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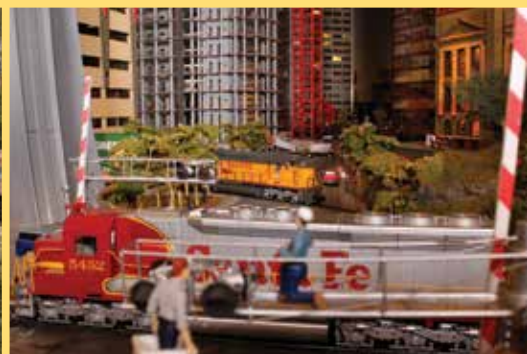


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A little bit of this and some of that

2022 was a busy year for CTT; '23 promises more fun

■ **WHILE THE COVER SAYS JANUARY**, there's a good chance you're seeing this issue around Christmas time. In which case, happy holidays to you!

As we close out 2022, it's time to reflect on how busy it's been.

Recently, I was part of a panel discussion on YouTube hosted by TrainWorld. Also on the panel was our sage "Views from the Underground" columnist Lou Palumbo.

One of the things we talked about was how there used to be a definitive "train season" starting in the fall, peaking during the holidays and winter, and closing when it got warm in the spring. But like so much else in the world, the pattern seems to be changing.

"Now, it's train season all-year round," Lou opined. It was hard to argue against his premise – which you should never do with Lou anyhow, because he's usually right. Just ask him. But we're seeing the same thing at *Classic Toy Trains*, and definitely on Trains.com.

There used to be a slow period in the spring and summer, and over the past few years, that's kind of vanished. Our theories as to why center on the fact that new trains are arriving all the time. Shows are happening all year. Maybe the decline of the pandemic has something to do with it, too.

Are you seeing it? Drop us a note and let us know.

Speaking of change

CTT Senior Editor Roger Carp attended the fall Eastern Division of the Trains Collectors Association show at York, Pa. He reported being at least steadily busy throughout the event. I imagine

people were eager to get their hands on our most recent special edition, *Lionel Trains of the 1940s*, which he was instrumental in creating. When people say, "He wrote the book on that," Roger frequently has.

Interesting to me was the take on the show from frequent Trains.com and CTT writer Chris Montagna: "York may not be what it was 20 years ago," he wrote. "However, the world isn't the same as it was two decades ago, either."

Chris continued, "I always look back at York weekends with positive thoughts and memories. I look forward to April and seeing more young hobbyists walk the aisles ... and add to their collections while taking the time to catch up with old and new friends once again."

Well said, Chris.



Recognizing another friend

As we roll along with our 35th anniversary celebration, I wanted to note the contributions to CTT of Peter H. Riddle. His article, "You DO have room for a layout," is on page 42, and is representative of the high-quality how-to content Peter has produced for much of the magazine's run.

His pieces are always well written, entertaining, copiously illustrated, and easy to follow. I imagine a lot of you have learned a thing or two from Peter. I know I have.

Looking to the new year

There are a lot of surprises (really good ones) in store for 2023. Some of them involve Trains.com/CTT and others are for the magazine. We're pretty sure you'll like them!

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CLASSIC TOY TRAINS

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Classic Toy Trains is the indispensable source for toy train hobbyists. Our mission is to enhance our readers' enjoyment of the toy train hobby by publishing useful information and engaging insights about layouts, how-to projects, and hobby news and heritage.

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Letters

FROM OUR READERS

Marx Santa Fe diesels modeled three types



The striking O gauge model of a Santa Fe diesel that Louis Marx & Co. created in 1950 for its *El Capitan* set had the traits of not one but three full-size diesels.

■ **ERIC BEHEIM'S ARTICLE ON THE MARX *EL CAPTAIN*** set in the May/June 2022 issue of *Classic Toy Trains* was quite interesting and confirmed that Louis Marx & Co. was indeed the master of high-quality toy lithography.

Yet as I looked at the photo of Marx No. 21, something seemed amiss. But what?

The Marx Santa Fe cab unit has the body and roof design of an Electro-Motive Division F3/F7, the locomotive number of a Santa Fe F3A, and the side panels of an FT (as Eric noted in his fine article). Moreover, its undersized truck frames clearly represent those equipped with three axles each!

So the 21 wasn't really an FT, as noted in the article. Instead, this great-looking model was an amalgam of the three Electro-Motive locomotive types that actually handled *El Capitan* from 1938 until the arrival of the FP45s in 1967.

Early E units led *El Capitan* from its introduction until around 1946, when the Santa Fe repainted and regearied 10 FT freight sets to speed conversion of its streamliners to diesel power. They handled *El Capitan* occasionally, if not regularly, over the next few years until around 1949. Then the railroad went to the F3/F7 fleet that led the streamlined train for the rest of independent operation.

It appears that Marx's lithographers used the most identifiable components of all three locomotive types that pulled *El Capitan* – and the *Super Chief*, for that matter – and blended them into one unique carbody. – *Carl Byron, Groton, Mass.*

More on Cannonball Express

I was asked by *Classic Toy Trains* reader Bob Galganski whether the three-rail track packed with the Lionel No. 1615 Cannonball Express set I wrote about in the May/June 2022 issue was modified to enable non-AC operation. After all, the locomotive was DC-powered.

The Cannonball Express and other

DC sets used the standard Lionel O-27 track that came with AC sets. The insulated middle rail worked as well with DC as it did AC. The only functional differences between DC and AC sets were the lack of a neutral position on the DC and the added complexity of getting certain accessories to work with DC. – *Michael Connor, Greensburg, Ind.*

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WITH LOU PALUMBO

Anatomy of a train show

Endless activity behind the scenes

■ **IN THE EARLY 1980S, I WAS GOING TO** many shows to sell off “extra trains” from my prewar and post-war collection I was building by advertising in the local newspapers. I didn’t have a retail store at that time, so shows were my main outlet to move the surplus of trains. One year, I sold at 26 train shows. You can do the math: that’s one every other week!

Actually, between September and February I had a train show every weekend. Mall shows started on Friday and ended on Sunday night, which led to some very long weekends.

When attending a train show, customers found rows of tables and booths loaded with various trains and accessories for sale.

Shows of that nature never happen overnight. Even if there are fewer train shows now, the amount of preparation required by a show has hardly changed. Just ask the dedicated folks who oversee the shows and all the dealers that show up.

The organizers of each show must stay within a budget that includes table fees for dealers and concession operators. They must rent the space where the show will take place and pay for all the advertising and security personnel, along with any other expenses related to the show’s operations.

The dealers and other folks selling trains at the show must prepare their items for sale. Go back to a column I wrote for the October 2010 issue of *Classic Toy Trains*.

In “Detail to Retail” I outlined the preparation needed for dealers hoping to get the most money. The ones doing the most preparation usually do well. By contrast, dealers who don’t service their trains in advance, preferring to sell everything “as is,” typically do poorly

and wonder why their trains fail to sell at show after show.

It’s simple: three-quarters of the people that attend a show are the same people that attended a previous show in the same area. Dealers who didn’t sell their products at the most recent show likely won’t sell them at this show unless they have reduced the price. Pretty basic knowledge, but some people never learn.

Shows are held everywhere. I’ve attended shows in gymnasiums, union halls, hotel ballrooms, fire halls, shopping malls, and outdoor parking lots. Can’t overlook the greatest of all shows, ones organized by members of the Eastern Division of the Train Collectors Association every April and October at the sprawling fairgrounds in York, Pa.

Weather can have a lot to do with the success of a train show. Rain and snow can dampen attendance, regardless of how much

work people have done beforehand.

Advertising is a key factor to get new blood and money into the train shows. I rate a show by the number of folks who come through the doors. Once the people have come into a show, it’s up to all the dealers there to make it worth everyone’s while. If the number of people attending the show is good, the chance of dealers selling their products should also be good.

To put it in the most straightforward way, train shows don’t just happen! There’s a lot of work and a lot of effort put in by everyone involved.

Go to a train show! Buy some trains and enjoy this wonderful hobby.

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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 Jan 7-8 Monroeville, PA - Convention Center
 Jan 7-8 Boise, ID - Expo Idaho
 Jan 8 Wheaton, IL - DuPage County Fair
 Jan 14-15 Oaks, PA - Greater Philadelphia Expo Ctr
 Jan 14-15 Columbus, OH - Ohio Expo Center
 Jan 14-15 Ridgefield, WA - Clark County Events Ctr
 Jan 21-22 Richmond, VA - Richmond Raceway
 Jan 21-22 Novi, MI-Suburban Collection Showplace
 Jan 21-22 World's Greatest Hobby & Great Train Combo Show Puyallup, WA-Washington State Fair
 Jan 28-29 St. Charles, MO - Convention Center
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↑ DAVID BROWN'S O GAUGE LAYOUT

The guys holed up in the shack by the main line on David Brown's O gauge layout caught a break today when the temperature climbed above the freezing mark. On a whim, they decided to set up their checkerboard outdoors for a few games before their fingers get numb or the noise of that passing freight train hurts their ears. The New Haven Also RS3 road switcher handling the short train is one of the hardest workers on David's roster in Phoenix, Ariz., where folks can probably play checkers outside all year.

WANT TO CONTRIBUTE?

Please send your best pictures to CTT Photo Album, 21027 Crossroads Circle, P.O. Box 1612, 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/



↑ ED BERRY'S O GAUGE LAYOUT

Ed Berry is just one of the many current layout builders who use a section or two of the O gauge layout they have recently finished as a way to display some of the die-cast metal vehicles they collect. On his three-rail display in Kinston, N.C., he specializes in miniature Corvettes, and so has arranged for a show of the sleek and sporty Chevs to be scheduled near the line where a Southern Ry. Alco RS3 from Atlas O has been assigned to a daily freight train. The structures nearby belong to the lines marketed by Bar Mills, Lionel, and Menards. As for the eye-catching automobiles, Ed reports they are sold by Ertl, Franklin Mint, and Yat Ming.



↑ GARY KING'S S GAUGE LAYOUT

The American Flyer Gulf single-dome and triple-dome tank cars highlighted in this issue of *Classic Toy Trains* have a wonderful opportunity to strut their stuff in the picture Gary King snapped on his S gauge layout. Visitors to the King residence in Albany, N.Y., get a kick out of watching the postwar No. 343 Nickel Plate Road 0-8-0 switcher drop off tankers at refinery Gary designed for his 10 x 24-foot railroad. CTT readers will soon be able to see what the excitement is all about when an exclusive article about the layout is published in our magazine.

PHOTO ALBUM

YOUR PICTURES



← MARK AND SHIRLEY CHILDRESS' O GAUGE LAYOUT

It's a snowy December 24th in Swansea, Ill., under the beautifully decorated tree at the home of Mark and Shirley Childress. Officials at the Southern Ry. decided to shift the 4-6-4 Hudson steam engine and tender usually assigned to passenger service over to freight duty. With residents of the tiny village Shirley set up with Department 56 Snow Village structures getting ready to celebrate after removing some of the snow that covered local streets, the crew of the Lionel No. 8702 steamer couldn't complain too much about not being able to head up the crack *Crescent Limited* train. Sometimes, they understand, you do whatever is necessary to help get the job done in time for Christmas.

↓ MICHAEL NOWICKI'S O GAUGE LAYOUT

The bustling scene on Michael Nowicki's model railroad resembles any number of O gauge layouts from the 1950s, when families had a ball gathering their trains and operating cars to display around their Christmas tree. Lionel stalwarts, including the No. 671 Turbine engine and whistle tender leading the way on Mike's layout in Newark, N.J., ran for endless hours in Decembers of long ago. Kids loved moving cows on the No. 3656 operating cattle car and corral that remains a hit with members of the Nowicki clan more than 70 years after making its debut in 1949.





↑ **ROBERT BUENZLY'S O GAUGE LAYOUT**

Between the frigid weather and the recent pandemic, Robert Buenzly had good reason to stay huddled inside his home in Allentown, Pa. Like other resourceful toy train enthusiasts, he decided the perfect answer to his boredom and blues was to construct a new layout. This scene on Bob's 4½ x 12-foot O gauge display reflects his creativity and motivation. He arranged some of the porcelain structures he had purchased around two loops of Lionel FasTrack and then fired up this MTH New York Central 4-6-4 Hudson and Lionel 0-8-0 switcher for his pleasure. Thanks to owning a stable of three-rail trains and nostalgic buildings, Bob discovered it was a whole lot easier to survive harsh winters!

→ **MARK SAVAGE'S O GAUGE LAYOUT**

"Christmas is always a magical time for toy trains," O gauge modeler Mark Savage observed in a note that he sent to our editorial staff. Then we discovered how the holiday season inspires terrific modeling from this dedicated hobbyist, because he wanted us to see this scene on his home layout. For the annual display Mark recently created at home in Reno, Nev., he posed the MTH Electric Trains model of a Virginia & Truckee steam engine and tender as the combination drove in circles around the ornate tree. Mark took this wonderful shot of the 19th-century locomotive reflected on a background of pure fantasy filled with comets and stars, plus plenty of Christmas whimsy.

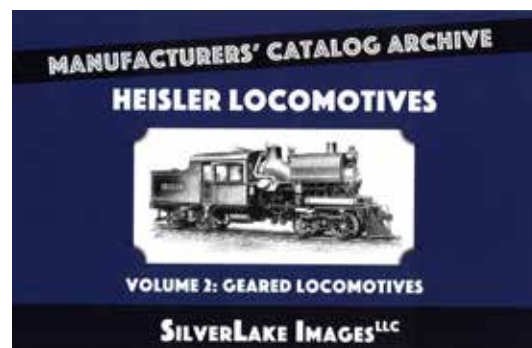


WITH THE CTT STAFF



BLUE COAL BOXCARS. The Metropolitan Division of the Train Collectors Association has released these custom-decorated Lionel models lettered for the Delaware & Hudson and the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western. The O gauge cars, part of Lionel's Made in the U.S.A. line, are traditional No. 6464-sized boxcars and feature a plastic body with Blue Coal graphics; a metal frame; and sprung, die-cast metal trucks. The boxcars are priced at **\$89.99 each** or **\$169.99 for the pair**. To order, send a check payable to METCA to Stuart Rankin, 6 Packard Dr., Middletown, NJ 07748. Online ordering is available at metca.org/store.html

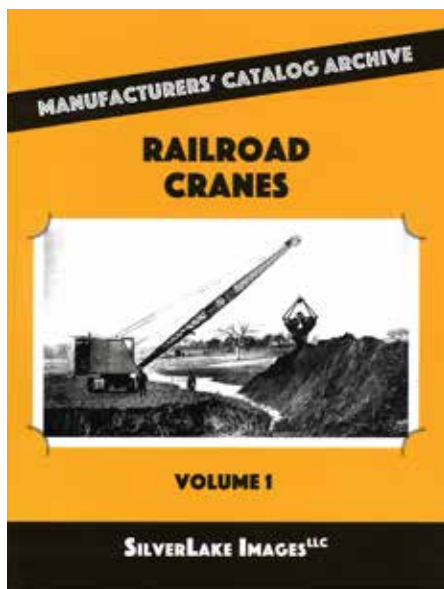
ARTICULATED AUTO HAULER. New paint schemes on this Atlas O Master Line car (**\$154.95**) include TTX (BTTX and TOAX reporting marks, both painted faded yellow); Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe (fictional blue-and-white scheme); and Norfolk Southern (Thoroughbred herald). New road numbers are offered on NS cars in the as-delivered scheme. The O gauge articulated auto carrier (scale model shown) features 1/8 scale details and dimensions; a die-cast metal chassis; positionable end doors; an interior deck; an articulated diaphragm with three curvature settings (0-42, 0-54, and 0-63+); separate, factory-applied grab irons; and 70-ton roller-bearing trucks. The minimum diameter curve for the model is 0-42. The car is sold out at the manufacturer, but it is still available at brick-and-mortar and online Atlas O dealers.



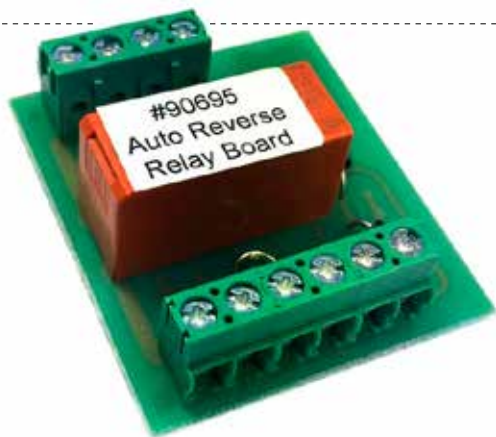
THE NEXT CHAPTER. SilverLake Images LLC recently added *Heisler Locomotives, Vol. 2: Geared Locomotives* to its Manufacturers' Catalog Archive series of books. The 118-page softcover book (**\$35**) includes reproduction of three Heisler publications: Catalog 108 from 1908 (well-illustrated with a look at general arrangement and gearing design, main frame, braking system, boiler, cab, and specifications), Catalog 115 (trucks and gearing, main frame, brake system, boilers, and more), and 1908 repair list (labeled drawings of the locomotives and components). To order, contact Ron's books by calling **914-967-7541** or visiting ronsbooks.com

A MODERN TWIST. These full-color UV-curved resin figures and statue are just some of the O scale (1:43.5 and 1:48) offerings from West Edge 3D. The company offers figure four-packs for **\$47.95 each**, cemetery memorial and statue sets for **\$68.95 each**, and headstone sets for **\$52.95 each**. To see the full product line, and to order, visit westedge3d.com.au/





THE BIG HOOK BOOK. Learn more about cranes manufactured by Burro, Byers, Lambert National, and P&H in this publication from SilverLake Images LLC. *Railroad Cranes, Vol. 1* is 150-page softcover book (\$35) featuring reproductions of *Burro Cranes Model 15*, *Byers Shovels and Cranes*, *Lambert National Steam Hoists*, and *Story of the P&H Crane Construction*. To order a copy, contact Ron's books at 914-967-7541 or visit the store's website at ronsbooks.com



EASY-TO-INSTALL RELAY. The reverse loop relay board from Dalle Electronics is designed for automating reverse loops with AC or Digital Command Control track power. The relay, priced at \$34.95, is designed for twin-coil switch systems and is a replacement for American Flyer No. 695. The board features two barrier strips to wire the unit with; the relay contacts are rated at 8 amperes. The device can be installed with two No. 4 or No. 6 flathead wood screws. To order, visit dalle.com or call 717-661-7041.



THE BULKHEADS ARE BACK. This Atlas O Trainman series 68-foot bulkhead flatcar is offered in new road numbers on models that come decorated for TTX (speed logo) and BNSF Ry. (Mineral Red). New road numbers are available on models that are lettered for General American Marks Co. (blue) and TTX (Forward Thinking logo). The O gauge bulkhead flatcar (scale model shown) is priced at \$59.95 and features side stake pockets, simulated tie loops, a fish-belly center sill, pull plates, and lift rings. Minimum diameter curve is O-54. Look for the bulkhead flatcars at your favorite Atlas O dealer.



READY TO DELIVER. This 52'-6" flatcar with pipe load is part of the Trainman series from Atlas O. New road numbers are offered on models decorated for CP Rail, Burlington Northern, Conrail, and Union Pacific. New paint schemes include British Columbia, Grand Trunk Western, and Western Maryland. The O gauge flatcar (scale model shown) has roller-bearing trucks with rotating bearing caps; a separate, factory-applied brake wheel; a pipe load with modeler-installed load tie-downs; and die-cast metal couplers. The minimum-diameter curve the model will operate on is O-31. The flatcar (\$64.95) is in stock now at your favorite Atlas O retailer.



MICHIGAN MEMORIES. The Northern Michigan Railroad Club offers this custom-decorated MTH Pere Marquette flatcar with a pair of Sebewaing Brewery trailers in two road numbers. The O gauge models, scheduled for release in winter/spring 2023, are priced at \$90 each (price includes Michigan sales tax). Shipping is \$15 for one car and \$20 for two cars. The limited-run cars (40 of each road number will be produced) will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Send payments to NMRRC Car Agent Paul DeLange, 7333 Cottage Dr., Bellaire, MI 49615. Email questions to nmrrc.car@gmail.com. For additional information, please visit the club's website at nmrrc.org

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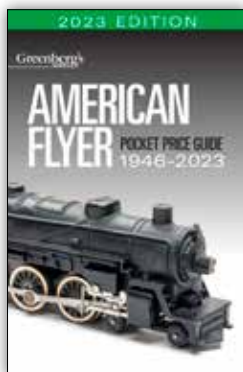
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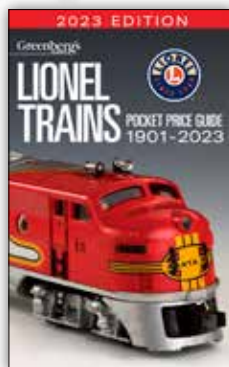
Greenberg's American Flyer Pocket Price Guide: 1946-2023 provides current market prices for American Flyer S gauge trains and accessories manufactured by A.C. Gilbert and Lionel, as well as trains from contemporary manufacturers, such as American Models and MTH. The top-selling reference guide, item No. 10-8623, has 160 pages and is priced at **\$15.99**.



WHAT'S IT WORTH?

With show season in full swing, you'll want to order a copy of Greenberg's Lionel Trains Pocket Price Guide, 1901-2023. The

456-page book (item No. 10-8723) features current pricing with input from experts in the field; identification and evaluation tips; and listings for Lionel Corp. Tinplate, club cars and special-production items, boxes, and sets. The book (**\$22.99**) measures 5½" x 8¼" and includes space for notes.



WELL STOCKED SHELVES. Featuring the classic artwork "Well Stocked Shelves," by well-known artist Angela Trotta Thomas, this 1,000-piece puzzle (No. 69743; **\$19.99**) features Lionel's greatest hits! Puzzle measures 19.25" x 26.75". It's made of thick recycled puzzle board; random-cut pieces ensure a tight interlocking fit. Produced by MasterPieces and licensed by Lionel.



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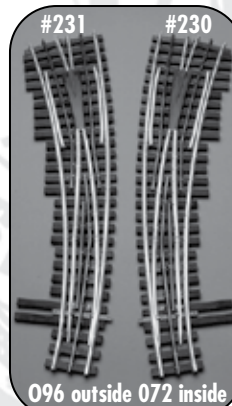
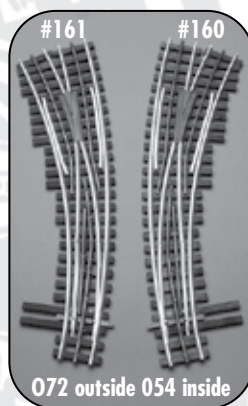
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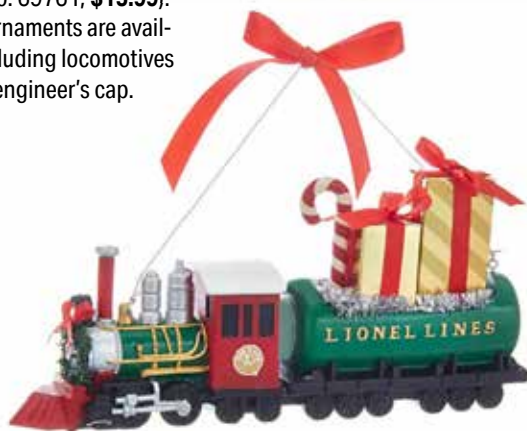
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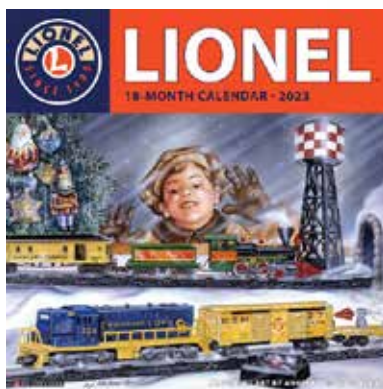


TRIMMING THE TREE.

Officially licensed Lionel toy train ornaments made by Kurt Adler for your Christmas tree. Shown here are a Lionel Glass Conductor Hat (item No. 69759; **\$12.99**) and a Blow Mold Train (No. 69761; **\$15.99**). Other ornaments are available including locomotives and an engineer's cap.



TOY TRAINS ALL YEAR. The full-color Lionel 2023 Wall Calendar (No. 69763; **\$15.99**) shows steam, diesel, rolling stock, and accessories from the world's favorite toy-train maker. Featuring artwork by Angela Trotta Thomas, this calendar by Willow Creek Press measures 12" x 12" and has large grids for notes. It also includes moon phases, and standard U.S. and international holidays.



PIECES OF THE HOBBY.

Exclusively from *Classic Toy Trains*, this 500-piece Lionel Trains of the 1940s puzzle (No. 69754; **\$14.99**) features some of the train maker's most iconic products. The high-resolution image based on artwork from CTT's latest special issue measures 15" x 21". Also included is a poster that can be used as a handy reference during assembly. Produced by MasterPieces.

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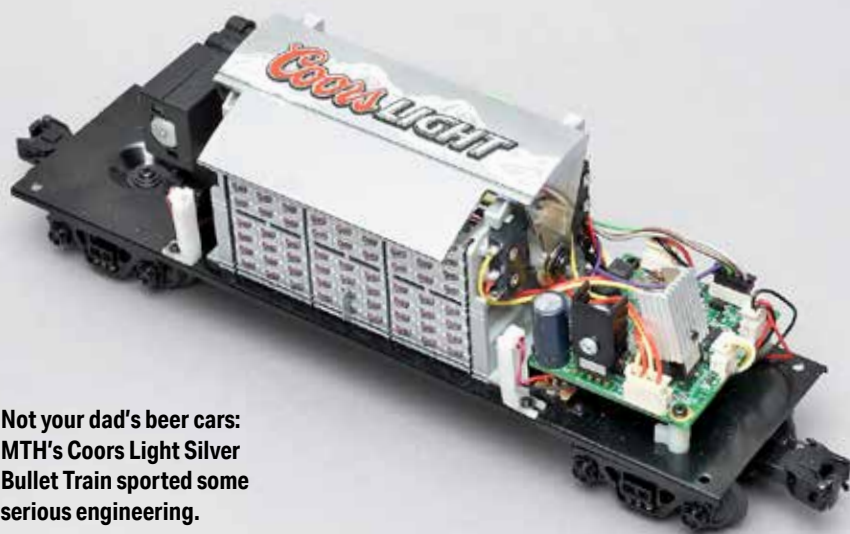
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Modern era notes

WITH BOB KELLER

Creativity in the key of 'O'

These products were standouts in a time
of copious production



Not your dad's beer cars:
MTH's Coors Light Silver
Bullet Train sported some
serious engineering.

■ **OFTEN WHEN WE'RE TALKING ABOUT** creativity in modern toy trains, we tend to focus on things like how many LEDs the latest diesel model has, the features of the latest sound or command-control system upgrades, or innovative details like smoking whistles.

While browsing through a stack of old *Classic Toy Trains*, I was thinking about how the sheer volume of production from Lionel, MTH, and K-Line obscured a lot of great products. There was so much coming out that everyone (myself included) was dazzled by the latest jumbo steamer, hotshot diesel, or freight car you were certain would never be made in O or S gauge.

Here are a few models that I think deserved more attention and which are underappreciated today. If you want to go back for a look, I've also listed the issue their review appeared in.

Marx elevated train set with track elevators (March 1998)

Jim and Debbie Flynn's iteration of Marx

was a jewel of a company, trying to keep the heritage of tin litho trains alive and expand upon them. The Marx O gauge elevated train itself was interesting in that it was decorated in an attractive Chicago Transit Authority livery.

But the power car was just a motorized passenger car. Users were advised not to expand the train length because of the lack of pulling power. It also had a

sound car that triggered station announcements in sequence.

But what I thought was the best element of the set was the inclusion of stamped-metal stationchairs to elevate O-27

track! The metal had an authentic aura from countless movies where trains rumbled overhead, but all you could see were steel supports reaching skyward.

The outfit came with parts to assemble a dozen of them, and additional 12-piece sets were available separately.

This was a neat innovation from a small company trying to expand its footprint. It was also one more option for building an urban railroading scene.

**BEER CANS ARE
ONE THING, BUT A
BEER TRAIN IS
SOMETHING ELSE!**

Lionel atomic reactor (May 2001)

One thing you can say about the *Classic Toy Trains* workshop is that when the lights are on and sounds can be heard, people from different departments almost always stick their heads in to see what's going on.

The Lionel No. 463 nuclear reactor was a product that definitely drew a crowd. Its centerpiece is a glowing disco ball "reactor." Flashing lights in assorted colors suggest big stuff is happening inside the plant!

To power this nuclear fury you need raw materials. A moving magnetic arm reaches down into a nearby gondola and picks up "fresh" nuclear fuel (ball bearings), dumping it in a bin for use.

Now, since you've secretly loaded glow-in-the-dark fuel pellets in another compartment, you can get on to part two: taking out the nuclear trash! Trigger the control and a hatch lowers, allowing the "spent" nuclear fuel to be loaded into the same gondola!

Totally unrealistic (unless maybe, you're an ex-Soviet nuclear engineer), but really cool. Pure fantasy and all fun!

MTH Coors Light Silver Bullet Train (November 2007)

Beer cars are one thing, but a beer train is something else!

The design is the Coors Silver Bullet train from commercials and print ads – rendered in O gauge. The outfit is futuristic, and I hoped it would be the start of a sort of science fiction railway line, but that was not to be.

Packing a rock 'n' roll playing sound system, opening cargo doors, and an icy blast of smoke-fluid "frost" when the boxcar hatches lifted, this MTH train was like nothing anybody had ever seen. It was bold and daring, but I suppose it had too many marks against it.

Although brewery rolling stock is pretty popular, if you like Grain Belt or Yuengling, are you going to run it that often? Second, while it looks like a Buck Rogers train, it doesn't fit in the typical O gauge line, and would probably end up on a shelf; \$500 was a lot to pay for a novelty. Third, and I heard this often,

"Why should I pay to advertise their product?"

So creativity comes in all sizes in O gauge, but it doesn't necessarily mean success. **CTT**



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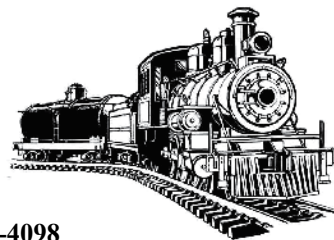
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Adding a motor to a Lionel F3

How to double the power in a Santa Fe diesel



During the years Lionel cataloged the No. 2243 Santa Fe F3 (1955-57), the O-27 diesel had a single motor. One reader wants to know if he can add a second one.

Q I want to add another motor and drive wheels to my Lionel No. 2243 Santa Fe F3 diesel A unit so it's like my No. 2343 F3 that came equipped with two motors. The frames and shells of these two postwar locomotives seem similar or even identical, so I should be able to make the change. Otherwise, how can I run my two 2243 units together and keep them at the same speed? – Robert Czarnowski, Oxford, Mich.

A The frames are essentially the same, with both locomotives equipped with horizontal motors. You'll have to obtain a new horn and mount it the way the horn is installed in your 2343. Of course, you will also need the motor assembly and power truck to replace the unpowered truck you now have.

Therefore, you should be aware that the cost of the parts may come close to the cost of a complete running frame with two motors. Even one with no cab or a damaged cab would be an option; just mount your cab on the new frame.

Lockouts on prewar engines



The No. 1681/1681E engine and tender pair reigned over the Lionel Jr. line of low-end sets in 1934 and '35. Artwork in the catalog for 1935 showed the lockout lever on the top of the body.

Q I have a couple of Lionel No. 1681 steam locomotives from the pre-World War II era and don't see a lockout lever on them. Was one originally installed? Also, did American Flyer O gauge engines from the same period (middle 1930s) lack that basic feature? Thanks for your help. – Leon Gennett, Monroe Township, N.J.

A Lionel locomotives that were originally equipped with remote-control reverse units (known as E-units) lock out in some manner. Prewar American Flyer locomotives also came with lockout levers, regardless of which reversing mechanism had been installed.

Z-Stuff crossing gate problems

Q I have a new set of Z-Stuff for Trains No. DZ-1010 crossing gates. When I test them the bell rings and the lights flash continually, but the arms don't lower and the red LED indicator lights won't go off no matter how I place the two signal units. I've tried them with and without a pair of dwarf signals and end up with the same results. How do I fix this problem?

– Mike Blakesley, Forsyth, Mont.

A If the crossing gates are brand new and have the issues you mentioned, you should contact the manufacturer and request replacements. Trying to fix them may only compound the problem, which in turn may make it impossible for you to obtain new crossing gates or get a refund.

Substituting postwar tender shell

Q I recently purchased a Lionel No. 8006 Atlantic Coast Line 4-6-4 Silver Shadow locomotive and tender (introduced in 1980). Unfortunately, the sound system in the tender no longer works. I noticed that this is considered a "2046 streamlined tender." Does that mean I can put the shell over a postwar 2046W tender to get a tender with a whistle? – Ron Kozora, San Francisco, Calif.

A You're right about how the shell for the 8006 tender was made using the same mold as the 2046. It should fit the frame perfectly. But there is one problem. In the early 1970s, Lionel altered the interior to accommodate the components for the Mighty Sound of Steam. There were added walls and posts to hold the speaker and create a baffle to deflect or regulate the passage of the sound.

These changes will prevent you from dropping the tender shell over the postwar whistle assembly. If you cut them out of the way to make it fit, just don't crack the shell while removing the inner wall. **CTT**

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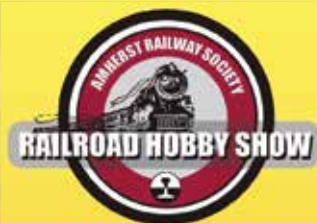
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Flyer's 5300T Miners Work Train

Breaking into a new niche in 1953



■ THE A.C. GILBERT CO.

typically fought hard for second place in the postwar toy train niche. The superb locomotives and ingenious accessories developed for its S gauge American Flyer brand helped the firm in New Haven, Conn., stay in the race.

People at the Gilbert Co. adopted another effective, if overlooked, tactic. Sales executives and design engineers searched for niches missed by Lionel. They looked for types of rolling stock and animation they could pioneer and then dare Lionel to catch up.

The No. 5300T Miners Work Train set, a part of the

appearing to drive the car's motion by pumping the center bar up and down.

For 1953, executives decided to see what further use they could make of the new handcar. One way was to package it with a sheet-metal structure that served as a home for the 740. And so was born the No. 741 handcar and shed.

Another way was to create small, lightweight freight cars the handcar could pull. Gilbert could use them together as an inexpensive set. Designers built a prototype for a four-wheel tippie car – the kind used to move ore out of mines and quarries transport it to

The A.C. Gilbert Co. found a novel way to challenge Lionel for a larger slice of the toy train pie when it created the No. 5300T.

For the 5300T, a handcar came with 3 tippie cars, 12 curves and a No. 1½ transformer.

Each of the tippie cars had a short pin on one end and a hole at the other.

Coupling them involved inserting the pin of one car through the hole of another or the one drilled into the bar on the 740A handcar. Engineers improved the rolling stock by making it possible to dump the loads of ore at the touch of a finger. Now a young railroader or miner could simulate all the action associated with an Old West gold mine.

Gilbert looked for types of rolling stock and animation they could pioneer and then dare Lionel to catch up.

Engineers never made resolving the problems of the mining set a priority. Perhaps they, like sales executives at the company, failed to get a clear idea of what purpose this unique train should serve. Rather than promote the 5300T as a true set, Gilbert buried the 16½"-long train among the accessories in the back of its consumer catalog.

They categorized it as "an ideal 'starter' set for junior railroaders" – thereby damning it with faint praise!

Sales of the Miners Work Train hardly overwhelmed the powers-that-be in New Haven. Maybe only leftover inventory was being peddled in 1954 before the set was dropped from the American Flyer lineup after that year.

Even if the 5300T limped in financially, it demonstrates the willingness of the Gilbert Co. to take some drastic steps to outpace Lionel. Think of this unheralded yet clever little train on a par with the Lady Lionel – a testament to powerful imagination and wishful thinking. – Roger Carp

The A.C. Gilbert Co. cataloged the No. 5300T Miners Work Train in 1953 and '54. The third volume of *Greenberg's Guide to American Flyer S Gauge* (1992) values the set at \$200 in very good condition and \$375 in excellent.

cataloged Flyer line in 1953 and '54, exemplifies the spirit that drove Gilbert.

Handcar and set

The search for unexplored niches led the engineering crew to develop for 1952 a motorized unit, the No. 740 American Flyer Lines handcar. It sped around a layout on its own, with its two figures

foundries and other sites. They had it mass-produced and painted in three different colors: blue, green, and red.

Meanwhile, the 740 was modified to accommodate the drawbar necessary for it to be connected to an ore car. By cutting a notch out of the frame on the handcar (renumbered 740A), the bar could be mounted at a different height.

Frustrating users

The plan behind the 5300T was ingenious and enjoyable. Unfortunately for owners, the featherweight ore cars came uncoupled easily. The mining train had merely to hit a bump or ride over sections of track or a switch that had not been connected perfectly and it would come apart. Frustrated kids then had to shut down the layout and reattach the tippie cars to the handcar.

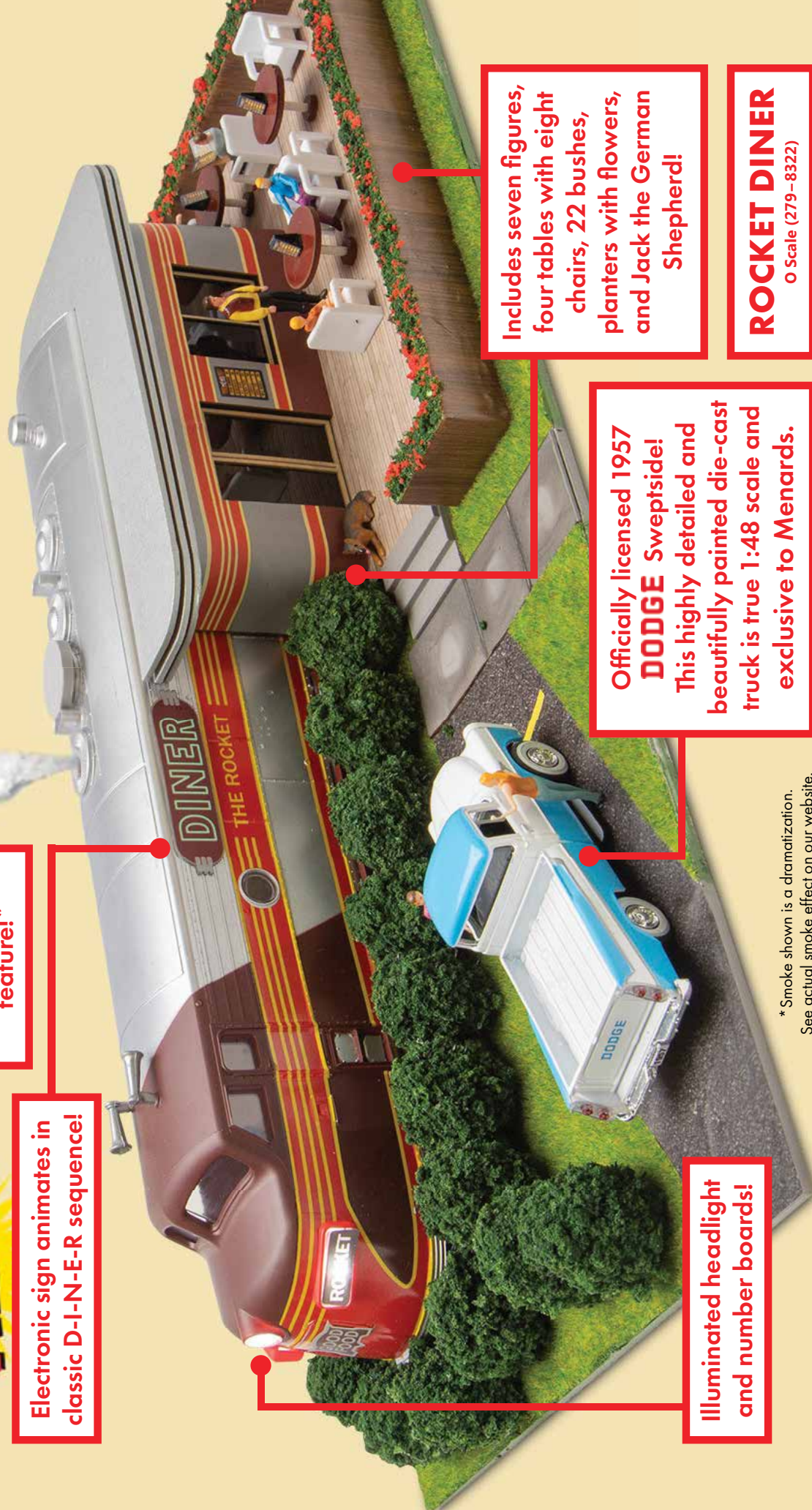
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U.S. Car No. 1

The presidential car *Ferdinand Magellan*

■ **THE 2020 AMERICAN FLYER CATALOG FROM LIONEL** introduced the No. 2019400 *Ferdinand Magellan* presidential railcar with a group of Pullman heavyweight passenger cars. I jumped at the chance to order one.

The car was the Air Force 1 of its time. It was, in fact, named U.S. Car No. 1.

The Secret Service in 1942 wanted President Franklin D. Roosevelt to have a protective railcar during World War II.

Originally a private VIP Pullman car built in 1928, it was armored outside and reconfigured within. It went from six bedrooms to four with a big one for the President and a smaller area for the First Lady. One end of the car had the stewards' quarters, a pantry, mechanical

equipment, a galley, and ice bunkers for cooling. A large lounge opened up to the observation deck, and a dining/conference room featured a table for eight.

Roosevelt went 50,000 miles in the car. Harry Truman was its top user, clocking 28,000 miles on his whistle-stop campaign alone. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the first to fly in an aircraft with the call

Lionel's American Flyer release of the *Ferdinand Magellan* presidential car.

sign "Air Force 1," used it some, too.

The *Ferdinand Magellan* was retired in 1959 to Miami's Gold Coast Railroad Museum. It came out in 1984 for a short trip by President Ronald Reagan.

I'd been interested in the *Ferdinand Magellan* for several years before Lionel



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produced the car. Several years earlier I had decided to kitbash an S gauge model of it using a Gilbert observation car.

To do so I copied the paint color as best I could to match the actual car, including a gray roof. I found decals I could apply by the letter. I was also able to find the presidential seal and scale it down to put on the railing at the rear of the car. I did my best to make speakers for presidential speeches.

Making some modifications

When my new *Ferdinand Magellan* arrived, I was a little disappointed to find it was just the standard American Flyer Pullman observation Lionel had been producing for years. I hoped it would be more like the actual car.


I made some changes to mine to make it closer to the prototype. I took it apart and removed more than half of the people in the windows. There would have been very few passengers in the presidential car, so windows crowded with riders wouldn't happen.

Next, on the roof of the observation end of the prototype, there was a blue awning, so I painted mine to match.

Then I looked up what other cars would have been in the Presidential train. Normally, there were a Pullman sleeping car for staff, a combination car with communications gear, and two baggage cars. Locomotives were supplied by the railroad the train was traveling on.

With this information I could have my *Magellan* travel on my layout. I ordered a Pullman sleeper from the same catalog and added American Models cars I already had. I like to use a Lionel TMCC Pacific or Mikado from about 10 years ago to pull the train.

When you put together cars from different manufacturers, paint colors – in this case, Pullman Green – seldom match. This actually makes my S scale train look more prototypical, according to footage I've seen.

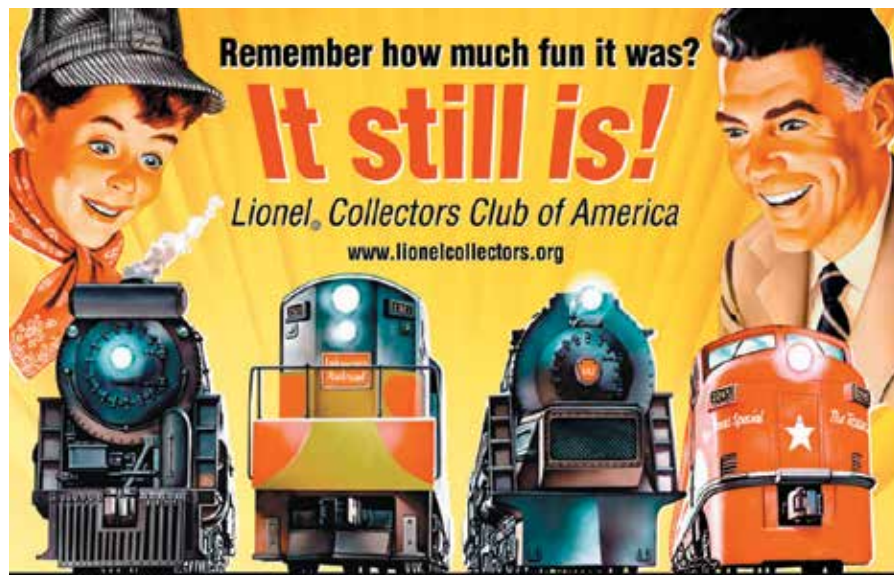
Wouldn't it be great if at some point it was decided that the president should again ride by train and put the *Ferdinand Magellan* back into service? 



Bill Clark is a life-long S gauge operator and collector. In addition to his work for CTT, he has written reviews for S Gauging magazine.



The newer Flyer release, left, with a few modifications, alongside my earlier effort using an older car to which I added details, including loudspeakers.



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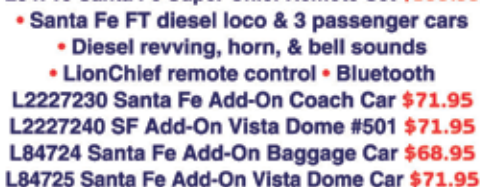
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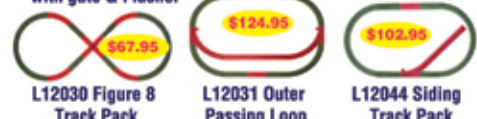
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LIONEL SETS FOR 1973

'New'
was the
key
word

STORY BY MARK SUEK

Lionel really hit full stride in its fourth year as part of Model Products/Fundimensions of The Fun Group at General Mills, and the company enjoyed a noticeable uptick in sales. What's more, operators and collectors were treated to an exciting array of O gauge trains.

The best word to describe what was happening in 1973 was "new." Over a few months, Lionel issued its first F3 diesel locomotive of what's known as the "modern era," manufactured a new size of in-demand heavyweight passenger car plus a new diesel, and heralded the Standard O series of rolling stock and an intriguing, if ill-fated, track system.

Let's start our overview of what was going on half a century ago by focusing on the range of sets presented in the 16-page full-color catalog. We can look as well as the assortment of excellent steam and diesel locomotives and the TruTrack System. Later in this year we can shift attention to the rolling stock, appreciating the different types offered.

Four basic sets

The consumer catalog released for 1973 expressed excitement about what was new in the Lionel line as well as a sense of nostalgia for the long heritage of those trains. The photo used for the cover image showed a young boy entranced by his brand-new set while his baby boomer dad and his grandfather born during the prewar period looked on.

The happy child had received one of the better O gauge outfits introduced that year. Other youngsters might be playing with one of the four basic sets being cataloged. All four were new for 1973 – their product numbers proved so. However, their names and motive power linked them to what General Mills had offered the previous year or two.

The No. 1380 U.S. Steel Industrial Switcher included a No.

At the top of the list of O gauge outfits released by General Mills in the Lionel cataloged line for 1973 was the Golden State Arrow. Set No. 1388 featured a brand-new Santa Fe GP20 road diesel on the point. It led five freight cars and a matching porthole caboose.

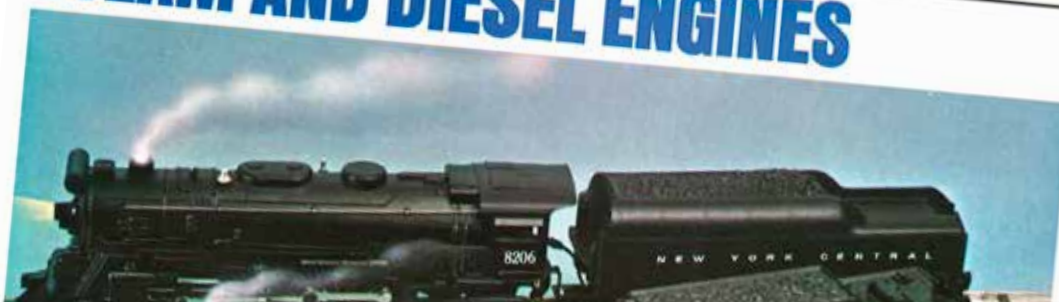
GOLDEN STATE ARROW

The top of the Lionel line is this huge Santa Fe GP-20 freight train set. The totally new GP-20 engine with headlights pulls an impressive line of scale and operating cars around a big double oval layout with two remote control switches. Cars include a scale hopper, tank car, postal box car, cattle car, three-tier auto rack car and lighted caboose. All this plus a 50-watt transformer controlling forward and reverse, 10 curved and eleven straight track, and remote uncoupling track.

No. 6-1388



STEAM AND DIESEL ENGINES



The memorable catalog put together by the Fundimensions division of General Mills pictured on the front cover three generations enjoying Lionel trains. The happy boy ran the Blue Streak Freight set.

8350 diesel switch engine pulling two freight cars and a bobber caboose. Eight curves formed a circle.

The No. 1381 Cannonball featured a Santa Fe 2-4-0 steam locomotive and tender with the same two freight cars (a Nickel Plate Road gondola and Chesapeake & Ohio flatcar with stakes). The caboose was a red Southern Pacific-type with bold yellow Santa Fe lettering.

The No. 1382 Yardmaster used a No. 8111 Detroit, Ironton & Toledo NW2 diesel switcher. It led three neat pieces of rolling stock and a matching DT&I work caboose.

The No. 1383 Santa Fe Freight came with a new Alco FA2 diesel wonderfully decked out in silver and blue with a yellow warbonnet logo. Behind rode the same three freight cars (Canadian National short hopper, Republic Steel gondola with canisters, and Penn Central flatcar with logs). The red work caboose added featured Santa Fe graphics.

Four better sets

Next in the catalog appeared four longer and more expensive sets. More track and a 50-watt transformer came with them, and each of their locomotives had a headlight.

The No. 1384 Southern Express relied on a 2-4-0 steam engine and tender to lead the same short hopper and gondola with canisters, along with the C&O flatcar with stakes. The red SP-type caboose, like the tender, had Southern markings. A 90-degree crossover enabled operators to put together an exciting 27 x 64-inch figure-8 configuration.



The No. 1385 Blue Streak Freight (shown on the catalog's cover) used a 2-4-2 Jersey Central Lines engine to pull five cars and a blue SP-type caboose with matching graphics. The locomotive came with Electronic Mighty Sound of Steam – “the surging sound of steam that is synchronized to the pace of the engine and the puffing of smoke.”

Then the No. 1386 Rock Island Express featured a 4-4-2 Atlantic and tender with four slick pieces of rolling stock and a gray Southern Pacific-type caboose whose Rock Island lettering matched that on the tender. The locomotive also had Electronic Mighty Sound of Steam. The eight curves and six straights combined to form an oval measuring in at 27 x 54 inches.

The No. 1387 Milwaukee Special stood out for being the first new passenger set of the era. Leading a trio of heavyweight cars “detailed to perfection and built to last a lifetime”

was a die-cast metal 4-4-2 Atlantic with Electronic Mighty Sound of Steam and a smoke mechanism. The Milwaukee Road tender proved the outfit was “total railroad realism.”

Favorites old and new

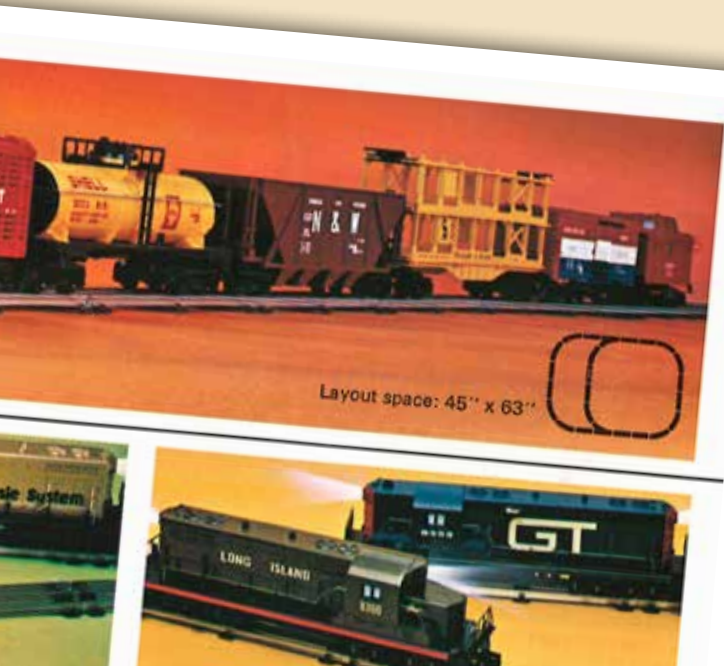
When it came to motive power available for separate sale, the list for 1973 was a long and impressive one. A Dockside switcher, a 4-4-2 Atlantic, and a 4-6-4 Hudson led the group of steam engines. The New York Central model came equipped with remote-control forward-neutral-reverse; the first two steamers boasted forward-reverse control.

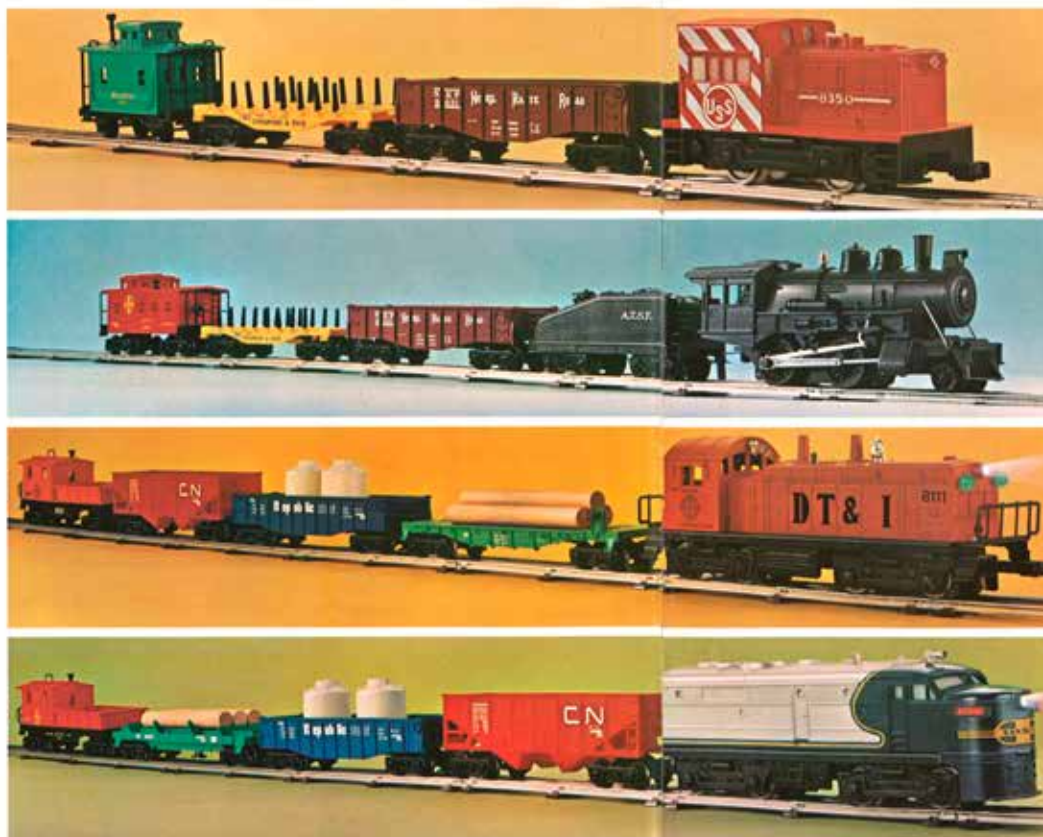
A total of eight powered diesels were specified in the catalog; six of them had matching non-powered twins so operators could create realistic lash-ups on their layouts.

In addition to the noteworthy diesels deserving special attention, the Lionel line included the Nos. 8354 Erie NW2 switcher (reminiscent of the no. 610 from the middle 1950s), 8353 Grand Trunk GP7 road diesel, 8357 GP9 road diesel, and 8361 Western Pacific Alco FA2 cab unit. Both of the Geeps came with a working headlight and forward-neutral-reverse; the Western Pacific model had forward-reverse to go with its headlight.

Lionel selected the Baltimore & Ohio, whose name had been emblazoned across an iconic F3 diesel during the postwar period, as its first effort under General Mills. The new Nos. 8363 and 8364 powered and non-powered A units featured die-cast metal trucks, a working headlight, illuminated number boards, and an operating horn.

The decoration of the new B&O units resembled that found on the postwar No. 2368, with light blue, white, and gray as the





COMPLETE SETS

U. S. STEEL INDUSTRIAL SWITCHER

A totally new set with totally new ideas. A great beginner's set with the big feature of Lionel's all-new Master DC motor and power pack. It provides great smooth, true-ride performance. The DC power pack controls forward and reverse. This is a set that is easy to operate and fun to play with. Set includes the new industrial switcher, gondola, flat car with stakes, caboose, 8 curved tracks, and DC power pack.

No. 6-1389

Layout space: 27" x 27"

CANNONBALL

The beginning of something great for the young engineer... something he can grow with. A beautiful new 2-4-0 steam engine with the great Pullman motor highlights this set, classic in design, authentic and detailed. The train measures 42" and features a new slope-back tender, gondola, flat car with stakes, caboose, 8 curved and 2 straight tracks, and a 25-watt transformer. Tracks form an oval layout.

No. 6-1381

Layout space: 27" x 36"

YARDMASTER

Here's the railroad workhorse in a set loaded with play value. The set features the brightly colored, rugged diesel switcher with headlight and four load-carrying cars: gondola with canisters, long flat car with logs, hopper and combination flat car/caboose. 8 curved and 4 straight tracks make into an extended oval layout. 25-watt transformer.

No. 6-1382

Layout space: 27" x 48"

SANTA FE FREIGHT

Here is the ever popular Santa Fe Alco diesel with new blue and silver colors and pulling a long line of play-value cars. The set includes the operating log-dump car with load, gondola with canisters, hopper and the popular work caboose. 8 curved and 6 straight tracks provide a wide extended oval layout. The Santa Fe houses the Lionel diesel Pullman motor. 25-watt transformer.

No. 6-1383

Layout space: 36" x 48"

principal colors used. The striping process, however, now relied predominantly on what were called "electrocals." Where this met a traditionally applied decaed stripe below the number board at the start of the curvature of the nose on the F3, an annoying stripe alignment mismatch and overlap occurred.

It's a shame MPC didn't make the B&O F3s as shown in the advance catalog. The gray, triple-striped pilot and the porthole lenses would have been nice. As the F3s were produced, the pilots were black and the portholes were filled in to reduce manufacturing costs. Further, the lenses on the number boards weren't stamped with the part number.

Breaking ground

More interesting to Lionel fans was the first "new" diesel of the modern era. An insert made for a die on a molding machine transformed a high-nose GP7 road unit into a low-nose GP20. The latter appeared as the Nos. 8352 Santa Fe and 8369 Long Island RR road diesels.

Both of the newcomers promised a working headlight, remote-control or transformer-controlled forward-neutral-reverse, and die-cast metal trucks with operating knuckle couplers. The two GP20s had non-operating twins that came equipped with an electronic horn.

The blue-and-yellow Santa Fe headed the top set of 1973. The No. 1388 Golden State Arrow came with Nos. 9707 M-K-T stock car, 9708 U.S. Mail boxcar, 9135 Norfolk & Western quad hopper, 9152 Shell single-dome tank car, and 9126 Chesapeake & Ohio automobile carrier. Last came a No. 9163 Santa Fe illuminated N5c porthole caboose.

Four freight trains, each headed by a short yet powerful locomotive, introduced the lineup of cataloged outfits for 1973. Included with each set was track and a power pack or a transformer.

All that glitters

Lionel helped celebrate the 50th anniversary of General Motors by offering a diesel locomotive painted gold. Consumers snapped up the striking O gauge engine.

In the real world, the Baltimore & Ohio had also marked the occasion. It had done so by painting one of its Chessie System General Motors Electro-Motive Division GP40 road diesels a metallic gold scheme with blue "B&O/GM50" reporting marks under the cab windows and a simplified version of GM's special logo on the front of short hood.

Lionel, unfortunately, didn't catalog an O gauge GP40, so it went with the tried-and-true GP7 as the model (No. 8359) for its version of the "GM50." The stunning Geep featured a working headlight, illuminated number boards, remote-control forward-neutral-reverse, and die-cast metal trucks. It measured more than 14 inches in length.

Wait ended

After years of requesting heavyweight passenger cars, Lionel aficionados were pleased to see in 1973 two new illuminated Pullman cars and a matching observation, all with frosted windows. Their dimensions caused them to be called "Baby Madison" cars.

The Nos. 9500 *City of Milwaukee* and 9503 *City of Chicago* coaches and 9502 *President Washington* observation were a welcome sight. Lionel had decorated them in an eye-catching orange-and-maroon Milwaukee Road scheme with gold lettering.

They were introduced in the No. 1387 Milwaukee Special set, led by a die-cast metal 4-4-2 Atlantic steam locomotive and tender combination that featured a smoke mechanism.

Lionel supplemented the train with additional cars in 1974, 1976, and 1988, four of which were also uncataloged add-ons in 1973. In spite of the cars being undersized and rolling wobbly on four-wheel trucks with plastic sides, they remain in demand. The set might have been a real classic if it had been assigned a 4-6-4 Hudson steam locomotive as its motive power and been equipped with the six-wheel die-cast trucks added later.

TruTrack System

Besides various freight cars and accessories, the new catalog announced "The All New ... Lionel TruTrack System." It included straight track (8¾ inches long); curved track (10 inches long); left- and right-hand manual and remote-control switches with position indicators; a lockon; and plastic roadbed for the straights, curves, and switches.

TruTrack turned out to be a product whose conception and promotion outpaced reality. On the positive side, it had T-shaped rail, wood-colored ties (eight on each straight piece and nine on each curve), curves with a wider diameter (about 42 inches) than typical tubular track, a thin center rail, and plastic roadbed that snapped on. On the negative side, the rails were made of an aluminum alloy that just didn't perform well.

Had the Italian manufacturer used another metal for the rails and made better rail joiners, TruTrack might have been more successful. Unfortunately, that product lacked the strong points of both Super O track from the postwar era and FasTrack from the current period.

One more gem

Plainly, the more years General Mills developed, manufactured, and marketed a lineup of Lionel outfits, locomotives, rolling stock, and accessories, the more executives learned about its customers. Improvements and innovations in the design, production, and operation of the trains and ancillary items were being made, and some saw light in 1973.

We conclude with a diesel locomotive outfit that has since become the most valuable of anything associated with that year. The No. 8365/8366 Canadian Pacific F3s came in an uncataloged set available only as a Service Station Special (the No. 1350 five-car freight train) authorized Lionel dealers alone could buy and stock. The desirable powered and unpowered A-A combination replicated the classic scheme initially used on the No. 2378 Canadian Pacific duo from 1957. Homage to the glorious past still shaped Lionel. **CT**

Longer trains promising more activity completed the roster of O gauge sets. Working headlights, smoke, and Electronic Mighty Sound of Steam were standard components.

SOUTHERN EXPRESS

The new Southern Express set combines the brightly-colored green and black 2-4-0 engine and tender, a long line of cars, the popular figure eight and Lionel's new chugging steam sound, adding another touch of realism to model railroading. The engine includes a working headlight and its forward and reverse motion is controlled by the transformer. Cars include a gondola and canisters, flat car with stakes, hopper and caboose. 12 curved and 4 straight tracks plus a 90° crossing and a 50-watt transformer complete this outstanding set.

No. 8-1384 Layout space:  27" x 54"

BLUE STREAK FREIGHT

A super-long train, a super-long layout and this authentically colored two-tone blue engine and tender make this an outstanding set. Here is play-value galore with eight units. The engine and tender has working smoke, headlight, and Lionel's Electronic Mighty Sound of Steam. The chugging sound of steam that is synchronized to the pace of the engine and the puffing of smoke. Cars include two gondolas, box car, flat car with stakes, hopper, and caboose. All this plus four canisters. 8 curved and 6 straight tracks and a 50-watt transformer that controls forward and reverse.

No. 8-1385 Layout space:  27" x 54"

ROCK ISLAND EXPRESS

Rugged is the word for this die cast engine train set. Ruggedness and realism combined. It has headlight, smoke, transformer-controlled forward and reverse ... plus the great Electronic Mighty Sound of Steam. And look at the cars: rack, auto carrier, flat car with stakes and bulkheads, gondola, hopper and caboose. The die cast engine is the big 4-4-2 coupled with a long tender. 8 curved and 6 straight tracks make into a huge extended oval. Transformer is 50-watt.

No. 8-1386 Layout space:  27" x 54"

MILWAUKEE SPECIAL

By popular demand ... a new Lionel passenger train! Here are totally new passenger cars, detailed to perfection and built to last a lifetime! And they are pulled by a rugged 4-4-2 die cast engine and long tender. Set includes two beautifully colored, authentic lighted Pullman cars and a lighted observation car. 8 curved and 6 straight tracks make up into a long extended oval layout. Another bonus! The die cast engine has smoke, headlight and the Electronic Mighty Sound of Steam and Whistle. It's total railroad realism. Transformer is 50-watt and controls forward and reverse.

No. 8-1387 Layout space:  27" x 54"



BEST CHRIS FOR THE GRANDKIDS

Lionel lovers build
a holiday layout

STORY BY ROGER CARP
Photos by Wayne Strobel

Among the most fortunate girls and boys are the ones whose devoted grandparents introduce them to electric trains. They have ample opportunity to discover the memorable toys that brought pleasure to older folks in their extended family and learn just how much fun O and S gauge models can be.

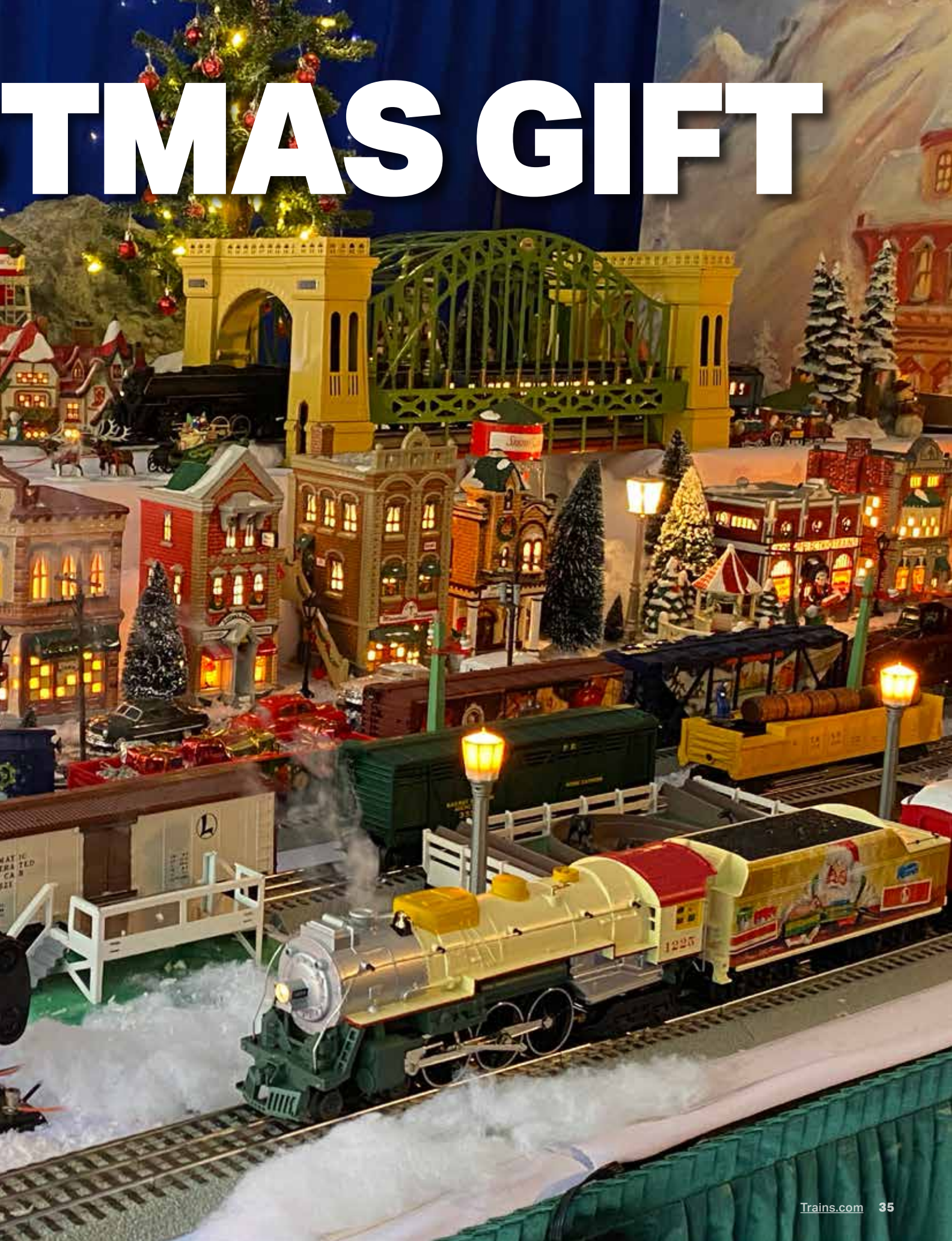
This generalized description of how different generations can bond over toy trains explains the laughter and smiles filling a residential garage during the winter months in the Southeast. Raise the door and you come face to face with a colorful and entertaining three-rail display featuring terrific scenery, cool accessories and structures, and a few contemporary Lionel locomotives and cars.

Best of all, visitors have the opportunity not only to see how children can spend hours running trains but also to meet some of the finest ambassadors for our hobby. Two sets of grandparents plus a wonderful and trusted friend, all of whose experience with Lionel modeling adds up to well more than 150 years, pooled their talents and trains to create a memorable railroad for their grandkids.

Bob Thomas, Joe Sadorf, and Wayne Strobel wanted to entertain Douglas and Rhett with some of the classic operating models Lionel had cataloged during the postwar years, so they added this siding for the automatic milk car and the animated horse and barrel cars.



TMAS GIFT





Bob and Angela Thomas (left) pose with their good friend and neighbor Wayne Strobel (right). Joe Sadorf stands with the Thomas' two very fortunate grandkids, Douglas and Rhett.

■ Lionel icons and artist

Rhett and her cousin Douglas are two of the luckiest youngsters around because their grandparents love Lionel trains and were eager to share all the fun with them. But keep in mind that those grandparents are not just your typical baby boomers who played with O gauge trains long ago and then returned to the hobby.

Far from it! We're talking about some well-known and highly respected members of the Train Collectors Association whose involvement with Lionel trains from the post-World War II era has been gaining momentum for decades.

Bob Thomas jokingly refers to himself as "a Lionel icon married to an artist!" Truth be told, as renowned as he might be as a collector whose layout was once featured in *Classic Toy Trains*, it's Bob's wonderful and talented wife, Angela Trotta Thomas, who has touched countless O and S gauge enthusiasts with the nostalgic artwork she has created for the past 30 years. Paintings and postcards eventually led to Angela providing illustrations for Lionel models.

On the other side of the extended family is Joe Sadorf, as energetic and kind a gentleman as you can imagine. His collection of Super O outfits is one of the finest around, and he and his wife, Annamae, have always been willing to share the trains on display at their home and help expand knowledge of them.

Together, these were four people who love Lionel trains and actively strive to share their appreciation with others. Who better for Angela and Bob, Annamae and Joe to present the gift of three-rail modeling to than their grandkids?

■ Winter's coming

In 2021, sometime between Halloween and Thanksgiving, Bob felt a powerful

desire to get some of his O gauge trains out of their boxes and onto a layout to operate. The only problem was, he didn't have a model railroad.

But Bob did have close friends who wanted to help him solve that problem while building a neat layout for kids, their parents, and their grandparents to enjoy by the time Santa arrived. Joe and Annamae were among them. So was Wayne Strobel, a longtime friend and neighbor with extensive knowledge of Standard gauge modeling, especially with modular layouts. Wayne also had invaluable experience building displays for trade shows.

Bob, Joe, Wayne, and Angela put their heads together and ended up creating a spectacular 10 x 12-foot display. Douglas and Rhett were the main beneficiaries, although soon youngsters in the neighborhood were dropping by to watch the trains while their moms and dads were discovering the hobby.

Clearing the garage at the Thomas homestead represented the first step. Then Wayne generously offered to bring over several of the modules he had constructed for operating his Standard gauge trains at various shows. Those modules were the perfect answer to the question of how to assemble benchwork.

Wayne helped his friends and fellow hobbyists push the modules together to form the foundation of the O gauge layout. They made sure to leave room along the



The guys are making certain the trains operate smoothly before neighbors amble by for a visit and maybe even a turn at the control panel. Joe set up the antique Santa Claus to evoke memories of when he and Bob grew up in postwar Pennsylvania.



The 10 x 12-foot O gauge model railroad features two independent loops of FasTrack on the main platform, along with a third line on the elevated section. A couple of Christmas trees and loads of structures and details make this display one you'll never forget.

sides so that folks could comfortably walk around. Bob wisely remembered to leave an opening in the platform to accommodate a decorated Christmas tree.

Once everyone was satisfied with the arrangement of the modules, Wayne carried over cloth curtains he had salvaged from trade shows he had attended and secured them along the walls to hide the beams supporting the roof.

Substituting sections of Lionel's FasTrack for the Standard gauge pieces Wayne had previously secured to the top of each module took time, but the three men cooperated well. They decided next to add an elevated line for greater operating interest and enjoyment. The layout was coming together beautifully.

■ Comes to life

Over the course of several days and evenings, Bob, Joe, and Wayne, often assisted by Angela and Annamae and even a grandchild or two, brought the two-level display to life. Their diverse skills and imagination made all the difference when creating a one-of-a-kind tribute to Christmas, trains, and childhood.

The enormous backdrop reflects the distinctive style Angela has refined, one



The Lionel *Polar Express* set creeps past a village on the display toy train enthusiasts Bob Thomas and Joe Sadorf built for their grandchildren with help from good friend Wayne Strobel. Ceramic structures and accessories both vintage and new bring the scenes to life.



that has delighted thousands of toy train lovers. She had originally created this artwork for one of Lionel's operating freight cars. Wayne figured out how to enlarge the images and then stand them up behind the layout in the garage.

Joe took the lead with finding vintage and modern accessories (some from his collection) and wiring them into their designated locations. Crossing gates and signals, freight loaders and stations, and a reissue of Lionel's huge Hell Gate Bridge from the prewar era injected personality and action into scene after scene.

Ceramic structures and figures by Department 56 and Lionel came out of storage to populate the main level. Here, Angela's superb eye for developing evocative scenes did the trick. She knew intuitively where to situate the colorful houses and figures of animals and people to give viewers vignettes they could linger over.

Rhett helped Angela in many ways. She had fun moving around the buildings and figures before putting on artificial snow. No wonder everyone believes the artistic genes will be carried on for another generation. Douglas, while younger, contributed his *Polar Express* set, always yelling out as it burst out of the Hell Gate Bridge and headed toward his grinning face.

The backdrop consisting of blown-up copies of Angela's wonderful artwork provides the ideal setting for the reissue of Lionel's prized prewar Hell Gate Bridge. Rushing forward is the 2-8-4 Berkshire steam engine and tender leading the *Polar Express*.

■ Soon to return

The layout was finished and trains were performing their magic not long before Christmas morning. Three generations spent their nights inside the garage,

A favorite performer is the Lionel No. 84964 LionChief Plus 4-6-4 Hudson steam engine and tender, sporting holiday artwork painted by Angela along the sides.

admiring the display, decorating the tree, and operating Lionel trains and accessories from the past 60 years. It seemed the tale had ended.

Not quite! Did you honestly think everyone in the neighborhood would remain oblivious to what the Sadorfs and Thomases were creating with help from Wayne? No way that was happening! Instead, kids and adults strolled over and asked for a peek. Very soon, it was like something out of a movie or television program from the 1950s – Lionel trains were captivating people of all ages.

Sometime in January, the time did arrive when everyone involved agreed the layout had to be dismantled. But with that decision came another one – actually more of a promise – to start all over and construct an O gauge display even more attractive and entertaining. We'll eagerly await the results! **CTT**



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NEW!



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(279-9354, 9355)



Burgundy
(279-9356, 9357)

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Black
(279-8371, 8372)



Burgundy
(279-8373, 8374)

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(279-8324, 8325)



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(279-8328, 8329)



"K" Line
(279-8330, 8331)

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The A.C. Gilbert Co. expanded its American Flyer line in 1955 with the No. 926, a great-looking and nicely detailed silver triple-dome tank car with Gulf lettering.



THREE DOMES ARE BETTER THAN ONE

Finishing the Flyer tank car saga

■ Back in the December 2021 issue of *Classic Toy Trains*, S gauge expert Don Heimbürger offered an outstanding look at the early single-dome tank cars cataloged by the A.C. Gilbert Co. for its American Flyer brand of S gauge trains. He focused on the models with graphics for Gulf Oil found in the line between 1951 and '54.

Don compiled information about how, beginning in 1955, the American Flyer lineup grew with the addition of a triple-dome tank car decorated for Gulf. Although Don didn't live to complete his look at those eye-catching freight cars, we at CTT decided to take what he had provided us and finish the fascinating story.

Why three domes?

Engineers and sales executives at the Gilbert Co. had good reason to bring out a three-dome tank car. They would have been remiss had they overlooked it.

For one thing, the builders of full-size rolling stock had been manufacturing tank cars with three domes since the pre-World War II era to meet the demands of shippers, typically petroleum refiners. Tankers with three separate compartments might serve to send the same type of product to customers whose storage facilities were in three different locations. Or a refiner could elect to rely on those modern freight cars to transport three different grades of oil, gasoline, or kerosene to a single area.

For another thing, designers and marketers at Lionel had expanded their line of

O gauge trains in 1953 with a three-dome tank car painted silver with slick Sunoco graphics. Consumers responded positively to the No. 6315 model, and that motivated decision makers at Gilbert to offer S gaugers their own three-dome car.

Meet the No. 926

As Don pointed out in his article on Gulf single-dome tank cars, the Flyer line for 1954 featured the No. 925 model as well as a brand-new tanker painted a sweet shade of green and decorated for Gilbert Chemicals. The fictitious business paint scheme was concocted when negotiations with Celanese Chemical Co. fell through.

A year later, in addition to the 925 model and a different chemical tank car (the No. 912 Koppers replaced the 910), the American Flyer line included the first

S gauge triple-dome tanker. The No. 926 was carried for the following two years.

Painted silver with Gulf graphics, the 926 had what collectors refer to as a Type 1 body. According to expert Eric Hundertmark, writing in the first volume of *Greenberg's Guide to American Flyer S Gauge*, that means it came with a complete tank having four stanchions on each side and wrap-around handrails. A screw and two square guide studs secured the injection-molded tank to the frame.

The engineering staff at Gilbert probably based the 926 on the same full-size prototype their counterparts at Lionel used – specifically, a 70-ton carrier of either gasoline or oil then being manufactured by Union Tank Car Co.

Planners of the Flyer line for 1955 placed the 926 in four top-notch sets: the Nos. 5530TBH New Silver Flash Freight, 5540TBW New Trail Blazer Freight, 5542H New Sunshine Special Freight, and 5565W New Flying Freight. The 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ "-long model was available by itself for \$4.95 (\$54.72 in today's dollars).

Back in 1956 and '57

Gilbert kept the 926 triple-dome tank car in its cataloged lineup for 1956. In addition to being offered for separate sale at an increased price of \$5.95, it came in three sets. The Nos. 5645TRH New Silver Flash, 5655RH New Sunshine Special, and 5665W New Challenger all provided their owners with a 926 model.

A year later, only two sets included a triple-dome tank car with Gulf Oil markings. The Gilbert Co. had modified the system by which it numbered its products, so the model previously identified as 926 was now listed as 24313.

The familiar triple-dome model appeared in the Nos. 20355 Sunshine Special Freight and 20365 Challenger Freight. The car was still priced at \$5.95.

At some point during the production, Gilbert switched from a die-cast metal frame to a plastic one. Further, there was a brake wheel at one end and two diamond-shaped markers at the other. Around the tank was a black railing.

Final years

The 24313 took its place in the cataloged line from 1958 through 1960. According to the Greenberg guide cited earlier, it still had a silver-painted tank with black lettering and an orange circular paper label with a blue Gulf logo. Additionally, it used a plastic frame with a one-piece brake wheel and a diamond marker at the opposite end. Sintered-iron sideframe trucks were still the rule.

Three cataloged sets came with a 24313 triple-dome tank car in 1958. The Nos. 20455 New Haven Mainliner Electric Freight, 20465 Missouri Pacific Fast Freight, and 20480 Santa Fe *Chief* Freight included the still-popular model.

The drastic reduction in the number of sets cataloged for 1959 meant not a single one came with a 24313. The same was true for 1960, the final year the Gulf model with three domes appeared in the consumer catalog. For those two years, the only way the company made it available was by itself, now priced at \$4.50.

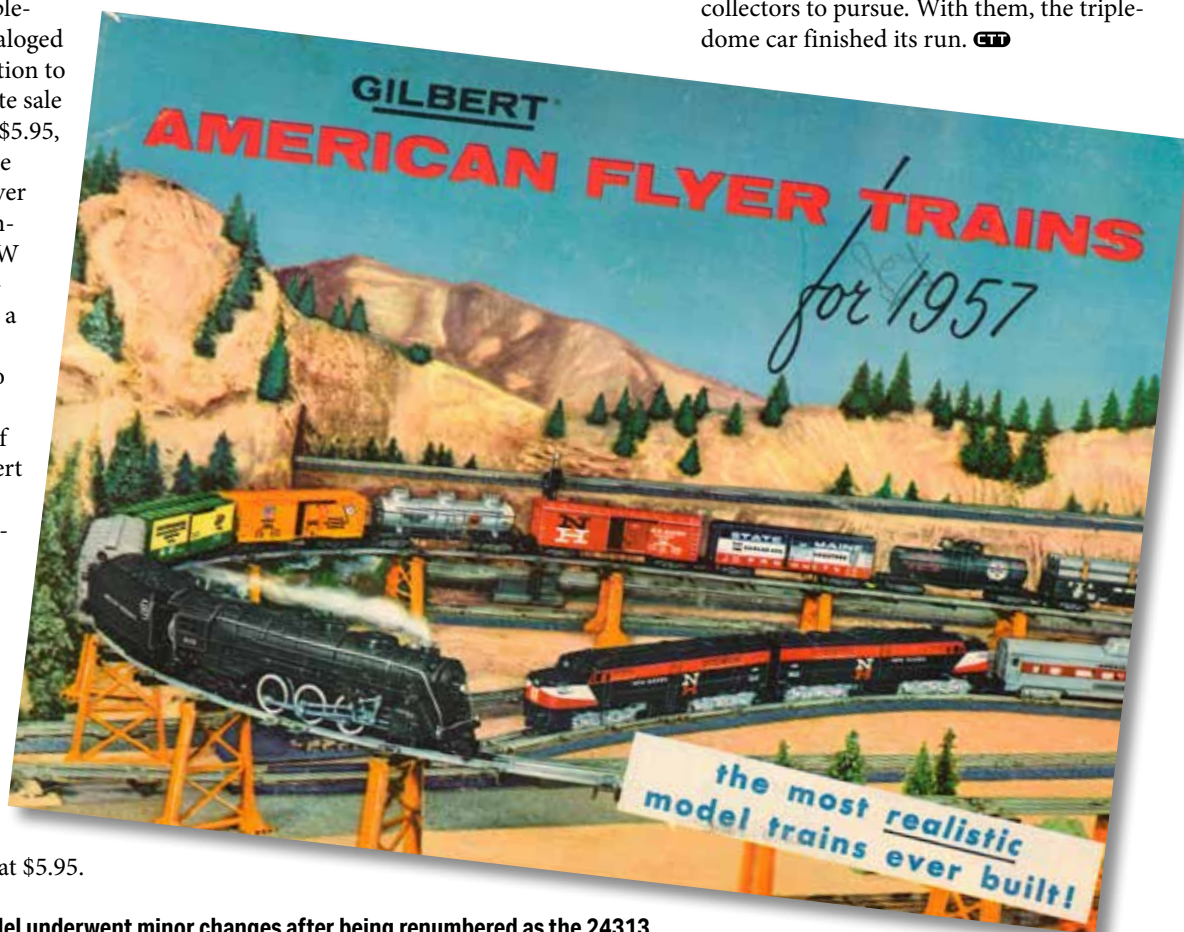
For 1959 and '60, the design of the triple-dome car was altered. It still had a

complete tank with four stanchions on each side plus wraparound handrails. What changed related to how the plastic tank was attached to the plastic frame. It was done with one central plastic guide pin as well as two snap-on plastic blocks.

Before manufacturing of the model ceased for good, other changes were made. Late versions came with a tank having an open bottom. There also were six stanchions on each side, and the handrails no longer wrapped around the ends.

Those small yet noticeable modifications created a true variation for today's collectors to pursue. With them, the triple-dome car finished its run. **CTT**

AT SOME POINT IN THE PRODUCTION, GILBERT SWITCHED FROM A DIE-CAST METAL FRAME TO A PLASTIC ONE.



The Gulf triple-dome model underwent minor changes after being renumbered as the 24313 in 1957. It appeared on the cover of the consumer catalog for that year.

YOU DO HAVE ROOM FOR A LAYOUT



1

This one fits in an apartment and offers plenty of action

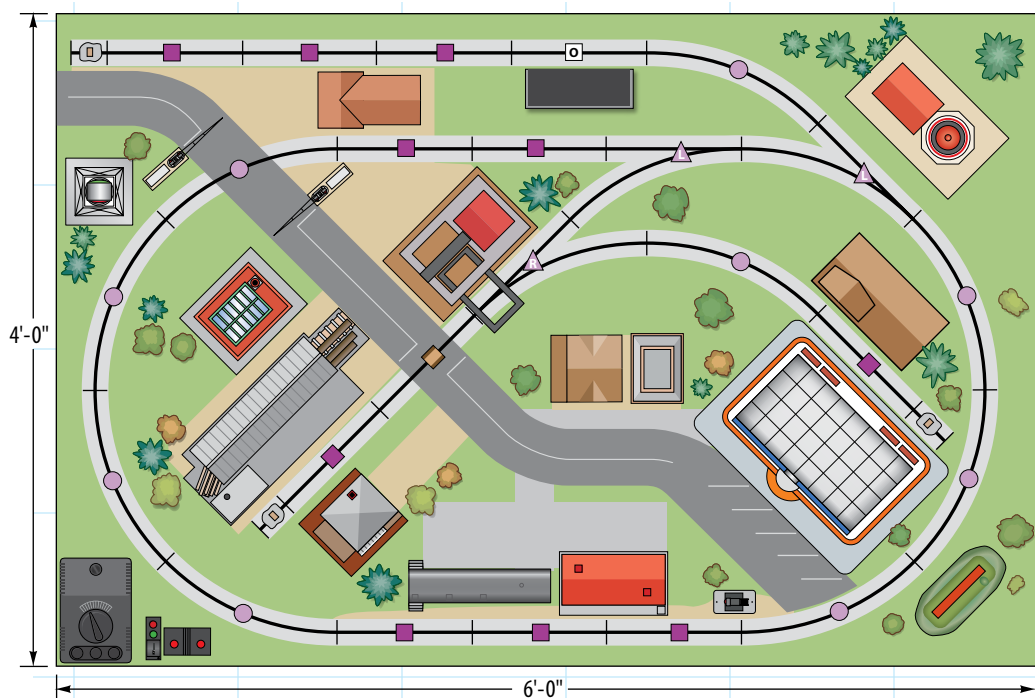
STORY BY PETER H. RIDDLE ● Photos by the author



Henry David Thoreau once wrote, “Our life is frittered away by detail. Simplify, simplify.” TV personality and organizational expert Marie Kondo urges us to declutter our lives by disposing of everything that does not bring us joy.

If you are reading this magazine, there’s a good chance that toy trains are high on your list of things that bring joy. In keeping with the philosophy that “less is more,” there is a trend among a growing segment of society toward smaller houses and fewer possessions. Many homes no longer offer enough room for an extensive O or S gauge layout, and simple track plans that fit into a small space can be boring.





LIONEL FASTRACK COMPONENTS

Quantity	Description/Number
10	10-inch straight (12014)
9	0-36 curve, 45-degree curve (12015)
1	operating track (12034)
1	grade crossing (12036)
2	0-36 manual left-hand switch (12017) or (12045)
1	0-36 manual right-hand switch (12018) or (12046)
3	earthen bumper (12059)

Illustration by Kellie Jaeger



But this need not be the case. A wealth of detail and operational possibilities can be packed into even a very small area.

The smallest practical size for an O gauge layout measures 4 x 6 feet. This allows for a loop of track with curves up to 36" in diameter, such as Lionel FasTrack. Sharper curves (O-27 or O-31) would leave even more room for longer sidings and a variety of accessories to help maintain interest. This is such a plan.

The train table shown in [Photo 2](#) has a simple framework built from 1 x 4-inch spruce lumber, topped with 2" extruded-foam insulation board (available in 4 x 8-foot sheets from building supply companies). This material is ideal for a train layout, as it's rigid and accepts track-fixing screws. It's also much lighter than plywood and can easily be cut and shaped to accommodate above-grade scenery, such as a built-up hill, or below grade features like a river, pond, or swimming pool.

Lightweight construction allows the layout to be moved, a definite asset when space is at a premium. The entire layout can be carried easily by two people and will even pass through a door if tilted at a 45-degree angle. (Don't forget to remove loose and protruding items, such as rolling stock, vehicles, and beacon tops first!)

The edges are trimmed with casing or baseboard, and the table is supported on two sets of folding legs from a hardware store. Note the placement of the transformer and control switches, at left in [Photo 1](#) and shown close-up in [Photo 3](#).

Little details

Small layouts look best with compact motive power and rolling stock. Large locomotives overwhelm the scenery and may cause clearance problems on curves.

There's no room for a reverse loop, so locomotives with couplers on both ends that can operate in either direction are logical choices, such as the tiny switcher in **Photo 3** and Lionel's 0-8-0 tank locomotive in **Photo 6** and the Lionel industrial diesel in **Photo 2**. They offer the greatest flexibility when moving cars around.

Traditional-sized rolling stock also looks better than its scale counterparts on a small layout.

Lionel FasTrack can accommodate virtually every O gauge product made since the end of World War II. Many late prewar Lionel trains are also at home on these track products, such as the Lionel No. 229 steamer in the background of **Photo 7**.

The mainline loop provides continuous running. The three sidings are arranged to provide room for trackside accessories and storage of rolling stock or an idle locomotive. Accessories fall into three main categories: operating, automatic, and passive.

Examples of operating accessories on this small layout include the American Flyer log loader on the central siding in **Photo 6** and a K-Line by Lionel billboard along the main line (at the lower right in the track plan).

Also in this category are three switches to redirect trains and an operating track section allowing uncoupling or unloading freight into a trackside bin (in **Photo 4**). These all require operator involvement.



Automatic accessories from MTH include a block signal and crossing gates (**Photo 6**) that go down and up, with crossbucks that blink as a train passes. They require no input from the engineer.

Passive accessories are simply turned on or off and need no human input or a passing train to function. Examples include a rotating Lionel No. 494 beacon (upper left, **Photo 1**), the Lionel light-house in the **Photo 7** night scene, and a K-Line Collectors Club sawmill, which has a functioning smokestack and rotating saw blade (track plan, left center).

A small layout benefits from a variety of passive items to attract visitors' attention, such as lights in the buildings of **Photo 6** and the Lionel Hobby Shop with its three tiny operating layouts **Photo 7**.

As with the hobby shop in **Photo 7**, some operating accessories benefit from being near the edge of a layout. The Lionel No. 3562-75 barrel car must be shunted

back and forth to both load and unload at the No. 362 barrel loader (**Photo 9**), and there is a tendency for the barrels to gang up and spill out next to the tracks.

The barrel loader should be placed where an operator can easily restore order in case of accidental spillage.

Another accessory that should be within easy reach is the MTH reproduction of an American Flyer coal loader (**Photo 5**). This unit lowers and raises a claw to carry coal from trackside to a storage bin inside the unit. The touch of a button sends the coal cascading into a car





waiting on the track below, and sometimes scatters it elsewhere. Cleanup is easier if you don't have to stretch too far to reach it.

Gabe the Lamplighter at right (also an MTH reproduction of an American Flyer item) will provide you with plenty of illumination for finding stray lumps of coal.

The barrel and coal loader scenes are located on a second 4 x 6 layout (**Photo 8**) – a variation with two sidings rather than three to allow more space for scenery.

In addition to the operating accessories, there are two remote-control turnouts and an operating track section next to a trackside bin, which give an engineer a lot to do.

Passive accessories include a Lionel No. 394 rotary beacon, FasTrack crossing gates, MTH crossbucks, a bubbling water tower, and a playground featuring various animated accessories by Lionel. These



items include swings and a teeter-totter, a merry-go-round, a pony ride, and a test-your-strength game, plus a miniature golf course where the little players can, on close inspection, be seen to putt.

Don't allow lack of space to keep you from enjoying this hobby. Ultra-compact layouts have a lot to offer in building fun and operating enjoyment. **CTT**



NEED MORE COMPACT DISPLAY IDEAS? CHECK OUT TOY TRAIN LAYOUTS FOR SMALL SPACES AT KALMBACH HOBBYSTORE.COM



Thoughts on the MARX NO. 666 STEAM ENGINE

A devilish runner with its own look

STORY AND PHOTOS BY GARY ANDERSON

Just about every hobbyist who either operates or simply collects electric toy trains manufactured by Louis Marx & Co. in the post-World War II era owns a few examples of the No. 666 steam engine. These O gauge locomotives with a 2-4-2 wheel arrangement are superb runners. As important, Marx enthusiasts can easily obtain them at reasonable prices in various conditions.

Of course, the 666 may be common and plentiful, but it has some interesting aspects worth exploring. Let me share some random thoughts about a locomotive I've been enjoying on three-rail layouts for more than half a century!

What were they thinking?

Like so many other Marx aficionados who have studied the 666, I'm always puzzled

by what company designers and marketing personnel were thinking when they developed that steam engine. The mean and not-so-lean 666 locomotive looks as though it had been created to take part in a demolition derby!

Engineers at Marx utilized a heavy die-cast metal body shell with an wide pilot and cab for the 666 locomotive. Notable features of the shell included a smokestack



Only a few examples of a Marx No. 666 steam engine painted gray have been reported. The author owns one, although he doubts the Santa Fe tender came with it.





When Marx released the 666 in 1955, the 2-4-2 steam engine and tender having a smoke unit were painted entirely in black. Later, a sharp white stripe was added.

and various domes; the boiler front was a separate die-cast part.

Designers put inside the workhorse the double-reduction motor with a brand-new smoke unit. Also distinguishing the 666 locomotive, according to the entry in the first volume of *Greenberg's Guide to Marx Trains* (published in 1989), were a plastic headlight lens and a die-cast headlight rim with a hood.

The 2-4-2 steam engine came with two-wheel lead and trailing trucks, along with four Baldwin-type drive wheels. Finally, the 666 lacked the two-piece piston/main rods, or "eccentrics," used on the more scale-like No. 333 steamer.

New in 1955

The 666 made its debut in the Marx line back in 1955. The rugged steam engine and tender appeared for the first time in the catalogs released by two enormous and

significant retail chains: Montgomery Ward and Sears, Roebuck & Co.

When the 666 arrived, it was painted entirely in a dull shade of black. Marx later added a white stripe along the running board. Those models typically pulled freight trains consisting of either tinplated cars with eight-wheel trucks or deluxe plastic cars. The 666 also came with scarce Canadian Pacific freight cars.

Marx offered an olive drab version of the 666 in its army sets. They came with eight-wheel plastic cars, with the army boxcar being the toughest to find.

Uncommon models

It's no surprise that some uncommon versions of the 666 have been reported. For example, set No. 52875 included a 666 with a white stripe that sometimes had the steam chest smoke generally found in the No. 1666 plastic steam engine. Although

an easy swap, it can be detected by the presence of a fresh solder joint on the headlight wire.

A rare version of the 666 locomotive was painted gray. The example in my collection came with a matching tender equipped with Sound of Steam. Too bad that Santa Fe tender was added later, because I have no indication of which tender originally came with the gray 666.

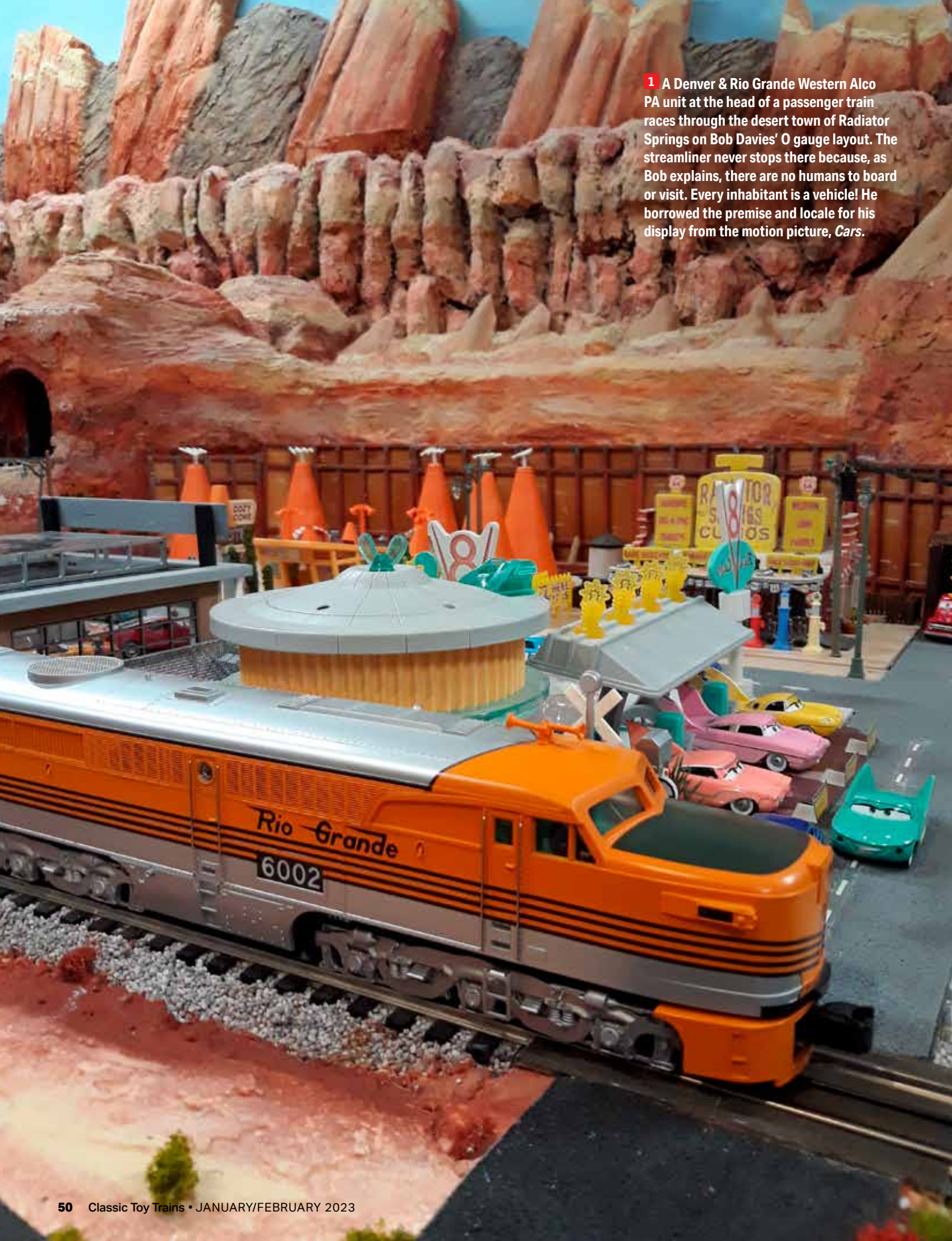
Also in my collection is a 666 sold in Mexico by Plastimarx. Other than not having a smoke unit, it is identical to its American cousin.

The story of the 666 closed in 1961, when Marx cataloged the 2-4-2 steam engine and tender for the final time. **CTT**

Another interesting 666 locomotive in the author's collection is this all-black version lacking a smoke unit. It was manufactured by Plastimarx in Mexico.



1 A Denver & Rio Grande Western Alco PA unit at the head of a passenger train races through the desert town of Radiator Springs on Bob Davies' O gauge layout. The streamliner never stops there because, as Bob explains, there are no humans to board or visit. Every inhabitant is a vehicle! He borrowed the premise and locale for his display from the motion picture, *Cars*.



THE ONLY O GAUGER IN *Radiator Springs*

Bob Davies set his layout in a town without people

Viewers admiring the town on Bob Davies' O gauge layout may wonder why this talented modeler forgot to include miniature people. They won't find even one little man or woman hanging out in the lobby of the Cozy Cone Motel, looking twice before crossing Route 66, or walking into the shop selling curios. Heck, they won't pick out a single stretch of sidewalk in Radiator Springs for pedestrians to stroll on.

Bob waits patiently while visitors investigate the small community set somewhere in the arid desert of the Southwest before explaining the omissions. "Radiator Springs is inhabited only by cars, a few trucks, and some farm equipment," he says. "Human beings departed long ago, probably when Interstate 40 came roaring through, diverting all the traffic and stealing all the business. Nothing was left except automobiles, the facilities they need, and freight and passenger trains."

If you're slightly puzzled about the existence of such a place and its purpose as the setting for an entertaining and bustling three-rail display, just wait until our host shares more of his story. It then becomes clear how Radiator Springs can serve as the foundation of one of the most imaginative, colorful, and fun layouts around.

Out of the armchair

A little more than 10 years ago, when Bob decided to enter the world of O gauge railroading, he had a distinct disadvantage – or maybe it was a distinct advantage! He brought with him few of the memories or

his years working for a railroad or having toured the U.S. from a famed streamliner.

Admittedly, Bob had been given an American Flyer set as a gift back in the 1950s. Besides arranging the S gauge track in a circle beneath the family Christmas tree, he remembered next to nothing about it. Around the time he reached the age of 10, he started playing around with an HO scale train that ran over a figure-8 of track nailed to sheets of plywood. Vague recollections of the steam engine and the freight cars it pulled being fun amounted to everything remaining from that part of his life.

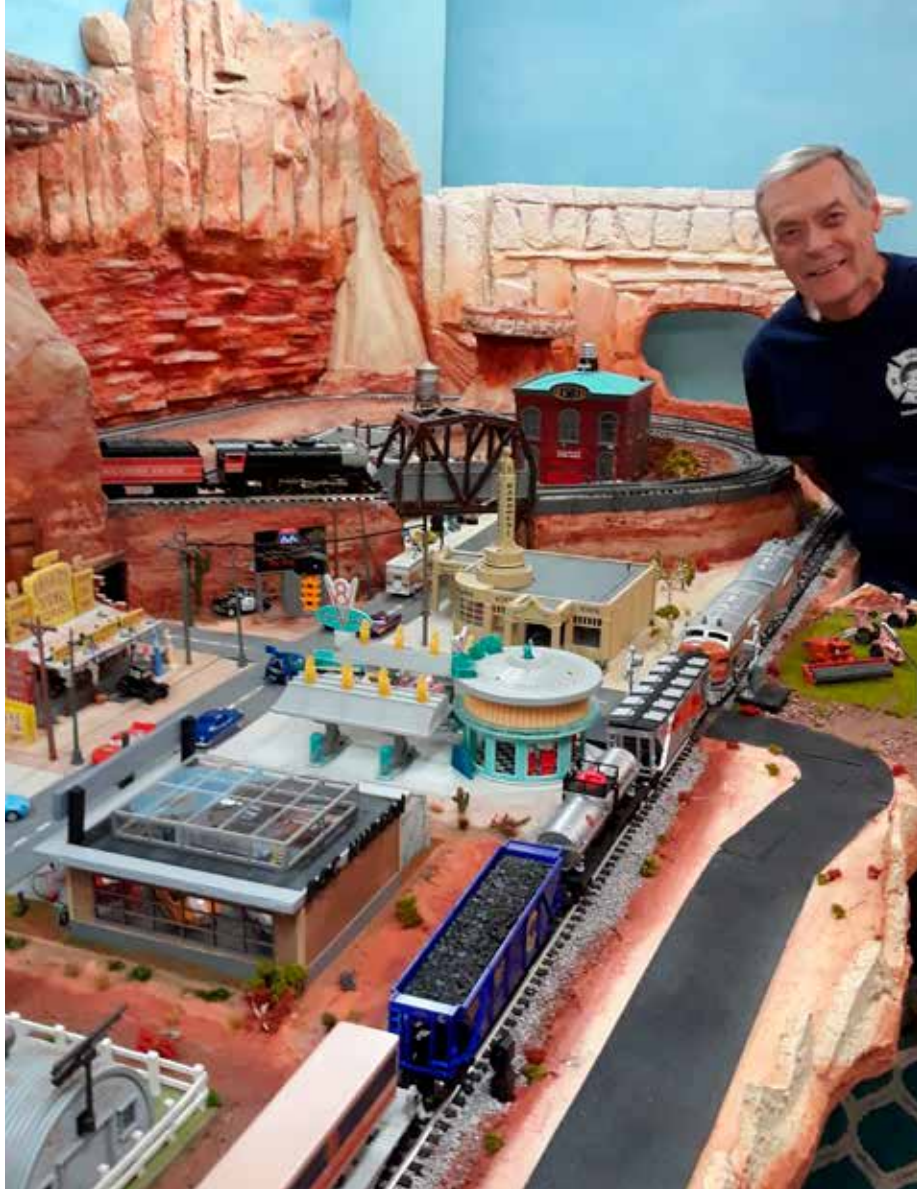
Fortunately, nothing about the HO scale set or its S gauge predecessor alienated Bob from pastime either. Simply put, other things took over his life after graduation from high school: marriage, opening a business, and helping to raise a son (Ray) and a daughter (Emily). When Bob had a spare moment or two, he might peruse a model railroad magazine. Doing so reminded him that the hobby could be a pleasant diversion, yet what he read failed to spark intense interest in him.

Really, "a pleasant diversion" was about all Bob was looking for in life until the day in 2012, when he abruptly realized the time for being an armchair modeler was over. Eager to express his creative juices in an enjoyable manner, he felt compelled to build a layout.



2 Anthropomorphic cars and trucks greet each other at the intersection of Route 66 and Cross Street. They had better slow down if they don't want the sheriff to chase them down for a speeding violation.

influences most other O and S gauge builders routinely acknowledge guided them when developing their layouts. Bob couldn't wax lyrical about the model railroads he had enjoyed with his father or a brother. Neither could he spin yarns about



3 Assisted by his children and wife, Bob enjoyed every minute of building his O gauge layout. Talking vehicles from the motion picture *Cars* share the spotlight with new trains from the current lines being cataloged by Lionel, Menards, and Williams by Bachmann.

Thinking creatively

Approaching the prospect of designing an O gauge railroad without any powerful childhood memories or few preconceived notions of how the display should look proved to be quite liberating for Bob. He felt free to follow any path he chose. Realism might direct his best efforts, but then again so might whimsy.

Letting his imagination soar, Bob wanted his three-rail layout to have as its setting the dramatic cliffs, gulches, and valleys associated with the deserts he had glimpsed in Arizona, New Mexico, and Nevada. He had resided in the southwestern section of the country for nearly all his life. The landscapes in that region fascinated him, as did the highways, people, and railroads there.

So far, nothing much out of the ordinary. Then Bob had a brainstorm, one that

made him smile and guaranteed his layout would be unique. Plainly, the 5½ x 15½-foot display was going to have a premise unlike that of any other he knew of.

Bob recalled having enjoyed *Cars*, a motion picture released in 2006. The computer-animated comedy, popular with children as well as adults, told the tale of a brash and self-centered racecar named Lightning McQueen. Part of a world inhabited by anthropomorphic vehicles able to talk, he learns important lessons about how to treat others with respect and kindness when on his way to a major competition he falls off a truck and winds up having to spend a few days in a rundown desert town known as Radiator Springs whose sole residents are cars like himself.

The transformation of Lightning, credited to the group of vintage and modern vehicles that he encounters, charmed Bob.

As did the neat environment surrounding Radiator Springs, notably the desert features on its periphery and colorful structures lining its byways. Smitten with the movie and its lovable characters, Bob wondered whether he could model the town where Lightning made friends with the locals and became humble and caring. The idea pleased Bob, his wife Debbie, and their children, and they embarked on a brand-new adventure.

Off to town

The layout came together, at least its framework and track, in a quick and pleasant manner. Maybe Bob didn't work as fast as Lightning McQueen raced, but he definitely moved along and made productive use of the many articles he had read over the years in *Classic Toy Trains* magazines. Besides, he already had a track plan embedded in his head. Bob planned to lay track in an arrangement based on the route plied by the Casey Jr. circus train, a beloved attraction at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., for more than six decades.

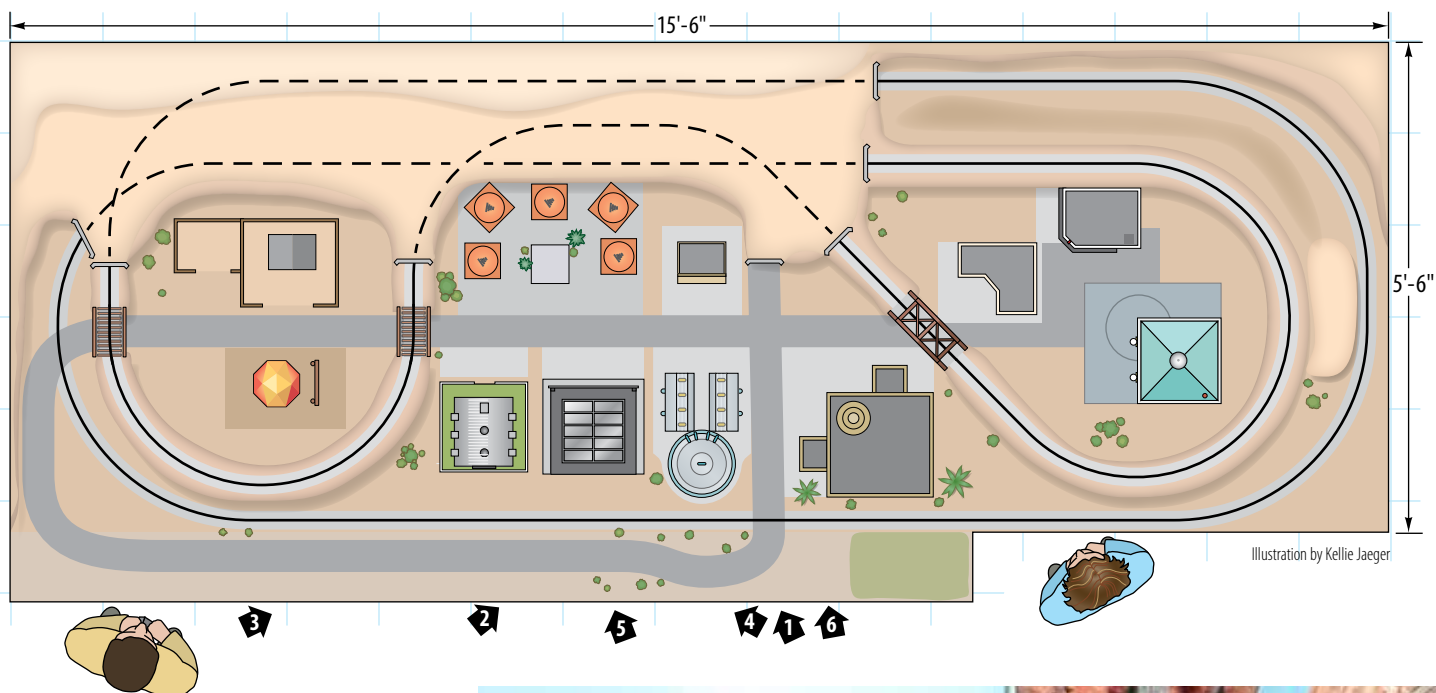
First things first, however. With the help of his son, Bob completed the open-grid benchwork, using 2 x 4 lumber for the legs and 1 x 4 pieces for the cross supports. Once the two were satisfied with the construction, they laid down commercial cork roadbed and then screwed into it sections of GarGraves track.

A display with the dimensions of his struck Bob as hardly demanding a system of command control. From the vantage point of the Lionel No. 37946 GW-180 transformer he installed, he could see everything going on and easily operate one or two trains.

No, for Bob and his adult children the name of the game on this layout was going to be scenery and structures. Bob needed to develop a convincing locale, one that viewers would believe to be Radiator Springs out in the desert.

Key were the sandstone mountains, cliffs, and rock formations surrounding the town and its famous if abandoned two-lane highway. Bob relied on Shaper Sheets from Woodland Scenics. He modified them to conform to the contours of the base he had created using Styrofoam. Over the shell he applied Sculptamold.

The unforgettable look of southwestern deserts was replicated on Bob's layout with the hobby acrylics he brushed on. His favorite brands were Americana and Ceramcoat. As he was applying the colors



An assortment of Mattel's Disney/Pixar Precision Series buildings and vehicles as well as magnificent landscaping provide Bob's 85-square-foot three-rail display with a personality kids and adults find wonderfully entertaining. The numbered arrows correspond to the numbers in each of the captioned photos taken by his wife, Debbie.

AT A GLANCE

Bob Davies' O gauge layout

Dimensions: 5½ x 15½ feet

Track: GarGraves (diameters range from 42 to 54 inches)

Motive power: Lionel, Williams by Bachmann

Rolling stock: Lionel, Menards

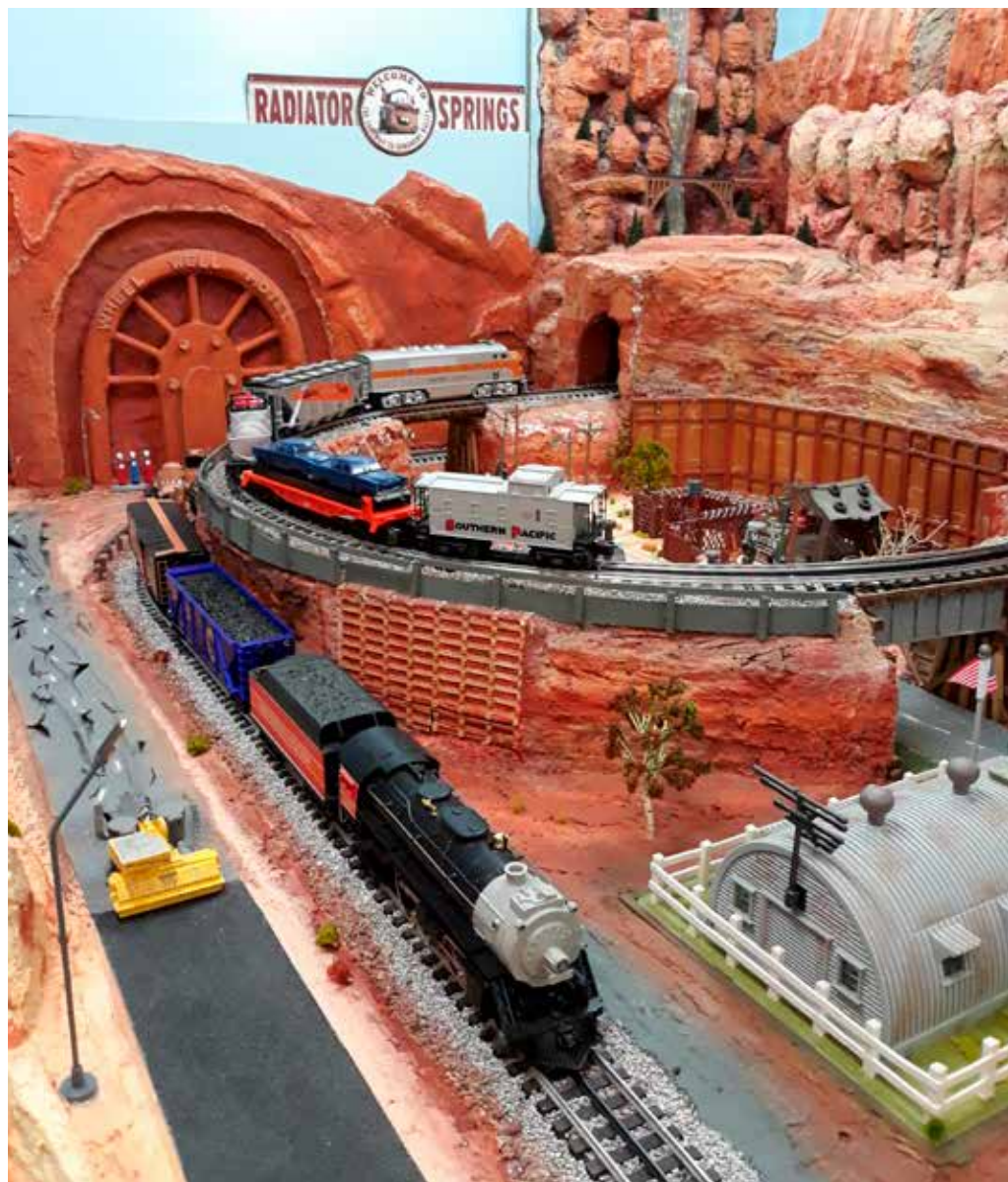
Controls: Lionel GW-180 transformer

Accessories: Z-Stuff for Trains

Structures: Mattel, MTH

Vehicles: Mattel

4 Bob based the track plan of his compact layout on the route traveled by Casey Jr., a circus train running at Disneyland in southern California. The lines on the main level and the elevated area are independent and lack any sidings or spurs. Steam and diesel motive power ride comfortably over the neatly ballasted GarGraves sections.





5 Whenever Bob Davies feels an attack of “the whimsies” is coming on, he takes immediate action and he places at the head of a freight train Wilson the diesel, one of the engines from *Chuggington*, an animated British children’s series. A detailed steamer will be substituted for the toy-like locomotive as soon as the mood has passed.

to the scenery shell, he sprayed them with a mist of water. Why the two-handed method? “To ensure the paint flowed into all the cracks and crevices left after the Sculptamold had hardened,” he explained.

Building the town

The remaining scenic effects – dried grasses and natural dirt, miniature cacti and Joshua trees – went on where Bob in consultation with Emily and Ray thought they would look right and provide the necessary accents to key areas. A back-lit waterfall made using Water Effects from Woodland Scenics enhanced another spot and always wins compliments.

In certain respects, everything to this point, including the desert effects and the three-dimensional backdrops created by applying Sculptamold over Styrofoam, merely laid the groundwork for building Radiator Springs. Here, Bob received helpful assistance from his daughter that made the town come alive.

What Bob had in mind for the colorful settlement didn’t originate in the catalogs issued by well-known model railroad manufacturers or other obvious sources. The exception was the operating firehouse from MTH Electric Trains.

Instead, Emily and he searched for entries in the Disney/Pixar Precision Series of buildings marketed by toy giant Mattel. Besides having been designed to model what viewers of *Cars* had seen, those structures were equipped with lights.

In addition, Bob noted, “the buildings from Mattel are all photo-celled. As a result, when I turn off the lights in my train room, they light up. It reminds me of the beautiful neon lights and signs I see when I go to Las Vegas, which is a short drive from our home.”

A highlight of Radiator Springs is the intersection of Route 66 and Cross Street. Bob installed the irregularly flashing yellow traffic light as seen in the movie *Cars*. It, like the oldies tunes constantly playing in town, really entertain viewers, even the youngest ones.

Out of the box

Structures and scenery, plenty of vehicles, and absolutely no figures. Oh, one more element gives Bob’s miniature version of Radiator Springs its pleasing personality:

the railroad tracks over which his modest roster of engines operates.

“Look,” Bob says with a hint of defensiveness in his voice, “I have a great time running my Lionel and Williams by Bachmann locomotives. But for me, coming up with the town and tracking down all the structures and vehicles where I had the most fun. That and creating the sculpted backdrops with indirect lighting. I’m really proud of the Cadillac Mountain Range, which consists of tailfins from model Coupe de Villes and El Dorados from every year between 1957 and 1962. You gotta love ‘em!”

Frankly, you just gotta love everything about this one-of-a-kind three-rail display. Bob thought out of the box when he fastened onto the plot and characters from *Cars* as the basis for an attractive and entertaining O gauge layout in which he is the only human being connected with the one and only town there. Until any vehicle calling Radiator Springs its home says otherwise, the friendly and talented Mr. Davies can claim to be mayor! **CTT**



6 The engineer running the Southern Pacific freight train on the upper level breathes a sigh of relief every time he escapes Willy's Butte, the rock formation dominating the mountains that looks a bit like a car hood ornament.

WHEN DAD TOOK ME TO LIONEL'S SHOWROOM

Maybe the best day of my childhood!

The association of Christmas and Lionel trains was first deposited in my memory bank before I turned four back in 1944. The trimmed tree, standing perfectly straight in a large bucket of sand and loaded with Noma bubble lights, tinsel, and prewar glass ornaments imported from Germany or Japan, was topped off by a beautiful star.

Our tree was encircled by an O gauge layout, whose design came from a Lionel instruction booklet. The train running around it consisted of a No. 259E engine and its four-wheel tender pulling Nos. 804 tank car, 809 dump car, and 831 flatcar with a wood load, plus a No. 807 caboose.

■ Ready to go

My dad, son of a Reading Co. railroader, loved trains, so he made sure that 259E was always in tiptop shape. A member of the faculty at New York University in Manhattan, he went to Lionel's showroom at 15 E. 26th St. whenever he needed anything for the prewar train. In fact, during World War II, he made several trips to "Lionel Mecca," as we called it, and described its many treasures.

I listened to my father and begged to go to Lionel's headquarters. Even after the war, Dad kept hesitating. Finally in the late autumn of 1949 he relented. I could not wait for my first trip to the hallowed place.

Dad and I then rode in a Stilwell coach behind steam on the Erie RR from Rutherford, N.J., to the Erie terminal in Jersey City. We boarded the Hudson Tube train to take us beneath the Hudson River to the 9th Street Station in lower Manhattan. After lunch at Chock Full o'Nuts and a stop at NYU, we took a cab to Lionel.

As we pulled up to a nondescript building, I couldn't hide my disappointment. I had envisioned a building with a big Lionel sign, perhaps a flashing one in iconic colors of orange and blue with a welcome mat. I expected to see a brightly lit street-level display of trains and accessories.



The highlight of David Goodhart's visit to Lionel headquarters in New York City back in 1949 was without question seeing the huge O gauge layout that had recently been built to fill the main part of the showroom. This shot reveals how several trains were running at the same time.

LIONEL "O" GAUGE TRACK WIDTH 1 1/2 INCHES



No. 290E Distant Control Freight Train

Outfit consists of:
 1—No. 290E Distant Control locomotive
 1—No. 1600T Streamlined coal tender
 1—No. 651 Flat car with load of lumber
 1—No. 654 Oil tank car, aluminum finish
 1—No. 657 Caboose
 1—No. 88 Controller
 8—OC Curved track
 2—OS Straight track
 1—OTC Lockon

Locomotive and tender are accurately detailed and beautifully finished in gun metal. Cars are enamelled and each measures 6 1/4 inches. Train is 41 inches long. Track supplied forms an oval 40 by 30 inches.

Price \$9.75

Type "E" or "F" Lionel multivolt transformer will operate this train. Type "B" or "T" of greater capacity will provide for the addition of many illuminated and automatic accessories.

No. 290W Same as No. 290E but with whistle equipment and with No. 66 whistle and reversing controller instead of No. 88.

Price \$13.25

No. 258EW Distant Control whistling locomotive and No. 1600W tender with No. 65 whistle controller. For use with cars Nos. 603, 604, 607, 608 and the 651 freight series.

Price \$12.50

**NORTH SHORE
LIMITED**

After all, New York's department stores had window displays during the holidays.

Dad and I opened the heavy glass front doors leading a rather dark lobby. In the narrow entryway over to the left, opposite the elevators, the tenants of the building were listed on an encased blackboard on the wall. Lionel was on an upper floor.

We entered an elevator that was more like a freight elevator than the impressive ones in department stores. Still, it did have an operator; no self-service here. The elevator wasn't full. I began to wonder if my expectations far exceeded reality. I wasn't crestfallen, but to put it mildly I was enveloped with feelings of disappointment.

The elevator stopped, and the metal gate was carefully opened. As Dad and I exited, we saw the front of a Pennsylvania RR steam turbine heading toward us.

I vaguely remember the sound of a steam locomotive and a periodic whistle, but those effects might just be wishful thinking. But I do know the headlight shown and the red keystone sparkled. The face of that engine was immense, so we felt tiny when passing by it as we headed to the showroom. I was awestruck, and my sadness immediately gone.

■ Inside the showroom

As Dad and I put the turbine behind us, we noticed on the shiny illuminated wall in front of us glass display cases containing items from the Lionel archives. There were a few prewar pieces I had seen in pictures and had become bases for current production. I recall a brass-finished engine from the early 1900s, the famous gondola that launched the business, two massive one-of-a-kind electrics known as the Brute and the Super 381, the prewar No. 700E

Lifelong O gauger David Goodhart spent many hours as a boy running the Lionel No. 259E steam engine and tender combination his dad had received when he was young. The popular duo, cataloged between 1933 and '42, pulled a promotional four-car freight outfit similar in many ways to the No. 290E set illustrated in the consumer catalog for 1937.

scale New York Central Hudson, and a display of OO gauge trains.

Then came the main event! To our left was the large, brightly lit showroom. In the center, between posts on both sides, stood a layout that to my 9-year-old eyes was truly enormous. The subway at the south end was an immediate eye catcher. A GG1 electric pulling at least four or five heavyweight cars operated in that subterranean space.

On the main line was a No. 2333 red-and-silver Santa Fe F3 diesel pulling a long freight. The control panel was on the east side of the layout and roped off; an "engineer" was at the controls. Packed with ZW transformers plus RCS and switch control boxes, it looked more like the instrument panel in the cockpit of an airplane I had seen a short time earlier than part of a toy display. The rest of the layout was surrounded by a cantilevered railing so onlookers like us were able to get "up close and personal," yet not too close.

There were a number of visitors that day, but the place didn't feel too crowded. There were several roaming staff observers, primarily concerned with little hands getting too close to the layout, but I don't remember them as being intrusive. If anything, they were somewhat aloof, as though no one was too eager to respond to

a myriad of questions from a kid. Surely for them, at that time of year, there were many long days.

■ Other memories

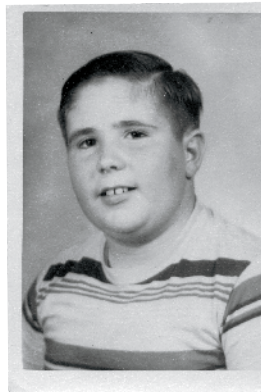
Around the perimeter of the showroom I could discern a number of doors to offices. Another door led to the Service Department, where Dad went for brushes and

bulbs. Here, as in the entry hall, there were displays of current and archival items.

I also remember seeing small display layouts used for demonstration purposes. At least one of them featured lots of accessories, but I honestly don't remember if any of them had trains operating. Surprisingly, there was no free literature of any kind, including consumer catalogs, to be handed out. At least there was no admission fee.

My father and I stayed in the Lionel showroom for a long time, and it took a good

deal of prodding from him to get me to leave so we could head over to our next stop, the Gilbert Hall of Science. But that's a story for another time. Our trip home, again behind steam through the Meadowlands and over the Hackensack River and Berry's Creek to the first stop, Rutherford, was the perfect ending to an unforgettable day of railroading. **CTT**



Memories of a visit to the Lionel showroom in 1949 remain vibrant in David's mind and still inspire him.

WITH THE CTT STAFF



Lionel Legacy SD40-2

This great heavy hauler is back with new road names and detail

G racing pages 42 and 43 of the slick Lionel 2022 Volume 1 catalog were the newest listing of the SD40-2. The SD40-2 is no stranger to a Lionel catalog; this is the first release since the 2018 Volume 2 catalog.

For this release Lionel offered four road names and five paint schemes – each with a powered and a non-powered option. The road names are Burlington Northern; Burlington Northern in a Spirit of 1776 red, white, and blue scheme; Louisville & Indiana; Savage; and Union Pacific in Desert Victory camouflage.

My O gauge model is a custom paint scheme from this run of models offered by Mr. Muffin's Trains in Atlanta, Ind.

These units have road-specific detailing, notably with roof items, brake wheel, pilots, and trucks. They come with Kinematic pilots, a smoke unit, and front and rear Electrocouplers. Measuring 19 inches in length, they require O-54 curves.

The SD40-2 units can be operated conventionally or with Legacy, Bluetooth, and

TrainMaster Command Control. All the powered units have an MSRP of \$649.99; non-powered units are \$349.99. However, it's been my experience you can always get a better deal through a Lionel dealer.

The non-powered units don't have any electronics on board. Since the most recent release of non-powered diesels had a "Superbass" speaker system, these "dummy" engines leave a bit to be desired.

However, if you want to create a multi-unit consist, you'll find they've been priced so you can add some complexity without spending an extra \$650.

There's something about these SD40-2s from Lionel that really stands out for me. Perhaps it's the popularity of regional railroads and short lines, or it could be the fact that they look so nice on an O gauge layout regardless of its size. Maybe it's because these road diesels are packed with great features for a great price.

While Lionel offered only a few road names, hobbyists were not limited to what was cataloged. It seems that custom run

O Gauge Legacy SD40-2 by Lionel

Price: \$649.99; non-powered \$349.99 (No. 2233964; Mr. Muffin's Trains)

Features: Fan-driven smoke; directional lighting with LED headlights; marker lights; Kinematic pilots; ElectroCouplers

Current Lionel-offered road names: Burlington Northern; Burlington Northern Bicentennial scheme; Louisville & Indiana; Savage; Union Pacific Desert Victory scheme

Website: www.Lionel.com

options are inevitable, and that's how I scored my Wheeling & Lake Erie version.

Comparing this version to my 2018 W&LE unit, the detailing has improved.

These diesels are quite popular and some dealers are still expecting them to arrive. — *Chris Montagna/Chris's Trains and Things, YouTube*



Note the railroad-specific detailing: The W&LE unit includes horns between the cooling fans; the Norfolk Southern model behind does not.



The new models feature Kinematic couplers and pilot detail where applicable specific to the railroad, including plows and m.u. hoses.

FlyerChief GP7: the stalwart in S

This classic gets new road names

This release of FlyerChief GP7s is from the Lionel 2021 Volume 2 catalog and has engines for the Burlington Northern, Chesapeake & Ohio, Lehigh Valley, and Wabash railroads plus two sets. One is a Texas & Pacific freight, and the other is a Clinchfield coal hauler.

I unpacked the S gauge road diesel, along with its manual and FlyerChief controller, the latter of which is marked for the Wabash engine. There were no extra traction tires or special items in the box.

After lubricating the engine as specified, I ran it with a transformer. It showed quick responses, and there were no issues.

Using two Lionel buttons wired into my layout, I tested the sounds. Everything worked as specified.

There are switches underneath to choose transformer only or the transformer with the handheld controller. You can also turn off the sound system.

The RailSounds were perfect, and the buttons activated the whistle and bell. Crew talk is activated with a short blast of the whistle button; it worked as it should.

Next, I used the supplied controller; it was completely successful.



The appearance of the engine is excellent overall. The paint has crisp separations, and there's no overspray. The shell and handrails are exactly the same as the Gilbert postwar Geep.

Finally I used my smart phone with the LionChief Bluetooth app. Again, the engine performed perfectly. The app gives you a lot more control options than do the handheld or universal units.

My layout uses original Flyer track and switches, meaning there are tight curves and Gilbert switch issues. The Lionel GP7 diesel handled both without difficulty.

I tested pulling ability by placing Gilbert-era Flyer freight cars behind the engine until it stalled. The Geep was able to pull 19 cars before being unable to start – good for an engine with only one motor.

Lionel has also redesigned the FlyerChief GP7 trucks for the first time in 60 years to be more prototypical than earlier Gilbert or “Flyoniel” models.

For its \$274.99 list price, this engine is a good value. That's only a \$25 increase since the 2017 models. — *Bill Clark*

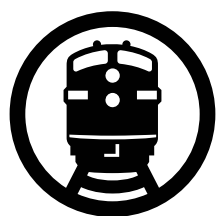
S Gauge FlyerChief GP7 by Lionel

Price: \$274.99; No. 2221040

Features: FlyerChief control with user selected operational modes; LED lights; switches for background sounds, smoke, and transformer remote operation mode; RailSounds RC sound system with background sounds, whistle, horn, bell, and announcements; traction tires; directional headlights; Electrocouplers

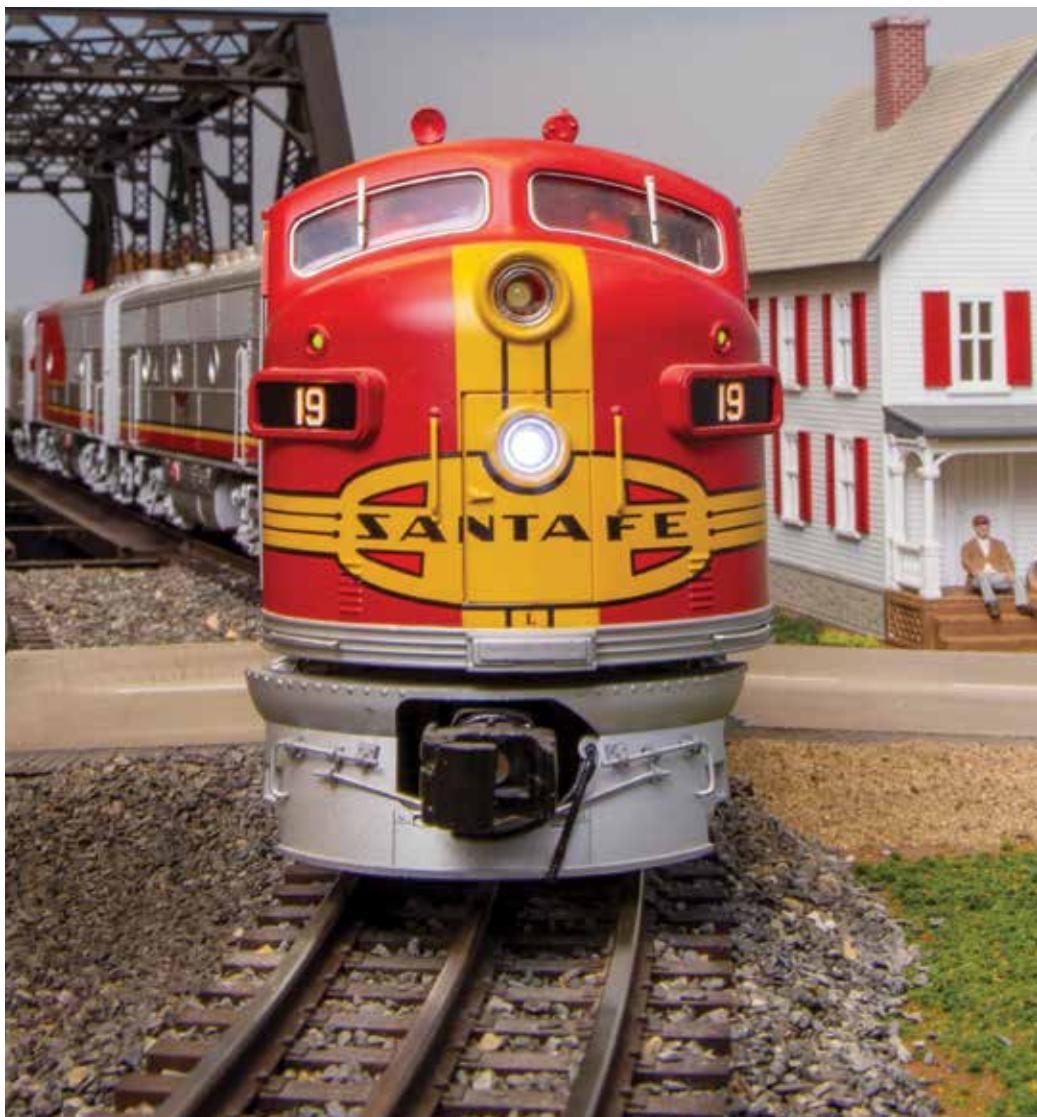
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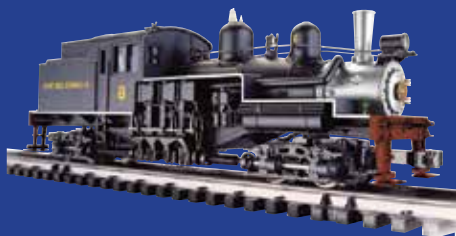
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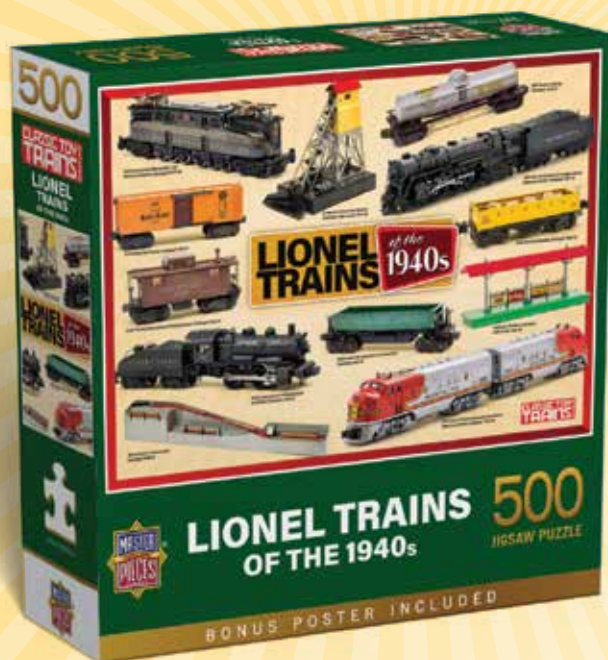


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WI, LA CROSSE: The 31st Annual Great Tri-State Rail Sale. La Crosse Center, 2nd & Pearl Streets. Saturday, January 28, 2023. 9:00am-3:00pm. Admission \$5.00, under 12 free. 300 vendor tables. All Scales; Model, Toy & Antique Trains & Memorabilia. Information: 4000 Foundation, PO Box 3411, La Crosse, WI 54602, 608-781-9383. Visit: www.4000foundation.com

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

Events

IA, MONTICELLO: 2023 Train Show. 2 Days, February 4-5, 2023. Saturday 10am-5pm and Sunday 9am-1pm. Bernides Center, Jones County Fairgrounds, 766 N. Maple St., Monticello, IA 52310. Tables \$30. Admission: \$5, children under 12 free with paid adult. Monticello RR Club, PO Box 169, Monticello IA 52310 or email Ron Ackermann at rack611@gmail.com

NC, ASHEVILLE: Asheville Train Show. Western North Carolina Agricultural Center. February 24-25, 2023. Friday noon-7:00pm and Saturday 9:00am-5:00pm. Admission \$6.00, under 10 free. All scales, all gauges, collectibles, artifacts, operating layouts, hundreds of vendor tables. More: www.Asheville-Trainshow.com

NJ, BRICK: ECTP and Collectibles LLC presents The Brick Train Show. Elks Lodge, 2491 Hooper Avenue, Brick, NJ 08723. Sunday, January 8, 2023, 9:00am-2:00pm. Admission: \$7.00; under 12 free with adult. John LaLima 732-845-5966. Go to www.eastcoasttrainparts.com and click on The Brick Show.

NJ, TOMS RIVER: ECTP and Collectibles LLC presents the Toms River Toy & Train Game Day Show. Elks Lodge, 600 Washington St., Toms River, NJ 08753. Sunday, February 12, 2023, 9:00am-2:00pm. Admission: \$7.00; under 12 free with adult. John LaLima 732-845-5966. Go to www.eastcoasttrainparts.com and click on Toms River Show.

NY, LINDENHURST: Long Island Classic Train Show/Swap Meet. Fireman's Memorial Park, 555 Heling Blvd. (north of Hartford St.), Lindenhurst, NY 11757. January 15, 2023, February 12, 2023, and March 19, 2023. 8:30am-1:00pm. Adults \$5.00, under 16 free w/adult. 100+ tables. Handicap accessible. Contact: John Mitchell 917-596-3494 or John Miata 516-353-1751. Email: LIClassicTrainShow@hotmail.com

OH, MASSILLON: CJ Trains Winter Train and Toy Show. Massillon Knights of Columbus Hall, 988 Cherry Road NW, 44647. Sunday, December 11, 2022, 10:00am-3:00pm. Admission: \$5.00, 12 and under FREE. \$25/dealer table, 152 - 8' dealer tables. Jon Ulbright, PO Box 446, Wooster, OH 44691, 330-262-7488, cathijon@ssnnet.com www.cjtrains.com

OH, TOLEDO: Greater Toledo Train & Toy Show. Owens Community College (SHAC), 30335 Oregon Rd., Perrysburg, OH 43551. Sunday, March 12, 2023, 11:00am-3:00pm. "Early Birds" 9:00am-3:00pm. Adults \$7, Early Bird Adults \$10, Children 12 and under FREE w/ paid adult. Contact: Randy Ramsey, 1566 South Ave., Toledo, OH 43609, 419-215-4181, email: toledotoymasters@gmail.com, website: www.toymasters.org

OK, STILLWATER: Winter Train Show. Saturday, February 18, 2023, 9am-3pm. Payne County Fairgrounds Expo Hall, 3 miles east of Stillwater on Hwy 51. 4518 Expo Cir E, Stillwater, OK 74075. Operating layouts and door prizes. Concessions available. Admission: \$5.00, kids under 18 free. For information: www.ttos-soonerdiv.org

PA, CHESWICK: "TRAINS, TRAINS, TRAINS: SHOW!" Pittsburgh Shrine Center, 1877 Shriners Way, Cheswick, PA 15024. Sunday, January 29, 2023. 10am-3pm. Sponsored by the Fort Pitt Division of the Train Collectors Association. 200+ tables; new & used trains: all gauges. Please enjoy our event for \$5. All are welcome! Info at: www.HobbyTrainCollectors.org

TX, HOUSTON: TCA Lone Star Division Gulf Coast Chapter Toy Train Show and Swap Meet. Saturday, January 7, 2023. 10am-4pm. Hilton Houston Westchase, 9999 Westheimer Rd., Houston, TX 77042. Admission at the door: \$8 individual, \$13 family. Questions and vendor table info, contact: Mark Heavener, 281-728-8585 or email: gulfcoasttca@gmail.com. \$1 off with flyer, visit: www.TCA-gulfcoastchapter.org

TX, PLANO: Dallas Area Winter Train Show. Plano Event Center, 2000 E. Spring Creek Parkway. January 21-22, 2023. Saturday 10am-5pm; Sunday 10am-4pm. Adults \$10.00, 12 and under free w/adult. 80,000 sq.ft. of model railroading with numerous operating layouts, layout tours, vendors, and door prizes. Information: Chris Atkins, chris@railroadmodelers.com 469-438-0741. Visit: www.dfwtrainshow.com

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A REVIEW OF A RARE BIRD

Chris Montagna of YouTube's "Chris's Trains and Things" channel looks at Lionel's 1926 Cardinal's Train set. This special outfit commemorates a historic consist that existed only briefly.



HOLIDAY LAYOUTS AND MORE

Can't get enough toy trains around the holidays? Trains.com/CTT can help! We have several articles on Christmas-themed layouts, including some you can build. There are also photo galleries featuring everything that glitters in O and S gauges.



LAYOUT VIDEOS

Be sure to check out videos of layouts that have appeared in recent issues. One of the most exciting is John Mansueto's S gauge layout. It's a compact display with big ideas!



trains.com

All tied up on the right-of-way

Plus a great-running B unit out of Marx parts

MOST MODELING OF ROADBED AND RIGHT-OF-WAY

scenery concerns itself with ballasting, vegetation, and signals or signage. Other than Lionel's Tie-Jector, I've not seen much attention paid to what one often sees along the right-of-way, namely, piles of replacement ties waiting to be put in place and piles of the worn ties that have been replaced.

For FasTrack layouts, there is a simple way to add this touch. I noticed that the long matchsticks used to light fireplaces are a great source for the bare wood.

FasTrack ties are 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ " long, and their width matches exactly the width of the matchsticks. After cutting each matchstick into 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ " segments, I paint them a dark brown to black to simulate new, creosoted ties. To simulate worn ones, I first use a hobby knife to roughen up the wood. Then I color them with a light gray paint. After that has dried, I drybrush them with white and black to simulate their worn condition.

You can place the new ties in several places: obviously along the right-of-way, but also in gondolas waiting to be taken to wherever they need to go. The worn ties can be placed along the right-of-way, too.

— Terry Cripe, Defiance, Ohio



It's easy to simulate railroad ties as a scenic element. Cut long fireplace matchsticks to the proper length and then paint and place them in a gondola or along the track.



Right on the Marx!

You're looking at one of the most reliable locomotives that I have. I've operated a lot of Marx equipment and have found their motors to be very dependable.


I wondered if I could build a diesel unit out of two of the No. 490 or 400 steam engine motors. The body had to be wide enough to allow them to pivot. The easiest way to do it was to build a B unit, so that I didn't have to construct a cab and pilot.



Here it is. I used replacement truck sides from Marx O gauge E7 diesels to hide the steam engine drivers. The body is made out of cardboard with some wood and metal parts and measures 16" in length. It just drops on over the frame and isn't fastened down.

One of these motors doesn't really pull a lot, but two of them together can haul a reasonable-length train.

The unit runs from very slow to extremely fast. If your train is running behind schedule, you can put on this locomotive and get your train wherever it needs to go on time!

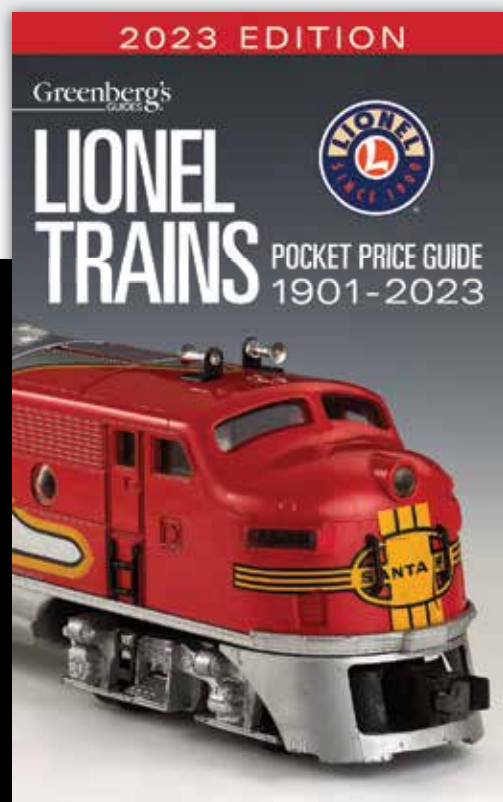
I operate this E8B behind a dummy Alco also decorated for the Seaboard. Most of the cost involved was the \$5 for each motor. Since the gears come all the way to the flanges, it has to run through Marx or similar switches. Also, I operate my trains on Marx O-34 curves. — Mike Small, Greensboro, N.C. 

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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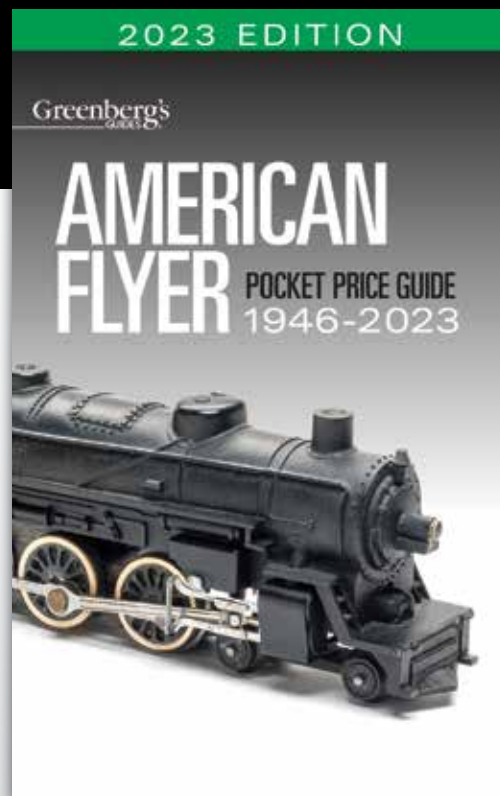
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