 1 No. 6257 Caboose
- 8 set. 1013 Curved Track
- 3 set. 1018 Straight Track
- 1 No. 5019 Remote Control Track Set
- No. 1023 90 Watt Transformer
- CTC Locks, Ties of Loblent
- SP Smoke Pellets, Instruction Booklet

\$35⁷⁵

■ Waking to a freight train

I finally did fall asleep, and on awakening hours later I rushed into our tiny living room. I saw the shimmering 3-rail track aglow from the Christmas lights draped all around the tree.

"Oh no," I thought, "it's not the Santa Fe diesels and shiny passenger cars." What I saw was a Lionel no. 2026 steam engine and tender. They were pulling nos. 6462 black gondola and 6465 Sunoco double-dome tank car, along with a no. 6257 caboose. [It was set no. 1463WS from 1951. — Editor] Some other, luckier, kid had surely gotten my train!

My father was at the throttle of a small Lionel transformer with black and red handles. He blew the whistle and then handed the controls over to me. Well, I was immediately hooked. The locomotive smoked and smoked as it whizzed around the Christmas tree.

I played with that train until it was time to walk the 2½ blocks to the Chicago & North Western railroad station. I was six years old and was allowed to cross the street by myself.

Once there I waited for the northbound train on which Uncle Ernie would be arriving. My uncle was round with red cheeks, so he looked a lot like Santa Claus.

▲ Six-year-old Tom Walker had dreamed of Santa Claus bringing him a Lionel Santa Fe passenger set for Christmas of 1952. His parents brought home, instead, a Lionel O-27 outfit cataloged in 1951. Momentary disappointment quickly gave way to happiness.

Uncle Ernie always was the last one off the last grimy commuter coach. He didn't get out of his seat until he saw me waving to him. As he got off the train I noticed that he had a big sack over his shoulder. He said Santa had left some things for me at his apartment.

My eyes lit up knowing what was in the sack. We raced the 2½ blocks back to our apartment house, climbed up to the second floor, and ran down the narrow hall to our place.

Once inside, after Christmas hugs and greetings were finished, I was allowed to open the presents Santa had left with Uncle Ernie. My Santa Fe train?

I opened the boxes, but instead of my streamliner it was an American Flyer Royal Blue freight set! "How could this have happened?" I thought. I was an only child so Santa Claus could not have forgotten my request. I figured he had just run out of time.

Anyway, we set up the S gauge track inside the wider O gauge oval. Then it hit me! I had gotten two great trains for Christmas and both were running at the same time!

■ Still hoping for Santa Fes

December of 1953 saw me once again visiting Santa and his helpers, circling what I wanted in my Lionel and American Flyer catalogs, and still dreaming of those red-and-silver Santa Fe diesels. Maybe this was going to be the year I finally got them.

On Christmas morning I rushed to see what was under the tree. There it was, an oblong package beautifully wrapped and sitting inside the two loops where my dad was running both the Lionel 2026 steam engine and tender and the American Flyer Royal Blue model.

Wrapping paper flew off the box in seconds. I reached inside and, to my surprise, found a Santa Fe warbonnet B unit. "This is wonderful," I thought, "an A-B-A set."

Not to be, however. All the other wrapped presents under the Christmas tree with my name on them contained shirts, pairs of socks, and the obligatory boys underwear.

I looked at my father with a look that must have said, "What happened? Where's the A unit?"

Dad saw my look of disappointment and said, "Maybe next year Tommy."

train go around the oval of track in my tiny bedroom.

Kindness to strangers

Then it happened! A cold day sometime in December of 1955. My life was about to change in expected ways.

I had just walked the mile from my elementary school to our apartment, eager to get my trains running. A cup of hot cocoa and the Lionel streamliner and Flyer freight were all a 9-year-old needed for fun. But my trains weren't there. Nor were the track, the signals, or the transformers.

"Where are my trains?" I shouted. My mother came walking into the kitchen and said, "I gave them away." I was devastated. Then she explained that two little boys who lived down the street, named Bill and Gordon, needed the model trains more than I did.

Mom went on to inform me their dad had cancer and there would be no Christmas for the boys as their family had no extra money for toys. This way both boys could have an electric train. The explanation didn't relieve any of my pain. I was still devastated.

That Christmas Dad bought me a Varney HO scale train. The set had a Dock-side switcher, four freight car kits we could build together, and a wide-vision caboose. With that gift, my enjoyment of model railroading changed. I focused my interest on HO scale.

Reunion of sorts

As the decades passed and I became an

avid railfan, I became close friends with Bill, one of the little boys who had lived down the street. It turned out he also liked to chase real trains.

One day Bill mentioned still having the electric trains he had played with as a youngster. I said I'd like to see them, as I really would like to collect a set like his. I just could not bring myself to tell Bill that those old Lionel and American Flyer sets had been mine.

Forty years later, he told me how he had found the train as a boy. His mother had told him how my mom had given both sets to his brother and him. Sadly, because his family had not had enough money for food that Christmas, his father had needed to sell the Lionel passenger set. Bill and his brother never saw it, but they loved the Royal Blue.

I was humbled by what Bill told me. Not too long after, at my 69th birthday party, my friend kindly presented me with the American Flyer freight set. It was 60 years after my mother had lovingly given it to a couple of brothers who had a lot less than I did.

All I can say is, "Thanks Mom. Thanks Bill. And thank you Uncle Ernie." **CTT**

► Let Dad and Uncle Ernie spend Christmas eating and then napping on the sofa. Tom was more than content to get down on the floor with his trains.



▲ Tom and his devoted father shared a great many fulfilling times together, including hours together working on toy trains and a few years later HO scale models. His dad always seemed to know when to offer assistance and when to step away so Tom could have fun.





LAYOUT BRINGS
FAMILY MEMORIES
to life



A dad and his twins built a great O gauge railroad

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY PAUL GEFKEN

Every family has wonderful memories based on shared experiences, celebrations, and travels. Parents and their children also remember the daily events that, while routine, define them as a family and bring meaning to their relationship. And families try to keep those memories alive by telling stories, snapping pictures, and cracking jokes.

Our family – my wife (Lisa) and I and our twin sons, Aidan and Josh – is no different. We like being together at home and on the road and are quick to recall favorite times and to laugh about what someone has said or done. Our good times continue to enhance life and make things happier, even during challenging moments.

The four of us have found another great way to preserve memories of what we've seen and where we've gone: We have built a 10 x 20-foot O gauge layout that captures some of the most enjoyable and meaningful places we've visited out West.

Aidan and Josh have provided much of the inspiration and assistance for the project, with Lisa chipping in regularly with details and words of encouragement. It's now the pleasure of the Gefken family to share our work with readers of *Classic Toy Trains* and recommend they attempt to do something similar with their families.

Greatest hobby

I've often heard that model railroading is the world's greatest hobby. It offers so much to every participant, especially children: imagination development, concept planning, scale model building, lessons in electronics, and problem solving. I can't think of any other leisure-time activity that can do so much for people joining in.

Perhaps as important, model railroading is a hobby parents and grandparents

1 The scenery Paul and his sons, Aidan and Josh, created for their 10 x 20-foot O gauge layout blends beautifully with the backdrop they installed around part of the display.



The 200-square-foot display boasts three independent loops of Lionel FasTrack over which Paul and his sons can run trains at the same time using Legacy command control.



The Gefken family (left to right: Paul, Josh, Lisa, and Aidan) spent almost seven years building this great O gauge layout to keep alive memories of family life.



2 While a Lionel Pennsylvania RR K4 4-6-2 Pacific (product no. 11327) bursts out of a tunnel, men below dig out ore for the Grand Central Gold Mining Co.

can share with their children and grandchildren to nurture memories of times spent together planning and building a layout. The dimensions and complexity of the railroad don't matter, so long as family members are involved and have fun.

In a world of home computers, video games, and smartphones that promise instant gratification for a fraction of the cost, model railroading is often overlooked, though it offers long-term benefits for a child's development to adulthood. Further, keeping kids interested long enough in the hobby to reap its benefits can be a challenge, particularly because there's a short timeframe from when they begin to pick up the necessary skills until they lose interest during adolescence.

Lisa and I have found that a terrific way to spark interest in the hobby early is to take kids on train rides while touring historical sites. She and I discovered how well those places and experiences can serve as the foundation for the layout built.

Our railroad has developed from family trips and vacations throughout California, starting when our teenage sons were 2 years old. Lisa and I have taken them to Roaring Camp Railroad in the Santa Cruz Mountains, the old mining town in Bodie,

and Railtown 1897 State Historic Park turntable and roundhouse in Jamestown. We've visited Yosemite National Park and its waterfalls, Lake Tahoe, the Merced River at Wawona, and the town of Graeagle. We've made sure our layout incorporated the interests of our boys. For Josh, that means performing in theater productions; for Aidan, that means sports.

Our layout represents a working piece of artwork that transcends our family's adventures and experiences and is a tribute to our memories. I find it impossible to think of another hobby with the ability to incorporate such deep meaning.

Layout planning

From our trips and my boys' interests I started to get ideas about what to include in a layout that would serve as a tribute to our family memories. By no means was I planning to build exact replicas of our favorite places, but rather use those places for inspiration and highlight them in

AT A GLANCE

Name: Gefken family's O gauge layout

Dimensions: 10 x 20 feet

Track and switches: Lionel (diameters range from 48 to 72 inches)

Motive power: Lionel

Rolling stock: K-Line, Lionel, Williams by Bachmann

Controls: Lionel CW-80 transformer (3), with Lionel Legacy command control

Accessories: Atlas O, K-Line, Lionel

Structures: Ameri-Towne, Atlas O, JV Models, Lionel, scratchbuilt, Woodland Scenics

Vehicles: Corgi, Ertl, MTH

Figures: Lionel, Woodland Scenics

modeled areas by referring to them with familiar names.

I thought about what gauge to use and how large a layout we would need to allow for an adequate number of tracks to run multiple trains so my sons and their friends would stay engaged. I decided bigger engines and rolling stock would be more impressive, so I went with O gauge rather than HO. I concluded a minimum layout size of 10 by 20 feet would allow for three different routes of track.

Until 8 years ago, those ideas remained just ideas, since there wasn't sufficient space to build a layout with those dimensions. It wasn't until Lisa and I extensively remodeled our home and added a family room that these ideas became reality.

The timing couldn't have been better, because our sons were then 9 years old and had enough skills to help build the layout. Of course, I had no idea we would need 7 years to complete the layout. But with model railroading, as with other pursuits, it's the journey that matters most and provides important everlasting memories.

Ongoing inspiration

At times I wondered whether the effort and cost of building an extensive layout would be worth the reward. But there always seemed to be signs to continue.

The first sign came on the day the three of us went to The Home Depot to buy wood for the benchwork. When checking out, the woman at the register asked us what we were building. When my boys said our family intended to construct a

"table" for a model railroad, she started to cry and replied, "It's wonderful to see that this is still happening."

The clerk's response showed me how important it is for a father and his children to work together to build something meaningful. Until recently, assembling plastic model kits, operating scale or toy trains, and racing slot cars were common

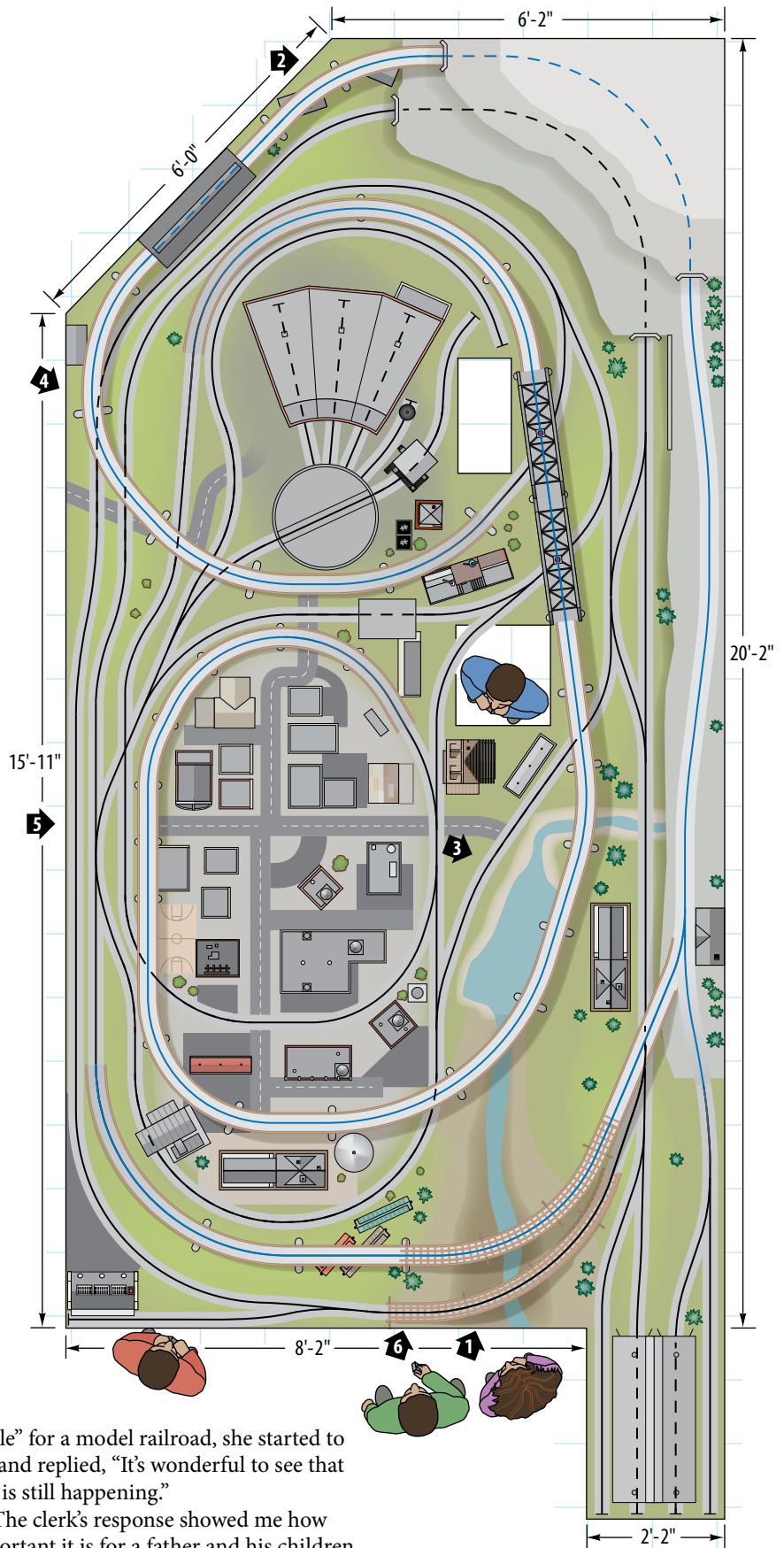


Illustration by Kellie Jaeger



3 Something in every scene brings back memories for Paul and Lisa and their twin sons. The fisherman dipping his line into a pond is a K-Line accessory the boys found.

experiences; I have many great memories of enjoying those hobbies with my father.

Other signs occurred when we would come across a needed item for our layout on one of our trips or at a local train show. I saw the kids' excitement and felt their imagination percolate on how to incorporate it into our layout.

For instance, once we stopped at a train shop in Tehachapi, Calif., on our way back from the Grand Canyon and purchased a K-Line bridge pier with a waterfall and moving fisherman. That item proved to be just what we needed on the layout to transition the river scene from the mountain backdrop to the Merced River swimming hole. Aidan and Josh couldn't wait to get home to add that accessory and get it up and running.

Or the time at a local show when Josh spied a set of marching band figures. After buying them, he brainstormed how to make them move in a parade down Main Street in our city using a conveyor belt or a thread attached to an electric motor. He demonstrated the creative thinking that I believe is one of the greatest attributes of model railroading.

Time to start

For the benchwork, we used 2 x 6 lumber spaced 4 feet apart with sheets of ½-inch-thick plywood on top. The foundation seemed sturdy enough to support the scenic features and structures we had in mind. To enhance the surface, we covered it with grass mats from Woodland Scenics.

My sons and I included a layout cornerstone consisting of a large mountain with two tunnels on the lower and upper levels. There would be a smaller lower-level mining tunnel to make use of an HO scale train from my childhood.

We lined the tunnels with aluminum foil painted gray and brown to look like blasted rock. I was amazed at how realistic the look was for such a simple process.

Before securing the mountain in place we added a 48-inch-high backdrop around two adjacent sides of the corner location. Next came a ridgeline outcropping for the track running from the upper tunnel over a deep canyon with three large waterfalls. That area represented Yosemite. Four 24-inch-high trestles were scratchbuilt for two separate tracks to span the canyon.

4 This great shot of a Lionel no. 11388 Southern Pacific 2-8-4 Berkshire being moved on an Atlas O turntable revives memories of family trips to Jamestown, Calif.

The boys and I used Lionel trestle kits to transition the track down to the flatland. By the way, we laid the track on top of ½-inch-thick foam to reduce the noise.

Once the two outer tracks were set in place, Aidan and Josh assisted me in incorporating a third inner track through the central part of Mountain View city.



The two outer tracks used Lionel Fas-Track O-72 curves to accommodate our largest engines; the inner third track used O-48 sections. Each track was powered with a Lionel no. 14198 CW-80 pack.

Focus on structures

More important than the landscaping when thinking about how we provided our layout with its unique identity were the structures. All four of us gave a great deal of thought as to which commercial items to purchase, where to place them on our model railroad, and whether to enhance their appearance with additional details.

Our family bought many of the buildings as kits, notably the roundhouse and a two-engine stall from Atlas O, two Rico stations from Lionel, city buildings from Ameri-Towne, and a mining camp from JV Models. Others came fully assembled, including the Electra Theater from Atlas O and models from Woodland Scenics.

Lionel was the source of animated structures: a water tank, a control tower, an operating sawmill, and a package conveyor belt. By the way, we installed an electric motor and pulley from Tamiya in the water tank to raise and lower its pipe.

We created an operating smokestack for a factory using a smoke unit from a retired steamer. Josh suggested inserting tissue paper highlighted with gray chalk dust to look like billowing smoke into the other chimneys and smokestacks.

A source of pride is the four-block city



5 Travelers on a Northern Pacific train catch glimpses of a marching band and fire-fighting equipment at a local parade.

with functioning traffic and streetlights. Some of the features reflect the interests and life goals of my sons. Take the marquee on the Electra Theater – it highlights Josh as the star of a new show. Not too far away observers see a basketball game going on. There, Aidan dunks while playing with his friends. We cleverly used a basketball coaching board for the court.

Fruits of our labor

Now that my sons and I have finished our O gauge model railroad layout, Lisa and I can say with pride and satisfaction it contains all the family memory features we

had hoped it would. Meanwhile, we have fun running trains past the illuminated buildings and scenery. Josh and I often operate Lionel steamers with Legacy features; Aidan prefers diesels with the same qualities. We usually have four engines running simultaneously on our three tracks using Lionel Cab 2 controllers.

The locomotives pull a mix of passenger and freight rolling stock from Lionel, K-Line, and Williams by Bachmann. Josh enjoys coupling Northern Pacific streamlined passenger cars to a Lionel 2-8-4 Berkshire steam engine. His brother often does the heavy lifting, using his diesels to pull coal hoppers and other freight cars.

Everlasting memories

For the past seven years, my wife and sons and I have been deriving from our home layout all the pleasures this hobby has to offer. As I look back on our adventure, I the effort and the cost of building an extensive layout were worth the reward.

Our display started as a tribute to our family experiences and memories. Along the way the four of us created wonderful new memories of the times spent together building the layout, going to train shows, and meeting other enthusiasts who have become new and treasured friends. **CTT**

6 Aidan prefers to operate diesels. No wonder he's at the throttle of the General Motors DD35 "Double Diesel" in the Union Pacific's scheme (Lionel product no. 28311).



POSTWAR HOPPER WITH ITS OWN IDENTITY

Andy Amante added this Lionel treasure

STORY BY ROGER CARP ● Photos by Dave Kelber

There are many advantages to living in New Jersey. A musical heritage that spans Sinatra to Springsteen is one; the beautiful beaches along the Jersey Shore are others. But the greatest benefit of making your home in the Garden State may be that nowhere else can an O gauge collector hear these magic words:

"I have a few trains to sell that my father left me. His mother used to work at Lionel between the 1940s and the 1960s. I wonder if you might be interested."

That in a nutshell was the message Andy Amante heard on his answering machine a few years ago. As enthusiastic a

hunter for Lionel trains from the postwar era as you'll find, he quickly grabbed his cellphone to return the call.

■ Treasure awaits

Before Andy knew it, he was talking with Christopher, whose grandmother had indeed been on the workforce at the plant Lionel maintained in Irvington, N.J. during the prewar and postwar periods.

Christopher had a nice stash of trains from the 1950s that he was selling on behalf of his father. Andy suppressed his excitement as best he could and quickly negotiated a deal to acquire all the trains.

Soon Andy was unpacking them at his home. He took his time, trying to study each and every model he had bought.

Then he noticed it – a black hopper with heat-stamped markings that identified it as a no. 3456 Norfolk & Western car, the same operating hopper Lionel had packed inside the box containing its no. 456 coal ramp. Nothing out of the ordinary, at least not at first glance. Andy was familiar with the 3456, which was cataloged with the 456 and as a separate-sale item from 1950 through 1955.

Only after perusing everything obtained did Andy go back to examine the

This scarce Lionel hopper has all the markings used on a no. 3456 Norfolk & Western operating model, developed in 1950 for the no. 456 coal ramp. However, the car lacks the features that are essential to making a 3456 functional.



freight cars more carefully. That was the moment when he realized this 3456 was unlike any he had ever seen before or was mentioned in any reference guide.

"This hopper lacked the plunger and opening bottom doors installed on the 3456 so it could operate with a coal ramp," Andy said. "From the bottom, my car looked exactly like any of the regular hoppers Lionel lettered for Lehigh Valley."

■ Learning more

Absolutely thrilled by his discovery, Andy set out to learn whatever he could about the unusual hopper. He contacted Christopher, but the former owner had no ideas. He merely repeated his grandmother had worked at Lionel and so she obviously picked up the oddball and carried it home for her son to play with.

Then Andy had a brainstorm. Being a

steady reader of *Classic Toy Trains*, he had seen Joe Algozzini's byline for many years and believed this respected expert on Lionel trains of the postwar era might be able to shed some light on his hopper.

Which is exactly what Joe did. In fact, he solved the mystery in a matter of seconds.

According to Joe, Lionel was producing no. 6456 Lehigh Valley hoppers around the same time it was manufacturing the 3456. In the course of doing so, a line worker inadvertently decorated a regular black hopper with the white heat stamp intended for the operating version. Everything was as simple as that.

In Joe's words, Andy has a "Manufacturing Make Ready." In other words, the unique hopper is actually a 6456-1 (the suffix used for an item meant to come in



Lionel heralded the no. 456 coal ramp and its operating hopper as highlights for 1950. Here, factory supervisors watch it in action with a no. 397 diesel-type coal loader.

its own component box), despite being incorrectly stamped 3456. The body shell used naturally and logically lacked the features of an operating hopper.

Joe concurred with Andy that the unusual hopper was without a doubt the product of Lionel's factory – nothing fraudulent or questionable about its origins. And, Joe finished, it was really neat, a gem for Andy to treasure for years. **CTT**

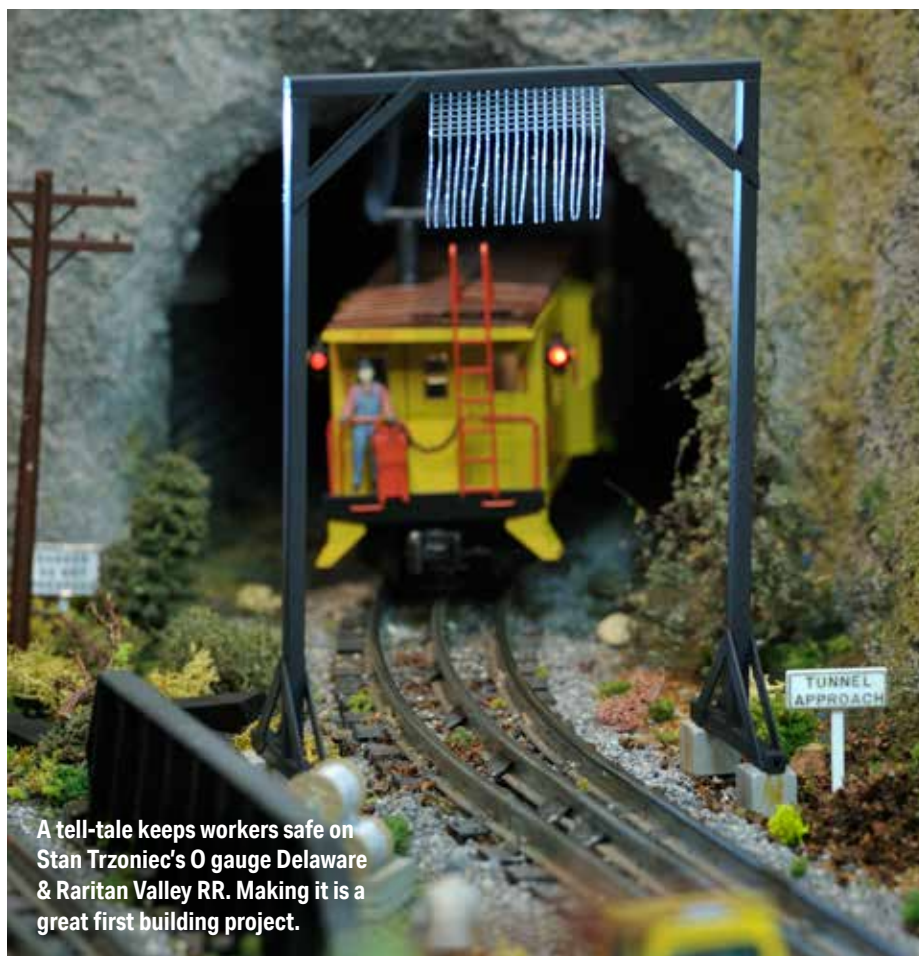
The absence of opening hatch doors and a plunger on the underside of the 3456 suggested to CTT contributor Joe Algozzini the car was an incorrectly stamped no. 6456.



WITH STAN TRZONIEC

Scratchbuild a tell-tale

A simple project sure to add scenic interest



A tell-tale keeps workers safe on Stan Trzoniec's O gauge Delaware & Raritan Valley RR. Making it is a great first building project.

■ **BECOMING A MEMBER** of any railroad's historical organization has its benefits. You learn history and take part in meetings and events. Above all (at least for me), you regularly receive the group's colorful and informative magazines.

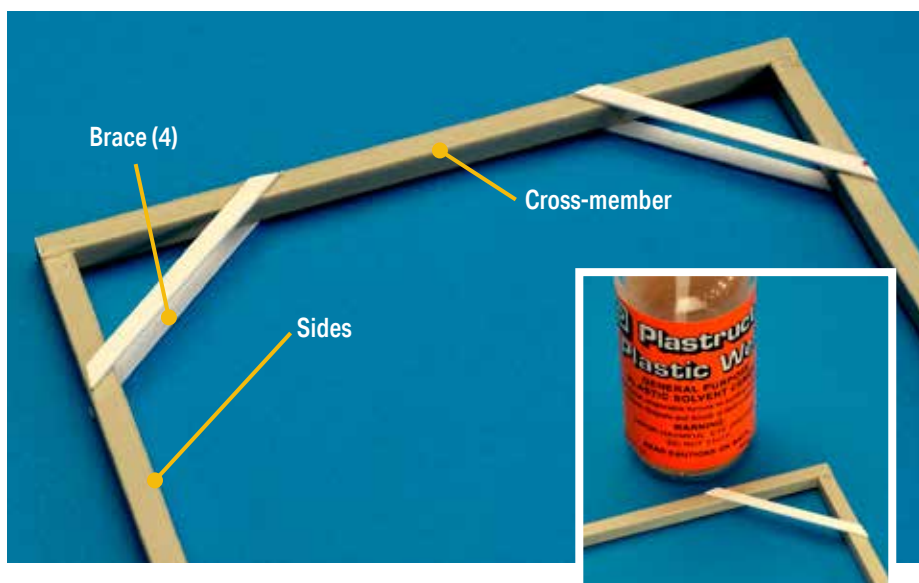
Being an O gauge modeler, I peruse them for interesting projects to build, especially if they have a detailed drawing.

The Southern Pacific Historical & Technical Society puts out the quarterly *SP Trainline*. A recent issue featured a full-size tell-tale plan courtesy of the Shasta Division Archives that was drawn in a scale of 1/4" to the foot.

A tell-tale is used to call attention to low-clearance situations, such as tunnels and bridges, that would endanger workers on top of rolling stock. Those laborers might have been up there to turn brake wheels or walk the train.

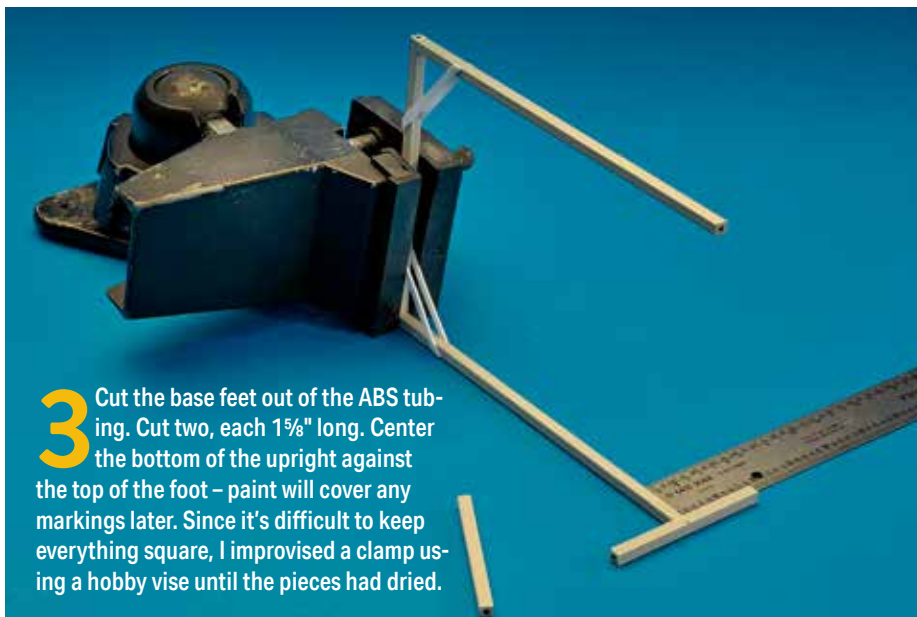
The drawing was almost right. After checking the dimensions, I needed to reduce the drawings to 80 percent to make them perfect for construction.

For those starting to scratchbuild, this is a simple project that can take as little as a couple of hours. If you cut everything to the drawing, it moves along smoothly. **CTT**



1 First, cut the top and sides from Plastruc no. 90202 3/16" light gray ABS square tubing. My top beam measures 4 3/4", and the sides measure 6 1/2" each. Square up each end with a file. Attach these three pieces with liquid cement. Capillary action assures a neat yet strong weld. Make sure the sides are attached to the top at a 90-degree angle. A small square can help.

2 While the main assembly is drying, cut four angle braces from Plastruc no. 90736 1/8" x 30" styrene strip. Each should have a 45-degree angle at the end and be 1 1/8" on the long end of the brace. The angles will help line them up on the upright and cross-member. Apply the liquid cement to the top corners on the front and back.



3 Cut the base feet out of the ABS tubing. Cut two, each 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ " long. Center the bottom of the upright against the top of the foot – paint will cover any markings later. Since it's difficult to keep everything square, I improvised a clamp using a hobby vise until the pieces had dried.

BILL OF MATERIALS

Plastruct

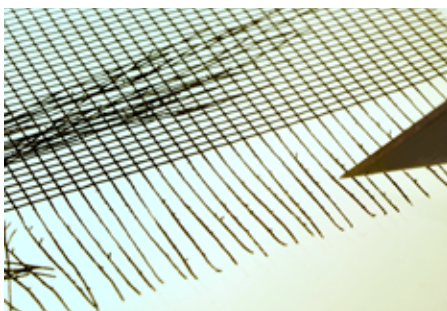
90202 $\frac{3}{16}$ " light gray ABS square tubing
 90736 $\frac{1}{8}$ " styrene rectangular strip
 90738 $\frac{3}{16}$ " styrene rectangular strip
 93968 gray window screen
 AC-12 $\frac{3}{8}$ " clear acrylic cubes

Miscellaneous

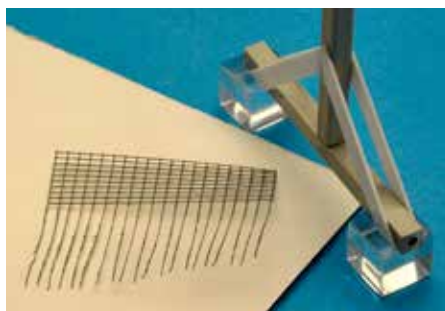
File
 Gel super glue
 Hobby knife
 Liquid cement, such as Plastic Weld
 Miter box
 Paints
 Scale ruler
 Testor's Dullcote



4 Cut four braces for each foot-upright pair from the Plastruct no. 90738 $\frac{3}{16}$ " x 30" styrene rectangular strip; again, they will all have 45-degree ends and measure 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ " at the longest point. Put two of the cut strips together to form a 90-degree angle and weld with the liquid cement. Then repeat the process until you've made four pairs. Attach braces inside and outside so the angle is centered on the upright and the angles of the lower ends line up with the bottom of the foot.



5 Next, cut a piece about 6" square from the gray window screen material (Plastruct no. 93968) and lay it flat on a self-healing mat or cutting surface. Cut the cross-members and remove them with the tip of a hobby knife so you have vertical "strings" about 1" long.



6 Keep two rows, or another $\frac{1}{2}$ " of material, and cut a section 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide. Don't worry about trimming them perfectly; they're supposed to look like heavy manila rope that's frayed and weathered. This photo also shows how the AC-12 $\frac{3}{8}$ " cubes will be positioned under the tell-tale after painting. They should be painted a concrete color, as they represent the bases for the tell-tale.



7 Cut two pieces of the $\frac{1}{8}$ " strip a little longer than the width of the rope assembly. Then sandwich the top of the rope assembly between two sides with gel-type cyanoacrylate adhesive (CA, or "super glue"). Once everything has dried, use the same adhesive to attach the assembly to the cross-member. Placing the tell-tale ropes on the back side (closer to the tunnel) of the top brace ensures a neat and prototypical look.

ALL★ABOARD with AMERICAN FLYER

**S gauge layout built
with special panels**

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JON BALKA

All Aboard American Flyer....” I can guess what you’re thinking after reading the words in quotation marks. You think this article must be about the famous talking stations the A. C. Gilbert Co. cataloged for its American Flyer brand of S gauge trains back in the 1940s and ’50s. The ones with a small record player announcing, “Through train to New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and all points west.”

Actually, not! This is an article about the other “All Aboard” associated with American Flyer: The All★Aboard scenic panels cataloged in 1965 and ’66 as well as the Pike-master trains sets offered to operate on them. My perspective on the panels and the trains is less a historical one and more an operational one. You see, I’ve built a 5½ x 10-foot S gauge layout entirely out of those 17-inch-square panels and various Flyer accessories.





1 Take a look at Jon Balka's 55-square-foot S gauge layout. The uniform curves and straights cut into the roadbed and the seams running through the middle are clues that he has used American Flyer All-Aboard panels to build it.



2 Shrewd purchases of All*Aboard panels at train shows and from dealers enabled Jon to amass enough of them, including ones with switches and crossovers, to assemble this fascinating home layout.

Moving up

How did this all begin? As a teenager back in the early 1990s I decided to move from HO scale railroading to collecting and operating toy trains. Because I already preferred the look of two-rail track and scale dimensions, American Flyer S gauge was the natural choice.

I first stumbled upon some All*Aboard panels while attending a local train show. Not having enough space for a permanent layout, I decided they were the perfect solution and bought them. Only later did I realize panels weren't complete or compatible with the longer Flyer locomotives and rolling stock I already owned, including the no. 312 K5 4-6-2 Pacific steamer and tender my parents had given me. I put the panels aside, but I remained intrigued by the idea of building a modular layout entirely of All*Aboard sets.

Fast-forward to 2015. On a routine visit to my favorite train store, I spotted a large quantity of the All*Aboard panels and enough original detail parts to scenick some of them. A discussion with the owner revealed there were several more cases of panels including those with switches, crossovers, and even steam whistles.

Before long, the store owner and I agreed on a price; the panels and everything that went with them were mine. Now came the challenging part of creating a layout with them.

Down to work

I carried the panels home and started planning. I eventually assembled them on some tables to make the S gauge railroad showcased here. To build the 55-square-foot display that stands 29" off the floor, I needed a total of 28 All*Aboard panels.

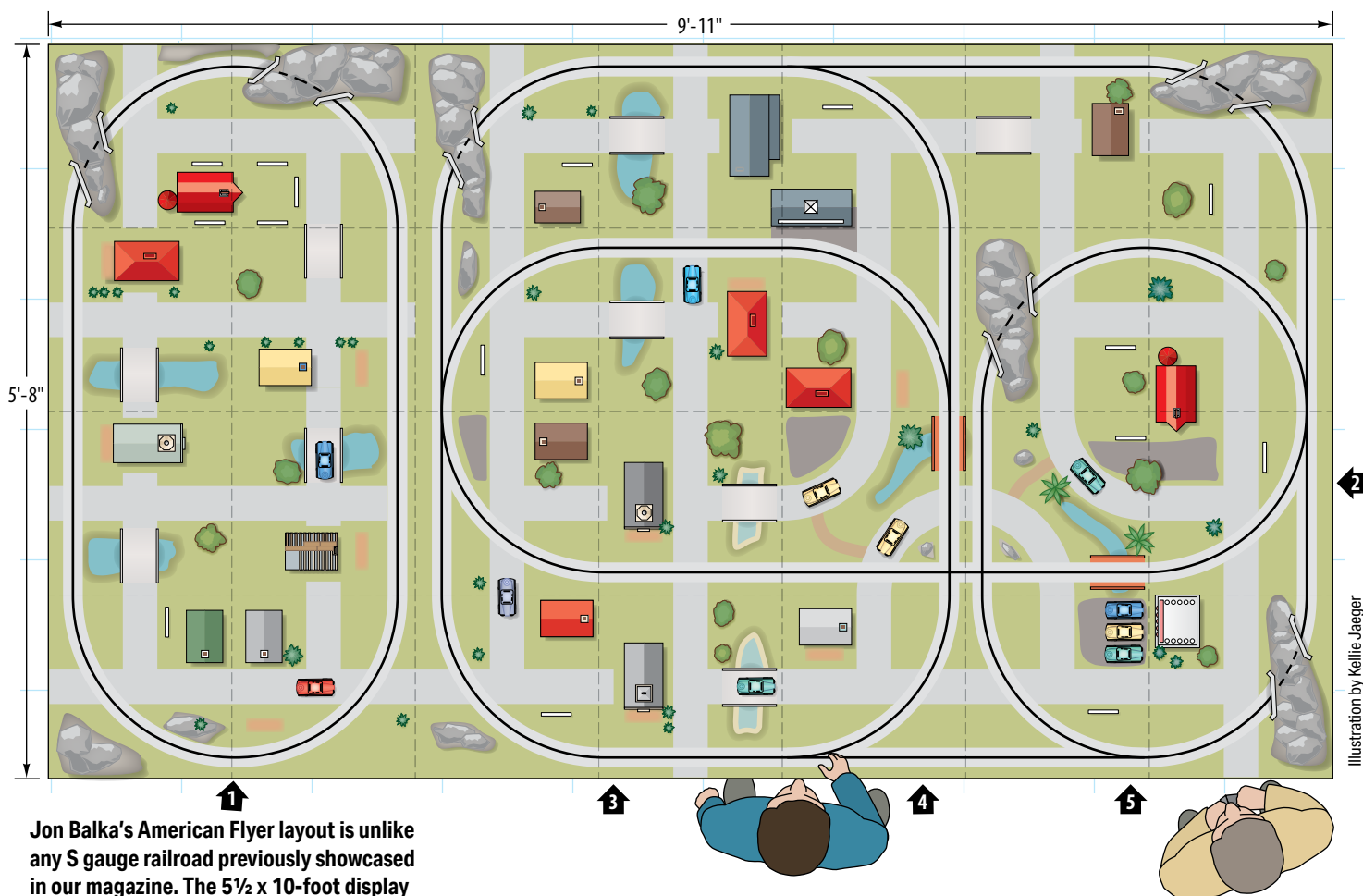
In addition to regular panels that were manufactured as straight or curved sections, I built the display with 10 switch sections, two crossovers, and a couple of the ones Gilbert equipped with structures housing whistles. I separated the layout into three electrical blocks so I could run three trains independently at the same time or so one train could cover the entire layout.

Because the layout is fairly compact, I elected to focus on residential and farm scenes. A mix of American Flyer, Little-town, Marx, and Plasticville U.S.A. buildings worked perfectly when developing those areas. These structures also had a vintage feel that in my view matched the track.

I took the same approach with the trees and some of the other details you can see in my photographs. Many are American Flyer items included with the panels. A few, notably the tall multi-color fir trees,



Jon Balka switched from HO to S gauge modeling years ago.



Jon Balka's American Flyer layout is unlike any S gauge railroad previously showcased in our magazine. The 5½ x 10-foot display consists of 28 of Gilbert's All*Aboard panels.

have different sources – but what matters is that they fit in visually.

Looking right

Time for me to get a little philosophical here. The most important consideration when assembling an All*Aboard layout is making sure that everything looks right and blends together. Usually, that means all the items are made of plastic and about the same proportion.

Structures like the Cape Cod houses and the barns in the Plasticville U.S.A. line from Bachmann work really well. Many of the downtown commercial and industrial buildings produced in the postwar era turned out to be too large for my purposes, so they aren't on the layout.

Regarding vehicles, I once arranged several high-quality and expensive die-cast metal automobiles and trucks on the layout. However, I quickly noticed they looked out of place. I decided to replace them with plastic vehicles by Marx, Renwal, and others that fit. The same issues caused me to go exclusively with plastic

animal and human figures of various makes to populate the layout.

Visual appearance is also important for the locomotives and rolling stock. With the exception of the tippie cars used in the no. 5300T miners' work train, I run only plastic items. For head-end power, I prefer Baldwin diesels and 4-4-2 Atlantic steam engines and tenders.

I opted for those locomotives for esthetic reasons and because large heavy engines can't navigate the tight curves of the Pikemaster track and would cause the panels to flex. Fortunately for me, the Gilbert Co. manufactured a fairly large selection of Pikemaster and lightweight equipment, so there's plenty of variety out there to choose from.

A few benefits

Whenever someone learns about what I've done with All*Aboard panels and asks me what about them has piqued my interest, I always mention two great benefits:

First, changing both the configuration of the panels and the structure details is

AT A GLANCE

Name: Jon Balka's S gauge layout

Dimensions: 5½ x 10 feet

Track and switches: American Flyer All*Aboard panels

Motive power: Gilbert American Flyer

Rolling stock: Gilbert American Flyer

Controls: Gilbert American Flyer nos. 8B and 22004 transformers

Structures: Gilbert American Flyer, Littletown, Marx, Plasticville

Vehicles: Marx, Renwal

Figures: Marx

Illustration by Kellie Jaeger



TIPS ON BUILDING AN ALL*ABOARD LAYOUT

Planning and constructing my 5½ x 10-foot S gauge layout out of All*Aboard panels taught me a great deal about how to work with them in a successful and entertaining manner. Here are 10 of my best suggestions and insights for anyone intended to build a layout like mine:

1 Understand that the All*Aboard panels were designed for Pikemaster motive power and rolling stock. Be sure to operate shorter S gauge models, especially from the 1960s.

2 Take advantage of the layout-planning cutouts included with the instructions packed in the All*Aboard sets. They work quite well for designing an enjoyable model railroad.

3 Purchase the most complete panels or sets you can find. Finding the accessories and details that were originally added to panels but are now often missing can be difficult.

4 Shimming, adding more power leads, and making custom rail joiners may be necessary to ensure smooth operation when you use original panels from the 1960s.

5 Be aware All*Aboard panels can't support a human's weight. Therefore, avoid designing a layout that doesn't allow you to reach by hand each and every area.

6 Search junk boxes at train shows. Lots of fun and imaginative items are out there ready to be found at low cost that will make your All*Aboard railroad unique.

7 Do not overpopulate your panels. It's tempting to keep adding more items, but ultimately it takes away from the scene. I never put more than one structure on a panel.

8 Vary your scenery with correctly sized structures and figures from manufacturers other than Gilbert's American Flyer line. Doing so

3 The no. 20550 *Frontiersman* set from 1959 is one of the jewels in Jon's collection. He likes to bring the old-time train off the shelf and let it run.

always adds variety and interest to a layout.

9 Keep in mind that the product is modular. Consequently, you can take off the tunnel tops and convert them to bluffs. That makes it easy to operate longer passenger cars before you decide to turn those scenic elements back into mountains when you want.

10 Lock the reverse units into the forward position when operating several trains at the same time. The panels are rigid, so the vibration may trip a locomotive into neutral.



4 The no. 355 Chicago & North Western Baldwin switcher is short enough to operate smoothly on the All*Aboard panels. Most of the other American Flyer diesels cataloged in the 1950s, especially the classic Alco PA units, are too long to fit comfortably through the tight curves.

incredibly easy. Nothing ever goes to waste – you simply move things around and add or subtract items, and before you know it, your S gauge model railroad looks completely different.

Second, the hunt for items that work is extremely enjoyable. I love digging through scrap boxes at swap meets and train stores to find items I know will look right, such as original All*Aboard mountains, plastic cars and structures, and my palm trees and swimmers.

Often, I end up paying just a few dollars for what I've picked up. Better yet, there have been times when vendors have just given me items at no charge. Even though I've bought some items for the layout from online auctions, I generally prefer to buy what I like in person.

Looking ahead

What lies ahead for my All*Aboard layout? To start, I have more panels at home,

so I can imagine adding an industrial area and possibly a commercial district. The challenge will be finding enough structures with appropriate dimensions and colors to fit in neatly.

Given that the mountains are cast into the panels, I can also see the possibility of adding risers to integrate an elevated segment and thereby create a scene with more than a single level. Finally, I wouldn't mind adding a backdrop and a low-relief background consisting of more of the Plasticville buildings I like. Available space is the only issue.

There you have it. All the reasons why S gauge enthusiasts or modelers without much real estate at hand should think seriously about building a layout out of the All*Aboard panels. And there's no need to stop after making a 4 x 8-foot display. As my model railroad shows, expanding beyond what Gilbert recommended long ago is great fun. **CTT**



5 The guys inside the caboose are hanging out the windows, hoping to see the lovely ladies tanning and swimming in the pond.

LIONEL'S CONVEYOR LUMBER LOADER



Dump the logs in and then ship 'em out with the no. 364 accessory

STORY BY ROGER CARP

All of us at *Classic Toy Trains* have been enjoying ourselves, thanks to the Lionel operating cars and accessories brought into our office by David Popp, executive producer for Trains.com. Once David called attention to the postwar items his father and maternal grandfather had acquired new in the late 1940s, Hal Miller and I couldn't keep our eyes or hands off them, especially after deciding to share those treasures in the magazine.

How to showcase what David had discovered proved to be a subject of debate. Presenting the models in the order his relatives had acquired them would have been fun, but no one had any firm conclusions. And opting for a strict chronological sequence of when Lionel had introduced the various items risked boring readers if similar pieces followed each other in consecutive issues.

So, Hal and I decided to move ahead by emphasizing differences among the operating models. From a milk car in February we stayed on the farm while dashing to a

cattle car and corral the next month. Then in the May issue we tried out an accessory, one with prewar roots that handled coal. This time we're focusing on a postwar accessory for logs: the no. 364 Conveyor Lumber Loader.

■ Wooden traditions

While Lionel heralded the 364 as a brand-new addition to its line for 1948, offering an accessory designed to automatically load and unload the dowels that served as miniature logs hardly broke new ground for the corporation. To be frank, lumber had been big business along Lionel Lines for several decades.

Lumber – the long planks and boards people use to frame residential and business structures, to serve as floors and ceilings, and to shaped into tables and cabinets – became the first type of load Lionel ever created for its toy flatcars. Standard and O gauge models came with flat pieces of wood by the middle years of the 1920s so children could imagine they were transporting softwood lumber.

The miniature boards on flatcars had to be rectangular so they wouldn't slip off during operation. Then the no. 3651 Remote Control Lumber Car joined the line in 1939. To make the load “dumpable,” designers knew it must be able to roll off into a tray by the right-of-way. That made cylindrical pieces essential.

Big news arrived the next year, when Lionel brought out its first remote-controlled accessory intended to handle logs. Only with dowels could the no. 164 Lumber Loader complete its tasks to the satisfaction of operators young and old.

Touching and turning the buttons on the controller let anyone empty a dump car and watch as logs rolled off to be picked up by the motorized chain conveyor and lifted to the upper unloading platform. Realism triumphed.

What a great step forward the lumber loader and the rolling stock serving it represented for Lionel! Executives acknowledged the importance of bringing back the 164 after World War II while updating the log dump cars serving it.



The no. 364 Conveyor Lumber Loader represented a new direction at Lionel in the years after World War II. A second-generation accessory for handling logs, it required only a single stretch of straight track for effective and entertaining operation.

■ Time for improvement

The over-arching strategy as World War II ended and production of toy trains was given a green light boiled down to bringing back as many of the finest prewar items as the market was likely to appreciate. That approach characterized the thinking among engineering and sales leaders with regard to accessories.

This wasn't a reluctance to innovate, but an understanding that consumers hadn't lost their appetite for the biggest and most innovative operating models that had broken new ground right before global conflict engulfed the United States.

Therefore, the 164 returned in 1946, a highlight of the first full line Lionel cataloged after the war. Similarly, as shown in the May issue, the individuals overseeing

what was presented insisted on bringing back the no. 97 Coal Elevator.

But the 164 loader demanded a fairly sophisticated operation. It called for a line of track in front and one behind so logs could be loaded and unloaded.

Accommodating model railroads with only a main line or a single siding, engineers working under the supervision of Joseph Bonanno at the Lionel plant commenced to look for a solution. The answer, they found, was to go horizontal.

■ Getting horizontal

The 364 Conveyor Lumber Loader aimed not to update its companion or to speed

up the process of vertically moving and unloading dowels. Instead, the steel accessory represented a re-imagining of how miniature lumber might be shifted.

The 364 simplified the process by depending on nothing more than a long straightaway for its action. To be precise, all an O gauge operator needed on his or her layout was a section consisting of three pieces of regular straight track.

As the instruction sheet for the 364 explained, "A remote control section should be placed in the track layout in front of the loader receiving platform and the Lumber Loader positioned so that its receiving platform is in the center of the remote control section." Unload the logs, let them travel up the conveyor belt, and wait to release them one by one into the now-empty no. 3451 Lumber Dump Car.

■ Reliable operation

The 364 challenged layout builders for the obvious reason that it measured almost 28 inches in length. Creating a siding long enough to handle it might not be easy. But dependable and straightforward operation made it a pleasure to own.

The sequence of activities, as David's Conveyor Lumber Loader showed, was short and sweet. Manually or via remote control, logs were put at the lower receiving end on the right end of the accessory. Next, an operator flipped the no. 364C on/off switch included with every 364 to fire up the red conveyor belt.

Scarcely before you could exhale, one of the dowels was cruising up the belt to the upper portion of the log loader. Once



Lionel heralded a pair of breakthrough freight loaders for its new line for 1948. The 364 provided a different method for unloading and loading miniature logs, and the no. 397 diesel-type coal loader offered a different manner for handling tiny chunks of Lionel coal.

it had reached the top of the platform, gravity took over and it rolled effortlessly over the tilting stakes into a freight car.

Not the kind of animation to leave you bowled over, yet slick. The 364, for which Chief Engineer Bonanno earned a patent, featured one other effect – illumination. A clear light bulb inserted into a lamp cover at the bottom of the ramp shone brightly once the loader was activated. Better still, the rays glowed through red and green lenses to boost the sensation of realism.

■ Hardly changing

Everyone from factory production supervisors to consumers must have been happy with the look and operation of the Conveyor Lumber Loader. After all, the accessory underwent no genuine modification after its first year in the line.

The dark gray crackle finish yielded to one described as silver-gray and smooth hammer-tone probably within a year after the 364 was added to the line. That aesthetic change was the most obvious way to distinguish an early model.

In term of operation, engineers sought to remove any kinks or sources of frustration for young lumber barons. For example, they added a metal guide tab at the uppermost end of the loader to facilitate movement of the logs into a waiting car. Designers also redesigned the brushplate on the motor after 1949.

That sums up the story of the 364, cataloged through 1957. Each corrugated cardboard box also included five dowels

packed in a no. 164-64 component box, a 364C on/off switch, hookup wire, and an instruction sheet.

■ Easy maintenance

Besides developing a dependable and reasonably priced accessory (the 364 sold for \$12.50, which was \$9 less than the 164), the engineering crew came up with a log loader that was remarkably easy for hobbyists to maintain and authorized repair personnel to troubleshoot, service, and keep in tiptop shape.

The heavy-duty motor hangs upside down, a fact that causes liquefied gearbox lubricant to drip into it when the loader is operated frequently. Both the brushes and the commutator often need cleaning.

In addition to tending to the motor and its major components, keep the upper surfaces of the 364, particularly the conveyor belt, free from oil, dust, and dirt. Periodic cleaning is essential; applying lubricant to either the gearbox or the rollers with the belt is not. To the contrary, doing so may gum up those parts.

The conveyor belt can be tricky, because over the decades it can end up stretched until it fails to move the logs. It should run ride flat with no slippage.

Parts dealers typically sell replacement belts, which are installed by first removing the sheet-metal screws securing the backplates. Then, beginning at the low end of the loader, follow the path of the old belt as you put on the new one.

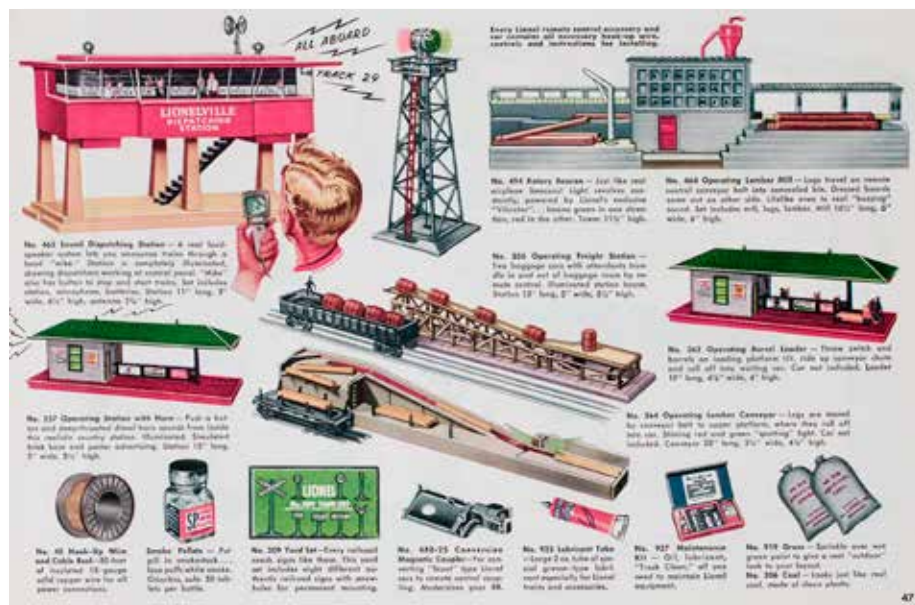
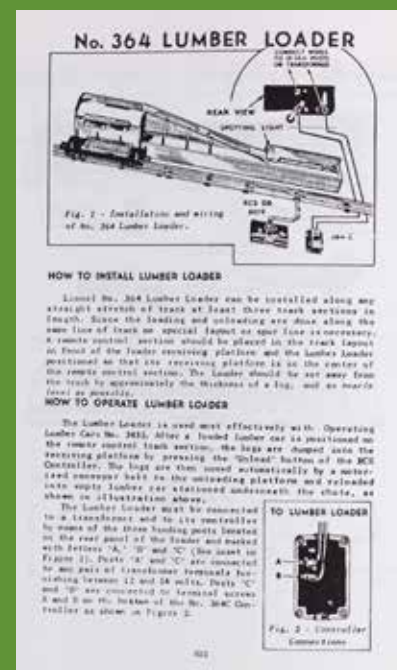
The three belt rollers and cam are held

in place by pins you can gently pull out individually while you thread the new belt through its course. Don't forget to add a tiny drop of oil to each pin before you reinsert it. And “tiny” is the key word.

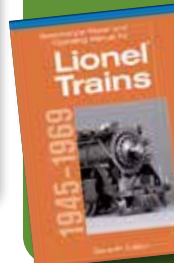
■ Time for fun

Once your 364 is ready for action, make certain you have located it on a level surface. Hook it up to an appropriate fixed-voltage circuit on your transformer, where it can get the 12 to 14 volts necessary.

As the instruction sheet explained, leads from a transformer should be connected to binding posts A and C on the underside of the loader's base. The 364C on/off switch is connected between binding posts B and C to ensure the light burns continually and the motor is easily and reliably controlled. **CTT**



Keeping the 364 Conveyor Lumber Loader in tiptop condition demanded very little in terms of maintenance. The simplicity behind the accessory was reflected in the illustration and brief description of the accessory's operation in the *Lionel Service Manual*.



LIONEL SERVICE MANUAL:

You can order this abridged version of the manual at KalmbachHobbyStore.com

Unlike other operating accessories cataloged for only a few years, Lionel kept the 364 in its line for a decade. It continued to be prominently illustrated and described through 1957.

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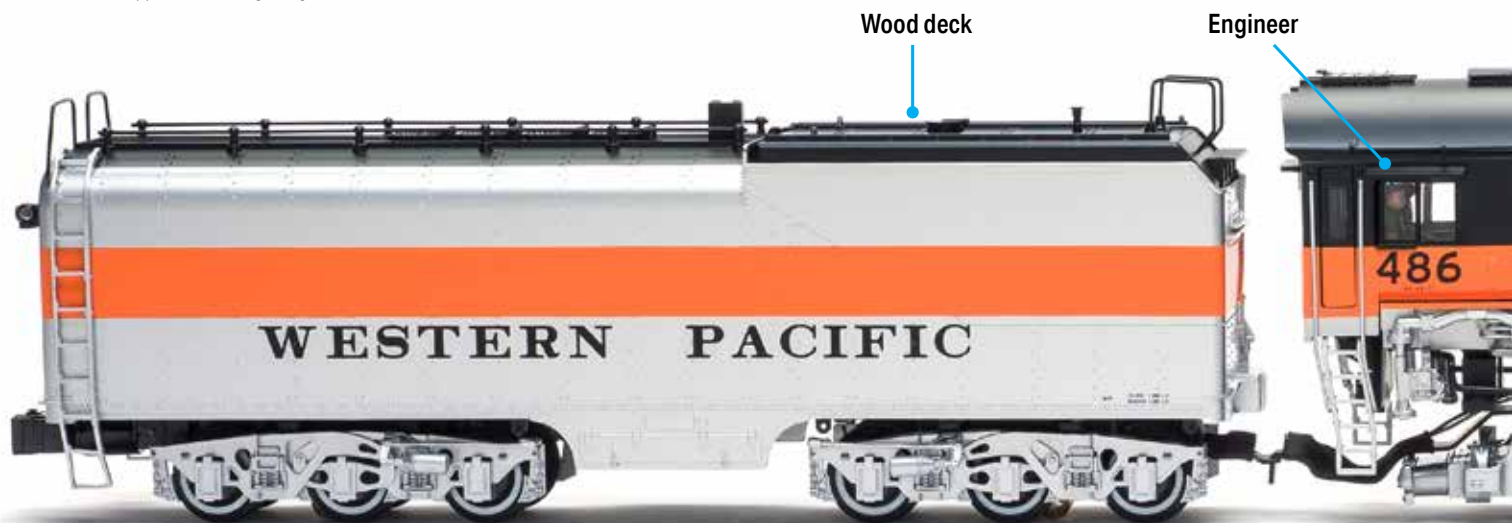
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WITH THE CTT STAFF



Wow!

Lionel's Vision Line GS is just spectacular

Lionel's 2020 Vol. 1 catalog celebrated the firm's 120th anniversary, and what a catalog it was. For me, the most distinctive offering wasn't a single locomotive, but a single style of locomotive: The Southern Pacific's venerable GS (General Service or Golden State) line of 4-8-4 Northern steam engines.

I don't believe any manufacturer (in any scale) has taken on such an audacious program in covering a single locomotive type. We're talking more than 20 road numbers! That's right – the catalog offered the model in more than 20 road numbers in GS-2, GS-3, GS-4, GS-4, GS-5, and GS-6 classes, plus six road names and assorted livery variations. Whew!

If you're an SP fan, then as my grandmother used to say, your ship has come in!

Production numbers of these O gauge beauties are limited, and they have all the latest technology Lionel offers. In addition, the starting price is, shall we say, robust. Nevertheless, the bold scope of this project may be a new standard for Lionel!

Background of the models

Our test subject was an SP design, but in Western Pacific livery. So how did the WP get these engines?

It's probable that without the onset of World War II, the WP would never have acquired this specific type of locomotive. Wartime production limitations narrowed

the choices railroads had in buying new motive power.

In 1943, the SP sought to build 14 streamlined 4-8-4s for *Daylight* passenger service. The War Production Board nixed the streamlining as superfluous to wartime transportation. SP reworked the design.

Enter the Western Pacific. It was a 1,500-mile carrier running from Salt Lake

City to Northern California and San Francisco. Passenger operations were fairly limited; the WP hosted the western leg of the Chicago-Oakland *California Zephyr* passenger train as well as tri-weekly service from Oakland to Salt Lake City.

The railroad was in a crunch for more power, steam or diesel. It was, after all, a main artery to the Pacific Coast for travelers and, more important, the armed forces fighting in the Pacific Theater.

The WPB agreed the line needed new power, so it reassigned six GS-6s from the SP's order to the Western Pacific. Dubbed GS-64-77s, they were broadly similar to their SP cousins and were used in freight and passenger service.

As postwar dieselization grew on the WP, three of the GS-64s were sold to the Southern Pacific as parts sources.

O gauge Vision Line Western Pacific GS-6 4-8-4 by Lionel

Price: \$1,999 (no. 2031630)

Features: O-54 operation, can-style motor, die-cast metal construction, remote coupler on tender, Legacy RailSounds system

Control modes: conventional, Lionel's TrainMaster Command Control, Legacy, LionChief Plus 2.0, and LionChief Bluetooth App Command, Voice control through the app; and sound system, smoke unit, remote coupler

Low speed (Cmd): 2.1 smph **Low speed: (Conv)** 6.1 smph, **High speed:** 71.9 smph

Drawbar pull: 3 pounds, 9 ounces

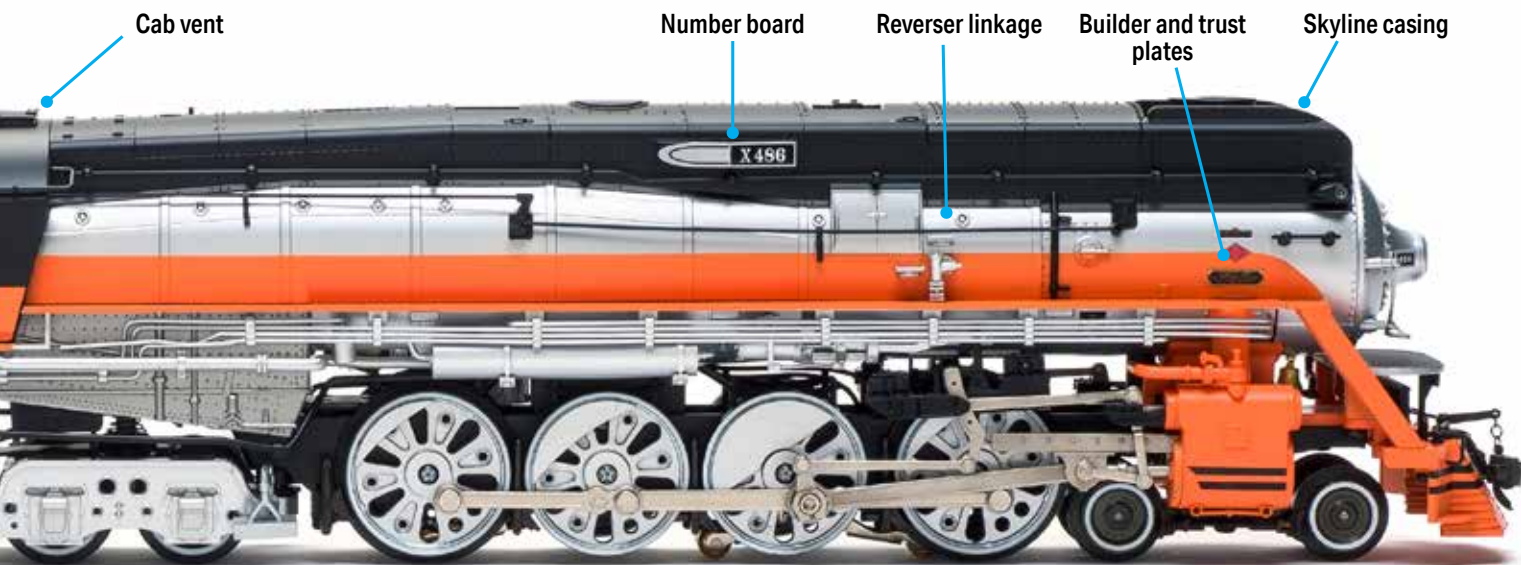
Current production road names: See sidebar

Opening the box

Let me remind everyone that this is a \$2,000 Vision Line product. It promises all the bells, whistles, and technology associated with that impressive series.

I had high expectations, and yet when the wrapping material was off I was still amazed. This may be the most beautifully crafted locomotive I've ever seen. After reviewing several hundred products over the past 25 years, that says something.

The uncoupler arm, air brake lines, and scale-sized coupler on point are very visi-



ble. Just above the pilot is a black-painted deck for maintainers to access the smokebox, headlight, and number boards.

Being unaware of the variety of SP locomotive classes on which this model is based, I expected the over-and-under headlights. Nope, there's a single headlight in the middle of the smokebox.

The front of the smokebox has superb deep-rivet detail. Just above and to the sides are the classification lights. Using a Legacy controller, you can select them to be off, white (an extra unscheduled train), or green (additional sections to follow).

On the upper fireman's side, just above the classification light, you may spot something curious. No, it isn't a blunderbuss or a bugle, but an air horn. Yes, these locomotives had air horns as well as a traditional steam whistle.

The top of the locomotive has the familiar streamlined "skyline" casing that minimizes resistance and facilitates air-flow over the top of the engine. The shroud incorporates the smokestack. The casing is fluted to drive the smoke upward – and it's needed, since this model has a tremendous smoke unit!

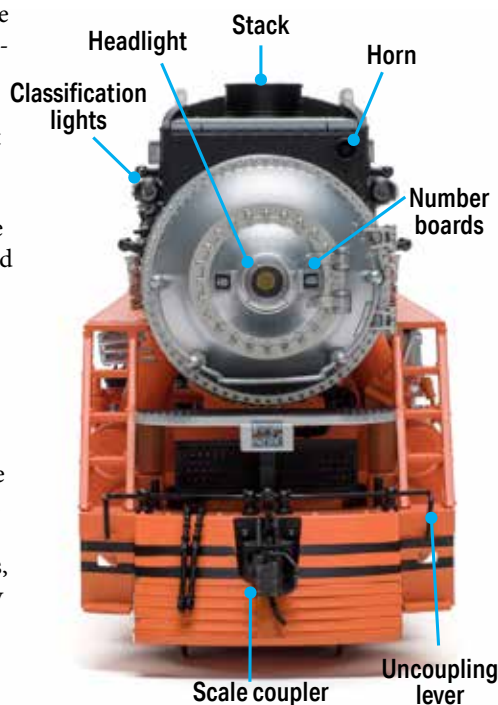
About halfway down the hood you'll spot number boards on the side angled outward. These are illuminated, showing X486 (Extra 486). Two pop-off valves, a turbogenerator, and the steam whistle are located up top. These are in recesses a bit closer to the cab.

The sides of the boiler have grab irons, piping, and a reverse lever. You'll also spy a diamond-shaped Lima builder's plate and a trust plate on the smokebox side.

Below the running board are piping and running gear, all done in a delightful silver tone – terrific for enhancing the details, in particular piping rivet detail on the smokebox.

The locomotive, being an oil burner, negates the need for the fireman to shovel coal from the tender. This, combined with some of the worst weather in all of mountain railroading, called for an enclosed all-weather cab.

There are steps leading up to the cast-in cab door, and add-on grab irons on both sides. The interior is green, and crew figures have been installed. The cab is illuminated, and up top is a ventilation hatch you can open to peek inside.



The tender is a metal monster! It boasts six axles and intricately shaped truck side-frames. Silver paint highlights detailing that would have been lost if done in black.

On the top of the cab end of the tender is a flat deck with safety tread. Handrails bracket it. The top of the oil bunker has cast-in rivet detail as well as a pipe for fuel oil. The water tank has cast-in rivet detailing as well, but there's a simulated wood deck with textured planks. The four water hatches can be opened with a fingernail.

Grab irons are on both sides of the water tank, and there are handrails on the rear. These are placed at ladders that curve up and over the round end of the tank.

The tender rear has two class lights, a backup light, and a remote coupler.

Painting was outstanding. As mentioned, the silver makes details really stand out. The orange striping is flawless and almost looks to be part of the casting rather than an added coloration.

On the test track

Just powering up the model is a show in itself. The sounds at startup are terrific, but the model doesn't need to move a wheel to provide a show.

The smoke unit is powerful. You can adjust the output, which is a handy feature, so it isn't a case of full power or off.

There are some fun "steam" features as well. Trigger the whistle, and you'll get a stream of smoke emanating from the whistle area. You can also see "steam" cycle out of the steam chests through the reciprocating cylinder feature. This is a lot cooler than I thought it would be! It looks



amazing when the 4-8-4 is running at slow speed. Who hasn't seen a movie where people trackside vanish in a cloud of steam as a big locomotive rolls by?

As with most contemporary models, you have crew talk, the dialog for which is railroad specific and chimes in throughout

a run. The "at rest" sounds are good, and once the locomotive gets moving, the DynaChuff makes itself known through several levels of effort.

The whistle has a quilling feature to enable you to perfect your own custom toot as you approach each grade crossing.

An interesting feature can be accessed if you're using the app: voice control.

I tried it out and got mixed results. There's a list of commands to start, stop, and activate certain functions like the whistle. It does work, but I had to repeat about half of the commands more than once. Several times I repeated the commands, but my phone replied, "Unable to identify command."

I thought that might have been the phone (Siri) replying, although it's turned off on my iPhone. I look forward for further development of this feature.

The model's performance was exemplary. I put a mishmash of O gauge passenger cars in tow, and all those hot vintage light bulbs didn't intimidate the locomotive at all. Neither did the freight consist I hooked up.

Drawbar pull was among the best I've seen at 3.9 pounds. The speed range was excellent as well. In command mode the high speed was 71.9 scale mph; the low

speed was 2.1 smph. The conventional low speed (using an MTH no. Z-4000 transformer) was 6.1 smph.

I was surprised that a locomotive of this size would run on curves as tight as O-54 – I'd have guessed O-72 at a minimum [It actually made it around the O-31 curves on our layout! I wouldn't recommend doing this, however; the tender trucks weren't happy with the tight curves. – Ed.].

One detail that may be easy to overlook is the Kinematic drawbar. This is a Lionel design that gives the coupler shaft a wider range of movement, permitting easier movement of a connected car through a tighter curve. This is pretty neat.

Some years back I wrote that Lionel's Union Pacific FEF 4-8-4 was the best locomotive the firm had ever built. This series of SP-inspired models certainly makes a strong case for that title, and one could be the centerpiece of your fleet.

I sure hope Lionel doesn't decide to give this same star treatment to, say, the various sub-classes of New York Central Mohawks. My bank account couldn't possibly afford it! – Bob Keller

More photos available at Trains.com/ctt. Thanks to Sommerfeld's Trains & Hobbies in Butler, Wis., for loaning us this model.

Reader Review

Lionel's new Bluetooth O-6-O steam locomotive is a winner!

The Lionel LionChief Plus 2.0 O-6-O-T steam locomotive is an attractive O gauge model with lots of nice features and a moderate price.

The engine was originally listed in the 2019 Vol. 2 catalog and again in the 2020 Big Book. Due to shipping delays, it's just becoming available.

It comes lettered for Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe; Bethlehem Steel; Brooklyn Eastern District Terminal; Denver & Rio Grande Western; and Pennsylvania RR. It will also serve as the motive power for several sets, including Christmas Candies, Easter Eggspress, Granite Run Quarry, and The Polar Express.

This steam engine operates with the LionChief Plus 2.0 system. Consequently, it can be used with any of the company's control systems: conventional transformer, TrainMaster Command Control, Legacy, LionChief universal remote controller, and the app for smartphones or tablets.

It doesn't come with a controller, so you'll need a universal Bluetooth remote or the LionChief app. It's available for free download for Android or Apple devices.

Pairing the locomotive with your Bluetooth controllers is easy and quick. The O-6-O-T is equipped with a wide range of features, including directional



lighting, a whistle, a bell, and other sounds. The volume can be adjusted from the controllers. Remote Electrocouplers are on the front and back.

Be aware that the remote couplers do not work with conventional transformer control or with a traditional remote-control track section.

The fan-driven smoke generator uses Lionel smoke fluid. It's controlled by an on/off



switch under the locomotive. Smoke output is not variable, but rather is synchronized to the wheel rotations.

There's also an announcement option with different

CATALOGED PAINT SCHEMES AND CAB NUMBERS

Southern Pacific

Daylight livery

GS-2 no. 4412

GS-3 no. 4423, LAUT Special no. 4423

GS-4 no. 4439, no. 4449

GS-5 no. 4459

Golden State livery

GS-3 no. 4428

Lark livery

GS-2 no. 4414

Daylight, Southern Pacific Lines on tender

GS-3 no. 4416

GS-4 no. 4449

GS-5 no. 4458

Black, Southern Pacific Lines on tender

GS-2 no. 4410

GS-6 no. 4460

GS-6 (round SP herald) no. 4467

Black, Southern Pacific

GS-2 no. 4411

GS-4 no. 4457 with Vision Stock Express
freight set

GS-6 no. 4462

Other road names

American Freedom Train GS-4 no. 4449

BNSF GS-4 no. 4449 (black)

Chessie Steam Special GS-4 no. 4449

Lionel Lines no. 120, GS-4 with separate
matching car set

Western Pacific GS-6 no. 486 (orange and
silver)

Western Pacific GS-6 no. 481 (black)

messages. In addition, there are two electrical pickups for good electrical connectivity. The engine's short wheelbase means it can operate on even the sharpest Lionel curves.

Using both the universal Bluetooth controller and the LionChief app, the locomotive operated flawlessly with all functions working as expected. Lionel equipped the 0-6-0T with a traction tire and left off Magne-Traction. Even so, it easily pulled a train of eight cars on a level route.

The catalog price is \$249.99, and a universal remote is an additional \$40 to \$50.

This little steam engine may not have all the features of a Legacy locomotive, but I found it has everything most operators will want and use, and it's a good runner. – *John Hudak*

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Events

FL, OCALA: Lions Tri-Annual Train Show. First Christian Church, 1908 E. Fort King St. Saturday, June 12, 2021, 9:00am-2:00pm. Adults \$5.00, children 12 and under free w/adult. Bring two canned goods and receive \$1.00 off admission. Information: Bob 352-694-6381 or cell 813-203-3216

FL, TALLAHASSEE: 30th Annual Tallahassee Model Railroad Show and Sale! 2-DAYS! Leon County Fair Grounds, 441 Paul Russell Rd., Bldg. 2 & 4. June 26-27, 2021. Saturday, 9:00am-5:00pm & Sunday, 10:00am-4:00pm. 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: 9th Annual Elkader Model Train Show-Swap Meet. Sunday, August 22, 2021, 10:00am-4:00pm. Johnson's Reception Hall, 910 High Street. Adults \$4, children 6-12 \$2, under 5 FREE. Free parking, lunch-stand and door prizes. Information: Larry Lerch 563-880-2066 or 563-245-3345

NE, SPRINGFIELD: NE-IA Railroaders Train and Toy Show. July 17-18, 2021. Saturday 9am-4pm, Sunday 9am-2pm. Meet. Sunday, August 22, 2021, 10:00am-4:00pm. Johnson's Reception Hall, 910 High Street. Adults \$4, children 6-12 \$2, under 5 FREE. Free parking, lunch-stand and door prizes. Information: Mark Nelson 402-731-1349; Bob Schaffer 402-990-0085; Jeff Carper 402-960-7824 www.NebraskaRailroaders.com

OK, EDMOND: Train Show – Steaming into Summer Fun. July 16-17, 2021. Friday, 5pm-8pm. Saturday, 9am-3pm. Admission: \$5.00. Edmond Community Center, 28 E. Main St., in the heart of downtown Edmond, OK 73034. Sponsored by the TTOS Sooner Division. For further information visit: www.ttos-soonerdiv.org

All listed events were confirmed as active at the time of press. Please contact event sponsor for updated status of the event.

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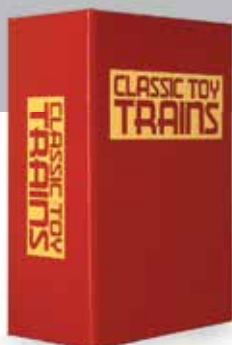
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Making a sawmill fit in

Simple changes help this Flyer accessory cut a better figure

■ **I READ YOUR EDITORIAL** in the March 2021 issue, “Keeping ‘S’ in classic.” Here are a couple of photos from my S gauge Lackawanna Valley layout.

I thought the modified American Flyer no. 23796 operating sawmill might interest some readers. I noticed from other S gauge layouts showcased in *Classic Toy*

Trains how other modelers had cleverly blended the sawmill into their layouts.

Out of the box, the sawmill has a toy-like appearance; however, certain features fit with a scale layout like mine.

Most American Flyer accessories were actually closer to O scale in size. The sawmill, however, was more diminutive and

truly proportioned for S scale.

The key was to tone down the colors and shrink it to the eye. Using readily available materials, including some from Micro-Mark (micromark.com), I made a few modifications.

I cut and glued down a wood-plank-ing deck. Then I put shingle material on the two roofs and fitted the base with simulated stone. I brushed glue onto the simulated plastic sawdust pile and sprinkled some readily available turf product on it and around the decking to simulate the real thing.

I added a small water tank, a red barrel, and an HO scale rail cart. The figures are 1:72 scale, so they shrink the overall size of the scene to the viewer.

I painted the surface under the log carriage a concrete color for more realism.

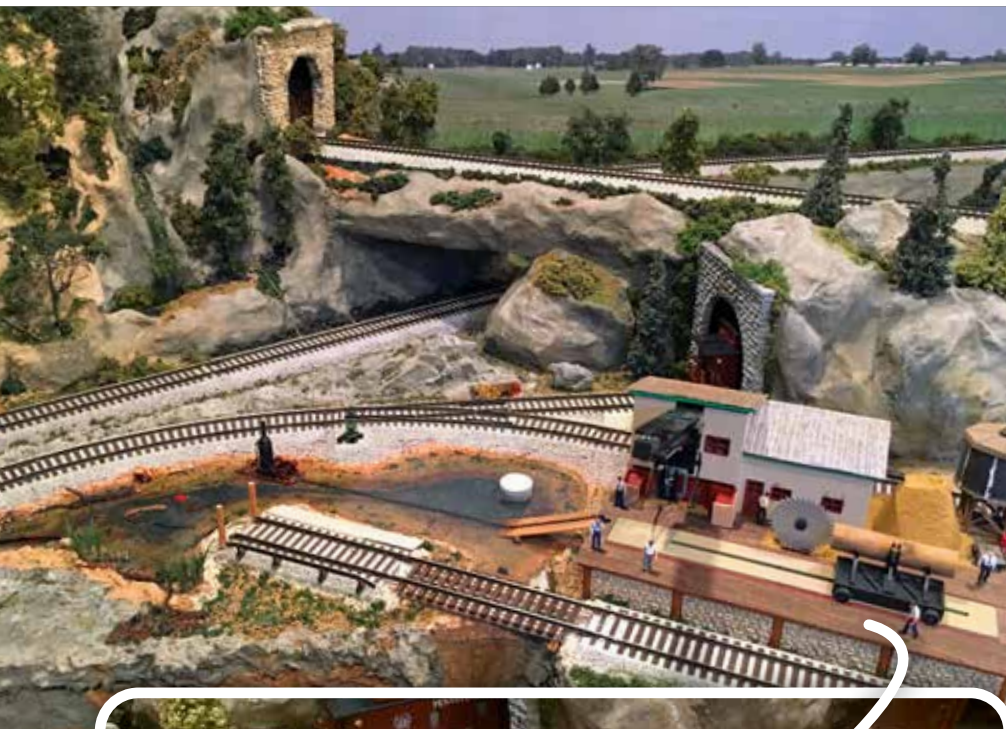
It's an easy one- or two-night project, depending on your patience to let glue and stain dry.

I prefer S scale, but still miss the operation of the traditional American Flyer accessories I enjoyed as a boy.

Now my grandchildren can enjoy them. They unload a side-dump car full of logs into the adjacent pond. Then they load the car with cut boards and deliver the cargo to a different part of the layout.

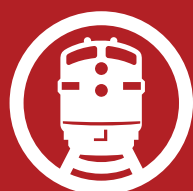
Three grandchildren operating one button each translates into lots of fun for them and me! **CTT**

THE KEY, I THOUGHT, WAS TO TONE DOWN THE BRIGHT COLORS AND SHRINK IT TO THE EYE.



John's American Flyer no. 23796 operating sawmill adds action to his S gauge layout. A few added details improve the postwar accessory's looks while helping it blend into the scene.

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



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